



FLORIDA STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE

Theresa A. Flury
Executive Director

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STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARKS FIRST SIX MONTHS

TALLAHASSEE—Theresa A. Flury, Executive Director of the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program, marked her first six months the end of June 2009. Governor Crist appointed Ms. Flury to head the Program December 22, 2008.

For more than 29 years, the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program has represented the best interests of abused and neglected children in court and the community. The Program operates with approximately 7,000 dedicated volunteers giving approximately 27,000 abused and neglected children across Florida a voice.

Within just a few weeks of taking the helm, Ms. Flury faced many challenges including not only a special legislative session, but also news from the legislature of a possible 23% budget cut during the regular session. “In a very short time, I learned that we cannot do this alone; we must rely on the support of our volunteers and the community. Our volunteers and the community rallied together and let the legislature know how critical our work is to thousands of abused and neglected children in Florida. Their voices were loud and clear and

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thankfully the legislature heard them. I am grateful for the tremendous effort our volunteers and community made on the Program's behalf." Ultimately, the legislature voted on a 7.5% cut. The cut was less drastic, but still resulted in the loss of 57 positions statewide. "We lost positions, but we are determined the cuts will not affect the number of children we are serving."

During the past six months, Ms. Flury has served on Florida's Children & Youth Cabinet, Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Counsel, the Multidisciplinary Dependency Court Improvement Panel, and the Department of Children and Families Task Force on Fostering Success.

Ms. Flury is intent on increasing the number of Guardian ad Litem volunteers and has formed a leadership team to help accomplish this. Ms. Flury's priorities also include providing statewide training for Program staff in critical areas including legal advocacy, educational surrogacy and psychotropic medications. "Being able to lead such a wonderful Program is an honor. Our employees and volunteers are extremely dedicated to our children. I'm excited about moving the Program forward."

For more information on how to become a guardian ad litem, log onto our website at www.GuardianadLitem.org or call 1-866-341-1GAL.

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