



Serving Knox, Blount, Sevier, Hamblen, and Jefferson Counties



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**CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of East Tennessee  
to Unveil Light of Hope Sculpture at Juvenile Court**

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KNOXVILLE (November 6, 2009)—To raise awareness about the growing child abuse and neglect crisis in the community, CASA commissioned the Light of Hope sculpture. The sculpture entitled “Innocence Remembered” was unveiled at Knox County Juvenile Court on Division Street on November 6 at 2:00 PM. This provocative sculpture will be a lasting reminder that child abuse has a tragic and profound effect on our community. The sculpture was unveiled by Mayor Ragsdale and Carolyn Doty, Executive Director of CASA. The artist, Val Lyle, explained to attendees how she arrived at the design, which expresses rage, remembrance, and hope. Judge Robert Moon, General Sessions Judge in Hamilton County, read a poem he had written and adapted for the occasion entitled “Shelter from the Storm.” Carolyn Stinnett also gave a poignant account of what life is like as the adoptive mother of a victim of shaken baby syndrome. Her son, Corey, is eleven years old and suffers from severe brain damage as a result of child abuse.

The sculpture consists of a 48-inch wide triangular granite stone with two life-sized bronze children sitting on top. The names of sculpture contributors and major fund donors, as well as a tribute to Judge Carey E. Garrett, are inscribed on the back side. The front of the stone base bears the following inscription:

*In remembrance of lives lost to child abuse.  
In celebration of lives saved through caring.*

Engraved pavers surround the sculpture, which is placed near the entrance to the court and juvenile detention facility. Its strategic placement is designed to remind all

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who walk past it of the importance of protecting the most vulnerable members of the community. For children who have lost their lives to child abuse, either literally or figuratively, it serves as a memorial. For those who work at the court, it will serve as a tribute to their hard work and caring. For current perpetrators of child abuse and neglect and the at-risk juvenile offenders who enter the facilities, it will serve as a reminder of the tragic consequences of child abuse and neglect. Each year, more than 1,600 children die as a result of child abuse.

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The community may still participate in the Light of Hope sculpture project by purchasing a sponsorship or an engraved brick paver. The deadline for donations has been extended through April 30, 2010, and a second round of engraving of both the granite base and the pavers will be conducted at that time. Two sizes of brick pavers are available for \$100 and \$200 each. Those contributing \$1,000 or more will have their name engraved on the back of the granite base. CASA has the goal of raising an additional \$20,000. All funds in excess of those needed for the sculpture will be used for expansion of the Knox County program, as the program is currently at peak capacity.

For more information or to obtain a donation form, call the CASA office at 865-329-3399 or visit [www.casaoeasttn.org](http://www.casaoeasttn.org).



Additional background information on child abuse:

In addition to the human suffering and damage to individual lives, child abuse takes its toll on the community. Abused children are at increased risk for poor school performance, suicide, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, and criminal behavior. The direct annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the U.S. is \$33 billion, and the cost associated with long-term and secondary effects is \$70 billion per year. Since 2004, child abuse rates have increased approximately 106% in Knox and the surrounding counties served by CASA of East Tennessee.

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CASA volunteers are a large part of the solution. With the child welfare system overburdened with cases and not enough resources allocated to provide the level of care needed for children with such complex needs, CASA volunteers provide a safety net for these children. CASA volunteers provide approximately \$3,800 worth of services for each child per year at a cost to the community of only \$500 per child.

CASA provides for each child:

- A dedicated advocate who works with one child at a time until they are placed in a permanent home
- Detailed home assessment any time the child has a new placement
- Monthly home visits to monitor the safety and appropriateness of the placement
- School visitations and meetings with teachers
- Consultations with the child's medical and mental health service providers
- Attendance at all DCS meetings
- Attendance at all court proceedings
- Preparation and submission of a detailed report for each court proceeding
- An average of fifteen hours per month dedicated to serving the child
- A trusted friend that the child will confide in
- Continuity in a system that can take up to four years to resolve a case
- 30% more services provided for the child than for a child not served by CASA (U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, 2006)