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## **Montgomery County Child Advocate Awarded Volunteer of the Year for Texas CASA**

**CONROE, Texas (October 25, 2013)** – CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County Volunteer Jane Funke of Conroe was named the Jane Quantan Piper Volunteer of the Year by Texas CASA, the statewide network of 71 local Court Appointed Special Advocate® programs that recruit, train and support volunteers who speak up in court for children in the foster care system.

This award, presented during Texas CASA's annual conference in San Marcos on October 25, recognizes the exceptional work of a CASA volunteer who makes a difference in the lives of children in foster care. The award is named for the founder of Texas CASA.

“When we recruit CASA volunteers, we ask ordinary people to commit to take extraordinary action on behalf of children, infants and teenagers that they’ve never met,” said Vicki Spriggs, Chief Executive Officer of Texas CASA. “It’s a tough job, sometimes heart-wrenching and often thankless. But it is also immensely rewarding for people who really want to make a difference in the lives of children who, through no fault of their own, end up in the foster care system.”

Funke has been a CASA volunteer since 2009 and has advocated for 25 children in 11 families. In addition to her work as an Advocate, she is a member of the CASA of Montgomery County Volunteer Council and is working on a coloring book which will explain CASA to children.

“Jane exemplifies the mission of CASA and the heart of volunteerism,” said Pat Creighton, Program Director of Child Advocates of Montgomery County. “She truly believes in CASA and has shown the difference an Advocate can make in the life of a child.”

### **About Texas CASA:**

CASA volunteers are specifically trained to advocate for children in foster care. Volunteer advocates get to know the child and speak to everyone involved in the child's life, including their family members, teachers, doctors, lawyers, social workers and others. The information they gather and their recommendations help the court overseeing the cases make informed decisions. CASA volunteers commit to a child until the case is closed and the child is in a safe, permanent home.

Texas CASA is comprised of 71 local programs serving children in 207 Texas counties. Over 7,600 trained volunteers advocated for more than 23,600 children in foster care in Texas last year. Unfortunately, more than half the children in care do not have advocates to speak up for them in court.

### **About CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County:**

CASA Child Advocates is Montgomery County's only organization appointed by the court to advocate for abused and neglected children. CASA Advocates speak up for the best interest of abused and neglected children who have been removed from their parents and are under the Court's jurisdiction. CASA's goal is to provide a court-appointed volunteer to serve as Guardian ad Litem for every child in the foster care system, and to break the cycle of abuse, one child at a time. For the past 21 years, CASA has been training volunteers, raising awareness in the community, and working to stop the cycle of child abuse in Montgomery County.

Learn more about CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County at [www.casaspeaks4kids](http://www.casaspeaks4kids) and on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/CASACHildAdvocatesofMontgomeryCounty>

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