

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

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Bringing Joy to Children in Foster Care during the Holidays

Many local children living in the foster care system often miss out on the chance to celebrate the holiday season with their families. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), a nonprofit organization whose volunteers advocate for abused and neglected children living in foster homes and residential facilities, initiated several projects with the help of local businesses and individuals to make this holiday season a special one for our community's most vulnerable children and teens.

One such initiative is the Holiday Gifts project. The Church of the Assumption Giving Tree Committee and the Service Club of Mendham High School coordinated the purchase of the gifts, which included clothing, toys, books, video games, and gift cards. Jennifer Brown, advisor to the Service Club of Mendham High School, said "The students at Mendham look forward to helping the children associated with CASA every year. They truly enjoy the experience of being able to help local children. It is rewarding to see such a sense of community among high school students." CASA volunteers distributed these gifts to children and teens in our community.

Through the Kids Helping Kids program, CASA collected drawings of winter and holiday scenes from local children and used them as designs for holiday greeting cards. These cards were sold to raise money to support CASA programs.

Over thirty small businesses in Morris and Sussex Counties participated in a holiday fundraising event to allow patrons to make a donation and show their support for CASA's mission. Cards with the donors' names and the faces of children were displayed in local businesses to bring awareness to the plight of abused and neglected children. Aura Salon owner Frank Campanaro, Plaza Barbershop owner Gerry Russo, and Kathryn Joseph Salon owners Kathryn and Joseph Menz spearheaded this CASA holiday fundraiser. Through word of mouth, salons and other local businesses throughout the two counties participated in the event and raised over \$2,000 to support CASA advocacy.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Morris and Sussex Counties is part of a statewide network of community-based non-profit organizations that recruit, screen, train and supervise volunteers to "Speak Up for a Child" removed from their home due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. CASA is the only program in New Jersey that uses trained volunteers to work one-on-one with children, ensuring that each one receives the services needed and achieves permanency in a safe, nurturing home. Visit www.casamc.org or call 973-998-7590 for more information about CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties.

Names of Individuals in Attached Pictures L—R, by Filename:

AS.jpg

Frank Campanaro, Maria Laglia (Aura Salon)

KJ.jpg

Joseph Menz, Kathryn Menz (Kathryn Joseph Salon)

PB.jpg

Gerry Russo (Plaza Barbershop)