

For Immediate Release:

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Charleston, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize outstanding community volunteers who personally exhibit outstanding volunteerism and promote the improvement of our communities.

Peoples Bank & Trust has chosen CASA of East Central Illinois as its Volunteer of the Quarter. Coles County CASA started in 1994 and for twenty-one years served children in Coles County. In 2015 they expanded into Cumberland County and the name was changed to CASA of East Central Illinois. The same year they also became GAL (Guardian ad Litem). As GAL their voice in the courtroom holds more weight with the judge when making recommendations based on the best interest of the children for whom they are assigned to advocate.

As of June 12, 2019, they have 87 open cases with 184 children with CASA representation in the court system. Since January 2019 they have received 24 new cases impacting 45 children. The number of abuse and neglect cases continues to rise. CASA of East Central Illinois currently has 29 active volunteer advocates. This number is extremely low and at least 25 more volunteers are needed. An eight week volunteer advocate training session is currently being held. Another eight week training session will begin September 9th. They are hoping to bring on at least a dozen new volunteer advocates in these training sessions.

CASA of East Central Illinois is run by the Executive Director who reports to the Board of Directors. The Board consists of 12-15 members and currently has 13. Anyone interested in serving on the CASA of East Central Illinois Board of Directors or becoming a volunteer advocate can call 217-348-0599 or email edcccasa@co.coles.il.us for more information.

Peoples Bank and Trust is honoring CASA of East Central Illinois with a donation and have placed its name on a plaque which is displayed in the bank's lobby. Peoples Bank and Trust has honored area volunteers in Charleston for the past nine years and CASA of East Central Illinois is the 36th volunteer recognized by the Charleston Branch of Peoples Bank and Trust.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Charleston, Tower Hill, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples Bank & Trust is a full-service bank offering outstanding customer service to

consumers, small businesses and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.