

Proclamation



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH APRIL 2022

- WHEREAS,** April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and April 17-23rd, 2022, is National Volunteer Week; and
- WHEREAS,** the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office provides representation for abused, abandoned, and neglected children in dependency court proceedings; and
- WHEREAS,** the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office, current best interests model of representation, is nationally recognized as best practice because it uses a multi-disciplinary team model that includes an attorney, a certified child advocate manager, and a trained volunteer or pro bono attorney; and
- WHEREAS,** for more than 40 years, the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office has provided the most vulnerable children in Florida with an adult from their community who is a consistent, positive presence in the child's life; and
- WHEREAS,** the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office provides the highest quality community advocacy and legal representation to protect each child's rights and best interests; and
- WHEREAS,** for more than 30 years, the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office has provided independent legal advocacy for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children located throughout Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** in 2021, the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office had more than 13,000 volunteers, and those volunteers advocated for more than 37,000 children in Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** the Guardian ad Litem Program in the 3rd Judicial Circuit, serving Columbia, Suwannee, Hamilton, Lafayette, Dixie, Madison and Taylor Counties oversees a volunteer base of over 60 people; and those volunteers advocate for more than 500 children in the 3rd Judicial Circuit; and
- WHEREAS,** Guardian ad Litem pro bono attorneys sacrifice time worth over three million dollars annually to the State of Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** Guardian ad Litem volunteers sacrifice time and mileage worth millions of dollars annually to the State of Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** Guardian ad Litem volunteers have provided an invaluable service to Dependency Court Judges; and
- WHEREAS,** Studies show that children with a Guardian ad Litem are more likely to be adopted, half as likely to re-enter foster care, less likely to spend time in long-term foster care, more likely to have a permanency plan, and more likely to perform well in school; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office and their commitment and dedication to individuals, families, and communities everywhere through service, delivery, research, education, and legislative advocacy.

I, Stephen M. Witt, Mayor of the City of Lake City do hereby proclaim the month of **April 2022** as Child Abuse Prevention and Volunteer Appreciation Month.



In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal to be affixed this 21st day of March 2022.

Stephen M. Witt, Mayor
City of Lake City