



# voices for children foundation, inc.

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BEING A VOICE

Inaugural Issue - Summer 2010



"To BE A VOICE for someone who could not yet speak - was a powerful experience." - Diane, June GAL Volunteer of the Month

## Ten Years Later - Still a Loud Voice

Diane has lived in Miami for over 30 years. As a long-time resident, Diane felt compelled to become involved in something greater than her own self-interest and decided to become a Guardian ad Litem (GAL). Since 2000 she has worked on many cases, some difficult and some less challenging. However, the children have always served to remind her of why she became a GAL and why she loves Being A Voice.

When asked to recall a memorable case, Diane tells the story of a newborn baby boy, recklessly abandoned in a dumpster. He still had his umbilical cord attached when he was found. The baby was placed in a foster home where the foster parent felt an immediate connection with the child. "On my first home visit," says Diane "she expressed the desire to adopt him."

With every home visit Diane made, she was elated with joy to see the love the foster mother expressed for this child, who while still so young had already had such a difficult life. She noticed the home slowly filling up with a car seat, a bouncer, toys, books and baby clothes. "When I held the child during my visits, I was often dumbfounded," Diane recalls, "how could a person literally *throw this child away?*"

Diane continued to visit with the child and foster parent while the court completed diligent searches to locate the unknown mother and father. In observing the foster parent with the baby, Diane believed that the foster parent could give him all the necessary tools to eventually become an asset to his family and the community. "This was the opinion I voiced to the court," explains Diane.

Every effort was made to reunify the baby with the parents but as the department completed its diligent searches, the parents were still unknown. The foster parent filed for adoption of the child and his adoption date was set. "The judge's chamber was full of everyone who was involved in the case and there was not a dry eye in the room."

Voices For Children, in conjunction with the Guardian ad Litem Program, is proud to name Diane as the June 2010 GAL Volunteer of the Month. Her commitment to the program and strong sense of duty are exemplary, and it is the commitment of volunteers like Diane that allow our program to thrive.

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Michael N. Rosenberg, VFC Board Chair, Johan Askowitz, former VFC Board member, Nelson F. Hincapie, VFC President and CEO

## Mayor Alvarez Proclaims Day in honor of Johan Askowitz

On Thursday, May 6, 2010, Voices For Children Foundation celebrated as Mayor Alvarez proclaimed the day *Johan Askowitz Day*, in honor of former Board member and longtime child advocate Johan Askowitz. Ms. Askowitz is one of the longest-serving members of the Voices For Children Foundation's Board of Directors, serving from 1987 to January 2010. As a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) volunteer since July 1988, she holds an impressive record of involvement in more than fifty cases with the GAL Program, and rejoices **Being a Voice** for well over one-hundred children in our Miami-Dade community.

True to her commitment to making a difference in the lives of Miami-Dade's most vulnerable members, in 2006-2007, Johan served as Chair of Voices' Programs and Special Projects Committee, which focuses on providing foster children with life-enhancing opportunities and meeting their immediate needs. Through her involvement on this committee, as well as countless other committees over the years, Ms. Askowitz has brought a notable strength to the organization with her spirit, commitment to service, and devotion to children in the foster care system

Over 20 years of enthusiastic volunteer service has shown that Ms. Askowitz is committed to bringing hope, promise and opportunity to the abused, neglected and abandoned children of Miami-Dade County. Congratulations Johan and thank you for all that have done to **Be A Voice!**

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT I, CARLOS ALVAREZ, MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, CHAIRMAN DENNIS C. MOSS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ON BEHALF OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AND THIS COMMUNITY, do hereby proclaim Thursday, May 6, 2010,

## *Johan Askowitz Day*

## EVENTS



Whole Foods Market in conjunction with Voices For Children Foundation is promoting **Change for Change**. This new program, which will run through July 4th, allows customers to donate their \$0.10 reusable bag refund to Voices For Children. Simply shop at Whole Foods between now and July 4th, bring in your reusable bag for your groceries, and at check-out donate your refund to **Change for Change** and **Voices For Children Foundation**.

Where: Whole Foods Market  
6701 Red Road (Red Road and US 1)  
Coral Gables, FL 33143

The mission of Voices For Children Foundation is to raise funds to ensure that every abused and neglected child in Miami-Dade County has a court-appointed Guardian ad Litem and that financial assistance and other resources are available for their accompanying health, educational, and social needs.



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