



BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDATION WHY VOICES FOR CHILDREN?

For 36 years, Voices has provided funding to support the 11th Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program. The state of Florida requires that the interests of every abused, abandoned, and neglected child be represented by a Guardian ad Litem (GAL). However, the GAL Program does not receive adequate public funding, so Voices For Children Foundation fills the gap. Additionally, Voices raises funds to meet the social, education, and medical needs of Miami-Dade's abused, abandoned, and neglected children.

WHAT IS THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL) PROGRAM?

The 11th Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program recruits, trains, supports and supervises court-appointed adults to represent the best interests of Miami-Dade's abused, abandoned, and neglected children in dependency court proceedings. Guardians ad Litem serve as the "voice" of abused, abandoned, or neglected children in juvenile court. www.WeAreGuardians.org

It is part of a nationwide network of advocacy organizations under the umbrella of the National Court-Appointed Special Advocates Association (NCASAA). www.CasaForChildren.org

HOW MANY CHILDREN DOES THE GAL PROGRAM REPRESENT?

Although the number fluctuates, as of January 2020, there were 1,637 children in Miami-Dade's foster care system. During that month, the GAL Program represented approximately 93% of those children and youth, leaving approximately 99 youth without a voice in court. (Citrus, January 2020)

WHAT ARE THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THESE CHILDREN?

Approximately 56% of these children are Black, 7% are white, 36% are Hispanic, and 1 % are multicultural and/or other ethnicities; 41% are 0-5

years, 21% are 6-9 years old, 14% are 10-13 years old, 22 % are 14-17 years old, and 2% are 18 years of age or older (Eleventh Judicial Circuit GAL Program, January 2020)

WHAT DO GALs DO?

- Speak up for the best interests of the child
- Gather information through regular visits with the child
- Conduct interviews with people associated with the child • Attend hearings on the child's behalf
- Make recommendations to the judge

WHO CAN BECOME A GAL?

Anyone who:

- Possesses a strong desire to help children
- Demonstrates good judgment and common sense
- Exhibits good communication skills
- Provides favorable references and consents to a background check • Completes 30 hours of training
- Is at least 19 years old

HOW CAN I BE A VOICE?

If you would like to make a financial contribution, please contact Voices For Children at 305.324.5678 or donate online please visit www.BeAVoice.org

To become a Guardian ad Litem volunteer, call 305.638.6861 Ext. 245.

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