

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



Tammy Mason
Orangeburg County Volunteer GAL

“I am thankful that I did not become another statistic. I challenge each of you to become a GAL and advocate for abused and/or neglected children who would not have a voice without you. You can become a part of the solution by helping a child in need.”

“My name is Tammy Mason , and I became a Volunteer Guardian ad Litem (GAL) this past year”.

My early childhood years were spent in the inner-city of Washington, DC, in an area plagued with alcoholic, drug-addicted, uneducated, single, young mothers and fathers. Like many children living in such conditions, I was placed in foster care. Many people told me that I would never become anything. I am grateful that none of the negative statements became truths in my life, and I feel obligated to help others with similar backgrounds.

Know that a volunteer GAL does not need to have a background such as mine to make a difference, but a love of children and their best interests are imperative. Imagine advocating for children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned and/or educationally deprived. Many of us have experienced such abuse ourselves or know someone who has experienced abuse. Why not serve as a change agent by being a voice for abused or neglected children in our community?

Meeting with my assigned child gives me a sense of purpose. During our monthly meetings, I feel privileged that the children share a part of themselves with me. I look for ways to keep the lines of communication open such as talking while playing board games or hearing something positive the child has to say about him or herself.

Sometimes foster children feel like the GAL is the only one who will convey their desires; sometimes that is the case. As such, it is important to be completely honest with your assigned child and be accountable for whatever you say you are going to do. Foster children are looking for someone to be real and genuine. Staff are available to help you through the process. The local GAL office has been very supportive in regards to providing advice or lending a listening ear.

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