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Greetings,

As you may know, I have been appointed by the Cass County Associate Circuit Court as a Guardian ad Litem in your Order of Protection case now pending. The Court appoints a Guardian ad Litem to act as an attorney for children since they do not have the ability to come into court, present evidence, tell the court what they want or need or anything else. As part of my investigation into your matter I would like to speak with you. If you have an attorney, please forward this to them. I cannot speak to a represented party without the permission of your attorney.

You may be questioning why a Guardian ad Litem is being designated to assist in your case or wondering what their duty is. In a nutshell, a Guardian ad Litem in Missouri is an attorney assigned to stand for the child's best interest. A Guardian ad Litem may be assigned in paternity actions, adoptions, modifications, dissolutions, and certain neglect or abuse cases. This includes all child order of protection cases. The Guardian ad Litem's role is to investigate the case and recommend a solution to the court. In most cases, the Guardian ad Litem's investigation primarily involves informal separate meetings and interviews with the parties and possibly the children in addition to other individuals who could have relevant information regarding the child's welfare. They may also ask other experts for input and testimony in the case.

The Guardian ad Litem serves in the case until either the parents come to a written agreement that resolves the issues and the judge then approves it, or if there is a hearing and the case is decided by the judge. If the Guardian ad Litem is no longer necessary, the judge can discharge them. However, if the case is appealed, the Guardian ad Litem is involved in the appeal process unless ordered otherwise. If your case has a new motion filed in the future, the same or a different Guardian ad Litem may be appointed.

I take my roll as Guardian ad Litem very seriously and want to do my best to help the Court decide what is in the best interest of your child. Depending on the nature of the allegations and the age of the child I may or may not want to meet with them. We will make that decision together closer in time to the hearing on this matter. I almost never object to continuances in hearing dates as the GAL but I also do not want to be the one asking for continuances. Therefore, I do ask for you to contact me as soon as possible to get this process started.

Very truly yours,



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TRH