

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

“At times it is difficult work, yet the reward of seeing a child in a safe, permanent home is worth all the effort.”

Seeing a child smile and hug you because you are the only adult there for the child at a school event, ball game or camp event, is priceless.”



*Jerry Allen,
Oconee County Volunteer GAL*

“My name is Jerry Allen, and I’ve been a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Volunteer for 16 years.”

Jerry came to the Oconee County Guardian ad Litem program after some earlier experiences in New York. She served as the Assistant Director of the Schenectady County, NY CASA® Program for 2½ years. So although she was familiar with the basic principles of being a volunteer Guardian ad Litem, there were some differences. Jerry learned that in South Carolina, the volunteer had a much more active role inside the courtroom and in advocating what was best for the children.

Because of her prior training, Jerry did not have safety concerns for herself. The program stresses volunteer safeguards, such as asking parents to meet in public places such as a library or the GAL office, or to have the case worker or GAL staff members to accompany the volunteer.

Jerry’s work as a volunteer Guardian ad Litem has given her many wonderful moments. One of Jerry’s favorite times is watching a child be adopted, and knowing that they will have a permanent home and family. And you know that you have made a real difference when a child says to you that she wants to be a Guardian ad Litem when she grows up!

Jerry says that being a volunteer has changed her life for the better. “I have gained a better understanding of how other people face and deal with the stresses and challenges of life” she says.

To other people considering becoming a volunteer, Jerry has this to say: “Every child needs a mentor and a voice, to focus on the child and help guide that child, directly or indirectly, through the foster care system and to a brighter future.”