

Cumberland County CASA Program
1 Courthouse Square, Suite 301
Carlisle, PA 17013

Phone: 717.240.6159
Toll Free: 888.697.0371 x6159
FAX: 717.240.6460
Email: casa@ccpa.net
Website: www.ccpa.net/casa



March 31, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: LINDA ROSENBERRY, CASA Outreach Coordinator
717.240.6159**

Cumberland County CASA Volunteers Recognized

CARLISLE, PA – The CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Program will hold its Swearing-in and 13th Annual Light of Hope Ceremonies on April 2, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Old Courthouse on the Square in Carlisle. Five new volunteers recently completed extensive CASA training. It will help equip them to advocate for the best interests of the children to whom they will be appointed. In addition to swearing in the new CASA volunteers, a symbolic candle-lighting event will be held, signifying hope and the impact that having an advocate in a child's life can have.

In the 13 years the CASA Program has existed in Cumberland County, the 5 new volunteers bring the total to 182 "ordinary citizens" who have successfully completed the training and screening process. They represent more than 376 children who have been deemed to be dependent, or "without proper parental care and control," by the Dependency Court in the Court of Common Pleas. Cumberland County Children and Youth Services is the agency that is responsible for the oversight of these children and families.

This year's five new volunteers are Robert Flynn of Enola, Kathy Kelly of Harrisburg, Marilyn Mills of Carlisle, Kim Summers of Newville, and Trisha Whitmer of Newport. Judges Edward Guido, Christylee Peck, and Albert Masland are the three judges in Cumberland County who hear dependency cases and who will swear in the CASA volunteers. CASA volunteers are appointed by these judges to advocate for the best interests of the child or sibling group they are representing. Because they are appointed to only one child or sibling group at a time, CASA volunteers have the unique opportunity to observe the children and develop a more intimate understanding of the needs of the child.

Also being recognized on April 2 are the nine volunteers who completed fall training in November 2013, as well as those volunteers who have been involved with the CASA Program for five and ten years. In the fall, new volunteers Faith Eck of Larella, Susan Helsel of Mifflin, Patricia Jackson of Chambersburg, Connor Line and Emily Seitz of Newville, Kim Meals of Carlisle, Kathy Ramper of Harrisburg, Natali Rosado of Arendtsville, and Tracy Duff-Sweeny of Mechanicsburg were sworn in during a CASA Appreciation Brunch. They are already advocating for 15 children.

Those completing five years with the CASA Program are Cindy Garfinkel of New Cumberland, Devora Sherfy of Dillsburg, and Laura Neal and Clare Garfield of Carlisle. Between them, they have represented 12 children. The ten-year veterans are Diane Bowers of Carlisle and E.J. McKenna-Heib, who has relocated to Massachusetts, They have advocated for nine children. In addition, E.J. McKenna-Hieb has served an additional 10 children through her role as an educational consultant to other CASA volunteers.

When children's cases reach the level of being involved in Dependency Court, they often take at least two years before resolutions are found. CASA volunteers are asked to remain with the child or sibling group they are appointed to for as long as the child's case is open. Most volunteers are appointed to only one child or sibling group at a time.

Volunteers for the CASA program are always needed. Applicants must be 21 years of age or older to serve. For more information, contact Cumberland County CASA at 717-240-6159 or casa@ccpa.net.

###