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Advocates Fight for Alternatives to Guardianship



CANTON, MI. – July 31, 2007 – “Now that I don’t have a guardian, I feel free and can make my own decisions,” said Canton resident Christina Currin. “It doesn’t matter if I have a disability. I can make my own decisions and if I need help, I ask my family or friends, but I am the one who makes the final decision.”

For several years, guardianship was a justified way to protect the “best interests” of people with disabilities. Recently, opinions have shifted. For those capable of making their own decisions, society views guardianship as an obstacle; preventing people from reaching their full potential.

“Sometimes the guardian seems to make all of the decisions without the knowledge or consent of the person and then that becomes a civil rights issue, said Attorney Mary Bomgren. “That’s why there are several alternatives that people have been choosing over the past 10 decade or so.”

Christina used to have a guardian, someone that even put her in a nursing home without her consent and withheld her money! Times have changed and now Christina is happy and living her life, the way SHE wants to live it.

“I have my own apartment that I share with my roommate and I have a job. I come and go as I please and I don’t have to answer to someone that doesn’t care about me. I have surrounded myself with fun and loving people who only have my best interests at heart.”

Christina utilizes the supports and services offered by Community Living Services in Wayne County. CLS is a non-profit organization that promotes inclusion, full citizenship and a self-determined life for people with developmental disabilities. CLS serves over 2,700 people in Wayne County and is funded through the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency.

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