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Anchorage CASA Program

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2011 First Lady's Volunteer of the Year Awards Nomination

It is with great pleasure that we nominate Debby Hudson for a 2011 First Lady's Volunteer of the Year Award. Debby has been a valued member of the Alaska CASA family since 1994. In the spring of that year she was trained to serve as a court appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer. CASA volunteers represent the best interests of children and youth in the custody of the state as a result of abuse or neglect. To be sworn in as a CASA volunteer requires undergoing a thorough background screening and completing a rigorous pre-service training course. It is a unique, challenging, and highly responsible volunteer opportunity at which she excelled. CASA volunteers carefully research the background of each case by reading documents and talking to everyone involved. Most important of all, CASA volunteers get to know each child's unique needs and personality. The information gathered by the CASA volunteer is reported to the judge, along with the CASA volunteer's recommendations about what is in the child's best interests. Throughout the life of the case CASA volunteers monitor the situation to ensure the child's needs are being met and that a permanent plan for the child is developed and implemented. During her six years of service as a CASA volunteer Debby was assigned to five cases, representing seven children.

During this time Debby also was involved with the CASA program's nonprofit partner, Friends of Alaska CASA (FAC, formerly CASAs for Children). FAC was formed in 1993 to raise funds to support and promote the Alaska CASA program. Debby served on the FAC board as secretary and treasurer for six years.

While a member of the FAC board Debby, an avid quilter, conceived and organized a quilt auction as a fundraising event to benefit CASA. For the past fifteen years she has organized this quilt auction, contributing some 500 volunteer hours to the event annually. Five years ago Debby came up with the idea to add a raffle quilt to the event which substantially increased the money raised. The annual quilt auction has been the primary source of funds for FAC: over these fifteen years the auction has raised \$263,000! Debby oversees every detail of the event and has been able to garner the support of quilt stores, quilters guilds, and hundreds of quilters from throughout Alaska and even communities in the Lower 48. More than 2,000 quilts have been donated to the auction by some 375 quilters – many of whom donate year after year. But Debby didn't stop at just organizing the auction; she has personally donated 126 quilts that have raised \$13,600.

Debby's tireless efforts to support the CASA program have been recognized with a Light of Hope Award for outstanding efforts on behalf of Alaska's children and a Volunteer of the Year Award for outstanding service to Friends of Alaska CASA.

No one has single-handedly contributed more to the CASA program than Debby Hudson; she is so deserving of this honor. We are privileged to know her. Thank you for your consideration.

