



Guardian Gazette



Guardian ad Litem 15B
Orange and Chatham Counties

FALL 2009

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Dear 15B GALs,

Starting with the good news—Quincy and her husband, Matt, are expecting a baby! All is well, the baby is due at the end of January, and who knew Quincy could get more beautiful than she already was?

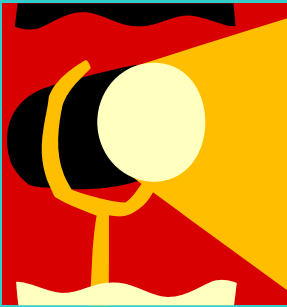
Except for that little addition, our staff remains the same. The District Administrator position, which was frozen when Gretchen retired in April, is still frozen. Lynne is still supervising Chatham Co. cases and a few Orange Co. cases. Kit and Quincy are supervising Orange Co. cases and Quincy manages the office. We are no longer being assisted by Karen Russell, who came over from Alamance Co. to help out for a while. The state office is not able to tell us when the DA position might be thawed, or how long we can expect to have Kit in her temporary, 30-hour status. We are so grateful to all of you for your patience and help while we're scrambling around! Cases are continuing to flow in and we can usually expect more when school is back in session.

You may be reading in the news about the impending closing of Level 3 and Level 4 group homes, which will affect some of our children. The change has to do with the ongoing mental health “reform” in the state, and the well-intentioned attempt to de-institutionalize mental health care. There is no definite time frame for closings, but we are told to expect that group homes will be harder to get into and stays will be shorter, beginning immediately. If you have a child in a group home, the treatment team for the child should be planning a transition for the child to step down to a Level 2 foster home, return home with intensive services, or some other alternative. Therapeutic camps (e.g. Three Springs and

Timber Ridge) will be eliminated. Wright School and Whitaker School, two good facilities serving children, are not slated to be eliminated. The hope is that “the system” will respond to the group home closings with increased and improved services available to families in the home or in the home community. As many of you know from cases you’ve had, there are some children who are not safe in their home communities and who are unable to function safely in a foster care family setting. Children in need of higher levels of care will be sent to hospitals or to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs). If you have questions about the placement of your children and how best to advocate during the changes, let us know.

**HAPPY FALL!
15B STAFF**

SPOTLIGHT GAL



We would like to recognize GAL **Cameron Morgan** as our Spotlight GAL. Cameron is a graduate student in political science focusing on American Politics and Public Policy. He has been teaching college courses for several years at UNC and in a couple of North Carolina Prisons. He became interested in GAL work as a result of a project he completed at a Charleston, SC group home. During his time as a GAL, he has worked with seven kids from five different families. He currently carries three cases.

When he first started volunteering he was surprised and frustrated by the amount of turnover among treatment team participants. Therefore, he is thankful that he’s been able to be a consistent advocate to witness cases ending well and kids succeeding.

THANKS CAMERON!

Orange County Court:
1st and 3rd Thursdays
9:00 a.m. in Chapel Hill

Chatham County Court:
2nd and 4th Thursdays
9:00 a.m. in Pittsboro

OCDSS PPAT meetings:
Wednesday mornings

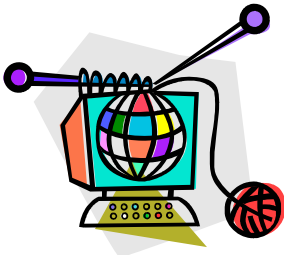
CCDSS PPAT meetings:
1st & 3rd Thursday afternoons



UPCOMING IN-SERVICE NEWS



We still plan to schedule a court report in-service training. At this time, the dates remain TBD. This is due to a court improvement team that is meeting periodically to discuss ways to improve our court system, including modifying court reports. The team is made up of different community members, and Lynne is on this committee. Once the team has finalized their plans, we will notify you of their decisions and be able to schedule our in-service. Thanks for your patience.



WE'RE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB!

Check us out at

<http://sites.google.com/site/orangechathamgal>

Are you the parent of a special needs child who struggles in school? Do you want to learn how you can better advocate for your child's needs and know more about the IEP Process? Then join us for this vital training...

"Navigating the IEP Process"

Saturday, September 12th

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

at Orange United Methodist Church: 1220 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Chapel Hill

This **FREE** workshop for parents of special needs children *and professionals* who serve them will be facilitated by the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC). Participation in this training will provide you with the information and tools you need to actively participate in the development of your child's IEP - *Individualized Education Program*. Please join us to learn more about:

- The important *STEPS* of the IEP process
- The *COMPONENTS* of an IEP
- How to write *MEASURABLE* goals and objectives
- Related services and supports
- All about assistive technology
- What to do if you disagree or if there is conflict
- How to have *EFFECTIVE* communication between home and school



Light refreshments and materials will be provided at no cost!
Sorry, but childcare will not be provided during this workshop.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE is **Wednesday, September 9th**. Seating is limited. **EARLY REGISTRATION** is encouraged as seating is first come, first served! Register one of three ways:

- Email julie@mhaorangeco.org
- Online at www.fan-mhaorangeco.org (news/events page)
- Call 919-942-8083, ext. 2

This training is co-sponsored by the following:

Family Advocacy Network (FAN), a program of the Mental Health Association in Orange County
www.fan-mhaorangeco.org

Orange County Schools Exceptional Children's Department www.orange.k12.nc.us

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Exceptional Children's Department www.chccs.k12.nc.us

SEPTA - Special Education Parent-Teacher Association (*both the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and the Orange County Schools Chapters*) www.septachc.homestead.com and facilitated by the

ECAC - www.ecac-parentcenter.org

SEPTEMBER 2009

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs	Fri.	Sat.
		1 GAL training	2	3 Orange Court GAL training	4	5
6	7 Office closed	8 GAL training	9	10 Chatham Court GAL training	11	12 IEP WORKSHOP
13	14	15 GAL training	16	17 Orange Court GAL training	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 Chatham court	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER 2009

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs	Fri.	Sat.
				1 Orange COURT	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 no Court	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Orange Court	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Chatham Court	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

4th LEONA SCHWEINS
5th MARY IRVINE
THERESA BINION
9th MIKE FOSTER
LORRAINE TUCK
20th HAZEL BOLDEN
21st KIM HILL
24th TERRY BLINSMON
29th ALEXIS PANKEY
30th MARGARET MOORE

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

1st STEPHANIE YOHE
3rd LYNNE WENTWORTH
5th SUZY ARMSTRONG
7th POLLY ULIN
14th LAQUELL BROWN-McCORD
24th STEPHANIE D' ATRI
25th CARMEN COLEY
28th GABRIELLE MILES

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3rd BOB LODDENGAARD
JENNIFER RICHELSON
16th DEBORAH GIBBS
19th ROBERTA LEE
22nd DEBBIE CHACOS
SUSAN HOERGER
30th SUE BAKER

