

# THE GUARDIAN

Guardian ad Litem Program - NC 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District, Winston-Salem Oct 2009



## **Joann Reed**

As we work towards best interest and permanency, we must remember that the child continues to grow and needs support and understanding. Foster Children often feel left out and "different" from other children. Sometimes intervening on the child's behalf in what most of us might consider small things, can boost that child's image of self.

Joann Reed was sworn as a volunteer with the GAL Program in February 2009. She is the advocate for a sibling group of four. In addition to advocating for these children in court to insure that their placement needs are met she has become a strong advocate for one of these children in her school setting.

Joann learned from the foster parent and from the child's teacher that the DSS custodian refused to allow the juvenile to have school pictures taken and refused to sign a release for the juvenile to appear in an NBA commercial spot featuring NBA basketball player, Chris Paul. After learning of this information and the deadlines for the signatures that were approaching, Joann immediately contacted her Program Supervisor, Alli Keitt to ask what could be done to refute the decision. Within 24 hours, phone calls were made to the Assistant Director of DSS and the Social Worker's Supervisor. Within 48 hours, the necessary signatures were obtained to allow the juvenile to have her school pictures taken. The most notable accomplishment was to have the NBA authorization signed allowing this juvenile an

opportunity to appear in a future NBA commercial that emphasizes the importance of reading with children.

Joann has done a yeomen job as advocate for these children! She has observed visitation opportunities, spoken with therapists, met with parents, initiated services for the child who was developmentally delayed, followed up on substance abuse treatment and has seen the children every month in every placement since they came into DSS custody.



**Payments to Foster Parents**

As of September 1, 2009, Foster care/adoption board rates are as follows:

| <u>Child's Age</u> | <u>Board Rate</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 0-5 years          | \$475 per month   |
| 6-12 years         | \$581 per month   |
| 13 years & over    | \$634 per month   |

These rates apply to County Foster Care only. Therapeutic foster care pays more because of the complexity of the child's situation.

**September, 2009 Statistics - Forsyth County**

|                           |                    |                     |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>New Petitions</b>      | <b>10 Families</b> | <b>13 Children</b>  |
| <b>Closed Cases</b>       | <b>10 Families</b> | <b>13 Children</b>  |
| <b>Scheduled Hearings</b> | <b>63 Families</b> | <b>116 Children</b> |

**Statistics 2008-2009 - Forsyth County**

|                           |                     |                      |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <b>New Petitions</b>      | <b>71 Families</b>  | <b>126 Children</b>  |
| <b>ReOpened Cases</b>     | <b>6 Families</b>   | <b>7 Children</b>    |
| <b>Closed</b>             | <b>105 Families</b> | <b>154 Children</b>  |
| <b>*Adoptions</b>         | <b>42 Families</b>  | <b>58 Children</b>   |
| <b>Scheduled Hearings</b> | <b>750 Families</b> | <b>1262 Children</b> |

\*included in total of cases closed

## GROUP HOME UPDATE

You may have heard that Level III and IV Group Homes will be closed in the near future. That is not exactly true though services will be curtailed for our youth. When the announcement was first made, we had 13 youth in this type group home. Since that time several have been stepped down to foster homes or Level II Group Homes.

The following excerpted information was received on October 13 with the latest info about these changes in Residential Care.

Why are we transition children from Residential Level III & IV Services? A variety of consultants, as well as the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, determined that NC was using residential placement where other services may have been more appropriate. (DHHS NC has been working to develop community-based services for children since 2006.

In 2009, The General Assembly instructed DHHS to restructure the Medicaid child mental health residential services to ensure that total expenditures are within budgeted levels and further instructed the Division of Medical Assistance and Mental Health, DDSA Services to establish a team to assure effective transition of consumers to appropriate treatment options. Consequently, policy changes regarding Residential Level III and Level IV Services are required. The following is a summary of those policy changes.

- New admissions to Level III or Level IV residential services must meet the following additional criteria: convening the Child and Family Team, review of a current comprehensive clinical assessment and development of a discharge plan.
- New admissions to child residential services are limited to no more than 120 days.
- Additional authorizations are limited to a maximum of 90 days after the current authorization expires. Additional authorization requests require a new comprehensive clinical assessment by a psychiatrist that includes clinical justification for continued stay at this level of care, review of goals and progress by the CFT and a revised discharge plan.
- The CFT in developing the Person Centered Plan (PCP) shall promote least restrictive services in the home prior to residential placement.
- In addition to the current eligibility criteria, before a child can be admitted to Level III or Level IV placement the following shall apply:

1. Placement may be a transition from a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility of inpatient setting or multisystemic therapy or intensive in-home services did not meet the treatment needs within the last six months and severe functional impairments persist.  
AND
2. The CFT has reviewed all other alternatives and recommends Level III or IV residential placement to maintain the health and safety of the child.

If the child you represent has a Case Manager at one of the local treatment facilities, please stay in touch and attend the Child and Family Treatment Team Meetings. You can have input into the decision about placement and keep up with the child's progress. The teams consist of family members and their community supports that help implement and update a plan with the child and family. The plan builds on the strengths of the child and addresses their needs, desires and dreams.

### **NEW VOLUNTEERS**

On October 3, 2009, Forsyth, Stokes and Yadkin Guardian ad Litem Programs partnered at Wake Forest Law School and trained 47 volunteers. We are excited to welcome the following as Guardian ad Litem Volunteers:

Aisha Forte, Alexandra Ford, Carl Menzel, Donovan Hylarides, Elizabeth Winters, Emeka Ekeledo, Erika Moses, Greer Benge, Jessica Boyd, Kate Seal, Kelly Amell, Kelly Prokop, Marc Langston, Mark Flowers, Naomi Huntington, Natalie Vermitsky, Rachel White, Samantha Gillis, Tara Vyas, Tiffany Johnson, Tina Flower, Tyrel Hooker, Andy Yun, Austin Walsh, Jenna Walley, Ashley Seawright, Jessica Rutledge, Tierryicah Mitchell, Lourdes Leal, Molly Hassenflet, Kristen Gurley, Leslie Greening, Megan Curran, Tucker McCarthy, Ross Durr, Zoe Niesel, Laura Chisam, Harm Weickum, Carl Newman, Matthew Toldero, Donovan Hylarides, Julie Daniels, Brittany Sjbél, Brittany Speas, Ashley Webb, Craig Principe and Ron Tedder.



## WELCOME INTERNS

Deshauna Darden and Angelica Gathings joined the Winston-Salem staff as interns for the academic year 2009-2010. Deshauna is a senior at A & T University and Angelica is a senior at UNCG. They are both working on cases and assisting staff with our advocacy. Alicia Hunt from WSSU is interning for the fall semester.

### Supper Club

Ten folks attended Supper Club on October 29 at Rana Loca Restaurant. The program was "Why Collaborate?" In the past couple of months we have run into problems with our collaborative efforts. The In-Service presentation and handouts are extensions of the training manual.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

|                  |       |                        |       |
|------------------|-------|------------------------|-------|
| Jade Davis       | 11/26 | Chrystal Johnson-Toney | 11/16 |
| Courtney Epps    | 11/25 | Alicia Luchetti        | 11/26 |
| Alexandra Ford   | 11/30 | Rich McPherson         | 11/5  |
| Molly Hassenfelt | 11/7  | Becky Pagett           | 11/17 |
| Kindra Speech    | 11/4  | Penny Spry             | 11/13 |
| Jackie Thompson  | 11/10 | Jonathan Williams      | 11/28 |
| Susan Williford  | 11/6  | Laura Wolverton        | 11/29 |
| Debbie Hedges    | 11/15 |                        |       |

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

November 11, 2009      Veterans Day - Holiday - GAL Office Closed  
November 25 & 26, '09    Thanksgiving Holiday - GAL Office Closed  
December 15, 2009      GAL Christmas Supper Club - Invitation to follow

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