



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM**

**CALL FOR CHILD ADVOCATES
May 8, 2009**

The Guardian ad Litem program in District 17B, serving children in the counties of Surry and Stokes, is currently in need of volunteer guardians ad litem. In particular, our need in Stokes County has reached the critical point. There are currently 85 children in Stokes County who have been determined by the Court to be neglected or abused, up from 54 children this time last year. Of those 85 children, 69 of them are waiting to have an advocate assigned to their cases and be their voices. *Each and every child* needs a guardian ad litem advocate to get to know him or her and understand that child's special circumstances. *Each and every child* needs that one person advocating on his or her behalf. No child should have to go to court without an advocate.

You must be interested in child advocacy or you would not have ended up at the GAL website. Remember, you do not need to have any special education or experience to be a child advocate. Our program will train you and provide you with support and guidance as you advocate for your assigned child. It really only takes a few hours a month to perform this service for a child. It is a worthwhile investment of your time – you are giving a voice to an abused or neglected child and ensuring the Court is aware of the child's needs.

Our current advocates come from all walks of life. Some have been with the program over six years – some even longer – and they love doing what they do. They joined the program not knowing what is involved in advocating for a child, but learned quickly. The Court now looks upon these individuals for information and recommendations about the child or children in their cases.

So far this year, 7 new advocates have joined our program in District 17B. Each has been assigned his or her first case and is beginning the exciting and rewarding process of advocating for a child. However, there are still children without advocates. Please don't forget about the 69 children in Stokes County. Before you leave this website, please pick up the phone and call 336-386-4090 and speak with Linda or Teresa. If it is after business hours, leave a voicemail message and your call will be returned. We are eager to hear from you!

Thank you on behalf of the children,
Linda Devine
District Administrator