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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cumberland County CASA Holds Swearing In Ceremony

By COLBY WHEELER, Community Outreach / Resource Development Technician

The Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) recently expanded a program to Cumberland County that provides Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in court proceedings. CASA has been working for the past few months getting volunteers ready in Cumberland County. Cumberland County CASA held a swearing-in ceremony for the second set of volunteer advocates.

“We are proud that there are so many people in Cumberland County willing to help the children in their area, Phyllis Bennett, UCHRA Executive Director said. We look forward to watching how the CASA program in Cumberland County grows and serves the people of the community.”

The path to become a CASA volunteer advocate is one of determination and dedication to helping children and the citizens within the community. Through thirty hours of training the potential volunteers learn what the CASA program consists of and the role they play in the life of the child in need. After the necessary training has ended volunteers must be cleared with a TBI background check to insure they can take on the responsibilities put forth by the judge and CASA program.

Once a volunteer meets all the criteria they are sworn in by the Juvenile Court Judge. The judge then appoints CASA to a case to do an intense independent investigation, conferring with the child's parents, foster parents, social workers, teachers, psychiatrists, psychologists and other persons having knowledge pertaining to the welfare of the child/children.

The CASA volunteer gives the child/children the opportunity to tell the courts their wishes concerning their future. The CASA volunteer submits a timely report to the court giving fact based information on what is happening in the case. Sometimes the CASA volunteer is the only constant person in the child's life.

“I would just like to congratulate all of our Cumberland County CASA volunteer advocates for the hard work and dedication they have had to get this far in the program. We are grateful to have such a great group working with us to help children in need in Cumberland County,” Lori Edwards, Program Assistant for Cumberland County CASA.

All potential volunteers must be 21 years of age or older and commit at least one year to the program or until their case is closed. CASA is funded in part by UCHRA and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a CASA volunteer advocate in Cumberland County please call the UCHRA office at (931) 456-0691 and ask for Lori Edwards.



Cumberland County CASA volunteer advocates are pictured above with Judge Larry Warner of the Cumberland County Juvenile Court system. Judge Warner led the swearing in ceremony for the new CASA advocates. Pictured: Sue Bott and Erin Young