

Outback to Sponsor Seminole County GAL Program

Outback Steakhouse is now the premier location for the Seminole County Guardian ad Litem Appreciation Luncheon.

Once a month the restaurant will open its doors to more than 100 GAL volunteers before the customers arrive. Outback's warm and cozy environment is the perfect setting for the dedicated and loving GAL volunteers' luncheon. This partnership is Outback's way of supporting the community and honoring the hard work of the Guardians.

The Appreciation Luncheon is a time for GAL volunteers to relax and share their recent experiences and insights. Selected members give special talks expressing the dedication and love they have for the children they represent. "Outback is honored to accommodate the GAL Program, which is a more than worthy cause," said manager Amy Pickard. Outback will provide the food and service free of cost.

In the midst of the overwhelming uncertainty of a family separation case, a **Guardian ad Litem** is often all children have. GAL volunteers help children *during* this confusing process by giving them the attention they need. In order to more accurately represent children in court, most volunteers go above and beyond the call of duty. GAL volunteers care about the children they serve and don't think twice about the challenge. Their responsibilities include:

- Gathering information from all persons who may impact each child's case
- Consulting with medical, social, psychological and law enforcement workers
- Providing recommendations and information for judges to consider when ruling
- Advocating each child's best interest, protecting them from insensitive treatment
- Above all, visiting regularly, becoming a friend the children can trust and depend on

Separation from family is traumatizing. These young people are marked with lifetime emotional scars, affecting their self-esteem. The time to help is the present. Providing careful and sensitive support for children involved in emotional separation is an honorable act of creating history and memories that will last a lifetime.

You can help. Guardians agree that serving as a volunteer is the one chance the community has to make the separation process right for its children. GAL Volunteer Anthony Orr explains:

"Our kids have a lot of hurdles placed in their way when they are born, and, without help, not many will make it without severe emotional, health and educational handicaps. We need more resources, and better techniques, to deal with severely dysfunctional and toxic families..."

In other words, the Seminole county GAL needs volunteers! Use the contact information below to find out if you are eligible.

*To inquire with the Seminole County Gaurdian ad Litem Program please call. (407) 665-5370.
For other counties call, (904) 534-8515 or visit <http://www.gal.fl.gov> for more information.*

Outback Steakhouse has almost 1,200 locations in the U.S. and 20 other countries. It offers steak, chicken and seafood served in an Australian themed atmosphere. Please visit <http://www.outback.com/> for more information.