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Fifteen Local Heroes Recognized for Fight Against Child Abuse

Adams and Broomfield Counties, CO – Fifteen local heroes were recognized for their commitment to the fight against child abuse on Friday, April 29, 2011 by CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Adams & Broomfield Counties, during the program's Annual Appreciation and Awards Dinner.

CASA is a non-profit organization that trains everyday people to advocate for the best interests of children who have open abuse and neglect cases in the court system. CASA Volunteers serve as an additional set of eyes and ears on a case, helping to provide the judge with valuable information on the child's behalf. The ultimate goal of a CASA is to make sure the child is well cared for and to ensure that the best decision for the child's future is made.

Each year, in Adams and Broomfield Counties, there are over 1,300 children who have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected, and who are in desperate need of a caring, committed CASA Volunteer to speak up for their best interests. Most victims are under the age of three. Many of these children will grow up in foster care or in care of the state. Of those that do, sixty-percent will be homeless, incarcerated, or dead within two years of leaving the system.

With these staggering numbers in mind, many local citizens have stepped up to the plate to help make a difference in the lives of Adams and Broomfield Counties' most vulnerable children by becoming CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteers and supporters. These volunteers and supporters contribute the valuable gift of their time and resources.

CASA of Adams and Broomfield Counties currently has 250 active volunteer child advocates who are working tirelessly on behalf of abused and neglected children. Each of them is making a positive impact on the lives of the children they work with.

During April, National Child Abuse Awareness Month, the organization honored its caring volunteers and paid tribute to those who have demonstrated outstanding service to the children in the community. This year's award winners include:

Outreach Award – Eric P. Mott; **Rookie of the Year** – Nila Watterson; **Young Philanthropist Project (YPP) Associate of the Year** – Saraphina Feis; **Broomfield Health and Human Services Award** - Robin Lively; **Adams County Human Services Department Award** – Marie Stephens; **City and County of Broomfield Award** - Judy Ackley; **Adams County Commissioners' Award** – Irene Randall; **Governor's Award**

– Colin Purdy; **Caseworker of the Year** – Angela Miller; **Barry Glasgow GAL of The Year Award** – Jennifer Conn; **Judge of the Year**– Judge Jill-Ellyn Straus; **Board Member of the Year** – Bob Feis; **‘Giving Hope, Changing Lives’ Philanthropist of the Year**- Ted Shipman; **Community Champion For Children**– Carina Martin; **Volunteer of Year**– Marlene Wiske

The awards dinner was held at Harvest Fellowship Church in Brighton, CO and was sponsored by The Bagel Bakery & Cupcake Shoppe, Jay’s Grille and Bar and Platte Valley Family Pharmacy. Music was provided by David Ackerman, Raymond Gonzales, Sr., and Al Perez.

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Adams and Broomfield Counties is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that trains, supports and supervises community volunteers who advocate for the best interests of innocent child victims of abuse and neglect. Each year, in Adams and Broomfield Counties, there are over 1,300 children who have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected, and who are in desperate need of a caring, committed CASA Volunteer to speak up for their best interests. CASA conducts volunteer training classes three times a year. The next class begins in June 2011. For more information about CASA, call (303) 654-3378 or visit www.casa17th.org.

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Pictured (left to right): Loren Brown, CASA Board Member; Judge Jill-Ellyn Straus, Judge of the Year; and Simone Jones, CASA Executive Director

