

Our Mission

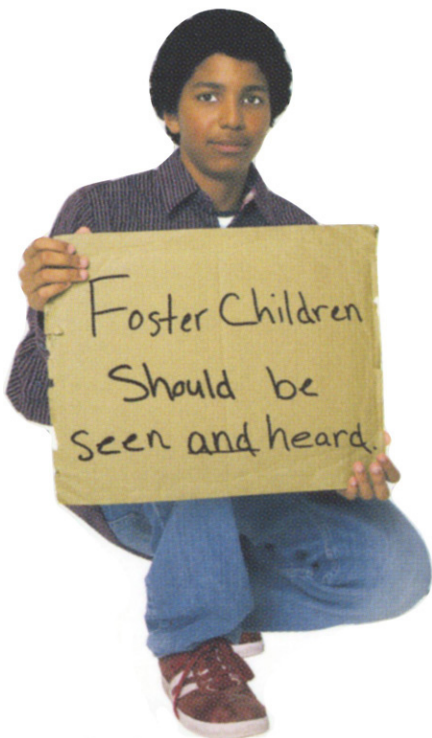
The South Carolina Volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program recruits, trains, and supervises volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children in Family Court. It is our vision to provide a volunteer advocate for every child who is the subject of an abuse and neglect proceeding in South Carolina.

Our History:

In 1977, South Carolina passed the Child Protection Act which mandates both the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem and an attorney in child abuse and neglect cases. In 1984, South Carolina established one of the first state funded programs in the nation utilizing volunteers as Guardians ad Litem in abuse and neglect proceedings. Now a part of the Division of Children's Services under the Office of the Governor, the Program has more than 1,500 volunteers serving over 4,500 children. Volunteer Guardians ad Litem play a critical role on behalf of abused and neglected children across the state by working to help each child find a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible.

Organizational Structure

The South Carolina Guardian ad Litem Program currently operates in 45 counties within the state's 16 judicial circuits. While state and county administrative staff serve an important and necessary function within the Program, it is the volunteers who form the heart and foundation of the Program. Our volunteers provided over 83,000 hours of dedicated service on behalf of abused and neglected children during calendar year 2008. These volunteers fuel the Program's operation by giving freely of their time and serving as a powerful voice in court for the children they are appointed to represent.

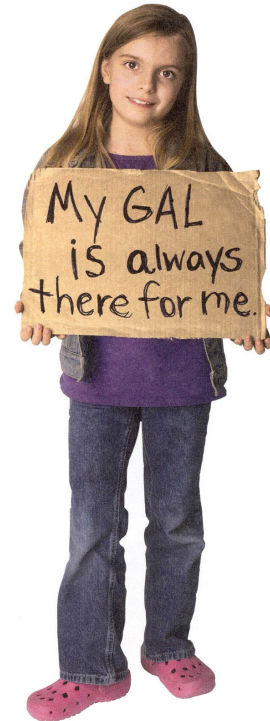


South Carolina GAL Program Facts for 2008:

- **1,583 Volunteer Advocates** in South Carolina
- **83,507 Volunteer Hours** donated to children
- **7,511 Children Represented** by a Volunteer GAL
- **8,027 Hearings Attended** by a Volunteer GAL

Statistical Data from South Carolina Volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program, Jan. - Dec. 2008.

How GAL Volunteers Help Foster Children



The benefits that a volunteer provides a foster child have been well documented. A 2006 audit conducted by the US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General demonstrates that once a volunteer is assigned, approximately:

95% of children do not languish in long term foster care.

90% of children do not re-enter the child welfare system.

http://www.nationalcasa.org/about_us/studies.html

\$1,629,221.

The estimated dollar value of volunteer service provided to South Carolina's abused and neglected children in 2008.

Estimate based on the nationwide 2007 figure of \$19.51 per hour of service donated. http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

Contact Information

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