



MEDINA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT

Probate and Juvenile Divisions

93 Public Square, Room 104, Medina, Ohio 44256

KEVIN W. DUNN
Judge

MEDIA RELEASE

March 5, 2019

Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program Seeks Compassionate Volunteers

MEDINA – The Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program is seeking additional volunteers to be a friend and advocate to help to make decisions in the best interest of wards in our community. The program, which began in 2004, currently has 29 active volunteers who assist adult wards who cannot manage their own affairs because of advanced age or some other mental or physical disability.

“When a person becomes unable to care for himself or herself, it may be necessary for the Probate Court to appoint a dedicated, compassionate guardian to assume the decision-making responsibilities for that individual and increase quality of life,” said Nicki Shook, Volunteer Guardianship Coordinator.

Volunteer Guardians assist “placed” wards in nursing facilities who are indigent. This means that the decision-making for the ward is person-centered only, including health and placement decisions. Guardians have the opportunity to develop a positive relationship with their ward, increase their knowledge of medical and other issues affecting the elderly, learn how to advocate within nursing facilities, hospitals and legal systems, and maintain flexibility of hours, all while gaining the satisfaction of helping someone in need. Four in-service trainings are offered each year to provide education on various topics that will help volunteers as they make determinations for their wards.

“Our goal is to ensure that we continue to provide our volunteers with a massive amount of support, not only from the Court who is the superior guardian, but to ensure that our volunteers know they are also supported by an attorney on each case, fellow volunteers, and the community,” Shook said.

A volunteer guardian must be 21 years old and a resident of Ohio. Shook said during interviews with prospective volunteers, she looks for a caring heart and sincere desire to assist the elderly to live their lives with dignity.

Judge Kevin W. Dunn said the Volunteer Guardianship Program has had a positive impact on not only wards, but the Court and our community as a whole and hopes that others will join the effort.

“A volunteer guardian can assist the Court in providing hands on information on the ward and his/her conditions, residence and caregiving. But under it all, wards are good people who also need the personal human touch which can be provided by visits, sharing news, a board game, or just befriending,” Judge Dunn said. “Humans were designed for many things; loneliness is not one of them. Step up and volunteer and share yourself with another. The Court will provide you with all the training and support to make this a memorable venture.”

For those interested in joining the Volunteer Guardianship Program or learning more, they can contact the Medina County Probate Court at (330) 725-9703.

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To learn more about the Medina County Juvenile and Probate Court or Court programs, visit our website at MedinaProbate.org.