

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

From: Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Inc.
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Bergen County CASA is happy to announce our new class of volunteers!

Hackensack, Bergen County, NJ – Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates announce 13 new volunteer advocates joining them in providing support for the abused and neglected children in our community. These volunteers were sworn in by Judge Mizdol on February 23rd at the Bergen County Court House.

The goal of the Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is to prevent abused and neglected children from becoming lost in the child welfare system. The objective of appointing a CASA Volunteer, a trained advocate from the community, is to ensure that the child's best interest is represented at all times. CASAs are appointed by the Presiding Judge of Bergen County Family Court, to ensure that the best interests of the child are met. In order to do this, the CASA must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the court, facilitate the resolution of the presenting problems, and monitor the progress toward the established goals.

Bergen County CASA is happy to welcome their new advocates: Jocelyn Dreier, Ridgewood; Angelica Escribano, Belleville; Wanda Ferraiola, Tenafly; Morgan Gonzalez, Lodi; Marilyn Gordon, Paramus; Elsa Levi, Teaneck; Lucy Rosen, Harrington Park; Diane Weiss, Montvale; Lisa Valdez, Edgewater; Wanda Withers, Teaneck; and Amy Zimmerman, Park Ridge. These 13 volunteers join a dedicated group, bringing the number of CASAs in the county to 83.

All CASA volunteers are carefully screened and receive 30 hours of training in skills necessary to fulfill his or her responsibilities. They now join a volunteer corps of court appointed special advocates, helping the county's abused and neglected children receive proper services while in foster care. Volunteers also ensure that they are placed in safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible. CASA volunteers are matched to the child directly and will be assigned one case of a child or sibling group. They will provide approximately 10-20 hours of service per month of casework.

Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a private, nonprofit organization serving children throughout Bergen County. Today, the organization is able to serve about one-third of more than 300 abused and neglected children who have been removed from their homes by court order for their own protection. This new class will provide more volunteers and allow them to help more children. Anyone wishing to volunteer can contact the CASA office at 201-336-7520 or amanda@bergencasa.org or go to www.bergencasa.org for more information.