



## FLORIDA STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE

**Theresa A. Flury**  
Executive Director

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **17<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM RECEIVES CASA GRANT**

**FT. LAUDERDALE**— 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program recently received a National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program Expansion grant in the amount of \$40,000. The grant period is June 1, 2009-June 30, 2010.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Program (Program) represents abused and neglected children in court and the Broward County community. The Program operates with approximately 400 dedicated volunteers giving more than 2,000 abused and neglected children a voice in court.

According to Department of Children and Families, as of February 2009, approximately 5,600 teens were in out of home care. According to the Pew Charitable Trust publication, "Aging Out of Foster Care Without a Permanent Family," "the number of youth who leave foster care because of their age- a situation referred to as "aging out"-has increased". With the grant, the Program looks forward to hiring a staff person to serve 75 youth preparing to leave the foster care system. The staff person will support 35 trained and certified Guardian ad Litem volunteers assigned to the youth to advocate on their behalf. Guardians will receive special training to address issues and needs of teens and develop sound transition plans including educational and career goals.

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Patty Walker, 17<sup>th</sup> Circuit Director says, “Guardians ad Litem play a significant role in navigating our teens through the system of care. They are not only a voice for the youth in the court and the community, but serve as positive role models in life as well. This grant will allow more of our teens to benefit from and enjoy the experience of having a Guardian ad Litem.”

Theresa Flury, Executive Director of the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program in Tallahassee said, “the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program is committed to ensuring teens in foster care receive the support they need to be successfully transitioned to adulthood.” Ms. Flury feels confident the grant will “increase our ability to provide concentrated advocacy for teens during this critical time in their lives.”

*For more information on how to become a guardian ad litem, log onto our website at [www.GuardianadLitem.org](http://www.GuardianadLitem.org) or call 1-866-341-1GAL.*

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