



## FAQ's ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR LMM's GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES:

Volunteering as a guardian gives you the opportunity to meet a need in your own community for an at risk group of people. You will be able to reach out with a caring heart and hand to a person who likely is without family or close friends. You will gain experience in nurturing, advocating, and caring for another person who otherwise would have no one in his or her life. Perhaps most importantly, you will receive satisfaction in making someone's life better. With all of today's technology, there is nothing that can begin to replace the smile or touch of another human being. Only you can provide this!

### What are the volunteer positions?

#### *Guardian*

A Guardian serves as the legally appointed Guardian of Person for incompetent, indigent adults. The Volunteer Guardian acts in the best interest of the ward as an advocate and substitute decision-maker in the care and management of medical and personal affairs of the ward. Activities related to the management of a guardianship include the following:

- Regular visitation (at least monthly) to the nursing home where the ward lives.
- Monthly telephone contact with the nursing home.
- Attend the quarterly care conference for the ward, either in person or by teleconference.
- Contact/intervention with service providers and family members, as appropriate.
- Personal decision-making including living arrangements, medical care, and pre-need funeral arrangements.
- Documentation of all services provided to or on behalf of the ward.
- **NOTE: Volunteers have no financial obligation for the ward.**

#### *Friendly Visitor*

A Friendly Visitor provides companionship to the resident and valuable information to the resident's guardian through monthly visits. While visiting, the volunteer may talk, share stories, take walks, play cards, or enjoy other interests of the resident. The volunteer writes brief summaries of visits and other activities and reports findings to the guardian. Activities of the volunteer visitor include the following:

- Make at least one social visit per month or more often, with interactions based on the needs or desires of the ward.
- Completes visitation form and returns it to the guardian in a timely manner.
- Telephones guardian, as appropriate, to report observations or concerns about care.
- Documentation of all services provided to or on behalf of the ward.
- Performs other assigned duties.

#### *Volunteer Attorney*

A Volunteer Attorney serves as a consultant to a volunteer guardian. He or she works in conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator as cases are assigned and as tasks need to be accomplished. Activities of a Volunteer Attorney include the following:

- Act as attorney of record on all court filings.
- Preparation for and attendance at hearings, as necessary, especially when the case is contested.
- File Biennial reports.

- Be accessible to volunteer guardians in order to provide legal guidance and advice, as needed.

### **What are the requirements to become a volunteer?**

To become a Friendly Visitor the requirements are:

- Complete application, including references, interview with staff, and fingerprint/background check.
- Complete six hour (two 3-hour sessions) training program.
- Be familiar (through training) with guardianship standards of practice and ethics, and act in accordance to them.
- Maintain current valid Ohio's driver's license and insurance, and have access to automobile. If no driver's license, access to public transportation.

To become a Volunteer Guardian the requirements are:

- All volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.
- Volunteers who have been charged with or convicted of a crime involving theft, physical violence, or sexual or substance abuse usually cannot become a guardian.
- Complete application, including references, interview with staff, and fingerprint/background check.
- Complete six hour (two 3-hour sessions) training program.
- Be familiar (through training) with guardianship standards of practice and ethics, and act in accordance to them.
- Maintain current valid Ohio's driver's license and insurance, and have access to automobile. If no driver's license, access to public transportation.
- All volunteer guardians must complete continuing education as required by Probate Court.

### **What support is provided to volunteers?**

- The Volunteer Coordinator is available 24/7 for emergencies.
- An ethicist is available for consultation.
- Presentations and seminars are provided for volunteers to learn things they can use as a guardian.

### **How much of my time will be involved if I agree to volunteer?**

As a volunteer guardian, one-two hours per month would generally be needed after the first month. This time could be a combination of telephone and in-person contacts. Reporting requirements are minimal, but mandatory. The Probate Court requires a guardians report every two years and LMM require every Volunteer Guardian to complete monthly reports in the Volunteer Gateway database.

### **What can you tell me about the people who are in need of a volunteer?**

The people who are referred for guardianship must be adults, are most often indigent, lacking available or appropriate family and/or support systems, and have a mental disability as defined by law. All volunteers wards reside in nursing homes.

### **What kinds of things would I be doing as a volunteer?**

As a volunteer guardian your primary tasks would be health-related decision-making, placement-related decision-making, managing personal relationships issues, and advocating for your ward. You would always have staff available for consultation as you make decisions. Often volunteer guardians do special things for their wards-a drive in the country, coffee at McDonalds, if the guardian decides the ward is able. A token gift for their birthday or at holiday time, is a nice gesture, but is strictly up to the Volunteer and is not a requirement.

### **What costs am I likely to incur if I volunteer?**

You are not personally liable for any costs incurred by the ward that exceed the ward's assets. You incur the travel and telephone costs of having contact with the ward.

### **If I go through the training does that mean that I am committing myself to being a volunteer?**

There is a process to becoming a volunteer and you would not be asked to make a commitment until the training

is completed. After training is completed you will be asked if you are now ready to commit to being a volunteer guardian.

**What do I do and who do I call if and when I run into a problem after the relationship with the ward begins?**

In addition to information provided during the initial training, you will also receive an "As You Begin..." manual. This resource may help you with some problems. Should a problem, concern, or question arise at any time during the guardianship, contact the Volunteer Coordinator who will provide information or arrange for you to speak to someone who can assist you. Twenty-four hour, seven-day a week telephone support is always available.

**What kinds of paperwork will I have to do?**

The Court requires that a Guardian's Report be completed every two years. Volunteer guardians are required to keep records of the date, type, time, and content of contacts with the ward. Information on how to do this will be explained during the training. You must also complete monthly reports in the Volunteer Gateway Database.