

GAL Newsletter

January 2010 Newsletter

January 26, 2010

From the Desk of the District Administrator

Happy New Year to One and All. Thank you so much for the dedicated and untiring service that you provided to the children of Judicial Districts 6A and 6B during the year of 2009. A new year brings New Year's resolutions and this year is a great time to renew your commitment to the children that you serve. If you feel that you have not been focused on your case as you should, please take the opportunity to make a resolution to advocate for your children by reviewing your duties as a GAL.



Duties of a GAL Volunteer

- Visit the child and keeps the child informed about the court proceedings.
- Communicates with the Attorney Advocate to develop legal strategies to further the best interests of the child client.
- Gathers and assesses independent information on a consistent basis about the child to recommend a resolution that is in the child's best interest.
- Interviews the parents, guardians, caretakers, social workers and other service providers and
- Reads records related to the family.
- Seeks cooperative solutions with other participants in the child's case.
- Writes fact-based, child-focused reports for court hearings.
- Attends and participates in court hearings and other related meetings to advocate for a permanent plan, which serves the child's best interest.
- Testifies, if needed, to inform the court of changes in the child's situation.
- Ensures that the court knows the child's wishes.
- Keeps all records and information confidential.
- Monitors court ordered services and keeps the court informed about needs of the child.
- Consults with local program staff for support and guidance.

❖ *Please visit your child at least once a month in order to have a first hand knowledge about the child and to establish a trusting relationship with your child. If you cannot visit for any reason, please contact the child and the caretaker by phone. As always, if it is inconvenient to visit the child at home, sometimes school and daycare can be a place for a visit. However, the GAL should always conduct the initial visit at the child's home and this should be the main location for visiting your child.*

<http://www.nccourts.org/Citizens/GAL/Default.asp>

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

[HTTP://WWW.NCDHHS.GOV/GOVERN
MENT/INDEX.HTM](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/government/index.htm)

FIVE COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH
AUTHORITY

[HTTP://WWW.FIVECOUNTYMHA.ORG/](http://www.fivecountymha.org/)

WEBINAR TO FIND FEDERAL
EMPLOYMENT

[HTTP://WWW.AARP.ORG/MONEY/PER
SONAL/REAL_RELIEF_AARP/](http://www.aarp.org/money/personal/real_relief_aarp/)

YOUTH AGING OUT RESOURCE
GUIDE

[ONYOURWAY.ORG](http://onyourway.org)

ACTION FOR CHILDREN NC
[WWW.NCCHILD.ORG](http://www.ncchild.org)

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE FOR
CHILD WELFARE, WORK FIRST, AND
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES IN NC

[HTTP://SSW.UNC.EDU/MA](http://ssw.unc.edu/ma)

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL
ADVOCATES

[WWW.CASAFORCHILDREN.ORG](http://www.casaforchildren.org)

Contact Us

Melinda Hardy, District Administrator

Melinda.A.Hardy@nccourts.org

Terry Bell, Program Supervisor

Terry.L.Bell@nccourts.org

Judith Jones, Program Assistant

Judith.T.Jones@nccourts.org

P. O. Box 837

Jackson, NC 27845

(252) 534-3971 (Phone)

(252) 534-7311 (Fax)

Upcoming Court Dates
For 2010

January

26th Northampton

28th Halifax

February

11th & 25th Halifax

12th Bertie

18th Hertford

23rd Northampton

March

11th & 25th Halifax

12th Bertie

18th Hertford

23rd Northampton

- *All Court Reports should be in the GAL Office two weeks prior to the court hearing. Thank you.*

Upcoming Events

The Ninth State of

The Child Conference

March 5, 2010

8:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Mount Olive College

Mt. Olive, NC

Registration: \$20.00

Please make check payable

to:

State of the Child

Mail to:

State of the Child Conference

P. O. Box 976

Goldsboro, North Carolina

27530

919-920-1371

Workshop Topics

(You can select three)

- Working with Children with Self-Injurious Behaviors
- Helping youth transition from Foster care
- Gang Awareness Update
- Yoga and Stress
- What works in preventing Teen Pregnancy
- Trauma Focused Therapy
- Diversity: Embracing the Diverse Needs of Children
- Autism Awareness
- Preschool readiness-Strategies and Interventions
- Stopping Bullying
- Understanding and Accessing Mental Health Services
- Internet Safety for Children
- Powerful, Positive and Effective Techniques for Children at Risk

East Carolina Behavioral Health-LME is pleased to announce training by
Maggie Yankov, MS, LPC, LMFT, ACS.

Meeting the Challenge of Youth with Sexual Problems Within the Foster Care System

Friday February 19, 2010

1-4 p.m.

403 Government Circle, Suite #2

Greenville, NC 27834

Target Audience: Therapeutic Foster Parents, Provider Agencies, Depts. Of Social Services, Foster Parents, Depts. Of Juvenile Justice, sex offender treatment providers and interested others. Please contact Hope Eley at: heley@echblme.org to register for the training. Registration deadline is February 15, 2010.

- *If you are interested in attending any of the upcoming trainings please contact Melinda Hardy and I will arrange transportation. Thanks.*

From the Desk of the Program Supervisor



Happy New Year!

2009 was a year of great changes, both professionally and personally. For the past few months, I've taken on responsibility of case management for fifteen post-termination of parental rights cases involving over twenty children in Wake County in addition to cases in Bertie and Hertford counties. This assignment allows me to spend one day each week in the District 10 office in Raleigh. I'm enjoying the variety, and meeting new people, as I am gaining experience in expediting permanence for children. Since January 2009, I've been a full-time graduate student, which included international studies in Ghana for two weeks in January 2010.

Spotlight on Bertie County

Traveling to a central office can present challenges for some of our volunteers. Space was designated in the Bertie County Courthouse on the second floor for a Guardian ad Litem satellite office for the program last year. Pending installation of telephone and internet service, our plan for this year is to have the Bertie office staffed by the Program Supervisor at least one day a week for the convenience of volunteers and prospective volunteers in the Bertie County area.

Our GAL volunteers are making a difference in their communities through the GAL program and beyond. GAL Volunteer Arlethia "Lisa" Joyner doesn't reside in Bertie County, but she has advocated for many children from Bertie County, achieving permanence when several of the children were adopted. Permanence did not happen quickly, but persistence in advocating for permanence is core to the mission of the GAL program, and something that Lisa does best.

GAL Volunteer Cynthia Bunch is now serving as the interim director for Teen Court in Bertie County. The Teen Court Program is helpful to youth by providing a venue for resolving simple conflicts for certain types of incidents as an alternative to entering the juvenile justice system. Collaboratively, Teen Court and the Bertie County JCPC are seeking positive outcomes for youth.

To assist the abused or homeless women of the area, GAL Volunteer Gail McNeil is leading a project known as My Sister's House. Rev. McNeil implemented a similar project while in Duplin County and says she "has come home to Bertie County" to change the circumstances of this vulnerable segment of the population. She is partnering with agencies and community

groups in an effort to make a difference for women and families in Bertie and surrounding areas.

These are some examples of the wonderful work being done by GAL volunteers. We applaud our volunteers in all of the counties served by our local Guardian ad Litem office who have given outstanding advocacy for the children through this program. Many times, you have made sure their voices are heard in court. There aren't enough words to thank you for what you do and we could not do this without you. You truly make a difference in the lives of others. Thank you for continuing to serve the children through your diligent efforts.

Terry Bell, Program Supervisor

More about Terry's trip.....



Pictured above is Terry Bell, GAL Program Supervisor (seated 3rd left), and her North Carolina Central University classmates. We would like to send our best wishes to all of them. They are currently out of the country for a couple of weeks in the Republic of Ghana, West Africa. We have heard from Terry, and she reports that she is really enjoying her trip and is doing well. To read more about Terry's trip, please follow this link: <http://www.citifmonline.com/site/education/news/view/2498/5>

Happy Birthday



January

1 – Dolly Robins
10 – James Ward
20 – Judy Jones
21 – Bernadine Abernathy
25 – Jesse Bulluck
27 – Doris Faison

February

5 – Faye Wynn
11 – Betty Bennett
22 – Sheila Aycock
27 – Buffy Edwards

March

18 – Catherine Moody
19 – Gladys Askew
30 – Kaprice Brown

New GAL Training

Please Welcome the following GALs who were sworn-in in the Fall of 2009



Lynn Armstrong of Weldon, NC shown above being sworn-in by honorable Brenda G. Branch, chief district court judge, Halifax.



Sheila Aycock (right) of Littleton, NC and Renita Richardson (left) of Hollister, NC were also sworn-in by judge Branch.

2009 Yearly Statistics District 6A &B

Families/Children served:

86 families involving 122 children

Petitions received: 32 involving 42 children

Cases closed: 41 involving 57 children

Outcomes of closed cases:

Custody to Relative: 27

Reunification w/removal parent: 3

Adopted: 11

Custody to non-removal parent: 4

Child aged out: 8

Petition dismissed: 3

Transferred to another district/county: 1

159 hearings representing 218 children were held



Submitted by Judith Jones Program Assistant

Lets Support Our Troops

Guardian ad Litem, Second Lieutenant Glen Wegel, is being deployed to Afghanistan in a couple of weeks. Glen has been a GAL with our program since July 2007. Mr. Wegel was recently united in marriage to Ms. Ashley Brzozowski. Glen will be assigned to the Helmand Province in Southern Afghanistan which is the most volatile of all of Afghanistan. According to Glen, 90% of all servicemen killed have come from this region. Please follow Glen on Facebook while he is deployed, he would love to hear from us and we will pray for his safe return home to his family and his country. We love you Glen and congratulations to you and Ashley.

