



**Snohomish County**  
**Office of the Executive**  
**Aaron Reardon**  
*County Executive*

## **Media Advisory– April 13, 2007**

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### **Volunteer to improve children's lives in Snohomish County**

*April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month*

This year alone, over 1500 cases involving children will be processed through the Snohomish County child welfare court system. Through no fault of their own, these children have been removed from their homes due to allegations of abuse and neglect by their caretakers. The County advocates for these children through the Snohomish County Volunteer Guardian ad Litem (VGAL) Program.

“This is an amazing program that places children in the hands of people that are truly looking out for that child’s best interest,” says Executive Reardon. “It is an opportunity to provide a sense of security and safety that every child deserves.”

VGAL’s come from all walks of life and as appointed representatives of the Superior Court have been making a difference in the lives of abused and neglected Snohomish County children since 1978. In 2006, 163 volunteers advocated for approximately 500 dependent children. This year those numbers will increase. By increasing the number of volunteers in the program, Snohomish County will be able to achieve its goal that every child who needs a VGAL will have one.

Following initial program training, VGAL’s conduct an independent investigation of their appointed dependency case and provide recommendations to the court in advocacy for the child’s best interest. Most VGALs remain with an assigned case until a child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

For information about becoming a VGAL volunteer, please contact the Snohomish County Volunteer Guardian ad Litem Program at 425.388.7854 or visit [www.snoco.org](http://www.snoco.org) and search “Volunteer Guardian ad Litem”