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### **TN CASA Receives National Certification Recognizing the Quality of its Work for Abused and Neglected Children**

Murfreesboro, Tenn. — The Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association has been awarded certification by the National CASA Association. This certification recognizes that Tennessee CASA meets National CASA’s high standards for program operations and management.

According to Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association, “The National CASA quality assurance process is very rigorous, and reflects our commitment to ensure every child we serve has the most powerful volunteer advocate working on their behalf. This certification says Tennessee CASA has demonstrated a strong capacity to support the work of CASA programs in Tennessee in advocating for abused and neglected children within the state.”

Tennessee CASA is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides support to 26 local CASA programs serving 44 counties across Tennessee. The Tennessee CASA Network served 4,833 children through the work of 1,310 CASA volunteers in calendar year 2010. Tennessee CASA programs reported permanent placement recommendations were accepted by the courts 94% of the time. Six months after case closure, 96.8% of the children served by CASA programs remained in safe permanent homes, free from abuse and neglect. Local programs provide trained volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children who come to the attention of the Tennessee juvenile courts. Tennessee CASA was started in 1986.

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**About the National CASA Association**

In 1976, a Seattle judge was concerned over making decisions about abused and neglected children's lives without sufficient information and conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of these children in court, helping to ensure that they live in a safe and loving environment. The Seattle program was so successful that judges across the country began utilizing citizen advocates. In 1990, the U.S. Congress encouraged the expansion of CASA with passage of the Victims of Child Abuse Act. Today, there are more than 950 National CASA member programs across the country, with more than 70,000 men and women serving as CASA volunteers.

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