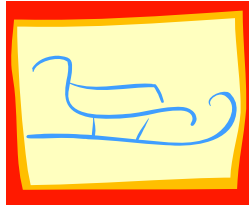


# Guardian ad Litem District 22A ~ Newsletter



*Winter 2009*



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*Title IV Worker*

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## ***Hello GAL Advocates!***

You have provided advocacy for 242 children this year. We have averaged 100% advocacy for 6 months of 2009. Our cases have increased 47% from last year, and court hearings have also increased 53%. We currently have 58 volunteers in Iredell County (Hooray!) and 9 volunteers in Alexander County (Double Hooray!) Our total count is 67 volunteers for District 22A. Our numbers are the highest in the history of D22A's GAL Program. Congratulations! I congratulate all of you because not only do you provide excellent advocacy but you refer your friends and family. The majority of our recruitment is by "word of mouth". We feel blessed to have each and every one of you, as well as the excellent company of GAL's throughout the State. Our numbers are quite impressive. Last year, GAL Volunteers gave the State of North Carolina 922,560 hours in training and casework valued at more than \$18.6 million. This year 4,805 volunteers participated in the GAL Program reflecting a near 40% growth rate.

Just in District 22A, we have sworn in 34 volunteers. We have held 9 new volunteer trainings. So you see, you are the product & ingredient for greatness! Our District has experienced change & turmoil. We now have Court Improvement which has placed more demands. We have additional court hearings with pre-trials and Child Planning Conferences. Court reports are required 14 days in advance. The Program staff submits court reports in a Judges' notebook. The notebook has become part of our County's Memorandum of Agreement, meaning we are now required to submit reports timely in order for the notebook completion. All of you have stepped up to the plate to submit your reports on time.

Thank you so very much! On one occasion a Judge was upset with the Department because a report was missing from the notebook. The GAL portion was completed on that day. Of course it isn't always completed. We still need your help with submitting your reports on time.

Another significant hurdle was the State's budgetary issues. Our mileage for both volunteers and staff ended. Sadly we lost 2 volunteers due to that issue. The rest of you pulled together and gave your full support to our program. Some of you switched cases so you didn't have to travel as much. Some of you joined forces with a partner so one person didn't have to shoulder the mileage burden. Most of you continued visiting your children even if that meant crossing state lines. Your personal sacrifices and dedication to the GAL children are only pieces of what makes each of you such a blessing.

Please accept our declaration, the GAL staff, of our continued support and dedication to each of you. We cannot represent children without you. You are the eyes, ears and voice of 220 children. I know each of you do not expect accolades because of what you do. You do this from the heart! We cherish you! We are here for you and we can not do this with out you. As simple as two words can be "Thank you" from our hearts and with our most sincere gratitude.

During this holiday season, we wish you and your family a safe, joyous and blessed holiday.

From the GAL family, we hope Santa is good to you. You deserve it!!

Donna Carver  
GAL - DA of D22A

## Adoption Assistance Eligibility Policy Changes



The following are major changes that are important to GAL cases:

\* At the initiation of the adoption proceeding, the child must be in the custody of DSS or licensed private adoption agency due to juvenile court intervention ("contrary to the welfare of the child to remaining the home") or by a relinquishment. What this means is that if the juvenile court awards custody or guardianship, and the custodian or guardian later seeks termination of parental rights and adoption, the child is NOT eligible for federal adoption assistance payments. This change may be a significant factor in determining the appropriate permanent plan for a child, particularly if financial resources of the proposed custodian or guardian are limited.

\* Any child who has been in foster care for 60 consecutive months is considered an "applicable child" under the new policy.

\* Any child who is a sibling of a child who is an "applicable child" and placed in the same adoptive arrangement is also eligible.

\* Changes in the child's age requirement and special needs diagnosis including children age 2 or younger must have a specific applicable special needs diagnosis to qualify for the monthly adoption assistance payments, unless placed with an older sibling with special needs; children ages 2-6 who do not

have a special needs diagnosis or part of a sibling group must be a member of a minority race or ethnic group to qualify for monthly adoption assistance payments. Note that children under 2 who are later diagnosed with applicable special needs may be approved at a later date.

As a reminder, the purpose of adoption assistance payments is to encourage the adoption of older youth, sibling groups, children with specific special needs, and children of an ethnic minority. Although now certain children represented by GAL may no longer be eligible for adoption assistance, the changes in the policy are consistent with the purpose of finding "forever homes" for harder to place children.

If you have questions about a specific child's eligibility, I encourage you to contact the appropriate person within your local DSS agency. The DSS agency can direct questions regarding the change in policy to DHHS.

For more information about this policy change please go to:

[http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-78/man/Section%201600.htm#P16\\_3](http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-78/man/Section%201600.htm#P16_3)



## GREAT RESOURCE POST ADOPTION!!!

MOUNTAIN YOUTH  
RESOURCES

All families that have adopted children through DSS, private or international agencies are eligible for:

### **Post Adoption Support Services.**

**Services are available to families at NO COST!**

Services that are available are:

- Respite and Tutoring Reimbursements
- Family and Community Education Conferences and Seminars
- Adoption Information and Referral System
- Family Support and Counseling
- Family Fun Days and Support System.



**Please visit**

[www.mountainyouthresources.org](http://www.mountainyouthresources.org) or contact:

Joecilyn Wallace @ 704-779-9808

## **New Report Reminder Notification**



I am starting to send out email reminders the Thursday before your report is due. That way you will have a full week but also the weekend to work on your report. I hope this helps you all and will aid in our effort to have 100% of our reports in on time!! Please I am open to suggestions on this so let me know! Thank you!!

# Happy Birthday



The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age.  
- Lucille Ball

## December

Dan Goss, Faye Hayes, Linda Lathrop, Nancy Vince

## January

Linda Edwards, Don Jones, Donna Carver

## February

Evelyn Drayer, Mike Needleman

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# WELCOME ABOARD

**August-** Neldra Delpit

**September-** Paula Hammer, Brenda Sharpe, Jewell Brown, Lori Crosby, Penny Stephens, Linda Edwards, Dan Goss, Linda Lathrop, Jennifer Norman, Kat Staton

**October-** Grey Johnson, Terrie Andersen, Heidi Green, Katherine Brewster, Susan Conyers, Mallory Fleming, Jennifer Jeffords, Joyce Wagner, Michael Harmon



2407 Simonton Road Statesville,  
NC 28625

**Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>,  
Noon-5 p.m.**

*Meet Mark Lunsford, Child  
Advocate & Proponent of  
Jessica's Law*

Please join us for an Open House to celebrate the Grand Opening of the new Dove House facility! Tour the new building and grounds and help celebrate this milestone. The project was only made possible through the overwhelming generosity of our community. 93% of the development and construction of the new building was completed by donations of materials, services, capital grants and fundraising programs such as Naming Rights and Engraved Pavers & Tiles!



## UPCOMING GAL EVENTS

• 12/7/09 ~ GAL Kids  
Christmas Party @ Hickory Dickory Dock in Hickory from 5-8 p.m.  
• 12/15/09 ~ GAL Volunteer  
Potluck @ 5 p.m. Bring your favorite yummy dish & fellowship with your fellow GAL colleagues.



## COMMUNITY EVENTS — hold "Ctrl" button and scroll mouse over

event which will connect you to the event website.

- 10 am 12/5 [Holiday Tour of Historic Homes](#)

2 pm 12/6 [Wreath Making Workshop at Mills Garden Herb Farm](#)

7 pm 12/9 [Holiday Victorian Tea Party](#)

4 pm 12/11 [Downtown Statesville Holiday Open House](#)

12/7/2009 Monday 7:30p  
[Mitchell Community College](#),  
Statesville NC



## Christmas Wonderland of Lights.

Drive through two miles of forest while viewing over 1 million lights.

The drive ends with a 300 foot Christmas light show set to music by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra with a special guest of honor – Santa Claus. Experience the wonder of a Nativity Scene, Pony rides, Petting zoos and our Candy Shop.

<http://www.zootasticpark.com/>

**Runs through Friday Nov 20,  
2009 – New Year's Day 7 Days a  
Week, 6 – 10 pm.**

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## Helpful Hint

Use this website to look up pending criminal court hearings.

<http://www1.aoc.state.nc.us/www/calendars/CriminalQuery.html>

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## Paula Deen's Gorilla Bread

1/2 cup granulated sugar  
3 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter  
1 cup packed brown sugar  
1 8-ounce package cream cheese  
2 12-ounce cans refrigerated biscuits (10 count)  
1 1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts  
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray a bundt pan with nonstick cooking spray. Mix the granulated sugar and cinnamon. In a saucepan, melt the butter and brown sugar over low heat, stirring well; set aside. Cut the cream cheese into 20 equal cubes. Press the biscuits out with your fingers and sprinkle each with 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon sugar. Place a cube of cream cheese in the center of each biscuit, wrapping and sealing the dough around the cream cheese. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of the nuts into the bottom of the bundt pan. Place half of the prepared biscuits in the pan. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, pour half of the melted butter mixture over the biscuits, and sprinkle on 1/2 cup of nuts. Layer the remaining biscuits on top, sprinkle with the remaining cinnamon sugar, pour the remaining butter mixture over the biscuits, and sprinkle with the remaining 1/2 cup of nuts. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool for 5 minutes. Place a plate on top and invert.

