akerman

Press Release

# Akerman Champions Foster Youth During 2014 Holiday Season

January 8, 2015

## Firm Extends Reach of Partnership with CASA To Benefit Abused and Neglected Children

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, once again partnered with the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association and its local guardian ad litem (GAL) programs to support abused and neglected youth in the foster care system. Akerman lawyers and staff across the firm participated in fundraising, gift drives and other charitable initiatives this this holiday season, benefiting more than 500 children and young adults in the foster care system.

Members of the Chicago, Denver, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Orlando and West Palm Beach offices participated in a holiday gift card drive, working with their local CASA/GAL partners to send holiday greetings and gift cards to over 450 young adults who are aging-out of the foster care system. Members of the West Palm Beach office also donated bedding sets to foster youth in transition, and the Tallahassee and Jacksonville offices collected toys, clothing, and books for local area foster children.

Community Impact Teams, comprised of Akerman lawyers and staff, played an integral role in organizing the holiday activities in support of foster youth in each office, which is in addition to many

other holiday drives and charitable activities in Akerman offices across the firm.

The significant impact of the firm's giving activities in support of foster youth is an extension of Akerman's inaugural Give Back Campaign, and reflects a collective effort by firm lawyers and staff to support common organizations that share the firm's philanthropic focus on education and youth development.

Akerman was recently honored by CASA/GAL with the "Community Advocate of the Year" award in the 13th Judicial Circuit for its dedication to promote volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children in the foster care system. In the weeks since, Akerman welcomed former First District Court of Appeal Judge, William A. Van Nortwick Jr., a renowned champion for equal justice and pro bono legal services, as partner-in-charge of the firm's national pro bono program. Van Nortwick will help expand the firm's pro bono efforts, which will build upon Akerman's Give Back Campaign and its work with CASA/GAL.

**About Akerman LLP**
Akerman LLP is a leading transactions and trial law firm known for its core strengths in middle market M&A, within the financial services and real estate industries, and for a diverse Latin America practice. With more than 600 lawyers and government affairs professionals and a network of 20 offices, it is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by *The National Law Journal NLJ* 350 (2014). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer*'s Diversity Scorecard (2014).

**About National CASA**
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a network of 933 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and

communities. The only program of its kind, CASA volunteers are empowered by the courts to provide children with one-on-one advocacy. CASA volunteers see their assigned children regularly and interview all the adults who impact their lives. Volunteer advocates offer judges the critical information they need to ensure each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care, staying with the child until she is placed in a loving permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives. More information can be found at CASAforChildren.org.