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NEWS
Contact: Heart of Missouri CASA
Kelly Hill, Executive Director
573-442-4670
kelly@homcasa.org

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
HEART OF MISSOURI CASA

Heart of Missouri CASA receives national grant to raise awareness of Boone and Callaway Counties' most vulnerable children

Columbia, MO – March 11, 2020 – Heart of Missouri CASA has been awarded a $49,100 Recruitment and Awareness grant from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Association for Children. Funds will be used to tailor a national public awareness campaign about child abuse and neglect for local markets and to distribute the campaign.

There are nearly 950 CASA/GAL programs nationwide, including 45 state offices, that recruit, train and support volunteers who advocate in court for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Their advocacy enables judges to make the most well-informed decisions for each child.

National CASA/GAL has developed a broad-based national campaign, "Change a Child's Story™." It is distinguished from other campaigns in that its messaging is told from the point of view of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. The campaign shows the importance to these children of having a volunteer by their side to advocate for their best interests.

The campaign includes digital and social media campaigns, billboard ads, radio ads, newspaper and magazine ads, and an upgraded website.

"Nearly 300 children in foster care in Boone and Callaway Counties are still in need of a CASA volunteer. Our goal with this campaign is to bring awareness to our community's most vulnerable children and recruit more voices for these children. We have two new volunteer training classes in April that we hope to fill with 30 new advocates." said Kelly Hill, Executive Director of Heart of Missouri CASA.

The "Change a Child's Story™ campaign was developed with R&R Partners, a cause-driven marketing and advocacy agency that has worked on prominent social issues campaigns. R&R Partners conducted focus groups across the country to ensure the campaign would resonate with target audiences while being sensitive to the perceptions of those with experience growing up in foster care.

The federal grant funds distributed through National CASA/GAL are provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, US Department of Justice, as authorized under the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990. In 2019, National CASA was awarded nearly $10.7 million in federal grants.

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About Heart of Missouri CASA

Our mission is to recruit, train, and support volunteers to serve as exceptional voices for every child in the Boone and Callaway County Family Courts. A CASA volunteer, serving as a court-appointed advocate, is trained to promote and pursue the best interests of an abused or neglected child in court, and prevents the child from getting lost in the system by being sensitive to the child's needs and presenting these needs in court.

Through consistent, thorough advocacy, CASA volunteers make sure our community's children are in the best possible home, have all the resources they need, and find a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible. Through these advocacy efforts, CASA is working with the Court to ensure that every child has a chance for a brighter future.

In 2019, 142 Heart of Missouri CASA volunteers advocated for 294 children, providing over 9,000 hours of advocacy. Visit Heart of Missouri CASA at www.homcasa.org

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