



Contact:
Pamela Perrilles
Executive Director
CASA of Peoria County
pperrilles@peoriacounty.org
309-669-2939
www.casapeoria.org

October 8, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CASA (COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES) OF PEORIA COUNTY ANNOUNCES 9th ANNUAL "CASABLANCA - DANCING WITH THE LOCAL STARS"

Peoria, IL – Who will be voted the best celebrity dancer in the Peoria Area? Find out on Saturday, November 1, 2014, at 6:00PM at the Par-a-Dice Hotel and Casino Ballroom when CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Peoria County presents its largest fundraiser, the 9th Annual, "CASAblanca – Dancing with the Local Stars". Tickets may be purchased for \$200 per person or \$1500 for a table of ten by calling the CASA of Peoria County office at 309-669-2939 or purchase online at www.casapeoria.org/events

The event features seven Peoria Area dignitaries, business leaders, and celebrities paired with seven of the area's talented instructors in a dance competition. Guest judges and event attendees will determine the "2014 Critics' Choice Award" at the end of the dance competition.

Participation in this unique fundraiser helps ensure abused or neglected children have a voice in their future. When a child enters the foster care system because his or her home is no longer safe due to neglect or abuse, a judge may appoint a citizen-volunteer to help the child--someone who advocates exclusively for him or her. That volunteer is called a CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocate, and that single word "advocate" says it all—a compassionate supporter who will stand up and be a voice for that child. Proceeds from the event support the cost of providing a CASA Volunteer with training, tools, education, and support for these children which amounts to nearly \$1200 per child. There are more than 1,000 pending abuse and neglect cases in the Peoria County Juvenile Court system, but CASA is only able to support 227 children. The goal is to raise enough funds to advocate for 75 more children in 2015.

The Local Stars and Dancing Pros helping to make a difference for these Peoria County youth include:

- **Jennifer Behnke, Senior Manager, PwC, LLP**, with Jon Young, part-time Dance Instructor with Inspired Arts Academy, strutting their stuff with an East Coast Swing.
- **Kevin Cassulo, Executive Director of Business Development, Alpha Media**, with Kathryn Hollandsworth, professional dancer and licensed esthetician, floating across the floor in Waltz style.
- **Matt George, CEO, Children's Home Association of Illinois**, with Beverly Caballero, Procurement Specialist, Caterpillar, Inc., spicing it up with the Cha Cha.
- **Elizabeth Khazzam, Designer, Elizabeth Khazzam Designs**, with Ed Caballero, Dance Instructor and Latin Music DJ, sizzling on the dance floor with Salsa.
- **JR Runkel, President, Fortner Insurance Agency, Inc.** with Ellen Cook, Dance Instructor, Miss Laura's School of Dance, creating smooth moves with Freestyle.
- **Karoline Seitz-Goddard, Vice-President, Central Illinois Bank**, with Apollo Shaw, Founder/Director, Shaw Dance Company, mixing it up with a Bachata/Salsa.
- **Zack Weaver, Financial Advisor, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management**, with Dominique Alexandre, Supervisor, CASA of Peoria County and dance enthusiast, energizing the crowd with a Cha Cha.

Do you have a favorite dancer? The general public can vote for dancers (in the form of dollars donated) to determine the "2014 People's Choice Award". Each dollar equates to one vote. So, donate \$25 and your favorite dancer will receive 25 votes. Visit our website at www.casapeoria.org/events where you can vote for dancers, bid on silent auction items, buy raffle tickets, and donate to Sponsor-A-Child.

-more-



Contact:
Pamela Perrilles
Executive Director
CASA of Peoria County
pperrilles@peoriacounty.org
309-669-2939
www.casapeoria.org

October 8, 2014

The Critics' Choice Award will be judged by guests at the event and the following celebrity judges:

- Leslie Matuszak, CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Peoria
- Michael Piraino, CEO, National CASA
- Michele Sullivan, President, Caterpillar Foundation, Caterpillar Inc.
- Bid to "Be-A-Judge", a special opportunity for an audience member to bid to be a judge the night of the event.

The event will be emceed by Sandy Gallant, former WEEK News 25 personality, and Greg Batton, morning co-host of WMBD's 1470AM "The Greg and Dan Show". The co-chairs are Teri Cook and Aneta Youngblood both members of the Board of Directors of CASA of Peoria County. The evening features heavy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, silent and live auctions, and the competitive dance contest. Sponsors of CASAblanca include: PwC, Par-A-Dice Hotel and Casino, Essential Wellness Pharmacy, G&D Integrated, CMFI, and Lisa Murphy Web Design. Call the CASA office at 309-669-2939 to learn how to become a sponsor of "CASAblanca-Dancing with the Local Stars".

To purchase tickets or vote for dancers: www.casapeoria.org/events
Like us on facebook: www.facebook.com/CASAPeoriaCounty
Follow us on twitter @CASAPeoria

About CASA of Peoria County (www.casapeoria.org)

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Peoria County is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, volunteer organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court system. Its existence is based on the belief that every child has the right to a safe and permanent home allowing them the chance to reach their full potential in life. The organization has been serving abused and neglected children since 2005. CASA is supported by Heart of Illinois United Way, Caterpillar Foundation, Community Foundation of Central Illinois and generous donors.

###