



## AGS CELEBRATES *17 Years of Service to Wards*

Lights, cameras, and a red carpet highlighted Adult Guardianship Services 17th Annual Volunteer Recognition Event. Nearly 150 people attended the star studded evening during which eleven volunteer guardians were recognized for five years of service and four were recognized for ten years of dedicated service to wards. *Judie Amsel, Jane Duke, Joyce Eisenmann, Ian Franks, Bonnie Gonosey, Kris Houston, Kirk Metzger, Gloria Moose, Judith Moser, Robert Norton, and Angela Wilson* received a five-year certificate. Receiving a ten-year recognition plaque were *Joseph Aquilina, Gloria Crawford, Loretta Fogle* and *Tracy Schrieber*.

Volunteer attorneys were also recognized for their continued pro bono contributions to AGS. *Joseph Shucofsky* and *Mary Ann Thomas* were recognized for five years of service. *Todd Bartimole, Nelli Johnson, Kathryn Joseph* and *Patricia Schraff* were recognized for each contributing 10 years of legal services to AGS.

One volunteer guardian, *Carol June Krohmer*, was recognized for 15 years of service to those in need. She has demonstrated her commitment to AGS and to those who so desperately need someone to advocate for them. For her years of service, June received an engraved clock and a proclamation from the Cuyahoga County Commissioners.

*See page 3 for award winners.*

A beautiful memorial service for wards who died during the past twelve months was conducted by Volunteer Guardians *Rev. Elijah Burrell, Jr.* and *Judie Amsel* as well as *Barbara Matlak*, Volunteer Coordinator. The names of the deceased were read and their guardians came forward for a moment of silence. Soloist *Maria Daniels*, accompanied by *Johnny Sherron*, sang "Wind Beneath My Wings."

An exciting feature of this year's program was the premier of the new AGS educational video which will be used to inform the community about guardianship and the services AGS provides. If you would like your group or organization to learn about AGS, contact **Mary Ann Thomas** at **216.696.1132 ext 143** to schedule a video presentation.



## 3 THREE NEW GUARDIANS REGISTERED



Donald lived in a room behind an apartment building. The room had heat. Donald had untreated syphilis, suffered from malnutrition, and was self-neglecting. His medical problems were made worse by his heavy drinking. Although he did not have much money, Donald was being exploited by his son.

While in the hospital, Donald was referred to AGS. With the help of his guardian, Donald is now living in a warm and safe environment at Algart Health Care Center. He is socializing

with other residents and is participating in activities. His guardian, *Melanie Root*, approved much needed cataract surgery and Donald now has the medications necessary to manage his treatable conditions. Donald's son now lives in Florida and they communicate through letters. Thanks to the care and concern of a guardian, Donald's life has greatly improved.

Our volunteer and staff guardians constantly strive to improve their skill and knowledge about guardianship. Recently, three AGS staff guardians passed the Registered Guardian (RG) exam offered by the National Guardianship Association.

**CONGRATULATIONS KARYN SEEGER, RG; MELANIE ROOT, RG; and GRETA MILLER, RG.** And, thank you for your commitment to excellence and to assuring the best care for your wards.

## LINDA PROFFITT HONORED AT NGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Linda J. Proffitt, AGS Program Director, was awarded the National Guardianship Association (NGA) 2006 Outstanding State Affiliate Member Award. The mission of the National Guardianship Association is to provide educational training and networking opportunities to guardians; to promote the highest level of values, standards and ethics; and, to ensure a nationally recognized standard of excellence. Linda shows her dedication to this mission as a member of the National Guardianship Association, president of the Ohio Guardianship Association, and Program Director of Adult Guardianship Services. Linda was awarded this honor at the NGA Annual Conference held October 7-10, 2006, in Newport Beach, California. Linda was nominated by her staff for her skillful leadership in managing 19 staff, including 12 staff guardians, 10 of whom are Registered Guardians; support staff, and a Volunteer Department that administers 140 volunteer guardians. She was recognized for increasing the budget from \$350,000 per year in 2001 to a budget of \$1.1 million in 2006. In conjunction with the AGS Board of Trustees she was able to obtain funding from the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board and Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services. Currently Linda is the driving force behind an initiative to get state funding for guardianship services for people with a mental illness.

Linda is not all number crunching. She has an open door policy and always has time for her staff. One of her favorite questions is, "What can I do to make your job easier?" This question generated handicapped parking stickers for staff to serve their wards better, computer upgrades, and a centralized representative payee program. Linda continues to be a leader for AGS through a tremendous period of growth.

**Congratulations,  
Linda!**



## 2 AGS WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS TO BOARD

In October 2006 the AGS Board of Trustees welcomed two new trustees: *Robin Bachman* and *Kim Walrod*.

**Robin Bachman** is the Director of Public Policy for the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine Health System. Prior to moving to Cleveland, Robin served as a legislative aide to a congresswoman from New York, as a legislative advisor to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and was an Associate Director of Research in the White House. With a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and a Masters of Public Administration from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia, Robin now lives in University Heights.

**Kim Walrod** has been with National City Bank since 1997, currently as a Vice President and Relationship Manager in the Wealth Management Division—Private Client Group. She holds a Bachelors of Science in Business from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and has a Masters in Business Administration from John Carroll University. Kim lives with her husband and young daughter in Westlake, Ohio.

**Welcome Kim and Robin.**



Visit the new Ohio Guardianship Association website at [www.guardianshipohio.org](http://www.guardianshipohio.org).

Learn more about guardianship and the advocacy efforts OGA has undertaken. Learn how you can be a part of encouraging legislators to include a line item in the Ohio budget for guardianship services.

Scavenger Hunt Newsletter Correction: The 3rd Place Winner photograph was in fact the 2nd place winning team. And the 2nd Place Winner photograph, was actually the 3rd place winning team.

## AGS SELECTED FOR PLAIN DEALER

### HOLIDAY SPIRIT

From among over 100 applicants, AGS was selected as one of thirty agencies to receive funds from the Holiday Spirit program sponsored by the Cleveland Plain Dealer. This year, Channel 5 joined the Plain Dealer in supporting the program which raises money during the holidays from readers and viewers. *Linda Proffitt*, AGS Program Director, participated in the Channel 5 telethon to support Holiday Spirit in December. The \$3,000 AGS will receive from the Holiday Spirit program will be earmarked for the Ward Emergency Fund which meets one-time emergency needs of our wards. **Thank you Plain Dealer and Channel 5 for your support of our wards!**

## CEMETERY Plots

Do you or your family have one, two or a block of cemetery plots that no one will be using? Our wards usually come to Adult Guardianship Services with just a bag of personal belongings. Often there are insufficient funds to purchase a pre-need funeral let alone a cemetery plot. Those otherwise unwanted cemetery plots could be utilized by our guardians to create a funeral plan for their wards. If you have a cemetery plot that you would like to donate to AGS, please call **Mary Ann** at **216.696.1132 ext 143**. Your donation would be tax deductible.

**REMEMBER: Mystery at the Zoo | July 14, 2007**

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Steven Stern  
Anna Teras  
Harry Usery  
Karen VanHuffel  
Ida Werwage  
Loretta White  
Sara Whitfield  
Grace Williams  
Mary Wilson  
Adam Yunus

## STATE SUPPORT NEEDED TO SECURE FUNDING FOR GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

A grassroots effort, under the leadership of the Ohio Guardianship Association, is urging Governor Ted Strickland to add five million dollars to the budget of the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) earmarked for guardianship services for people with a severe mental disability. If accomplished, AGS would be able to serve more wards with a mental illness.

Please write a letter to Governor Strickland asking him to fund guardianship services. In your letter, indicate your interest – guardian, concerned citizen, or social worker. Explain that indigent vulnerable adults like those deemed incompetent by the Probate Court because of Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or severe mental disability need a guardian. Make sure you specifically request that Governor Strickland add

\$5,000,000 to the ODMH budget. Be sure to thank the Governor for his consideration and urge him to act!

All Ohio citizens who need a guardian should have one. It is time for state funding of this very necessary service. Please help AGS in this effort. Address your letter as follows:

Governor Ted Strickland  
Riffe Center, 1948  
77 S. High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

If you would like some suggestions as to what to include in the letter or if you would like help composing a letter, call **Barb Matlak** at **216.696.1132 ext 140**.



### Janice Dzigiel GREG HOSHEK VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN AWARD WINNER

*Janice Dzigiel was the recipient of the 2006 Greg Hoshek Volunteer Guardian Award.* Janice joined the AGS Board of Trustees in 1998. Realizing that she would be a better board member if she herself were a guardian, Janice became a volunteer guardian for two different wards, both now deceased. She fondly remembers them, saying she learned more about life from them than she gave to them.

Janice became further involved by accepting the role of president in 2004. During her three-year term, AGS increased its volunteer base by 40, going from a corps of 100 to over 140 volunteer guardians. The paid staff increased from 12 to 18 and AGS now has a budget of over a million dollars. Janice led the effort to convince the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board to fund AGS enabling the program to serve over 500 wards per year.



### Sally Siggins GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD WINNER

*Sally Siggins was the recipient of the 2006 Good Samaritan Award.* This award is bestowed upon a member of the community who has made a significant contribution to AGS. Sally has been a part of the AGS family since 1992 when she became a volunteer guardian. She has served four wards and currently is the guardian of a gentleman in a group home. In 1993, Sally became a member of the AGS Board of Trustees and was its President for three years.

Six years ago, Sally became the Continuing Education Liaison for AGS, arranging for our volunteer trainings and in-service programs to be certified for Social Work Continuing Education Units. Sally has gone above and beyond the call of duty. For the care and compassion she has given to her wards, the guidance she gave to the Board, and for making it possible that our volunteers receive credit for the training they attend, we are grateful for Sally's many years of volunteer service to AGS.

*Thank you and congratulations, Sally!*

## AGS SPONSORS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Plans are nearly complete for **Adult Guardianship Services' 2007 Speaker Series**. The professional development seminar dates and topics have been finalized as follows:

- February 8:** *Topic:* Euthanasia, Physician-Assisted Suicide & Dying Well  
*Speaker:* David Simpson, CEO, Hospice of the Western Reserve
- April 4:** *Topic:* Reducing Conflict through Mediation  
*Speaker:* John Bertschler, PhD
- June 7:** *Topic:* Ethical Issues Surrounding Advanced Directives in the Real World  
*Speaker:* Dr. Kathy Weise
- August 2:** *Topic:* End of Life Care from the Muslim Perspective

All seminars will offer 1.5 hours of CEU credits for social workers and nurses. In order to accommodate the busy schedules of our attendees, each breakfast seminar will begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 9:30 a.m. Due to high interest, some of the seminars may be held somewhere other than **AGS**. Watch for announcements.

As you review your calendar for 2007, please reserve these dates for the 2007 **AGS Speaker Series**, made possible by funding from the Kendren-Thomas Education Foundation.

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Enhancing Lives.*



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