



The little things mean a lot

Volunteer Guardians are substitute decision-makers for people who have mental disabilities and are unable to make informed personal decisions in their own best interest.

Guardians do many things to ensure the quality of life for the people they serve. They make informed, major life decisions concerning medical care, therapies, living environments, and even funeral arrangements. **But**, guardians also do the "little things" – and the little things mean *a lot*.

Names of the individuals served by Volunteer Guardians have been changed to protect their privacy.

Desiree and Janet

When Desiree met Janet she had withdrawn from life at the nursing home she resided in and spent most of her time in her room. Desiree began visiting along with her son Jacob. As Desiree got to know Janet she realized that she was unable to do many things she liked, such as reading and playing BINGO because her vision was poor. As it turned out Janet had developed cataracts. Desiree advocated for her to have surgery and Janet has been able to go back to doing the things she enjoys. Janet had also withdrawn from some activities because she didn't have any family to go with her. Desiree & Jacob took care of that. They visit her, play cards, take her to BINGO and spend holidays with her. Now Desiree says "Janet has come to depend on Jacob and I coming to visit. She is now more open to telling us if there is some kind of problem. She knows we are there to help in any way we can."

III	The Volunteer Guardian Program is an award winning service program.	III
III	Columbus Dispatch Community Service Award, Finalist	III
III	J C Penney Golden Rule Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service	III
III	Daily Points of Light Award	III
III	Columbus Jaycees	III
III	Ten Outstanding Young Citizens	III
III	Two Volunteer Guardians	III
III	Columbus Bar Association	III
III	Outstanding Pro Bono Service Award	III
III	National Association of Area Agencies on Aging	III
III	Older Volunteers Enrich America Award	III
III	Volunteer Guardian	III

"I made sure my ward knew she was a significant person and that she should be treated as such."
~Volunteer Guardian~

Kathy remembers Dorothy

"I will miss her – Her innocence and strength of faith were inspiring to me. She did not have an easy life, but was always thankful for what she had and always offered to share it."

"It is so rewarding to see Katherine light up when I visit. It's been a joy to share with her."

Tanya and Darlene

I know I have had a positive influence on Darlene's life. I "moved her to a better nursing home, arranged for her to have her nails done weekly and visit her often."

"I am honored to have been a part of my wards' lives."

**"It is so rewarding to see
Jeanne light up when I
visit.**

~Volunteer Guardian~

John and David

David had Huntington's Disease which is hereditary and fatal. David was the last of his family... *then John stepped in.* John took David out to dinner, rented movies and even took David and his roommate to the Arena Grand for the Buckeye's Championship Game. When asked about his relationship with David John stated "He has lost his family but we have formed a bond. He is truly family to us."

Sandie and Lucy

When asked about the best thing Sandie thought she brought to Lucy she said "Although originally it was in the form of guardianship, it soon became apparent that, the relationship was more and that I had become a very welcomed presence in her life."

Cindy and Judy

As Judy declined Cindy shared "I was honored to be her voice, to remember her life for her when she could not, to handle her decline as I thought she would want."

Tracy and Theresa

"Meeting Theresa was a gift to me. For two and one half years our bond grew stronger with each visit."

**These caring individuals are making significant differences
in the lives of the people they serve.**

Someone needs you...because not everyone has someone.

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Or visit our website at
www.coaaa.org

The Volunteer Guardian Program is operated by the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA), a division of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department.