

# GAL Survey Results

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Sun, Jul 2, 2023 at 11:59 AM

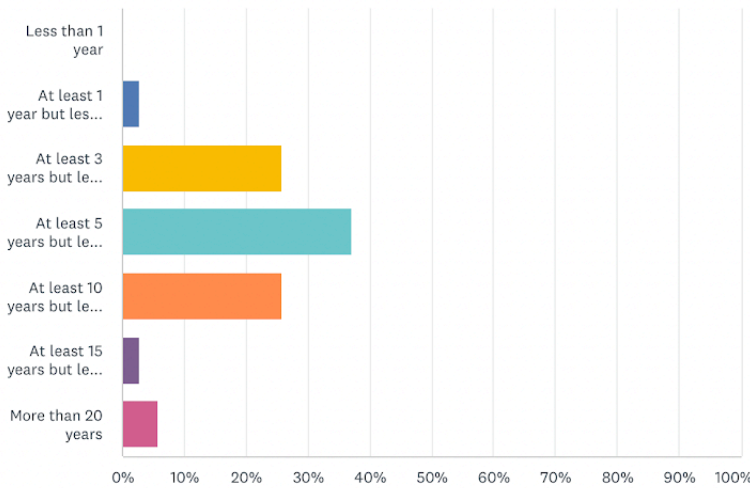
Draft To: Mike Tikkanen Invisible Children <mtikkanen@invisiblechildren.org>

Q1

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### About how many years have you been a Guardian ad litem?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

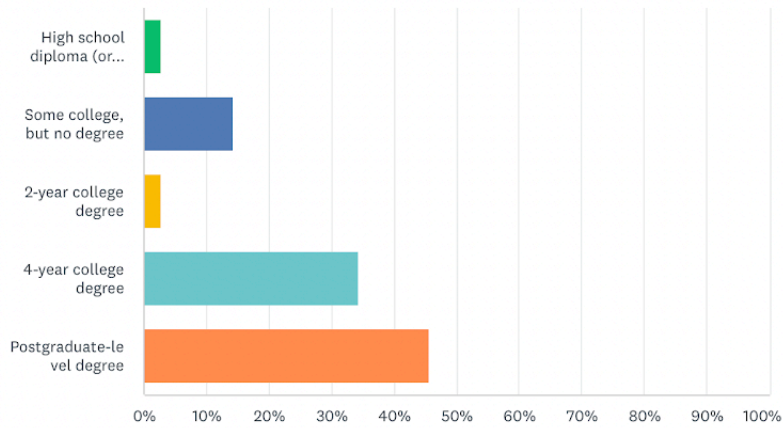


| ANSWER CHOICES                           | RESPONSES |
|--|-----------|
| Less than 1 year                         | 0.00% 0   |
| At least 1 year but less than 3 years    | 2.86% 1   |
| At least 3 years but less than 5 years   | 25.71% 9  |
| At least 5 years but less than 10 years  | 37.14% 13 |
| At least 10 years but less than 15 years | 25.71% 9  |
| At least 15 years but less than 20 years | 2.86% 1   |
| More than 20 years                       | 5.71% 2   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>35</b> |



## What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

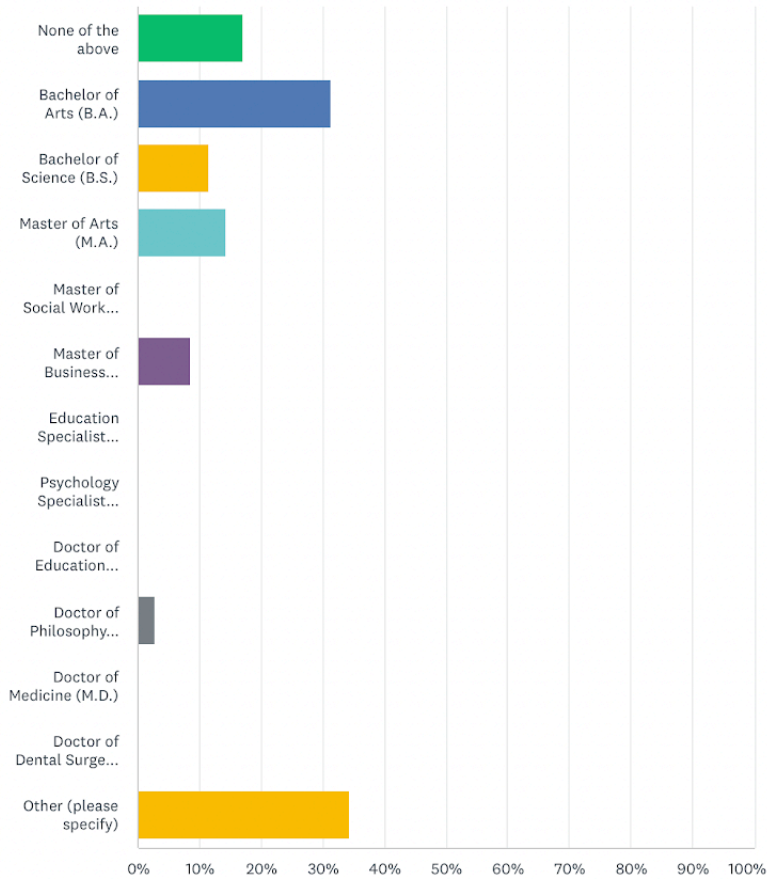


| ANSWER CHOICES                 | RESPONSES |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| ▼ High school diploma (or GED) | 2.86% 1   |
| ▼ Some college, but no degree  | 14.29% 5  |
| ▼ 2-year college degree        | 2.86% 1   |
| ▼ 4-year college degree        | 34.29% 12 |
| ▼ Postgraduate-level degree    | 45.71% 16 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>35</b> |



## What graduate or postgraduate degrees do you hold? (check all that apply)

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES                             | RESPONSES |
|--|-----------|
| None of the above                          | 17.14% 6  |
| Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)                    | 31.43% 11 |
| Bachelor of Science (B.S.)                 | 11.43% 4  |
| Master of Arts (M.A.)                      | 14.29% 5  |
| Master of Social Work (M.S.W.)             | 0.00% 0   |
| Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) | 8.57% 3   |
| Education Specialist (Ed.S.)               | 0.00% 0   |
| Psychology Specialist (Psy.S.)             | 0.00% 0   |
| Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)                | 0.00% 0   |
| Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)               | 2.86% 1   |
| Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)                  | 0.00% 0   |
| Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.)          | 0.00% 0   |
| Other (please specify)                     | 34.29% 12 |

RESPONSES (12)

WORD CLOUD

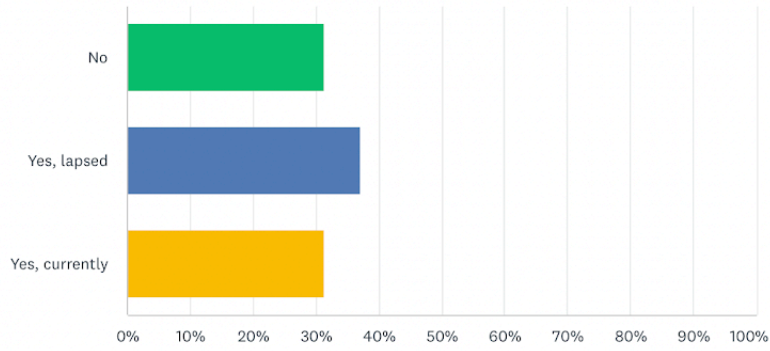
TAGS (0)

Sentiments: OFF

*Of the 12 who responded "other": 7 Juris Doctor, 1 Master of Education, 1 Registered Nurse*

# Have you been awarded certification or licensure in a profession?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES |
|------------------|-----------|
| ▼ No             | 31.43% 11 |
| ▼ Yes, lapsed    | 37.14% 13 |
| ▼ Yes, currently | 31.43% 11 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>35</b> |

[Comments \(21\)](#)

Q5

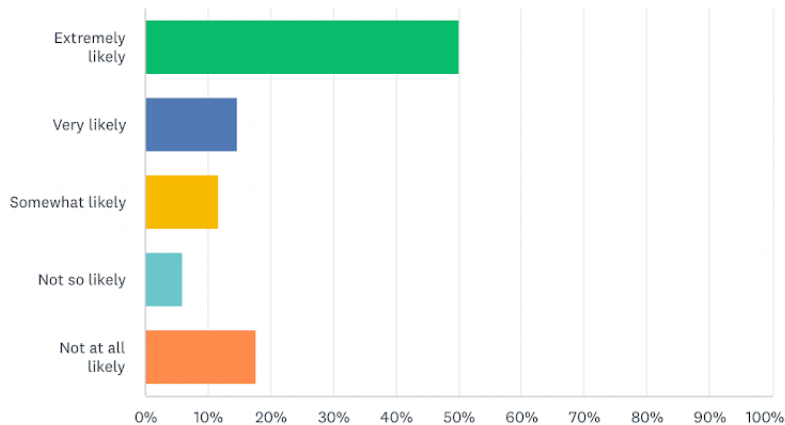


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## How likely are you to want to continue volunteering as a GAL?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES    | RESPONSES |           |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Extremely likely  | 50.00%    | 17        |
| Very likely       | 14.71%    | 5         |
| Somewhat likely   | 11.76%    | 4         |
| Not so likely     | 5.88%     | 2         |
| Not at all likely | 17.65%    | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      |           | <b>34</b> |

Q6



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## In your opinion, what value do volunteers bring to the GAL program?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 0

RESPONSES (35)

WORD CLOUD

TAGS (0)

Sentiments: OFF 

We advocate for these children without paycheck and without allegiance to anyone or anything other than the child. We are the program's 'deep bench,' skilled substitutes available to supplement a very limited (high-turnover) team of paid GALs. I'd say we are an indispensable asset.

An ethical commitment to fulfill a calling to advocate for vulnerable children because it is right and not for compensation.

Experience, time and enthusiasm

We have the ability to spend more time with the families and children. We don't get overworked because we only take cases we want to take. We do this free of charge so we are passionate.

We are an outside source, not part of the Department. We are totally independent and work many hours voluntarily working to advocate for children in the system.

Tremendous amounts of life and lived experiences, and, in some cases, many years in professional positions serving

children and families. We are willing to do the support and observations on evenings and weekends. We have a deep commitment to our cases.a

Commitment, dedication, life experience, time, ability to focus on just a few cases to can be more through,

Independent voice with life experience

Prior to Marti Swanson's death, I would have been very likely to continue volunteering. With her passing, I am unsure if I will continue due to concerns around supervision and guidance. In my opinion, volunteers have the time to invest in getting to know the child and the family system. With smaller caseloads, strong supervision, and ongoing training, volunteers are able to be strong advocates for what is in the child's best interest. Volunteers bring their own educational backgrounds and life experiences to the GAL program as well. But the greatest value is the time we have to build trusting relationships with the child, their parents, families, foster families, providers. This allows us to learn more information which helps inform the best outcomes for children.

Diverse perspective and support to a busy system.

They can help meet caseload staffing needs.

Advocacy for the best outcome for children in need

I feel that just the fact we are volunteers provides us with an additional mechanism to connect with children and their families. When I first introduce myself and explain my role to families they are amazed that what I do for them I do for free. For many it is the first time they meet someone from within the system who is trying to help them without getting anything for the effort. Parents are extremely grateful, kids don't believe it. I feel everyone involved with the families has a great appreciation for our efforts.

Create community awareness of issues kids and family face, bring transparency to child protection, and help build confidence in our courts. Also humanize the process, lower employee caseloads and bring diversity in all ways.

A layman's wisdom and perspective on the Child Welfare system.

Positive impact on the case regarding what is in the best interest of the child(ren) involved.

A huge service to children needing a support person during their foster time.

Our value is to the children we serve and the families they represent as well as the foster parents that are actively caring for the children. We have the experience, expertise, tie and resourcefulness to assess all parties and encourage communication.

Volunteers bring a diversity of life experience and subject matter expertise and share their time generously. They provide stability for the children they work with even as the workers, judges, and sometimes placements change.

As a volunteer, I only take 1-2 cases on at a time and thus allows my time, energy, and dedication to be at a level that every judge in a case I have been on, states the wealth and depth of knowledge surrounding the situation, my connection to the children and insight into the best interest if their needs is so thorough and insightful that he/she feels they have the information to make decisions based on the very best interest if the the children. In a system where the number of caseloads that a given social worker and employed guardian ad litem is being pushed to the limit, I feel the Volunteer GAL's make sure that children are not falling through cracks. I also believe that the dedication it takes to do the work that Volunteer GAL's do, ensures that only those who will make it their life's mission to look out for the best interest of these children are the ones taking cases in an ever growing system of children in need!

The value in volunteers is to take some of the workload off of employees, which allows us all to spend more time with the children.

time, resources, experiences

Most volunteers are older and bring lifes' experiences to their roles as GALs.

We have the time to focus on the child and family and really get to know them and their needs to more effectively advocate to the court "best interest of the child"



Flexibility, less case management, more time to spend with kiddos ie weekends

A fresh set of eyes, a love for children, and more time to devote to each case

Employees are overwhelmed with work and volunteers lighten the load and are able to dedicate more time and effort to children and families in need.

Volunteers work for their kiddos, not for money. Volunteers choose their caseload based on the time they're able to commit to their kids.; they're not stressed or time-poor. Volunteers don't require benefits; cost savings for dept. Volunteers are 100% committed to serving the best interests of the kiddos they serve. Volunteers bring knowledge/expertise/experience from a variety of professional roles and industries beyond child welfare; which adds depth, creative problem-solving, perspective, and innovation to the role that employee GALs cannot.

The volunteers are a critically important asset to the Juvenile Court processes. As initially a volunteer and then a 20 + year employee I can readily state the key aspects of the positive benefits of volunteers

Volunteer GALs spend more time learning about the children and family. They also stay with the children longer than any other party to the cases. This provides continuity and a historical perspective that know one else has... boutAge, wisdom, skills, compassion, competence, high quality metrics, the time it takes to work on a case effectively, a diversity of knowledge and skills, a non-institutional voice for children that isn't part of the paid ecosystem of "well-credentialed professionals" that has t led to good outcomes for children.

Dedication; professionalism; time; life experience

out of the box thinking; lots of time to devote to a few cases; life experience outside the child protection system

Time, energy, and a love for what we are doing. Volunteers in this program are not underpaid or overworked and do a great job for the families and kiddos we work with.

Providing a voice for the child in the complex court system