

The mission of the **Guardian ad Litem** (GAL) program is to advocate for abused and neglected children in foster care. As the eyes and the ears of the court, the **Guardian ad Litem** volunteer researches and gathers important information focusing on the individual child. They interview the child(ren), their teacher, relatives, social worker, foster parents, birth parents (if appropriate) and others who can offer critical insights concerning the child(ren). The volunteer partners with a GAL Attorney Advocate to make recommendations to the Judge about the child's best interest and expressed wishes. GAL volunteers increase the likelihood that abused and neglected children will receive timely and appropriate resources. Studies have proven that abused and neglected children represented by GAL volunteers spend less time in foster care and are more likely to end up in safe and permanent homes. At this time, however, there are over 800 children in the GAL program and approximately 260 assigned volunteers.

The **Guardian ad Litem** program affords members of our community the opportunity to enhance the lives of families and children on many levels. The program changes the lives of children, one GAL volunteer at a time. You'll have the power to change the course of a child's life. You'll have the power to make a difference. Please join us! Anyone who is 18 years or older and who has a sincere concern for the well being of children can be a GAL volunteer. After initial training, the position requires an average of 6 to 10 hours of time per month on a case. Many GAL's work full time and visit their GAL child in the evenings, on weekends, or even during lunchtime. You can become a **Guardian ad Litem** volunteer and make a difference in the life of child by visiting www.galcharlotte.com. If you have questions, or would like additional information, contact Sabrina Nettles at sabrina.nettles@gmail.com.