



The Court Visitor

Special Interest Resources:

- Activities for persons with Alzheimer's disease and personal approach:
<http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-activities.asp>
- WINGS webpage with most recent minutes and articles:
www.utcourts.gov/hotwto/family/GC/wings
- National Probate Court Standards:
<http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/spcts/id/240>

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Public Education Classes on Guardianship

Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) is planning three training sessions in April, May and June of 2015 on the following topics:

1. How to avoid guardianship (presented by the national guardianship expert and Director of the Courts Self-Help Center, Mary Jane Ciccarello);
2. Emergency guardianship: court process, medical evidence, reporting requirements (presented by elder law attorney and WINGS member, Kent Alderman);
3. Resources to support guardians (presented by Director of the non-profit "Jewish Family Services", Ellen Silver, LCSW).

Presentations will take place at senior centers or public libraries and will be recorded and posted on the Court's YouTube channel. More details coming soon.

Court Visitor Volunteer Program Case Management in December 2014-January 2015

The last issue of the court visitor newsletter was the first time we published the number and types of case assignments occurring each month. After today however, we have decided to send that information out to you monthly by email. If you are interested in receiving this data but email is not an effective method for reaching you, please contact Holly Kees at (801)238-7030 to request that it be mailed to you through the postal service. Future issues of the newsletter will not contain this case management review. The holidays brought with them a dry spell for the program. During the month of December we assigned a total of five cases. Two of these were whereabouts

assignments and originated from Weber County. The only other whereabouts case we assigned was from Washington County. Salt Lake County was responsible for the final two cases which were request to excuse the respondent from the hearing assignments. Despite the decrease in requests for court visitors during the month of December, the program has remained very active managing cases that carried over from previous month's assignments and engaging in numerous other activities that involve efforts to reduce neglect, abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults. The fluctuation in requests for court visitors is evident when comparing the case

management activities during the month of December and the first two weeks of January. It's exciting to be back in action with more requests this month than we had in December and there are still two more weeks remaining before the month is over! Davis County has clearly utilized the program for whereabouts requests as they already have three such assignments this month. A whereabouts assignment from Weber County furnished the last of four active cases in the Second District. Finally, the case assignments for January total nine so far this month including five requests to excuse the respondent from the hearing which originated from Salt Lake City.

General Counsel – Brent Johnson



“The independent voice of a court visitor is often key to resolving cases.”

~Brent Johnson~

Brent is the General Counsel for the Utah State Courts and has been with the courts for more than 20 years. Brent attended the University of Utah for both undergraduate and graduate work, receiving degrees in English and the Law. With the departure of Tim Shea, Brent has recently assumed oversight of the Court Visitor Program and has been learning about all the great things that the Court Visitor Program does for the judicial system.

Brent was born in California but has lived most of his life in Utah. Brent grew up in Sandy before the area was dominated by subdivisions. The Sandy neighborhood consisted of miles of undeveloped land. Brent spent his summer days floating down Little Cottonwood creek, playing baseball in an open field, and riding motorcycles through miles of open trails. Brent developed a love for the outdoors and he is an avid fisher, hunter, hiker, and camper. Brent has written and published several articles on fishing. Brent was lucky

to marry a woman who has the same outdoor interests. Brent has 3 daughters and 1 son and although they only mildly share his interests they share a lot of time together in the outdoors and enjoying other activities in the city and throughout the state.

Brent recognizes the importance of volunteerism and helping others who are in disadvantaged situations. Brent currently assists and mentors a refugee family from Iraq. Also, every Monday, Brent goes to the Homeless Youth Resource Center and prepares lunch for the youth who are receiving services from the center. Volunteering is rewarding, and Brent knows that those who receive these services are very appreciative.

Brent is very appreciative of Karolina and Holly for all their efforts in growing and maintaining the Court Visitor Program, and Brent is very appreciative of all those who provide volunteer services. The program depends

almost entirely on volunteers and it is great to see the quality and character of those individuals who have volunteered.

Volunteers come from all backgrounds and it is great to see so many individuals who are interested in helping the court system serve the needs of those who do not have the ability to provide their own care.

Brent has stated: “I envision the Court Visitor Program will continue to grow. I am hopeful that judges throughout the state will realize the benefits of the program and will increase their use of the program. The work is very important to those who need guardians. These individuals are usually in disadvantaged situations. The independent voice of a court visitor is often key to resolving cases. I want to thank all of the volunteers for the assistance they provide.”

Spotlight on Court Visitor Volunteer Program Staff



Karolina Abuzyarova

Karolina joined the Courts in 2011 to build a new guardianship monitoring program. She is responsible for program development, community partnerships, training curriculum and volunteer recruitment. Karolina helped establish and is coordinating Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders. She enjoys her job as it aligns with her life views and as she finds herself in the company of dedicated caring people.

Before immigrating to the United States in 2008, she managed Executive Development Program for the Ukrainian executive branch at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and served as a Government Liaison Specialist for the Global Libraries Program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation at the International Research and Exchanges Board in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Karolina holds M.A. in Comparative Politics and Public Administration from the University of Utah where she was E. Muskie/Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellow. She annually travels to South America to keep up with her sense of adventure. Recently naturalized U.S. citizen, Karolina calls Salt Lake City her home as she is an avid nature and art enthusiast.



Holly Kees

Social Work has been a passion for Holly Kees since she graduated High School in 1992. She began her career at 18 as a residential counselor, working with developmentally disabled adults. From there she went on to obtain her Bachelors in Social Work from Hood College in 1997 and her Master's of Social Work from the University of Maryland in 2001 while continuing to work full time in various areas of the field.

Following her graduation she completed two years of post graduate clinical supervision, passed the ASWB exam and became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in 2004. Spending 13 years as an employee of the Washington County Health Department in Maryland, she worked in clinical practice as a therapist and in management as the director of a long term residential treatment facility for addicted women and their children.

Prior to coming to the Court Visitor Program, she was employed as the supervisor of child protective services. Her interest in this program evolved from experiencing the loss of her father to Parkinson's and over the past year and a half she has found her role as the Court Visitor Volunteer Coordinator to be extremely rewarding.



Nancy Sylvester

Nancy Sylvester is the newest Staff Attorney with the Administrative Office of the Courts and is one of the legal advisers to the Court Visitor Program. She is a California native and is licensed to practice law in both her home state and Utah.

Before assuming her current position, Nancy served as the Judicial Assistant to Chief Justice Durrant at the Utah Supreme Court. Some of her other prior job titles include victim advocate for a local domestic violence shelter and business owner in the automotive industry.

In her spare time, Nancy loves singing in local choirs, walking her dog, trying out new recipes, and spending time with her family.



Court Visitor Program

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(801) 238-7030

FAX:
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E-MAIL:
visitor@utcourts.gov

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.utcourts.gov/visitor

Upcoming Events

Utah Advocacy Day

Alzheimer's Association will ask Utah legislators to designate Alzheimer's disease as a public health issue.

Date: 02/05/2015
Time: 11am-12pm
Location: Utah State Capitol, 350 N. State Street, Salt Lake City
Contact: Melissa Lee
801-265-1944
mlee@alz.org

Reason to Hope

Presentation about Alzheimer's and devastating affects it has on our state.

Date: 02/25/2015
Time: 12:00pm-1:30pm
Location: Salt Lake City Downtown Marriott

Date: 04/02/2015
Time: 7:30am-10:00am
Location: Provo Marriott Hotel & Convention

Center

RSVP to Liz at 801-265-1944, Contact: Melissa Lee, 801-265-1944, mlee@alz.org

Interdisciplinary Seminar Series on Aging - Spring 2015

Dates: February 2, 23; March 2, 23; April 6, 20.
Time: 12:00pm -1:30pm
Location: University of Utah College of Social Work, Okazaki Meeting Room (155-B).

Utah Coalition for Caregiver Support (UCCS)

All who are interested in issues related to caregiving are invited and welcome. The expectation of membership involves active participation in meetings and other Coalition activities.

Location: Department of Human Services 195 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, UT
Date: 02/04/2015, every first Wednesday
Time: 12pm - 2pm
Simone Black, 801-680-0883, simone@jenkins-soffe.com

Medicare 101

Free workshop designed to inform those turning 65 or preparing to retire about Medicare enrollment requirements and available benefits. Sponsored by Davis County Senior Services.

Date: 2/11/2015
Location: Layton Library - 155 N. Wasatch Dr. Layton, 84041
Time: 6:30pm-7:30pm
Contact: Marie Jorgensen, 801-525-5086,
mjorgensen@daviscountytah.gov

Survey of State Guardianship Laws

Recent collaboration between WINGS and Social Security Administration resulted in a report "SSA Representative Payee: Survey of State Guardianship Laws and Court Practices" published on December 2014, www.acus.gov/research-projects/ssa-representative-payee-program

The Social Security Administration has asked the Administrative Conference of the United States to study state adult guardianship laws and court practices with an eye toward suggesting potential enhancements in information-sharing and coordination on overlapping guardianship-representative payee matters.

The Administrative Conference of the U.S. is an independent federal agency dedicated to improving federal administrative processes through consensus-driven applied research, and provision of non-partisan expert advice and recommendations to federal agencies.