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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prince George's CASA Program Alumn Recognized by National CASA Association
First child CASA program served named a "Face of CASA for Children" in national campaign

Hyattsville, MD, June 26, 2013 – Foster care alumna and recent college graduate Courtney La Prince has been honored as part of the national "[35 Faces of CASA for Children](#)," an online tribute created in recognition of the 35th national anniversary of CASA and guardian ad litem volunteer advocacy.

Through the "35 Faces of CASA," the [National CASA Association](#) is telling the story of the CASA movement through the people who comprise it: CASA/GAL program staff, volunteers, judges, families, and young people touched by a CASA volunteer.

The first CASA program was created by Seattle Judge David Soukup. Judge Soukup had spent too many sleepless nights worrying about the life-altering decisions he made in juvenile court. How could he know what was truly in the best interest of the child when there was no single person in the courtroom whose only job was to investigate the facts and represent only the child? The answer to his concerns came in the form of trained citizens—CASA volunteers.

Today, CASA/Prince George's County is one of more than 900 CASA and guardian ad litem programs across the country. In 2012, programs trained 77,000 CASA volunteers to stand up for abused and neglected children.

Courtney La Prince was the first child served by the Prince George's County program. Her CASA volunteer was assigned to her when she was 13 years old, after she was abandoned by her mother at a shelter. Driven to succeed, and supported by CASA until she aged out of foster care, La Prince defied the odds, recently graduating from Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia. In her [online tribute](#), La Prince delivers a "commencement speech" offering advice for young people preparing to "graduate" from the foster care system.

"...Before you can follow your dreams, before you can set out on that road away from the life you knew as a child growing up in the foster care system and become the person you are destined to be, you must first leave the anger and the hurt behind you. In a word, you must forgive...."

To read Courtney's speech, learn more about the CASA program, and add your photo to a collage of images submitted by child welfare advocates from across the country, go to www.35Faces.CASAforChildren.org

(more)



CASA/Prince George's County, Inc.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)/Prince George's County is a volunteer-based organization that partners with the juvenile court to improve the lives of children living in foster care who have suffered from abuse and neglect. With a strong commitment to diversity, CASA trains and supervises volunteers from the community who advocate for the best interest of children, recognizing and respecting each child's individual needs. By providing a voice to children in the foster care system, CASA's goal is to help children and promote the timely placement of those we serve in safe, permanent homes.

To volunteer with CASA, call 301-209-0491 or go to www.pgcasa.org.

About National CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a network of 946 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. The only program of its kind, CASA volunteers are empowered by the courts to provide children with one-on-one advocacy. CASA volunteers see their assigned children regularly and interview all the adults who impact their lives. Volunteer advocates 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 volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

(www.casaforchildren.org)

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