



CASA for Children of Mercer & Burlington Counties
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CASA and Beneficial Bank Foundation Join Forces on Behalf of Children in
Burlington County**

Mount Holly, NJ—On Wednesday, August 9, 2017, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children in Mercer and Burlington Counties Staff gathered to accept a grant of \$20,000 from Beneficial Bank Foundation of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. CASA is the *only* organization that works directly with children from each county who have been abused and neglected and taken away from their families to ensure their safety.

Roseann Vanella, Board President, and Katherine Carmichael, Executive Director of CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties accepted the first of two grant payments which total \$20,000 from Merle A. Brown, Vice President, Director of Corporate Giving and Financial Literacy with the Beneficial Bank Foundation and LuAnn Yansick, Assistant Vice

President, Branch Manager, Beneficial Bank, Edgewater Park, to fund a two year resource program in Burlington County on behalf of abused and neglected children.

“This grant is essential to maintaining the safety and well-being of the 150 children we currently serve in Burlington County, and will help us to grow this number,” said Roseann Vanella, Board President of CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties.

"Judges assign our advocates their most serious cases with children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect. This grant from the Beneficial Bank Foundation enables our staff and advocates to directly assist these local families in crisis. We are so grateful for their generosity.”

With 743 children waiting for a CASA volunteer in Burlington County alone, CASA is focused on growing the frequency and number of training classes in 2017, and well into the future to have a CASA volunteer for each child who is in foster care. There are currently 258 active CASA volunteers assisting approximately 352 children in out-of-home placement in both Burlington and Mercer Counties.

CASA volunteers are trusted adults empowered to ensure that each child is well cared for and able to find a safe permanent home. CASA volunteers are unique judicial volunteers appointed by a judge. They attend court hearings with the child and report their findings to the judge. “It is traumatic for these children to leave their families and then have to adjust to new foster homes, new schools, new neighborhoods and often new towns,” stated

Katherine Carmichael. “CASA ensures these children do not fall through the cracks of the overburdened court and child protective systems.”

There are no prerequisites for becoming a CASA volunteer other than a desire to help children in need, being at least 21 years of age, clearing an extensive background screening and successfully completing 30 hours of training. CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties invites interested adults to learn more by attending a brief information session. Details can be found at www.casamb.org. CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties is a member of the National CASA Association, a network of more than 900 CASA programs serving children in 49 states and Washington DC.

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Photo caption: Beneficial Bank Foundation has awarded a \$20,000 grant to ensure that foster children currently in CASA’s Burlington County program receive vital services and reach safe permanent homes. Gathered for the check presentation ceremony on August 9 are (L-R): Quiana Gleaves, CASA Advocate Supervisor; Renée Paci, CASA Program Director; LuAnn Yansick, Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager, Beneficial Bank, Edgewater Park; Roseann Vanella, President, Board of Trustees, CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties; Katherine Carmichael, Executive Director, CASA for Children of Mercer and Burlington Counties; Merle A. Brown, Vice President, Director of Corporate Giving and Financial Literacy, Beneficial Bank; Simone Jarvis CASA Advocate Supervisor; Ines Ramirez, CASA Advocate Supervisor; and Harry Cassidy, CASA Advocate Recruiter. Photo credit Mary Penney