

GAL NEWS



A child's advocate in court

4th District—Onslow/Jones/Duplin/Sampson

Winter 2011

Special Points of Interest:

- p. 1 – New Year Message
- p. 2 – Darkness To Light
- p. 2 – Holiday Parade
- p. 3 – Calendar, Birthdays, & Anniversaries
- p. 4 – Parting Message from Jane Volland
- p. 4 – New Volunteers
- p. 5 – Spotlight on Volunteers
- p. 5 – GALVA Golf Tournament

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It's A New Year



Greetings to 4th District Volunteers,

Hopefully all of you enjoyed your holidays as we look forward to 2011. Thanks to every volunteer who made a difference in a child's life this past year. Your dedication in investigating cases and your patience in our courts have meant so much to our children and the 4th District GAL program. As most of you know, our GAL Administrator, Jane Volland, retired in December. Jane has provided GAL with tremendous guidance and leadership over the past years and we wish her a very happy and healthy retirement. Mr. McKinley Wooten, Deputy Director of AOC, will step in and serve as our GAL Administrator. We welcome McKinley and look forward to his leadership and support.

Locally, our volunteers continue to provide advocacy for our children by being in court and doing an outstanding job on investigations and court reports. Please continue to provide your court reports in a timely manner so they can be distributed to DSS and attorneys prior to court. In return, I want to work harder with DSS, attorneys, and other court personnel to reduce "downtime" in the courtroom. I am certainly aware that volunteers sometimes spend hours in court waiting for their cases to be heard, or continued. There are plans to meet in the next month to discuss issues such as this.

2010 was a very successful year for many of our children. With your support, we can provide a safe and permanent home for many more abused and neglected children in 2011.

Rusty Brown, GAL District Administrator

"What is success?

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;

That is to have succeeded."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Current Statistics

We are currently serving 178 children in Onslow County, 46 Children in Duplin County, 116 children in Sampson County, and 6 children in Jones County. We currently have 130 volunteers district wide to cover a total of 346 children. We need your help to recruit more volunteers. Our greatest need for volunteers is in Sampson County.



Stewards of Children is a comprehensive sexual abuse prevention training program that educates adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

The *Stewards of Children* program is designed for organizations that serve children and adolescents, providing prevention training for staff, volunteers, parents, and other interested adults.

Core Features of the Stewards of Children Training:

- ❖ A **video** integrating segments of **sexual abuse survivors** relating their stories of violation and healing, with segments from the author of the curriculum and from **professionals** who interface daily with the problem of sexual abuse.
- ❖ An **interactive workbook** for each participant.
- ❖ Discussion about critical issues in sexual abuse prevention and the relevance of these issues within organizations that serve children and adolescents. Led by an **authorized facilitator**.

There is no cost for this informative training. A participation certificate is presented to attendees. This training will be held January 31, 2010 6:00pm - 8:30pm, at James Sprunt Community College in the Boyette Building Room 113. Register **NO LATER THAN 1/18/2011** by calling 910-296-2307

Who should attend: Social Workers, Daycare Workers, Foster Parents, Guardian ad Litem Volunteers, & Concerned Parents. Please spread the word about this training.

Guardian ad Litem District 4 Participates in the 2010 Jacksonville Holiday Parade "The Gift of Giving" Saturday, November 20, 2010

For the first time the Guardian ad Litem Program in District 4 participated in the Jacksonville Holiday Parade held on Saturday, November 20, 2010. In the months leading up to the parade, the staff worked diligently to construct and decorate an amateur float for the event. The float's concept, "Christmas Wishes," went right along with the overall theme for the parade, "The Gift of Giving." The centerpiece of the float was a Christmas tree with giant presents around it with tags reading "JOY," "SECURITY," "LOVE," "HOPE," and "SAFETY." Our theme encompassed what our program and, more importantly, our volunteers strive for everyday...to give children the wishes and hopes of all children.

The parade was broadcast on WITN and local radio stations. The experience proved to be a wonderful opportunity to bring more awareness to the Guardian ad Litem Program, promote recruitment efforts, and bring recognition to all our volunteers who work so hard to give a voice to children who are not able to speak for themselves.

A special "thank you" goes out to **Shellie Silvester** and her family for their time and contribution during the parade. They graciously agreed to pass out candy to the crowd as our float passed. Also, sincere appreciation goes out to **Vickie Adamson**. She was our intern from August until December 2010 and dedicated much time, work, and effort into making the float a success. Although no longer interning with us, she stays on as a volunteer.



Calendar

January

- 5 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 6 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 11 – Court in Jones Co.
- 17 – MLK National Day of Service Office Closed
- 18 – Training for New Volunteers Begins
- 19 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 20 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 21 – Court in Onslow Co.
- 28 – Court in Onslow Co.
- 31 – Court in Onslow Co.
- 31 – Darkness To Light In-service Training

February

- 1 to 4 – Court in Onslow Co.
- 2 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 3 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 14 – Valentine’s Day
- 16 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 17 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 17 – Court in Onslow Co.
- 24 – Court in Onslow Co.



March

- 2 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 3 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 14 to 18 – Weeklong Court Onslow Co.
- 16 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 17 – Court in Sampson Co.
- 30 – Court in Duplin Co.
- 31 – Court in Sampson Co.

2011 Calendars

If you have not already picked up your 2011 GAL Calendar, please ask for one when you are in the office next. Last year we had a few that never made it into the hands of our volunteers. Also ask about our Tee-shirts.

Birthdays

January

- 5 – Mac Moody
- 9 – Pashyon Blake
Rusty Brown
Sue Rider
- 14 – Delilah Ploski
- 15 – Meredith Holland
Joanie Shostak
- 16 – Barbara Crecco
- 20 – Donna Thigpen
- 21 – Elva Lara-Rivera
- 25 – Donna Brewer
- 30 – Vicki Billings
Jon Stone



February

- 8 – Joe Flood
- 11 – Rosa Davis
- 22 – Deanne Gray
- 24 – Brenda Gilbert
- 28 – Tammy Lovelady



March

- 3 – Marion Mason
- 11 – Robin Kornegay
- 13 – Linda Mylan
- 14 – Marc Werner
- 21 – Sloan Thigpen
- 22 – Cynthia Figueroa
- 24 – Dot Spencer
- 25 – Annisha Maxwell

Anniversaries

January

- 2001 – Gladys Dewitt
- 2003 – Mac Moody
- 2005 – Jeff Clark
Dot Spencer
- 2006 – Rich Ziolkowski
- 2007 – Sara Graham
Charlie Steinbraker
Daryl Steinbraker
- 2008 – Betty Jean Hart
- 2010 – Christina Malu



February

- 2004 – Sheila Allen
Marion Mason
- 2006 – Jeralene Merritt
- 2008 – Terry Faison
Willie McQueen
- 2009 – Erika Allen
Barb Anderson
Christina Bates
Jaime Higginbotham
- 2010 – Terrica Brown
Kristy Davis
Angela Hansel

March

- 1996 – Laurie Baldrige
- 1997 – Sue Rider
- 2002 – Aletha Pugh
- 2010 – Pat Duffy

Save the Date

The 2nd Annual Blue Ribbon Poker Run will be held Saturday April 9th, starting at the New River Harley Davidson/Buell. More details to follow.



Welcome New Volunteers

The year 2010 turned out to be one of our most productive recruiting and training efforts in the last several years - in the last quarter alone District 4 trained 24 and swore in 22 new guardians. Taking the oath in Onslow County on October 15th were **Ed Adams, Vicki Adamson, Tronata Barnes, Brenda Gilbert, Helen Jones, Cathy Lagasse, Alison Schwerin** and **Lindsey Terry**. **Brian Dupre, Delilah Ploski, Dorine Polson, Christy Tyler** and **Marc Werner** swore in on October 29th and **Deserea Gurrola, Clarence Judd** and **Carlton Carter** joined us on November 16th. **Christina Diederich** and **Elizabeth Lewis**, both from the same class as all of the above, also completed training and are expected to be sworn in soon. Taking the oath in Duplin County for October **Barbara Crecco** and **Mary Ashley** and for December **Brenda Carter**. Taking the oath in Sampson County for October **Jennifer Goodridge** and **Cathy Stumpf**.

Parting Message from Jane Volland

Dear Guardian ad Litem Volunteers,

This has been my last day on the job, and I couldn't leave without expressing my heartfelt appreciation to you.

I have met some of you at Outback luncheons, CASA/GAL conferences, or other Guardian ad Litem functions, and I have spoken with some of you in our telephone advisory sessions or on other occasions. I so often have said that you are the "heart and soul" of our program. I wish that I had the opportunity to say that personally to each of you.

Last year over 4,900 of you gave 944,448 hours of service to the state of North Carolina, and you saved the state over \$19.7 million. More important, you provided strong advocacy and gave a voice to the children you were appointed to represent. And, you continue to be so effective in making a difference for children. I hear from your District Administrators about the children who have been safely returned to their families or are secure in a new family with adoptive parents. I know that sometimes you struggle with the pain of representing children who have suffered severe abuse, and sometimes you even experience the death of a child. Even though there are the sad and even tragic cases, I hear more about the happiness you have brought to children and the success you have helped them to achieve.

Just recently I read a message sent to a GAL volunteer from a young woman who is now enjoying her first year in college, and she proudly wrote to tell her GAL that she was on the Dean's List. So many of you have been the only consistent and strong support for the children we represent, and it is because of you that many of them succeed when they "age out" of the system. It is so clear that the children you represent need your support and the dedicated advocacy that you provide with your attorney advocates.

I know that you spend hours investigating, writing reports and preparing for court - and you do this without pay, and sometimes the "thanks" comes years later from your child-clients. I also know that it is sometimes a hardship to visit children, since out of county placements continue to increase and we are no longer able to reimburse you for travel expenditures. You all contribute so much in time, energy, and other resources to advocate for your child-clients. This is a year of serious budget deficits, and the Guardian ad Litem Program will face an uphill battle to remain strong and effective. But, the program is mandated by state and federal law, and I am confident that with your support the battle will be won.

In cleaning out a desk drawer today, I came across a short quote:

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
But by the moments that take our breath away."

Unfortunately I have no idea who the author is or where I came across the passage - but the words make me think of you and your advocacy. I am in awe of the volunteer service you give your child-clients. So many times in the past almost nine years, you have taken my breath away by your skill and dedication.

Thank you, and my very best wishes to you all in this New Year of 2011!

Jane

Spotlight on Volunteer – Joe & Helen Flood

Helen and Joe Flood come to us after 6+ years as Guardians ad Litem in Horry County, South Carolina. Joe explained that in that district they compartmentalize cases so that some volunteers do the investigations while others do the other phases. In a system like that, Joe said, “We were able to be involved in more than 200 cases!”

Since joining the 4th District a couple of years ago, Helen has worked 3 cases involving 4 children while Joe has advocated for 3 children in 3 different cases.

Both Helen and Joe are very active in other community matters – they run Casey’s Place, a dog rescue activity, where they have rescued more than 100 dogs from abuse and neglect situations. They also volunteer for the American Heart Association where they teach CPR.

Helen and Joe are the proud parents of 4 adult children, 3 of which reside in Pennsylvania and the other in Florida.



Tee it Up for the Children a Success

After a few anxious days of marginal weather, November 5th dawned a bit chilly but turned into a beautiful day for the 44 golfers who teed it up for the first annual Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Association Golf Tournament. Honorary Tournament Chairpersons Jean Hawley and Ernest Wright welcomed everyone and invited them to tee it up and “Play Away!”



Rock Creek Country Club staff did an above par job of preparing the course and hosting the event. More than 25 local area businesses sponsored teams and holes as well as providing lunch and several valuable door prizes. Guardian ad Litem Attorney Advocate, Matt Coxe, sponsored the “One Shot for a Million Dollar Hole in One” contest and prizes were given for longest drives and closest to hole.

Thanks to GAL staff Rusty Brown, Andy Webb, Cindi Cunio and Joan Shostak who handled the registration chores while volunteers **Julie Biggers, Kathy Brown, Donna Flaherty, Mac Moody and Shelley Silvester** were on hand representing GALVA.



Well done, Everyone!

2010 Volunteer Appreciation Events

The staff of the Guardian ad Litem Program District 4 is always looking for ways to show their appreciation to the volunteers that dedicate so much time and effort for abused and neglected children. After feedback from volunteers across our district, two volunteer appreciation events were held. This was to minimize as much inconvenience and travel time for our volunteers as possible.

A dinner was held on December 8, 2010 at River Landing Country Club for the volunteers serving in Sampson and Duplin Counties. Twenty three volunteers were in attendance along with their guests. Also, Jessie Ladson, Duplin County Commissioner, was present. Ms. Ladson is familiar with the Guardian ad Litem program through her work as a volunteer, and we very much appreciate her continued support. In addition, a very special ‘thank you’ goes out to **Robin Kornegay**, volunteer and owner of Unique Favor, for donating desserts and The Petal Pusher in Willard for donating eleven centerpieces which were also given away as door prizes.



A floating lunch from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. was held on December 10, 2010 at Golden Corral Grill and Buffet for the volunteers serving in Onslow and Jones Counties. We thank the many volunteers who were able to attend and express sincere appreciation to Judge James Moore, Jr. who was present as well. In addition, we were honored to meet with Senator Harry Brown and discuss our program, goals, and the efforts of the dedicated volunteers we were there to recognize.



It is our hope that through these events the Guardian ad Litem volunteers in the 4th District know how much their effort and services are recognized and appreciated. The challenges of each case can sometimes overshadow the importance of the overall goal, but the difference each volunteer is making in a child’s life is vital. Your commitment to the children and program are admirable and never goes without notice.

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Changing Lives
One Life At A Time

If I Had My Child to Raise All Over Again

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd finger paint more, and point the finger less.
I'd do less correcting, and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch more with my eyes.
I would care to know less, and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I'd run through more fields, and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging, and less tugging..
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd teach less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.