



Hello and thank you for your time.

Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Deborah Bixler and I am the guardian for two residents of Brookside Extended Care in Mason Ohio. I went through Warren County Court to get guardianship of the two gentlemen in the photos.

Guardianship of Gerald was finalized on September 8, 2006. On May 25, 2010 Warren County Court granted my guardianship for Tim. Gerald will be 64 years old on November 3rd. Tim will be 51 years old on September 4th. They both moved into Brookside Extended Care in 1980 shortly after they opened the doors.

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 enjoy holiday events, outings to malls, museums, ball games, bowling, and anywhere else they can find to get them out and have fun. The simple truth is their social calendar looks better than mine does.

Each of them have lived at Brookside for 35 happy years. I know they are happy because I see it in them. I worked at Brookside doing direct care 20 years ago. So I know them and can tell when they are in pain, sick, or just having a bad day.

Their care givers and nurses are on top of things with them. When they are sick they know and call me right away. They have their own space and their Brookside family.

These are just two of the people that can't speak for themselves. They can't walk, talk, or vote so I am here to be their voice. The county judge granted me guardianship of Gerald and Tim. Yet now another government group is telling me what is best for people they don't know or have ever seen. The choice of where they live and how they live should be up to the families and guardians of the residents living at these ICF's. Being forced to downsize homes like Brookside is wrong. For 35 years Gerald and Tim have lived with three other gentlemen in their rooms. They are used to being together. How can a government group of any kind say that's not right? They are family!

Keeping the ICF's as they are gives me the peace of mind that there are always going to be people there to care for them. People are there to make sure there is no abuse or neglect for those residents. Smaller homes means smaller numbers of caregivers. Smaller numbers of caregivers means more of a chance that abuse or neglect could happen.

The bottom line for me is the government doesn't have the right to tell me I am one person that I don't deserve the three bedroom home I own. Why does any government agency have the right to step in to the ICF's and change the rules of how they live and what is best for them? Isn't that exactly what the county gave me the right to do for them when they granted me guardianship?

Please do not allow this to go any further. People like Gerald and Tim need their voice heard. They deserve the right to continue their lives as they have for the past 35 years. With the attention and love of myself, their nurses, and care givers. They are more than numbers in a budget. I trust you will do what is right for the voices are can't be heard.

Thank you

Deborah Bixler