



National CASA Association Trustees Appoint Tara Perry as CEO

– Tara Perry will lead transformation of association nationally –

– National CASA works to ensure that every abused or neglected child has a caring, consistent adult to advocate for his or her well-being –

WASHINGTON, DC and SEATTLE, WA – June 6, 2016— In conjunction with the 35th Annual National CASA/GAL Conference, *One Network, Many Voices for Children*, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) Board of Trustees today announces the appointment of Tara Perry as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Perry's appointment corresponds with a major push from National CASA, together with its state and local programs, to support and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every abused or neglected child in the United States can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive. Perry replaces Michael Piraino as CEO, who retired in 2015 after more than 20 years of service.

Perry will help unite the work of nearly 1,000 CASA and Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) programs across the United States that recruit, train and support volunteers or citizen advocates who act as the eyes and ears of the judge, helping him or her make informed decisions about the best interests of America's most vulnerable children. Children in foster care are less likely to graduate from high school, more likely to be trafficked, and they experience higher rates of incarceration and homelessness as they enter adulthood. CASA/GAL advocates have proven to be game-changers for these at-risk youth—making it more likely that they will succeed in school and have a shorter road to a safe, permanent home.

“The CASA network has established itself as a unique and trusted voice for abused and neglected children, and both the board and the search committee agreed unanimously that Tara is the right person to elevate CASA's voice in the national conversation about issues that impact children and families,” said Bill Collins, Board Chair, National CASA Association. “Tara has deep experience leading transformational change, and she has already set us on our path to serving every child in need of a CASA/GAL volunteer's powerful advocacy.”

Since joining the organization in 2013 as Chief Strategy Officer and then as Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer, Perry developed and launched a National Strategic Framework to strengthen CASA at the national, state and local levels. In 2015, National CASA Association secured \$9 million in federal funding, a \$3 million increase over the prior year, as well as new commitments from private donors.

“This has been a remarkable year for National CASA,” said Perry. “We opened a new office in Washington, D.C. to connect more closely with public policy initiatives that impact our programs and the children we serve. We identified new strategic partnerships, including with the law firm Akerman LLC, and we began the process of transforming our Board of Directors

with the addition of powerful CASA champions like former U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and Dr. William Bell, president and CEO of Casey Family Programs.”

Today, there are more than 76,000 CASA/GAL volunteers serving more than 251,000 children, but approximately 400,000 children are without a citizen advocate. Under Perry’s leadership, National CASA will work in partnership with CASA/GAL state and local programs to close that gap. National CASA will also develop logic models and introduce a new performance measurement system to make the CASA/GAL model an evidence-based practice, ensuring the highest quality advocacy for children in foster care or in the court system.

“A strong CASA network is more critical today than ever before, as abused and neglected children face new and worsening challenges, including the devastating effects of the opioid epidemic and the rising toll of trafficking,” said Senator Landrieu. “Tara’s leadership is essential to CASA’s goal of serving more children under increasingly difficult circumstances, and I am proud to serve as a Board member and advisor during this exciting period of change.”

About Tara Perry

For the past 25 years Tara Perry has led and been at the forefront of numerous large-scale change initiatives, substantive national project rollouts, and innovative program developments. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to issues affecting our nation’s most disadvantaged youth.

Prior to joining National CASA Association in 2013, Perry served as Vice President of Strategy and Operations for the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, Georgia, the nation’s third largest arts center. She led the development of a 25-year growth and development roadmap, as well as an enterprise-wide Arts Education Initiative that raised more than \$15 million to engage diverse and underserved populations and to introduce the arts to a new generation of patrons.

Perry previously spent more than 10 years with the American Red Cross in Atlanta, Georgia, in Chicago, Illinois, and with the national organization in Washington, D.C. She developed a statewide preparedness strategy and had direct oversight over a \$20 million capital campaign. Perry was also a major force in the Service Delivery for the 21st Century transformation initiative that restructured the American Red Cross and changed the way the organization approached the delivery of health, safety and preparedness operations following a major disaster. Perry also served in top positions with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), The Kroger Company and the Atlanta Braves.

Perry has been recognized for her business and community leadership with a number of honors and accolades, including being named one of Atlanta’s top 10 female executives by *Business-to-Business Magazine*. She is a member of the International Women’s Forum and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing and Public Relations from Clark College, and a Masters of Business Administration from Mercer University.

About the 35th Annual National CASA/GAL Conference

More than 1,100 child welfare advocates and experts convened in National Harbor, Maryland, June 4th – 7th, 2016, to learn about the latest trends and cutting edge practices to serve America’s most vulnerable children. On June 7th, National CASA Association members will lift up the voices of the abused and neglected children on Capitol Hill for CASA Meets Congress, urging Members of Congress to support its mission to make sure every child in need of a caring, consistent adult citizen advocate has one.

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About the National CASA Association

The mission of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, together with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every abused or neglected child in the United States can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive. Today, more than 76,000 CASA and GAL volunteers serve more than 251,000 children, but approximately 400,000 children are without an advocate. National CASA Association is working in partnership with its state and local programs in 49 states to close that gap to ensure the highest quality advocacy on behalf of America's most vulnerable children.

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