

Cherokee County Guardian ad Litem Volunteers: We Stand Up for Children!



Amy Spencer
Cherokee County Volunteer GAL

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"My name is Amy Spencer, and I've been a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Volunteer for 4 years."

Amy works full time for the Cherokee County School System. In spite of her busy schedule, she still makes time to serve as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem. Her passion for children as an employee of the Cherokee County School System has extended to now include serving as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem. Although some people are sold on the Guardian ad Litem program upon first hearing about it, this wasn't the case for Amy. It took her reading information in the newspapers three times before she decided she wanted to be a Guardian ad Litem that served as an advocate for children.

Like many people who are considering becoming volunteers, Amy didn't realize how much abuse occurred in her community. Amy states: "it's not until you get involved with these children's lives that you begin to realize the amount of abuse that occurs. Coming from such a big family, I never imagined some of the things that happen to children right here in my own community.

Amy found that one of the most challenging aspects of serving as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem was to remain objective, while advocating for the best interests of the child. As Amy puts it: "the challenge is being up to it, despite how tough the case is. It's children's futures that we're dealing with, because if we don't stand up for them, then who will? When the children need you, then you have to be there. Guardians ad Litem are often the only voice a child has ever had.

One of Amy's favorite parts about being a volunteer Guardian ad Litem is the support she receives from staff. The supportive staff of the GAL program are hugely invested both in volunteers and children. The staff give volunteers the resources and support to be an effective advocate for children. Regarding the Guardian ad Litem staff, Amy mentions that the program is only as good as its staff.

Amy states that ultimately, what being a Guardian ad Litem comes down to is making a difference in children's lives that will affect their future. She states: "volunteers rely on the support system available to make the best possible recommendations that are going to be in the best interest of the children."