



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CASA FOR CHILDREN OF ATLANTIC AND CAPE MAY COUNTIES
ANNOUNCES EXPANSION INTO CAMDEN COUNTY**

New Geographic Footprint will Increase Services for Children and Youth Living in Foster Care

SOMERS POINT, N.J.: Under the direction of the National CASA/GAL Association and CASA of New Jersey, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Atlantic and Cape May Counties is consolidating services with Camden County. The new organization, which will be finalized soon, will be called CASA of Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties. Operations in all three counties will continue uninterrupted, providing CASA's recognized volunteer advocacy to children and youth living in foster care.

"Just as we have faced every success and challenge in Atlantic and Cape May Counties, will we meet them in Camden County by building lasting relationships, advocating for the needs of the children and youth that we serve, and supporting the CASA volunteers who are the heart and soul of our organization," said CASA Executive Director Lauren Crenshaw.

CASA volunteers meet with everyone on the child's case, including family, teachers, caseworkers, and counselors. They gather information into objective court reports that contain recommendations for services and resources to improve the child's educational, medical, and overall wellbeing. Youth with a CASA volunteer are twice as likely to be adopted, half as likely to re-enter foster care, more likely to have a plan for a permanent home, and more likely to experience educational achievement. According to the Administrative Office of the Courts, nearly 1,300 children and youth in all three counties were living in foster care in 2021, more than half are waiting for a CASA volunteer.

"It is our priority to work collaboratively with the CASA volunteers currently advocating for children in Camden County, the Courts and community stakeholders. We all have an investment in ensuring a smooth transition so that all youth living in foster care in Camden County continue to receive quality advocacy, access to services, and the guidance of a trained CASA volunteer," said CASA's Board President E. David Hieb.

Individuals interested in becoming a CASA should attend a monthly Information Session. For more information call (609) 601-7800 or visit www.CASAACC.org.

About Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children of Atlantic, Cape May, and Camden Counties

Trained CASAs speak on behalf of abused and neglected children living in the foster care system and are dedicated to ensuring these children are placed in safe permanent homes as quickly as possible. Last fiscal year in all three counties, CASA provided 517 abused and neglected children with an advocate and helped place over 140 children in permanent homes. For more information about CASA for Children, visit www.CASAACC.org or social media at CASA4Children.

About the National CASA/GAL Association

The National CASA/GAL Association is a network of almost 1,000 programs that recruit, train and support more than 76,000 citizen-volunteers who advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtrooms of their communities. The only program of its kind, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are empowered by the courts to provide children with one-on-one advocacy. CASAs see their assigned children regularly and interview all the adults who influence their lives and offer judges the critical information they need to ensure each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care, staying with the child until she is placed in a loving permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA is the only constant adult presence in their lives. For more information about the National CASA Association, readers are encouraged to visit casaforchildren.org.

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