

## Wake County Guardian ad Litem Program January Newsletter

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*The Wake County Guardian ad Litem Program is as strong as it has ever been, and it is all because of YOU, our devoted volunteers. It has not been easy, but your commitment to improving the lives of children has allowed our program to meet its many challenges and mandates. On behalf of our program and all children represented by this program, we send you our warmest appreciation and thank you for all that you do for making this program a success.*

*We wish you a year filled with countless smiles and dreams come true. Happy New Year!*

**Wake County Guardian ad Litem Staff.**

### Wake County Stats for December:

Children entering foster care **15**

Children returning to biological families **12**

Youth turning eighteen **2**

Children legally adopted **10**





## **Spotlight on Floydie A. Scott Advocate since 2008**

About 43 years ago my husband and I applied for adoption through a private agency. As we were waiting for a child, I later received a call from the city's social services department. They had gotten my name from a friend and if I was interested in adoption, they had a child for me. That same week this beautiful boy (6 weeks old) came to live with us. The friend turned out to be my physician's wife who was a volunteer in a program similar to GAL. My son is now a strapping career Marine with a family that has given me two of my ten grandchildren. Reflecting back, I wonder what would have happened if not for that program.

Recently I attended a Women's Conference where I heard the question "If not me, then who?" and began to think that there was still more that I could do to leave as a legacy for my children. I am a caregiver by nature and a registered nurse by career. When I retired after over 40 years as a registered nurse, I began to look for things to do where I could use my skills and talents, but this something needed to be something that I could be as passionate about as I was for my nursing career. I enjoy working with children; volunteering for the Special Olympics, working with the teens in my church and developing age appropriate programs on etiquette and activities of daily living. I saw a pamphlet on GAL, did some internet research and decided that GAL was that something. GAL offered the best fit; I could give to the program and the GAL would give to me. What can be greater or more satisfying than being an advocate, researching, and investigating options to determine what is best for a child? While the work of the GAL is very challenging, it can also be frustrating and heartbreaking. We speak for the child who cannot express themselves either because of their age or their anxieties and confusion. The responsibility of determining what is best for the child is not taken lightly. It is a noble and satisfying work, whether the children are reunited with the parents or placed in alternative permanent homes. We pray for the parents, hoping that they can get their lives settled in a positive way together, make good decisions and ideally are reunited with their children. Unfortunately, we also understand that this is not always possible.

As a GAL, we must step outside of our family into the shoes of the child to fully understand what is happening to them and the anxieties and uncertainty they must feel. This is especially true in children too young to express their wishes but old enough to know Mommy or Daddy who gets to visit once a week. Unconsciously there is a sense of not knowing where they belong. If we are to survive, society must care for and nurture the children, a responsibility given to the parent. When this is not possible for whatever reason, every effort should be made to provide a sense of permanence and belonging where they are loved and taught to love and care for others. "If not me, then who?" should pass down through the generations.

I have not been a GAL for very long but I believe it is an excellent program. I have the time and the resources and feel fortunate that I can give these to a very worthy program. I am determined to learn as much as I can, and devote as much time as possible to my duties. With so many cases and so few volunteers, my plan is to make this a focus for my former coworkers and staff as they plan for retirement. I send many thanks to GAL for giving me this opportunity.

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## Up-Coming Events

**January Supper Club:** Tuesday, January 13, 2009. The supper club will meet at the Raleigh Bonefish Grill. The Bonefish Grill is located at 4421 Six Forks Road, between the intersections of Six Forks with Lassiter Mill Road and Rowan Street (North Hills Shopping Center). Please RSVP to Fred Ames at [fredames@nc.rr.com](mailto:fredames@nc.rr.com) by Monday, January 12.



**Date: January 26, 2009**

**Time: 3:30 – 4:30**

**Location: Wake Co. Guardian ad Litem Office**

**Topic: Permanency Mediation**

**Presenter: Stephanie Smith**

**Date: March 6, 2009**

**Time: 9:30 – 12:30**

**Location: Public Safety Center**

**Topic: Case Studies**

**Facilitator: Ruth Kravitz**

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## Recommended Readings

**Finding Katie:** The Diary of Anonymous, A Teenager in Foster Care  
By: Beatrice Sparks

**Building a Home Within:** Meeting the Emotional Needs of Children  
By: Toni Vaughn & Diane Ehrensaft

**Orphans of the Living:** Stories of America's Children in Foster Care  
By: Jennifer Toth

**On Their Own:** What Happens to Kids when They Age Out of the Foster Care  
By: Martha Shirk & Gary Stangler

**A Child's Journey:** Through Placement  
By: Vera I. Fahlbert, M.D.



## Welcoming Ms. Cheryl Anderson Program Supervisor

Please join us in welcoming **Ms. Cheryl Anderson** to the Wake County Guardian ad Litem Program. Cheryl joined us on December 3 and will be serving as a program supervisor with our program. Cheryl is a Raleigh native who attended Millbrook Senior High and Broughton High School, where she graduated. Afterwards she earned her BA in Journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Taking an internship with the Charlotte Observer upon graduating, she moved to Charlotte, NC and later across the state line to Fort Mill, SC. Cheryl also graduated from More Than Conquerors College where she studied Christian Ministry, as well as from South University where she focused on Paralegal Studies.

Ms. Anderson comes to us from the District 26 Guardian ad Litem Program, where she worked first as a volunteer and then as a program supervisor. Cheryl has worked extensively with children in settings such as school, outreach programs, and as a mentor. We are delighted to have her as a member of the Wake County Guardian ad Litem Family.

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## Thank You

A special thanks to the following volunteers who participated in the holiday gift-wrapping project at Barnes & Noble; **Jeannie Carver, Jennifer Haagen, Elaine Smith, Elaine Kuhn, Kim Conyers, Don Miller, Linda Hoard, Jim and Barbara Burkhardt, Karen Wolfe**. All of your hard work is greatly appreciated.

We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Dr. Hellminski who facilitated our January In-Service Training (Assessment and Treatment of Abused Children- Clinical and Legal Issues). We also thank those volunteers who participated in this very informative training.

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## Congratulations:

To **Marcia Harris**, Ms. Harris is retiring from her position as the Director of Career Service of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill effective this month.

To Mr. **Andrew Clement**, Guardian ad Litem, who graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Way to go!

To **Malissa Streett**, Malissa was married on December 20, 2008. We wish her and her husband all the best!

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## Happy Birthday!

Amanda Oliver  
Antoinette Chambers  
Barbara Berlew  
Barbara Word  
Beverly Grant-Davis

Cally Jo Wiggins  
Christine Taylor  
Danielle Seale  
Deidra Lynce-Noga  
Fred Ames

Joanne Corson  
Judy Hoffman  
Kathleen Hoyle  
Kristin Lancaster  
Larry Tombaugh  
Robert Hill

Lindsey Dougherty  
Mara Wessell  
Marianne Powell  
Melissa Hooker  
Peter Barboriak  
Vicki Kenyon



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**Life Skills Assessment TIPS for Guardian ad Litem Volunteers Working with Teenage Children  
Eligible for LINKS Services (Youth 13-18):**

**Daily Living Tasks:**

Knows how to wash clothes according to the label  
Protects against possible break-ins  
Fixes his/her clothes when they need it, like sewing on a button  
Can fix meals on his or her own  
Uses things in the kitchen, microwave, electric mixer, and oven  
Stores food so it doesn't spoil or go bad  
Keeps his/her living space clean  
Prevents or minimizes roaches, ants, mice, mold, mildew, etc,  
Plans healthy meals each week  
Buys groceries

**Housing & Community Resources:**

Can understand and respond to ads for housing  
Can develop a monthly budget for living on his/her own  
Can calculate the start-up costs for new living arrangements (rental deposits, rent, utilities, furnishings)  
Can arrange for new telephone services and utilities (such as gas, water, & electricity)  
Can explain how to get and renew a driver's license  
Can explain what can happen if someone drives while drinking or on drugs is aware  
Is local social services agencies (like employment and counseling services)

**Money Management:**

Can explain how to write checks, make deposits, and ATM transactions, and balance a checking /saving account  
Can interpret pay stub information  
Can explain the good points and bad points of buying on credit  
Can explain how to establish and maintain a good credit rating  
Can name two ways to save money on things he/she buys  
Knows how many grocery items he/she can buy for \$10.00

**Self-Care**

Can make appointments with his/her doctor, dentist, or clinic when needed  
Can name two or more places to get help if he/she feels unsafe  
Can contact local places when he/she likes to get information on sex or pregnancy  
Can explain two ways to prevent sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS & syphilis  
Can take care of minor injuries and illnesses; if needed can get medical help quickly, knows how and where to get it.

**Social Development:**

Tries to find a compromise when he/she disagrees with someone  
Clearly presents his/her ideas to others  
Asks for help when he/she needs it  
Can explain his/her own cultural background  
During free time, he/she finds something to do that doesn't get him/her into trouble;  
talks over problems  
Avoids relationships that hurt or are dangerous  
Is polite to others  
Is able to organize and lead group activities

**Work and Study Habits:**

Can name three ways to find out about job openings  
Can prepare for a job interview (prepare for questions, arrives on time, wear appropriate clothes, etc.)  
Can explain where to get information about financial aid for education  
Can explain how to get a copy of his/her birth certificate  
Can explain how to get a copy of his/her social security card  
Can describe the steps to reach one of his/her goals  
Thinks about more than one choice when he/she decides something  
Thinks about how his/her choices affect others as well as his/her future a year or more from now  
Prepares for exams and presentations  
Uses the library, newspaper, computer/internet, or other resources to get information  
Get his/her work done on time  
Get to school or work on time

**Helping Children in Care Succeed in School**

**Tips for Guardian ad Litem Advocates:**

- Make sure the child is attending school on a regular basis.
- Make sure transportation and other basic needs are being addressed.
- Communicate with teachers regarding the child's educational needs
- Observe the child, document concerns and discuss them with the child's teachers, social worker, and other services providers when appropriate.
- Recommend tutoring or other academic help when needed.
- Identify the child's strengths and recommend activities that support those strengths.
- Inform the court when there is a need for an educational advocate.
- Include concerns about the child's educational development in your court reports.

## Indicators of Adolescent Substance Abuse:

### Behavior

Constant defiance of rules  
Defensive/denying/blaming  
Avoids communication  
Frequently tired/sleeping  
Hyperactive/anxious  
Carries a lot of money  
Possession of drug-related paraphernalia  
Clothing/jewelry  
Withdrawn/loner  
Unable to concentrate  
Talks freely about drugs  
Abrupt changes in behavior

### Social

Changes in friends (negative)  
Parental substance use/abuse  
Sibling substance use/abuse  
Risky/early sexual behavior, promiscuity

### Academic

Grades/performance declining markedly  
Lack of or negative change in level of motivation  
Skipping school, truancy

### Physical Symptoms

Continuing cold-like symptoms  
Smelling of alcohol  
Smelling of marijuana  
Coordination problems (staggering, slurred speech, bumping into things, etc.)  
Glassy, bloodshot eyes  
Puffy face/eyes  
Muscle twitching/tremors

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## Fostering Bright Futures

Fostering Bright Futures is a new charitable program committed to helping former foster children in Wake County achieve lifelong independence through higher education. The program helps these promising young adults earn degrees from Wake Tech by assisting with housing costs, education-related fees and everyday expenses. It provides access to academic tutors and career counselors, as well as life coaches to help manage time and money, set goals, model professional behavior and adopt other skills that position youths for independence. Fostering Bright Futures is made possible by a partnership of the Fostering Bright Futures Collaborative Advisory Board, Wake Technical Community College, the Wake Technical Community College Foundation and the Wake County Human Services Bridge to Independence. To learn more about Fostering Bright Futures, visit [www.fosteringbrightfutures.org](http://www.fosteringbrightfutures.org)