Windermere resident Meena Jotwani gives back by volunteering as a certified guardian ad litem.

W hen Meena Jotwani first learned about the Guardian ad L

Jotwani, a Windermere resident, became a certified guardian ad litem in September 2008, following an a

"Once a child comes into care, the court appoints a guardian ad litem to their case," Jotwani said. "We are a

from tutoring to psychological counseling. Our goal is to ensure that the child ends up in a permanent ho

Being a guardian ad litem opened Jotwani's eyes to a world she has never known.

"Prior to getting involved, I had no idea that there were so many families out there struggling," she said.

"Being a guardian ad litem is extremely rewarding," she said. "Initially, it can be very hard on the child. T

During her time with the program, Jotwani has proven herself to be an exemplary guardian ad litem.

"Meena is dedicated to the children she represents," said Lisa Shiese, assistant director of the Florida Guardian ad Litem Program. "She never misses a court date and fo rms relatio

Training and Case Coordinator Tamera Tajrishi added, "[Meena] has the desire to be involved as a guar

For Jotwani, one of the highlights of the program has been meeting the foster families.

"They have such big hearts," she said. "It is encouraging to know there are so many good people out the

"Still, there are close to 30,000 children in care in the state of Florida. Unfortunately, there are approxima

Jotwani strongly encourages others to look into volunteering for the program, as the rewards far outweig

"At times you may feel like you are just one person in this world, but you can really make a world of diffe

For more information about the Guardian ad Litem Program, call 850-922-7213 or visit www.guardianadlitem.org.