



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

GUARDIAN AD LITEM MONTH

WHEREAS, the Guardian ad Litem Program is a partnership of community advocates and professional staff providing a powerful voice on behalf of Florida's abused and neglected children; and

WHEREAS, many children in Florida are living in substitute care away from their families and need to have an independent advocate working on their behalf; and

WHEREAS, 7,000 volunteers work tirelessly to provide that independent advocacy on behalf of dependent children around the state; and

WHEREAS, over 5,200 children are still awaiting the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem; and

WHEREAS, the State Agency Initiative was launched to raise awareness and increase the number of Guardian ad Litem volunteers within the state agencies; and

WHEREAS, many partners in this remarkable initiative have committed to raising awareness of the Program through a variety of methods including hosting "Guardian ad Litem Month" within their agency this March as well as through the sharing of resources that highlight the importance of the Program and the need for volunteers; and

WHEREAS, March 25th is Guardian ad Litem Day at the Capitol to give a voice to abused and neglected children navigating a child welfare system that can be lonely and confusing and honoring the guardians ad litem working to ensure children do not get lost in the system;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Charlie Crist, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing March 2009 as *Guardian ad Litem Month*.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capitol, this 24th day of February in the year two thousand nine.

Handwritten signature of Charlie Crist in blue ink.

Governor