



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and did you know that without the Guardian ad Litem program, more than 1,400 abused and neglected children across our state would face the court process alone? Guardian ad litem volunteers come from all walks of life and a variety of professional and educational backgrounds. No special education or experience is required, just a commitment to serving local children in need. A guardian ad litem volunteer is sometimes referred to as “the voice for a child”, because we ensure the court hears the child’s point of view. We are sometimes also called “the eyes and ears of the court”, because we bring out details of a child’s life the judge might otherwise never learn. Guardian ad litem volunteers stand by every child and advocate for them through every step of the court process until they are finally settled in a safe and permanent home. Local GAL volunteers will tell you that it can be difficult, but that connecting with children during the time when they most need someone on their side makes all the difference.

Please call McDowell County’s GAL office at 652-4632 or visit www.volunteerforgal.org if you are interested in training to become a volunteer guardian ad litem. Training includes about 30 hours of classes and time observing how the court system works. Once fully trained, volunteers are sworn in by a district court judge and are assigned cases based on individual strengths, interests, and availability.