



FLORIDA STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLORIDA GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM MARKS A YEAR OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FROM CHIEF JUSTICE QUINCE

TALLAHASSEE—For the past year, Chief Justice Quince has partnered with the Guardian ad Litem Program to recruit attorneys to represent youth as part of the Program’s Fostering Independence Project. (Currently 170 attorneys are volunteering with the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program).

The Fostering Independence Project pairs pro bono attorneys with teens in foster care to help them obtain the services they need to prepare for adulthood. Attorneys can also become involved with the Program by utilizing their area of expertise to assist the Program in advocating for the child’s needs or representing the child in a traditional attorney-client relationship as the child’s attorney ad litem. While cases vary in complexity, most cases require approximately 4-6 hours per month. Attorneys will gain valuable experience by actively participating in trials, assisting with appeals, and other court hearings.

Unlike the traditional Guardian ad Litem volunteer training, attorneys can complete their training in as little as eight hours. The training is available on the Guardian ad Litem website. Attorneys can also use this time to fulfill the Florida Bar’s pro bono requirement and receive 8 CLE credits, including 1 ethics credit, after completing the training.

“Prior to volunteering as a pro bono Guardian ad Litem attorney, my legal experience had been primarily confined to representing large corporations in complex business transactions. Whether it be visiting with her at her (foster youth) home to filing a motion requesting Court approval so she can attend a church sponsored Christmas trip, being a volunteer Guardian ad Litem has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my 20 years of practicing law,” said Carol Hinds, Guardian ad Litem Pro Bono Attorney.

Chief Justice Quince, in her swearing-in ceremony, asked the lawyers of this state to volunteer for the Fostering Independence Project. “We have hundreds of children who age out of foster care every year but

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are they really ready to take their place as good and productive citizens in the state of Florida? I believe with our help, with the help of the lawyers of this state, we can make them those kind of citizens.”

To volunteer or learn more becoming involved with the Guardian ad Litem Program, call 1-866-341-1425 or visit www.GuardianadLitem.org.

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