

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** From: Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Inc.  
One Bergen County Plaza  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 440  
Hackensack, NJ 07601

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Contact: Amanda Simonton, Volunteer Administrator  
201-336-7520 - telephone  
201-336-7521- fax  
[amanda@bergencasa.org](mailto:amanda@bergencasa.org)

***Join Bergen County CASA at an Information Session.***

Hackensack, Bergen County, NJ – Bergen County CASA provides a trained corps of volunteers who are assigned by Family Court Judges to speak up for the best interests of children in the foster care system. The first step in becoming a CASA volunteer is to attend an information session. There are upcoming sessions scheduled on Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm and Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm.

Currently in Bergen County, there are almost 300 children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. These children are removed from their homes and separated from their parents, siblings, friends, teachers and sometimes even their own belongings. At Bergen County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) we give you the opportunity to make a difference in the life of one of these children. By becoming an advocate, your efforts can help a child find a permanent home or receive needed services and assistance.

CASA advocates are everyday citizens who are able to volunteer an average of 15 hours a month. In order to become a CASA volunteer, one must be 21 years of age or older, have an interest in children, their rights, and special needs, have the ability to pass both state and federal background checks and provide four favorable references from sources other than relatives. CASA volunteers are in essence, the voice of the child, in court. They interview parents, doctors, educators, foster parents, therapists, and anyone else involved in the life of the child they are assigned. Their goal is to provide child-focused reports to the court, which will lead to a speedy, safe, and permanent placement for the child.

Bergen County CASA needs more volunteers in order to reach our goal for each child to be placed in a safe and permanent home quickly. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please attend an information session on one of the following dates: Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm or Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 pm. These information sessions are being held at The Learning Center at One Bergen County Plaza, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hackensack, NJ. The information session will let you know specifically what our volunteers do and the commitment we ask of you. CASA staff members will speak to guests about the program and the next steps in becoming a volunteer. CASA's next volunteer training class begins in March, so this is an opportunity for potential volunteers to learn about and get involved with the organization.

Please contact the CASA office at 201-336-7520 or [amanda@bergencasa.org](mailto:amanda@bergencasa.org) to RSVP or if you have any questions. Also for more information, you can go to our website: [www.bergencasa.org](http://www.bergencasa.org). **Become a trained volunteer and speak on behalf of an abused or neglected child. You can make a difference in the life of a child.**