

Maggie Ozarowski:

About a year ago, I was looking for a new volunteer opportunity, something I hadn't done before, and I've never practiced family law.

James Kole:

I was involved in some other charity work that I did not find particularly rewarding.

Bridget Smitha:

There were some people that would rather take the easy let's read to children volunteer programs.

James Kole:

But I felt like I could do more. And I wanted to do more.

Bridget Smitha:

Why can't I give up an hour or two of my time to help these children and hopefully, maybe make their lives a little bit better?

Maggie Ozarowski:

It's more of a relationship than I think your typical attorney-client, especially attorney-client pro bono experience is.

James Kole:

Are some of these cases difficult? Yes. But boy, do you feel like you're making a difference.

Bridget Smitha:

I think the misconception that people have about Guardian ad Litem is that it's going to be emotionally draining.

James Kole:

Is this something that I'm going to be able to do, not because of the time constraints, but is this something that's honestly going to break my heart is dealing with these kids? And I was worried about that. But once I got involved, it was an easy decision.

Pat Farrell:

To see that they ultimately realized that I was going to be there, and it was somebody that they could contact or when I told them I'd see him next month, that I really did show up and was there.

James Kole:

That is incredibly rewarding to know or feel like you are making a difference in the case of a child that absolutely needs it.

Pat Farrell:

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I personally view this as part of our responsibility, not as lawyers, as people of the members of this community.

Bridget Smitha:

You're meeting the children that you're working with. They're not a piece of paper. They're not a name on a page. It's an actual person.

Pat Farrell:

I think they are entitled to be nurtured like any other child is.

James Kole:

From the very first case, I felt like people that were at DCF or the Guardian ad Litem program, or the judge, whoever might be involved, people that are in this for a career, appreciated what I was doing, listen to what I had to say, and I felt like I was making a difference.

Bridget Smitha:

I'm very confident that you'll do one case and you'll just fall in love.