



# The Court Visitor

## Special Interest Resources:

- The Managing Someone Else's Money Guides  
<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/managing-someone-elses-money/>
- Alliance for Retired American's fact sheets:  
<http://retiredamericans.org/members/retiree-resources/factsheets>
- Medic Alert+ Safe return for Alzheimer's patients:  
[http://www.alz.org/utah/in\\_my\\_community\\_62138.asp](http://www.alz.org/utah/in_my_community_62138.asp)
- 10 early signs and symptoms of Alzheimers:  
[http://www.alz.org/alzheimers\\_disease\\_10\\_signs\\_of\\_alzheimers.asp](http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_10_signs_of_alzheimers.asp)

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## Volunteer Court Visitor Evaluation

One component of the Court Visitor process is the completion of work survey's after each assignment is finished. These are critical for program improvement efforts and the program

appreciates the efforts of Court Visitors in taking the time necessary to complete these surveys. In addition to the survey completed by the Court Visitor, the Judges and Clerks are also asked to

complete an evaluation. This provides insight into the utility of the Court Visitor Program as well as the effectiveness of individual efforts on the part of the Court Visitors.

## Court Visitor Program: The Courts Perspective

The following is just a sample of the comments made by Judges and Clerks on their evaluation of the Court Visitor Program and the individual efforts of Court Visitors:

"It is great to have this resource now available for the Court. Being able to know the whereabouts of the guardians is invaluable. The information came much quicker then I really expected and I applaud our volunteer for getting the information to us."

"This was another case where the attorneys did not think the protected person could attend the hearing, but through the Court Visitor, the Court realized that the protected person wanted to attend

the hearing and did, in fact, attend the hearing."

"This is a new program and I am very excited to have this offered to the Court. It gives the Judge an extra insight and perspective from the protected person's side. It helps in making sure the protected person is given the chance to be at the hearing if able."

"I hope the volunteers know how valuable their reports are to the Court. Even though the Judge may not ask the volunteer any questions at the hearing, please know that the information in the volunteers report to the Court was thoroughly reviewed before hand and was very helpful in making their decision."

"The visitor found quite a discrepancy in the annual accounting."

"The Courts have needed this program for a long time. It was very helpful to me."

"Once again, because of this visitors report, the protected person was brought to the hearing and was able to voice her opinion. Originally the petition had asked to waive the protected person's appearance as she was not able to attend the hearing. It turned out that it was best that the protected person was able to be at the hearing. Thanks, Court Visitor!"

## WINGS

The Court Visitor Program has helped organize Utah Guardianship Summit on November 6, 2013 at the Radisson Hotel in Salt Lake City. The Summit brought together around sixty stakeholders in the area of adult guardianship from all around the state. Keynote speakers included Reverend Tom Goldsmith from the Unitarian Church, Chris Burbank – Chief of Salt Lake Police, and Sally Hurme, an AARP and National Guardianship Network representative from Washington, D.C. Three volunteer court visitors with background in auditing, psychology and law were invited to take part in the summit. Summit participants divided into three brainstorming groups: agency cooperation; medical evidence of incapacity; person centered planning and supported decision making. Each group

identified up to four issues and recommendations for action. Summary of the recommendations will be published in the Utah Bar Journal in 2014. Below is an outline of the issues.

### I. Agency Cooperation

identified the following issues:

1. Misunderstanding of the role of the guardian. What guardians can and cannot do. Guardianship process and regulations are complex and lead to barriers. More education for Person; Family; Community; Services.
2. Cost of getting a guardianship. Cost of services. Need for more resources.
3. Fragmentation of efforts. Complex process and system.

### II. Medical Evidence of Incapacity

narrowed the issues to:

1. What is the minimum information necessary

to support a judicial determination of incapacity?

2. How will the medical professionals be compensated for the evaluations?
3. Define duties of the attorney for the petitioner and attorney for the protected person in relation to the presentation of the evidence on incapacity.
4. What is the appropriate process through first identification of incapacity to adjudication?

### III. Person Centered Planning and Supported Decision Making

group identified one issue:

1. Accessing information about decision making, alternatives to guardianship, guardianship, and appropriate services and resources by all stakeholders



“Highlights from newsletter”



## Behind the Bench

During an interview with Judge Toomey, her appreciation for the Court Visitor Volunteer Program was evident. She described it as enormously helpful and explained that although she sometimes reaches the conclusion that she originally anticipated, having a neutral party to provide verification of the facts gives her greater confidence that she is

doing the right thing. She went on to say that the more thorough the reports the better, as every detail gives her insight into the complexities of the cases and aids her in the decision making process. It is better to be more inclusive rather than less inclusive she explained. Judge Toomey expressed her gratitude for the privilege of having the

Court Visitor Volunteer Program in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and exclaimed “I feel bad for my colleagues that don’t have the benefit of this program”. When asked if there was any advice she could offer to the volunteers she stated that she hoped they felt relaxed in court and not to be intimidated by the formalities of the court process.

## Volunteer Spotlight on Paula Kooring

Paula started her employment journey with KNAK radio at 16 years of age. Scheduling commercials was her primary responsibility but she also had the opportunity to do voice over's on a few commercials. At age 21 she progressed on to Fox & Drew Insurance. At that time she had the distinction of being the youngest female licensed insurance agent in the State of Utah. At age 23 she moved on to work as a desk clerk and night auditor at the Ramada Inn. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and is grateful to have met her best friend, a New Zealander, during her time there. Employed by the State at 25, she worked her way up from an Office Administrator in the crime lab to the Director of Administration Services with the Department of Public Safety. With a degree in Business from Westminster college,

Paula has accomplished a great deal. However, her career is not the only fascinating aspect of Paula's life. Born and raised here in Salt Lake City, she and her husband (also a volunteer with the Visitor Volunteer Program) are world travelers and they have had many adventures since Paula retired in 2004 following her 23 years with the State of Utah. During their first two years of retirement, Paula and her husband traveled somewhere every month. Although their excursions do not occur quite as frequently now as they use to, they are not any less exciting. Newfoundland, Alaska, Italy, Spain, France, Japan, Vietnam, Holland, Croatia, Slovakia, Montenegro, Germany and Budapest are just some of the exotic destinations they have encountered during their travels. "Americans do not

understand how good they have it" Paula explained. Having been exposed to a variety of cultures and environments, she stated without reservation that Vietnam is her favorite place on earth. Paula lights up as she describes the lush jungles, gorgeous scenery and amazing people she has experienced there. Despite the many hours she spends traveling the world, Paula always leaves time for her volunteer efforts with the Court Visitor Volunteer Program. She explains the position has been a "good fit" as she empathizes with the protected people and enjoys doing everything she can to ensure that the elderly are taken care of properly. Overall Paula is a very compassionate person, who's commitment and dedication are an asset to the program.



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*"American's do not understand how good they have it"*



## Court Visitor Program

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(801) 578-3843

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[Visitor@UTCourts.gov](mailto:Visitor@UTCourts.gov)

## Court Visitor Program in the Media

<http://www.standard.net/stories/2013/10/27/court-visitors-boon-vulnerable-and-their-guardians>

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.utcourts.gov/visitor/>

## Upcoming Events of Interest

### National Alliance on Mental Illness upcoming trainings

NAMI is hosting teacher/facilitator trainings for Basics, Progression, Family-to-Family, BRIDGES, Family Support Group and Connection. All trainings are in Salt Lake City, meals are provided on training days and hotel accommodations can be provided for individuals who are traveling 50 miles or more one way to attend. Here are the scheduled dates for trainings:

February 21-23, 2014  
- Family-to-Family  
February 21-22, 2014  
- BRIDGES  
February 28-March 1,  
2014 - Basics  
March 1, 2014 –

Progression  
March 14-15, 2014 -  
Family Support Group  
& Connection

Fill out application at  
<http://www.namiut.org>  
**Application deadline  
is February 3, 2014.**

### Democracy Day 2014

**Tuesday, January  
28, 2014, 8:00 AM -  
1:00 PM**

AARP Utah is sponsoring Democracy Day with the Community Action Partnership of Utah. This is a chance for citizens to hear from state dignitaries, witness a debate between Republican and Democratic party leaders, tour the

Capitol, and have lunch with their legislators in the Capitol Rotunda. The event, including lunch, is free and open to everyone. More information on Utah AARP website: <http://states.aarp.org/democracy-day-2014-registration-sc-ut-wp-events/#sthash.jb9V7p2W.dpuf>



**Best Wishes for a Merry Holiday Season  
and a Happy New Year!**