

May 11, 2015



Gerald

Tim

Hello and thank you for your time.

My name is Deborah Bixler and I am the guardian for two residents of Brookside Extended Care in Mason Ohio just north of Cincinnati. I had worked at Brookside Extended Care from 1991 to 1995 providing direct care to the residents. My own physical limitations prevented me from continuing my employment but I would visit as often as possible. Gerald needed a guardian and Brookside knew how close I was with him so we started the process for me to become his guardian.

Guardianship was finalized on September 8, 2006 through Warren County Court. Being a guardian is so rewarding I asked Brookside if I could also be the guardian for Tim. On May 25, 2010 Warren County Court granted my guardianship for Tim.

Let me tell you a little bit about these two wonderful men. Both Gerald and Tim have lived in foster homes, state institutes, and developmental centers before

finding their way to Brookside in 1980. Gerald has an inflammatory disorder, Cerebral Palsy, is Paraplegic, with poor circulation, chronic anemia and vascular disease. Tim has Cerebral Palsy, a seizure disorder, scoliosis, hearing loss, and is allergic to penicillin.

Gerald loves loud fun music and being outdoors. But He cries over sad slow Elvis songs and the texture of paper mache on his hands makes him gag.

Tim enjoys his quiet room with his fish tank and easy listening music. Tim is 50 years old now, but when he sleeps you will usually find him on his side sucking his thumb.

Gerald and Tim have a diagnosis of profound mental retardation. They are wheel chair dependent and need full assistance to move from their beds, wheel chairs, bath tubs or mats. They are both incontinent and are checked regularly by their care providers.

They receive physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech/language therapy, daily baths, meals and snacks, doctors' visits, appropriate age related medical test, dentist visits. These are tracked, monitored and transportation is provided by the Brookside staff.

The Staff also provides trips to museums, ball games, malls and stores, the zoo, parks, family and they do events Valentines dances, St Patrick's Day dances, Easter Egg Hunts, a Spring Luau, Ice Cream Socials with Elvis, a Fall Lawn Fest with a petting zoo, Halloween parties and Christmas parties.

They are out in the community and able to do these activities now because they have a full staff and support being at Brookside. Allowing Brookside and ICF's like them to build campus like settings on their properties would alleviate the concerns of the parents and guardians like myself. They would have the support staff of 24/7 nursing and additional care providers within feet of them instead of being miles away; if that support staff would be available at all. As parents and guardians we know these residents and are here to stand up for their health and safety because we know what they need and deserve.

Gerald and Tim have lived at Brookside for 35 happy years. I know they are happy because I see it in them. They have their own space and their Brookside family. And I know that they are loved at Brookside.

ICFs like Brookside provide the attention and support every special-needs human being deserves. If you close ICFs like Brookside you take away the home they know and need.

Gerald and Tim aren't like you and me, they can't write letters, debate, or give their own opinions. However, I believe they deserve and should have the same rights as you and I, the right to proper healthcare, safe care, empathy and love, and as their guardian, I am dedicated to ensuring that they receive this level of care.

I would like to personally invite each of you to Brookside to see the facility, meet our residents, staff and the parents and guardians that are struggling with what could happen with their loved ones should these changes take place.

Thank you for your time.

Deborah K Bixler

Guardian for Gerald Dearwester and Timothy Collett

Residents of Brookside Extended Care, Mason, Ohio