

## About the Program

The Lucas County Volunteer Guardianship Task Force was formed to help indigent older persons, age 60 and above, who are unable to speak for themselves and have no one to assist them in making life and health decisions.

Chaired by Lucas County Probate Court Judge Jack Puffenberger, the Task Force recommended that a guardianship program be established in Lucas County. Included in the Task Force were:

- Adult Protective Services
- Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio
- Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur's Office
- Long-term Care Ombudsman Program (ABLE)
- Lucas County Commissioners
- Lucas County Job and Family Services
- Lucas County Probate Court
- Lucas County Prosecutor's Office
- Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio

The program is funded through a Title XX grant from Lucas County Job and Family Services, Lucas County Senior Services Levy funding administered by the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio and a challenge grant from Steven Stranahan through the Toledo Community Foundation. Lutheran Social Services was selected as the host agency for the program.

Pro Bono Legal Services Program through the Toledo Bar Association is a recognized partner of the program.

## Mission Statement

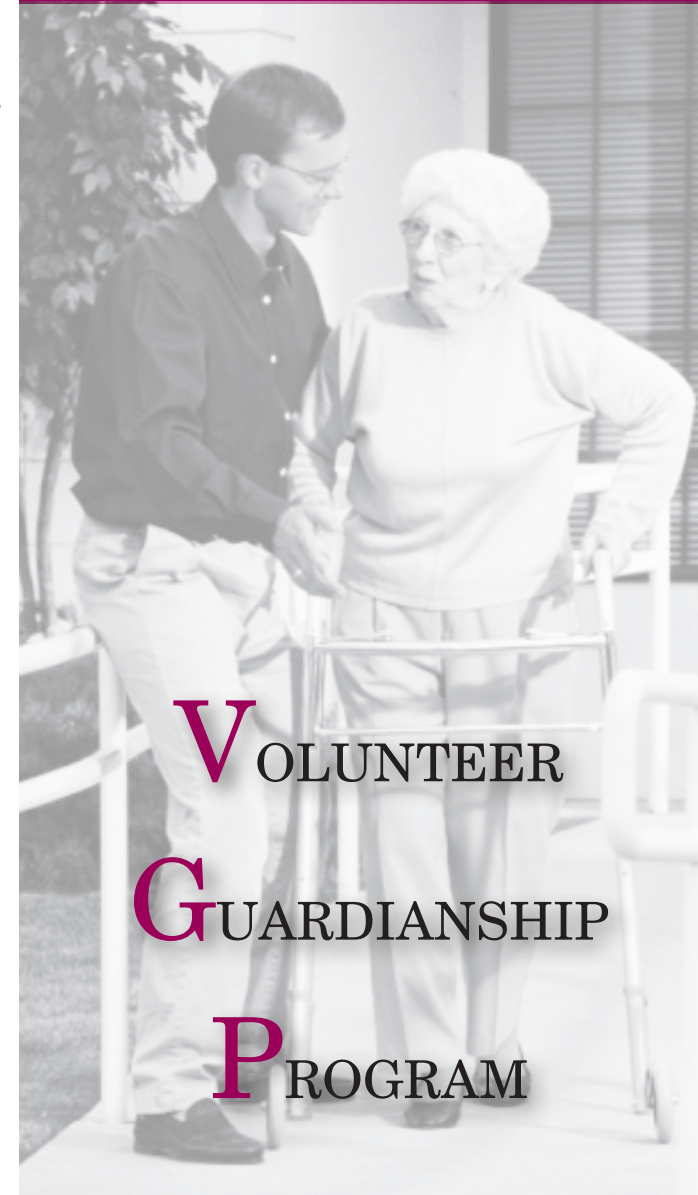
The mission of the *Volunteer Guardianship Program of Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio* is to enhance the quality of life of indigent older adults living in Lucas County, and who have been deemed incompetent by the Probate Court, by providing trained, qualified volunteer legal guardians to serve as concerned, caring advocates and as surrogate decision-makers.



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of Northwestern Ohio**

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**A Guide for  
Volunteer Guardianship  
in Lucas County**

*Lutheran Social Services  
of Northwestern Ohio*

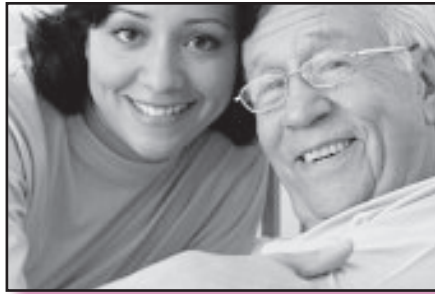
## What is Guardianship?

The **Volunteer Guardianship Program** (VGP) provides legal guardians for indigent, incompetent older adults in Lucas County.

The program provides a service by which trained volunteer guardians are court appointed for indigent older adults who are deemed incompetent by the Lucas County Probate Court.

The guardian makes decisions and gives consent for services for the individual, including placement, medical treatment and other therapies. The guardian's decisions are guided by the best interest standard in Ohio law and include the ward's input whenever possible.

The **Volunteer Guardianship Program** of Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio is a member of the National and Ohio Guardianship Associations.



## Why is VGP Needed?

Usually a family member or close friend is the first choice of the Court to be appointed to serve as a guardian. For a variety of reasons, however, there continue to be cases where no suitable person is available to serve as the guardian.

In the past, the court has turned to local attorneys to serve as guardians in these cases; however, the number of such cases has grown.

This program is designed to meet the needs of individuals 60 years of age and older in our community who need assistance making decisions that affect their lives.



## Who Can Be A Guardian?

Under the laws of Ohio, to be appointed by the court as a guardian, you must be:

- ✓ a resident of Ohio
- ✓ at least 18 years of age
- ✓ a law abiding citizen

## What Does A Guardian Do?

The **Volunteer Guardianship Program** is strictly involved in guardianship of the person and will not be responsible for the ward's finances. Some of the responsibilities of a guardian may include:

- ❖ Ensure that the basic needs of the ward are being met;
- ❖ Seek services that will help the ward reach or maintain his or her highest potential;
- ❖ Authorize medical care, counseling or other treatment as needed;
- ❖ Execute releases of information on the ward's behalf; and
- ❖ Make end of life decisions for the benefit of the ward.



For more information on how to become a volunteer for the **Volunteer Guardianship Program**, please contact *Monica Slovak, Coordinator*, at (419) 243-9178 or by e-mail at [mslovak@lssnwo.org](mailto:mslovak@lssnwo.org). Details and application forms are available at [www.lssnwo.org](http://www.lssnwo.org).