

Guardian ad Litem Volunteers: Standing Up for Children!

“My name is Janice Ayres and I’ve been a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Volunteer since 2006.”

The most rewarding aspect of being a GAL volunteer for me is knowing that I have made a positive difference in a child’s life and shown them that I am an adult that cares for them, is concerned about them, will listen to them, and can be trusted. Nothing can replace that moment when I know that I have made a connection with my child and they have accepted me.

The training provided by the GAL program covered many topics about child abuse but one of the first things I learned was that this program is child focused. I also learned that as a GAL I must stay focused on the best interest of the child and not be influenced by my emotions. The information provided in training made me realize the importance of remaining objective. This has eliminated any worry about becoming too attached to a child.

I was concerned about making a mistake in my decisions and recommendations for the child’s best interest. A child, between the ages of birth and 18 years, is depending on me to make his voice heard. As the child’s advocate I feel a strong obligation to get things right. That’s where the training enabled me to realize that by weighing the facts, possible solutions and ultimately the best interest of the child my recommendations would be unbiased and factual. Sometimes there is no “right” there’s only “best”. I also learned that the GAL staff is always there to help me whenever I have questions and that they will provide whatever assistance I need in making sure that I get the best outcome I can for my child.

My goal, and what I like best about being a volunteer GAL, is to help children and their families turn a disturbing situation into a positive, learning experience that hopefully will enable them to cope and deal with a stressful situation in a better way in the future.

Being in Department of Social Services (DSS) Custody, even in the best of circumstances, is no fun. Children are moved from one foster home or group home to another, and case workers come and go. It is not long until the GAL is the one person who has had constant contact with the child during this time. For many children the GAL is the only person who can provide them the constancy and stability needed in their lives.

In my opinion, anyone who has 4 to 6 hours available in their schedule each month should become a Guardian ad Litem. They should advocate for neglected and abused children because it is imperative that an objective, caring person insures that the child have a voice in the courts and know that someone cares about them and wants their lives to be better.



***Give it a try. Become a GAL volunteer.
A child is depending on you!!***



Forgotten Children
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