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Media Contact: Cliff W. Gilmore -- 360.335.5712
cliffwgilmore@northofcenter.com

OREGON CASA NETWORK RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT TO BENEFIT MORE CHILDREN IN OREGON

Portland, OR – October 31, 2018 -- Oregon CASA Network was awarded a \$17,000 Capacity-Building Grant by the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association.

The funds will be used to support the 22 local Oregon CASA programs that recruit, screen, and train CASA volunteers in 35 counties to serve children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

The mission of Oregon CASA Network, in collaboration with the National CASA Association and local member programs, is to strengthen CASA programs throughout the state and ensure each has sustainable resources to advocate for all Oregon children who are victims of abuse and neglect.

In Oregon more than 11,000 children enter foster care every year. Together with the local CASA programs, OCN strives to provide diverse, high-quality volunteer advocates who represent these children throughout their abuse and neglect proceedings.

“OCN exists to support the dedicated team members of Oregon’s CASA programs,” said OCN CEO Debra Gilmore, “I want to ensure our volunteers have the resources necessary to not only advocate for the basic needs of abused and neglected children, but to help them reach their full potential as valuable members of our communities.”

A child enters the foster care system every two minutes in the United States, and there are not enough CASA and GAL volunteers to serve every child. On average, for every child assigned a volunteer, two others must go it alone.

“While more than 2,000 Oregon CASA volunteers served more than 5,000 children last year, approximately 6,000 children did not have an advocate,” said OCN Board President Heather Murphy. “This grant will help us build our program support to close that gap and ensure the highest quality advocacy on behalf of these vulnerable children.”

Oregon CASA Network is one of nearly 1,000 CASA and Guardian ad Litem (GAL) programs nationwide. These programs recruit, train, and support 85,000 volunteers who help ensure children in the court and child welfare systems receive appropriate services, have a voice in determining their futures, and ultimately find a safe, permanent home where they can thrive.

These federal grant funds, distributed by National CASA Association through a competitive process, are provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, US Department of Justice, as authorized under the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

In 2018, National CASA was awarded more than \$10 million in federal grants.

For more information about becoming a CASA volunteer or other ways to get involved in changing a child's life, contact Debra Gilmore, tel. 971-301-2998, email debra.gilmore@oregoncasanetwork.org.