



Voices For Children Foundation - Programs

Below is a list and description of Voices For Children programs. For more information please visit www.BeAVoice.org or contact Dorothy Marin at 786.469.3862 or by email at DMarin@BeAVoice.org.

Guardian ad Litem Program

Miami-Dade County's Guardian ad Litem Program is home to over 500 community volunteers who, with the help of professional staff, provide a powerful voice and much needed oversight on behalf of Miami's abused, abandoned and neglected children.

In Miami-Dade County, there are over 3,100 children who find themselves in the foster care system, with overwhelming feelings of loss for family, rights, and hope.

But it doesn't have to be that way. You can be the one to give that child back their sense of belonging, their rights, and best of all, hope for a better life.

"[I] have been in foster care for about two years and I feel that it has been the greatest thing to happen in my life. Not because the system works but because there are people within the system who are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that a child has everything he or she deserves. ... I would also like to acknowledge my Guardian ad Litem for being there for me every step of the way. ... It is not the system that recreates a child's life, but the people working within it."

17 year old Miami-Dade County foster youth (October 2013)

Guardian ad Litem Program—Main Office
3300 NW 27th Avenue
Miami, FL 33136
T: 305-638-6861

For volunteering information, please contact Patricia Abaroa at 786-469-3864 or by email at patricia.abaroa@gal.fl.gov

Children's Needs Program

Voices' Children's Needs Program supplements the woefully insufficient State funding and Federal entitlements to the children we serve with direct financial assistance. Voices provides funds to address **Basic Essential Needs**, such as food, clothing, rent/utility assistance, furniture, transportation, etc.; **Educational Needs** such as school uniforms, tutoring, school supplies, after school care, etc.; and **Social and Enrichment Needs** such as extracurricular activities, camp, senior year activities, and more.

The Children's Needs Program also funds the following projects:

Artistic Expressions Workshops

Artistic Expressions Workshops offer enrichment opportunities to children in areas such as photography, painting, and hot glass blowing, among other expressions of art. The workshops are designed to offer youth a means to heal the pain of their difficult lives, gain a sense of control, find a positive outlet for self-expression and enhance their sense of well-being.

Youth are paired with participating local artists and the activities carried out in each workshop are dependent upon the curriculum established by the artist-mentors. Typically, each small group of foster youth meet with the artist-mentor in interactive workshops where they learn background on the art form, choose a theme for their artwork and receive artistic guidance and the necessary supplies and materials to execute their project. In each final workshop, the artist-mentor assists the youth in completing their creations and preparing them for public display.

Back To School Event

As part of our Children's Needs Program, Voices For Children partners with Old Navy, in the Shoppes of Dadeland, to provide approximately 600 foster youth with school uniforms and essential clothing. Since 2011, Old Navy closes to the public while the children have the opportunity to shop for their own clothing with gift cards valued at \$75 or \$100 based on the child's age. Partner Office Depot also provides backpacks with school supplies, which are distributed to youth that evening.

Empower A Student

The Empower A Student Program works with organizations such as His House, Children Home Society of Florida and Miami Bridge Youth and Family Services, Inc. to find students. Volunteers are matched with one child in foster care and work with him/her for one hour a week. This program began in 2010 with the dream of Rhonda Rose to offer free quality tutoring to foster children in Miami-Dade County who want to improve themselves. Our goal is to emphasize the control of their future, increase their confidence in themselves, and encourage a love of learning. We believe that education is the critical component to empower foster children to ultimately become productive adults in their future.

It Takes A Village (ITAV)

Generously funded by The Zyman Foundation, this project provides motivated but disadvantaged dependent or formerly dependent youth and young adults with the funding and other support needed

to successfully attend and graduate from college in order to become healthy and productive adults and contributing community members.

The initial program started in 2012 with approximately \$10,000 in college life scholarships awarded to ten youths to help cover school and living costs while attending college. Participants must remain enrolled full time while maintaining a 2.5 GPA, live on campus their first year, show effective financial management of the funds received, demonstrate pro-social behavior, secure employment during the summers or remain enrolled in school, and stay in weekly contact with the Children's Needs Program Manager.