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# Volunteer Advocate

## Welcome Kelly Andrews...

Kelly Andrews has joined our staff as our *Adolescent Program Coordinator*. Kelly's position is a grant-funded position. Kelly has many years of experience with adolescents. She has worked as a case manager and a crisis counselor. In her role with our office, Kelly will be supervising some of our cases regarding adolescents. She will also serve as a resource for all of our volunteers working with adolescents. Kelly will be helping to bridge the gap between abuse/neglect/dependency court and delinquency court, as well as, helping our alder adolescents in having reasonable, workable plans for their future. Kelly is putting together a resource manual and will conduct in-service trainings regarding adolescents. Kelly can be reached 564-7289 or Kelly.C.Andrews@nccourts.org. Please join us in welcoming Kelly.

## ...GAL Office Awarded CASA Grant

Our GAL office has been awarded a National CASA Grant. The grant is a one year grant with the option of applying for a second year. The grant specifically targets adolescents, ages 13 to 18 years, who have come into the court system due to abuse or neglect by their parent or guardian. The grant will also bridge the gap between juvenile delinquency court and abuse/neglect/dependency court to provide

consistency of plans and services for youths who participate in both courts. Finally it will address the needs of children aging out of the system by ensuring that an adequate plan and appropriate services are in place to provide a smooth transition into the world of adults. The grant specifically target recruitment of volunteers who are interested in working with the adolescent population. These volunteers will

receive additional training pointed towards the needs of adolescents and services available to meet those needs. They will also be provided with an understanding of how the juvenile delinquency system works in order to enhance the effectiveness of the two courts working together.

## GAL OFFICE TO HOST TRAINING

The GAL office is hosting a Legal Permanency Training on **Wednesday, Oct. 29 @ 4:30—8:15pm in the Conference Room (Basement) of the Judicial Annex Building**. Please join Guardian ad Litem Training Administrator Ruth Kravitz and Associate Counsel Deana Fleming for a friendly educational experience around the issues of Legal Permanency. The training will focus on reunification with parents, termination of parental rights, guardianship and custody to relatives or kins. Please don't miss this wonderful learning experience. A light dinner will be served.

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Durham County  
Guardian ad Litem Program

Fall 2008

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### Special points of interest:

Legal Permanency Training on  
Oct.29 @ 4:30

- ☉ Office will be closed Nov. 11 for Veterans Day
- ☉ Office will be closed November 27th and 28th for Thanksgiving

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# Welcome to the World of Mental Health

by Denine Nicholson

First let's define **Durham System of Care (SOC)**:

Nationally recognized, Best Practice framework to organize public and private services and resources

- ◆ Integrated
- ◆ Family Centered
- ◆ Team Decisions
- ◆ Shared Responsibility
- ◆ Strengths—Based
- ◆ Accountability to Outcomes
- ◆ Seamless

*Key Priorities:*

Help families help their children succeed @ home, in school, in community **1 Family/1 Team/ 1 Plan**. Broaden SOC to the way business is done community-wide for individuals and families.

*Ultimate Goal:*

Establish a seamless SOC, to make comprehensive, flexible and effective support available for individuals and families throughout the community, making Durham a better place to live for all individuals and families.

## Foster Care and Adoption Legislation

by Christy Hamilton Malott

After passage by the U.S. House and unanimous approval in the U.S. Senate, the **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008** (H.R. 6893), was signed into law by President Bush on October 7, 2008 . This Act will be the most important piece of legislation for child welfare since the enactment of the Adoptions and Safe Families Act in 1997.

**The Act addresses the following issues that are important to children in Durham County:**

Keeping children connected to biological relatives:

- ◆ by providing funding to relatives who act as foster parents of children (similar to Durham County's Guardianship Assistance Program);
- ◆ by providing funding for technology and programs that aid in locating relatives for children in foster care and connecting relatives to services and support available to them;

(The GAL Program may qualify for grant money to assist in training volunteers and staff in supporting kinship placements.)

- ◆ by requiring adult relatives of children in foster care to receive written notification of the child's situation;
- ◆ by allowing children to be placed with relatives who do not meet the standards of a licensed foster home if placement is safe and best for the child;
- ◆ by requiring reasonable efforts to place children with siblings and arrange for frequent sibling visitation when placement together is not possible.

Meeting the daily needs of children:

- ◆ by requiring efforts to keep children in the same schools whenever possible to assure educational stability OR efforts to place children in a more appropriate educational setting when necessary;
- ◆ by requiring the state to develop a plan to ensure that children's mental health, medical and dental needs are met through screenings and follow-up appointments;
- ◆ by requiring an individual plan for each child who ages out of foster-care.

**We are excited about the "FCSIA" Act and hope it will result in safe, permanent homes that nurture the identity and self-esteem of our children.**

## Our Fall Training Session Has Begun!

On September 15, we began a new training class. The training will consist of 33 hours of interactive learning. Included in this training is a new session on working with adolescents. These new volunteers are scheduled to be sworn in on October 23rd.



New training class began  
September 15th

If you know anyone interested in volunteering with our program, please have them contact Clara

Sellers at 564-7291 or by email at [clara.s.sellers@nccourts.org](mailto:clara.s.sellers@nccourts.org)

## A Note from Shirley...

Dear Volunteers,

I want to thank you for all the work that you do for our children. I also want to tell you about a very unique two day training that I attended. The training was entitled "Know Who You Are". This training explores racial and ethnic identity. This training was designed by the Annie Casey Foundation for social workers. The training helps individuals to explore their own racial and ethnic identity with the hope of being able to better advocate for our children. It is so important for the children we serve to have a sense of pride in their own race and culture. This training helped me to understand why it is important to have the courageous conversations of race and ethnicity with our children and the various

service providers who work with our children. Prior to the training we had to view a video and complete an e-learning training. The video showcased children, parents, foster parents and social workers. The children talked about losing themselves when they are placed in various homes who have no knowledge of their race and cultures. I encourage each of you to view this video. The video can be viewed at <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Projects/REI/knowningWhoYouAreVideo.htm>

It is my hope that this training will be available to all Guardian ad Litem volunteers and staff in the near future.

## Children Learn What They Live By Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.

*If children live with criticism,  
They learn to condemn.  
If children live with hostility,  
They learn to fight.  
If children live with ridicule,  
They learn to be shy.  
If children live with shame,  
They learn to feel guilty.  
If children live with encouragement,  
They learn confidence.  
If children live with tolerance,  
They learn to be patient.  
If children live with praise,  
They learn to appreciate.  
If children live with acceptance,  
They learn to love.  
If children live with approval,  
They learn to like themselves.  
If children live with honesty,  
They learn truthfulness.  
If children live with security,  
They learn to have faith in themselves  
and others.  
If children live with friendliness,  
They learn the world is a nice place in  
which to live.*

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*We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.*

*Marion Wright Edelman  
American Lawyer and Social Activist  
Director of Children's Defense Fund*

# Happy Birthday to Our Volunteers and Staff

## September

Clare Fair  
Matthew Mielke  
Kyle Kelly  
Kathleen Mohair  
Beth Silberman  
Cherelle Bruton  
Ponsella Brown  
Kelly Andrews

Pam Hunt  
Melissa Godwin  
Harriet Sander  
Kate Sturdivant  
Esther Robie  
Frank Benzoni  
Stephanie Kelly

## October

Marcia Allen  
Carol Worley  
Benjamin Wilson  
Mary Kelly  
Sharon Ritchie  
Caroline Eidson  
Amy Schulting

Milicia Tedder  
Nancy Rodriguez  
Gloria Freeman

## November

Celia Dickerson  
Jeffrey Jones  
Mavis Graham  
Abbey Smith  
Brian Royster  
Peggy Pratt

Allison Kostecka  
Camilla Foust  
Gaybeth Phelps  
Leah Oettinger  
Vivian Redd  
Crystal Todd-Yelverton



## ...Special Thanks

### **Friends of the Durham Guardian ad Litem Program:**

for your continued support for our Program and our children.

- ◆ XA appreciated the registration fee for football and his new pair of cleats!
- ◆ JG has enjoyed bouncing ins his new exersaucer!
- ◆ The twins have dry bottoms...thanks for the diapers!
- ◆ SC is stepping high in her sneakers!
- ◆ RP is making a fashion statement in her new clothes!
- ◆ MI learned how to really score with his tennis lessons!
- ◆ NB hung with the Tarheels at football camp ...touchdown!
- ◆ CJ is a blooming artist with her art supplies!

**Hats Off to The Friends!!**

## NC LINKS —Independent Living Program

by Kelly Andrews

The North Carolina Independent Living Program is called NC LINKS. LINKS services are voluntary and are available to youth ages 13-21. The Durham LINKS program is housed in the Department of Social Services building across from the courthouse in downtown Durham. To enroll a young person in NC LINKS there is a simple referral form the DSS worker fills out and turns in to the LINKS Coordinator. The Durham LINKS Coordinator is Fantasia Johnson and the upcoming meetings are: Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov. 4, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, and Dec. 18 - all meetings are at the Genesis House 300 Queen Street Durham, NC 27701. Please encourage any foster care or former foster care youth ages 13-21 to attend - if you have specific questions about this program please call Fantasia Johnson, Durham LINKS Coordinator at (919) 560-8460.

### Six Purposes of the NC LINKS Program

Help youth make the transition to self-sufficiency.

Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment.

Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions.

Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.

Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age, including youth who were court involved or were in mental health facilities.

Durham County  
Guardian ad Litem Program

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201 N. Roxboro Street  
3rd Floor, Judicial Annex  
Durham, North Carolina 27701

Phone: 919-564-7290  
Fax: 919-560-3307

Things turn out differently when  
you volunteer.



Statistics for September:

- We have 175 families involving 279 children.
- We have 112 volunteers.
- We have 20 unassigned cases involving 34 children.
- We had 101 scheduled hearings involving 183 children.

Thanks to all of Our Volunteers for Your Hard Work!

## Websites of Interest

- **Action for Children's** vision is that "...our state will be the best place to be a child and raise a child." <http://www.ncchild.org/>
- **Search for statutes** in any state. The issues are divided into 4 categories: child abuse and neglect, permanency planning/foster care, adoption and post-adoption: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/>
- **Durham's Partnership for Children** provides funds, services and support to ensure that all children enter school healthy and ready to succeed: <http://www.dpfc.net>
- **Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina** is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to preventing child abuse in North Carolina: <http://www.preventchildabuse.org>
- **Disconnected Youth in the Research Triangle Region** . North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline commissioned MDC, INC of Chapel Hill to analyze the problem of disconnected youth in the Research Triangle region. Learn more about the results at <http://www.mdcinc.org/docs/disconnected-youth.pdf>.
- **SaySo**—Foster care youth ran advocacy/support groups (a chapter is currently being organized Durham) Learn what the children have at <http://www.saysoinc.org>.
- **North Carolina Reach** is a state funded scholarship offered for up to 4 years to students who are legal residents of North Carolina and eligible for in-state tuition rates. The students must have been adopted from North Carolina DSS foster care after age 12 or aged out of NC foster care at age 18 (must have been in NC DSS foster care on 18th birthday). Learn more at <http://www.ncreach.org>.