

# Charlotte court collects gifts for Guardian ad Litem kids

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PUNTA GORDA — Gifts for 87 kids were picked up Monday from the Charlotte County Clerk of Court's office to go to children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned.

"Our office is proud to partner with Guardian ad Litem to help bring joy to a child's holiday season," said Clerk of Court Roger Eaton. "I'm so proud that we had about 40 clerks from my office sponsor a child!"

The Guardian Wish Campaign, of the Guardian ad Litem Program for Charlotte County, is designed

to collect new toys and clothing for children who have been removed from their homes and are staying with relatives, in foster homes and in youth shelters. Many of the homes and shelters do not have the means to purchase gifts for children for the holidays.

Local Guardian ad Litem volunteers distribute the gifts to the children just prior to the holidays. Guardian ad Litem volunteers are child advocates who monitor the child's situation and report to the court to ensure the child's best interests are being represented.

Jessica Stanfield, executive director of the Guardian ad

Litem Foundation for the 20th Judicial Circuit, said she used the campaign as a teaching moment for her 2-year-old daughter, getting her involved in shopping for the kids.

Attorney Russell Kirshy, who has participated in the Guardian Wish Campaign for many years, also said his own kids look forward to shopping for the Guardian ad Litem children every year.

"There's a lot of kids who could really use something," he said. "It's a small gesture."

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