



Volunteer Advocate

Welcome, New Volunteers!

GAL has sworn in 21 new volunteers since the winter newsletter was published:

- Nick Abramson
- Rachael Dorello
- Inez Fisher
- Vinetta Freeman
- Jill Friedman
- Camilla Goodchild
- Karen Hahn
- Bo Harvey
- Olivia Hyatt
- Meredith Levy
- Latonya McFadden
- Carolyn Miesowicz
- Kathleen Mohar
- Emily Picone
- Linda Pridgen-Braswell
- Vivian Redd
- Katherine Ross
- Kelly Thomason
- Lindsey White
- Katie Whitehead
- Lisa Young

Thank you for your hard work in training, and for your dedication to your cases!

Making a Difference for Durham Families

The Third Annual Making a Difference for Durham Families Community Breakfast took place on Thursday, April 20, 2006.

In celebration of Child Abuse Prevention Month, this event recognized the individuals, programs, and organizations that are working through Durham's System of Care to help families help their children

to be safe and successful at home, at school, and in their community. The event featured an exhibition area to raise awareness of the important community resources available to Durham's families.

Organized by the Durham Family Initiative and the Durham Community Collaborative, more than 200 Durham elected officials, non-

profit leaders, and advocates recognized the individuals and programs working to build strong neighborhoods, families, and children in Durham.

For more information, go to www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu and click on *Making a Difference*.

Durham County Guardian
ad Litem Program

Spring 2006

Special points of interest:

© Office will also be closed Monday, May 29, for Memorial Day.

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Baby's death spurs Wake reforms

Below is a link to an article discussing how Child Protective Services has instituted a new protocol for dealing with newborns, or new mothers, who have drugs in their systems. A summer of the article and the link to the full text are also provided below:

Raleigh News and Observer

<http://www.newsobserver.com/100/story/401770.html>

"Spurred by a 6-week-old girl's death, Wake County's child welfare agency...released a plan to improve its investigation and supervision of infants born to drug-abusing parents.

After Natalia Rita McCarthy died last spring, Child Protective Services created a new protocol for dealing with newborns, or new mothers, who have drugs in their systems. Now, when mothers or newborns test positive for drugs, a social worker does a thorough criminal background check of adults in the house, devises a safety plan for the child, and works to ensure that a drug-free adult helps nur-



"Officials say McCarthy, asleep, rolled on her baby, killing her."

ture the baby."
"Tom Vitaglione, an N.C. Child Advocacy Institute senior fellow, said the new policy means that Wake child welfare workers must take a harder line on parents who use drugs. 'They're going to assume that it's a legitimate abuse case,' he said."

N&O article written by Jennifer Brevorka.

Workforce Investment Act offers services to teens

So often it seems that the teens the Guardian ad Litem program represents are underserved in their local community, but it is encouraging to know that local there are many services available as a part of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Every North Carolina county should have a representative who works

with teens, within a certain subgroup which includes teens in foster care. This representative can provide free services like apprenticeships, career counseling, mentoring, tutoring, etc. Below is a link that allows you to access our local Youth Workforce Investment liaison and more information about the services the program

provides:

<http://www.ncdet.com/wrkfrcedev/specificArea.asp>

"This representative can provide free services like apprenticeships, career counseling, mentoring, tutoring, etc."

Happy birthday to our volunteers!

April Birthdays

4: April Hathcock
7: Katie Manley
15: Rachael Derello

May Birthdays

5: David Swanson
9: Heather Dambly
14: Sh'Myra Moore
23: Vinetta Freeman
27: Marisa Darden
31: Heather Johnson
31: Meredith Levy

June Birthdays

7: Jill Friedman
10: Lauren Phillips
12: Theresia McGee
14: Gaynelle Cooke
24: Angie Hofhine
27: Katie Whitehead



CASA e-learning available

National CASA is pleased to announce their new e-learning opportunity for trained advocates and program staff. The first e-learning series posted on the private area of casanet.org is entitled "Education and Youth in Out-of-Home Care." The five modules in the series address the following topics:

1. Increasing understanding about educational issues
2. Supporting the educational rights and needs of children and youth
3. Navigating the school system
4. Reviewing developmental mile-

stones, learning about assessment, and conducting school meetings

5. Becoming familiar with special education terms, common diagnoses, discipline and the role of the surrogate parent.

Each module will take thirty minutes to one hour to complete. National CASA suggests that users set aside adequate time to complete at least one module at a time



for optimal learning and that volunteers receive between five and seven hours of in-service credit for completion of this series.

The Blue Ribbon for Kids Campaign

You can help make a difference for North Carolina families by participating in April—Child Abuse Prevention Month.

During the month of April, concerned citizens nationwide wear blue ribbons to symbolize that they support children and families. Join the more than 200,000 North Carolinians who take part in the Blue

Ribbon for Kids Campaign each year by wearing or displaying a blue ribbon.

When someone asks you what the blue ribbon means, give him or her the facts:

- Last year in NC, more than 111,000 children were reported as abused or neglected.
- 31 children died from child abuse

homicide in our state last year.

- We can prevent child abuse in our communities by better supporting parents from the start.

"You can help make a difference for North Carolina families by participating in April—Child Abuse Prevention Month."

May 16: A day at the Legislature

A Foster Care/Adoption Awareness Day has been planned from 8 AM until 5 PM on May 16, 2006, at the Legislative Building on Jones Street. We want to have our legislators understand the impact of their decisions on the lives of children -- "Through the Eyes of Your Children".

About 16 programs will have exhibit tables from 8 AM - 4 PM in the 1100

Court of the Legislative building -- and the GAL program will have one of those tables! We also have the opportunity to speak during the speaker forum 3 - 5 PM. Most of the speakers will be SAY SO youth and other children in foster care.



Join us on May 16 at the Legislative Building for a Foster Care/Adoption Awareness Day

Please let your supervisor know if you are interested in serving on the organizing committee for May 16

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Things turn out differently when you volunteer.



Statistics for March:

- We have 184 families involving 316 children.
- 89% of our families have a GAL volunteer.
- 90% of our families have coverage.
- 91% of our children have a GAL volunteer.
- 91% of our children have coverage.

Thanks to all of our volunteers for your hard work!

Mental Health Reforms for Group Homes

Gov. Mike Easley signed an executive order last week imposing tougher rules on group homes that house mentally ill children in North Carolina. Good. That simple act turns the page on a shameful chapter of the state's history, one in which regulatory mistakes and greed put vulnerable citizens at risk.

Yet it does not end the matter. The state has taken too long to right obvious wrongs. Aside from funding more inspectors, little has been done to reform the troubled state agency that oversees services for these vulnerable citizens.

The new measures are straightforward. Group homes must upgrade treatment, hire more staff and train them better. Gov. Easley's order follows key reforms funded by the legislature in 2005.

Here's why those changes are urgent.

Below is a link to an article discussing Gov. Easley's orders that group homes for

mentally-ill children upgrade treatment, hire more staff and train them better. A summary of the article and link to the full text are provided below.



Action for Children describes the executive order signed by Governor Easley.

Article written by Action for Children

<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/observer/14330667.htm>