

Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders

October 22, 2015 summary minutes

Attending:

David Connors
Karolina Abuzyarova
Nancy Sylvester
Holly Kees
Nan Mendenhall
Daniel Musto
Julie Rigby
Kent Alderman
Rob Denton
Nels Holmgren
Judge Toomey
LeeAnn Frederick
Joe Taylor
James Toledo

Excused:

Ellen Silver
Wendy Fayles
James Brady
Lisa Thornton

No show:

Gonzalo Palza

Welcome, approval of minutes, announcements

The minutes were approved with a minor correction to the name of Rob Denton. Judge Connors expressed appreciation to Judge Toomey for her service as chair of the committee for the past year.

Legislative update

Shannon Alvey was not present, but emailed an update. The Office of Public Guardian (OPG) is moving forward with becoming its own office outside the Executive Director's Office at the Department of Human Services. Once established, OPG will be able to request increased funding needed due to the growing demand of their services.

Representative Cox is running a bill to remove the requirement for counsel for the respondent when the petitioner is a parent. The Guardianship Signature Program was suggested as a solution in order not to waive the representation requirement.

In addition, Shannon reported in the email that Claire Mantonya, Director of the Utah Disabilities Council requested a "video tutorial" on how to utilize OCAP and the Signature Program.

Karolina offered to follow up with Claire and suggest providing a live presentation to the Council.

Court Visitor Volunteer Program update

The purpose of the presentation was to brainstorm on the volunteer recruitment, as the program was running low on volunteers. Holly Kees, Court Visitor Volunteer Coordinator, reported that the program had 38 active volunteers; the total of 48 volunteers included the inactive volunteers at that time. Court Visitor Program had 30 whereabouts cases, 1 circumstances case, 1 well-being case, 5 excuse respondent from the hearing, and 1 audit case as of October 22, 2015.

WINGS

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Karolina solicited ideas for the recruitment and asked WINGS members to spread the word about volunteer opportunity in their own circles. She mentioned that the program's most successful volunteers are retired professionals. Nels Holmgren recommended Karolina to talk to AARP. Karolina notified that she has been in touch already with Alan Ormsby and Laura Polachek, PR specialist.

Judge Connors inquired about the feedback for the Court Visitor Program. Julie Rigby, Team Manager in the Third Judicial District, informed the group that when guardianship needs to be terminated due to possible abuse, neglect or exploitation, the Court doesn't have a way to find an alternative guardian. Julie was referring to the cases where a Court visitor was involved. Nan Mendenhall said that a recommendation of the judge is needed. Judge Connors pointed out that the court would welcome parties outside the court to flag the problems in guardianship cases. Nancy Sylvester indicated that possibly Steve Mikita from the Attorney General's Office, who advises Adult Protective Services, could be invited to be part of the conversation. According to APS, there are 10 cases per year that require a new guardian to be appointed in similar cases.

Education Subcommittee Report

Kent Alderman reported on the first two public education classes that were conducted this fall. Class on alternatives to guardianship on September 16, 2015 in Taylorsville only had two professionals in attendance. The class on guardianship procedures on October 16, 2015 at the Draper Senior Center had 8 people in attendance, including proposed guardians, interested parties and professionals. The last class coming up is going to take place on November 17th at the Liberty Senior Center in downtown Salt Lake City on the subject of community resources for guardians and caregivers. An online training program will be created from the training scripts.

Karolina suggested forming an education subcommittee targeting the Latino community. Volunteer court visitor, Helena Rosales, has agreed to help with outreach activity. Gonzalo Palza, Director of Centro de la Familia, did not show up at the meeting despite expressed interest. Karolina will follow up with the Mexican consulate to check for their interest in providing feedback for the contents of the training and outreach efforts. Kent Alderman expressed interest in continuing being part of the education subcommittee.

Guests

New WINGS members attended the meeting. LeeAnn Frederick and Joe Taylor from the SLCPD said they are interested in learning about the system of guardianship, so that they can provide referrals and become knowledgeable about community resources for vulnerable adults and caregivers. Committee members informed SLCPD about the Utah State Courts' Self-help Center. LeeAnn and Joe proceeded to the Law Library and obtained a box of card with contact information of the Self-help Center to distribute to their clients.

Another guest present was James Toledo from the Office of Indian Affairs. James was attending the WINGS meeting to further disseminate information at the Utah Tribal Leaders meeting. James will contact the Courts to see if a representative can make a presentation at the next meeting of the Utah Tribal Leaders. WINGS members were curious about collaboration between tribal and state governments and the way the judicial system works in different tribes.

Annual Assessment Meeting

No decision was made on the format of the annual assessment meeting. Judge Connors suggested having it in February 2016. Karolina offered to organize a half-day mountain retreat, if somebody can donate a facility. Nels Holmgren offered one of the rooms at the Department of Human Services. A final decision will be made at the December WINGS meeting.