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CASA Youth Advocates recognizes Marianne Grace for Supporting Services for Vulnerable Children

CASA Youth Advocates, an organization that gives a voice to vulnerable children in the court system, is honoring Delaware County Executive Director Marianne Grace as its 2011 Angel Champion.

CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, will honor Ms. Grace along with CASA volunteer Marcy Gaynor Fenza at its 8th annual Holiday Gala, 7 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Drexelbrook Events Center.

CASA is a national association that recruits, trains and supports volunteers who represent the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom.

Delaware County CASA started in 1992 and has served 849 children since that time.

Executive Director Anne Shenberger said in 2010, CASA served 172 Delaware County children with 88 volunteers who provided 10,693 hours of service, valued at \$245,942.

Ms. Shenberger said the Angel Champion award is being presented to Marianne Grace because she exemplifies the highest level of public service.

"Marianne Grace has consistently shown both interest in and support for CASA, believing that our service is essential to assuring that Delaware County's most vulnerable children are receiving all the services they need and that they are placed in permanent, nurturing homes as quickly as possible," Shenberger said.

In addition to support through County government, Ms. Grace also referred a neighbor to CASA who later became a volunteer.

"In actions great and small, Marianne has been an Angel Champion for CASA," Shenberger said.

Grace said she and County Council value the work of the CASA staff and volunteers who donate their time, talent and hearts to give children a voice when they need one.

"I truly value the training, the commitment of time and the personal dedication that each court-appointed advocate devotes to neglected or abused children in Delaware County," Grace said. "In Delaware County, we are privileged to be partners with many organizations that work for the rights of victims, and in CASA's case, the victims are young, innocent children. Delaware County is truly fortunate to have so many caring and courageous volunteers willing to speak up for children."

CASA will also present the Volunteer of the Year award to Marcy Gaynor Fenza, who was sworn in as a CASA volunteer in October 2008. Since then, she has handled two cases involving six children. Both cases were closed in October 2011 when all six children, ranging in age from 4 to 10 years old, were adopted by their respective foster parents.

"One of these children is autistic. Marcy's advocacy on this child's behalf assured that this child's intensive needs were successfully met. Additionally, Marcy's advocacy helped to give them the safe, permanent and loving home that they both need and deserve," Shenberger said.

For information about CASA or the Dec. 9 event call 610-565-2208.



CASA gives children a voice in court

Caption: Delaware County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) will honor two outstanding women who have helped CASA in its mission to advocate for abused and neglected children when CASA hosts its Dec. 9 Holiday Gala at the Drexelbrook. Pictured are, from left, 2011 Volunteer of the Year Marcy Gaynor Fenza, CASA Executive Director Anne Shenberger and Delaware County Executive Director Marianne Grace. For information about CASA call 610-565-2208.