



## Gail Bowler

Gail Bowler has been a ProKids CASA volunteer since 2000. Throughout her advocacy on behalf of children from newborn to teen, Gail has been a powerful force driving towards a safe, permanent and nurturing home for every child.

**Daniel** was only 5 years old when he entered the foster care system and had seen a lot. He had been bounced around among relatives after it had become clear his parents were addicted to drugs. Daniel was direct about his situation, telling people his parents were “crackheads.”

He was placed with a stern relative who provided stability for Daniel, but not much nurturing. Despite his mother’s problems, it was clear that Daniel’s mother loved him very much. Although she wanted to raise her son, Daniel’s mother refused substance abuse treatment again and again.

Gail never judged Daniel’s mother and believed that Daniel should be with her, but Gail also made it clear that she would not recommend Daniel’s return unless she got help. For a long time, Daniels’ mom remained resistant, even trying to get Gail removed from the case claiming Gail was “against her.” Gail was consistent in her expectations. She did anything she could to encourage and help Daniel’s mom to get substance abuse treatment, even taking her to treatment while facing her own health issues. David’s mother overcame her addiction. With Gail’s persistence and help, Daniel’s was reunited safely with his mother.

***“Patience and fortitude conquer all things.”***

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Lavonne**, a 14-year-old girl came in to foster care after suffering severe trauma to her esophagus. Lavonne’s father, with whom she lived, had emptied some air conditioning fluid into an old bottle and Lavonne, developmentally delayed, found it in the garbage and drank it. She required extensive medical care and her father was unable to care for her. In addition, Lavonne had serious behavioral issues. Unable to reunify with her father or relatives, Lavonne remained in foster care. Gail was her constant advocate and led a team of professionals to plan for Lavonne’s future, helping Lavonne transition into an adult group home for people with developmental disabilities.

**David, Tasha, Tanika, and Tonya** are four siblings and were all under the age of four when Gail was assigned to them. The children were placed with their grandparents, who were not expecting or planning to take on four kids. They both worked full-time and underwent an incredible adjustment in caring for four young children, including a newborn.

In the beginning, the grandparents were overwhelmed and often vented their frustrations at Gail and the caseworker. Over time, with Gail’s patience and commitment to the children, they began to see Gail as an ally and appreciate her involvement.

The grandparents needed a lot of help and support during this time, and Gail was there to help locate community resources to assist them. When it became clear the children would not reunify with their parents, Gail strongly advocated on behalf of the children and the grandparent’s received custody of their grandchildren.

In addition to her work as a CASA volunteer, Gail helps ProKids and our children in many other ways. Gail requests donations to ProKids for her birthdays, assists with the hundreds of holiday gifts donated for our children, and helped organize ProKids’ CASA Resource Library. For all these reasons, Gail Bowler has been named the 2009 Leslie R. Jaffe Volunteer of the Year.

*2009 Leslie R. Jaffe Volunteer of the Year*