



An affiliate of the National Guardianship Association

Information and resources for individuals, family members, and professionals about Guardianship and Conservatorship.



Welcome to the Massachusetts Guardianship Association

## The Guardian

September 2015

### Note from the MGA President...

*I hope that this issue of "The Guardian" finds you well-rested after a gorgeous New England summer. 2015 continues to be an exciting year for the Massachusetts Guardianship Association.*

*We have some very exciting programs coming up to end 2015, and we hope you will be able to attend.*

*Sarah W. Peterson, Esq.*



### Membership

Our new online system for registration is now up and running. We are now using PayPal for online payments. For those who feel more comfortable with paper, you are also welcome to complete your registration by mail with payment by check. Please note that we have a new mailing address, which is: MGA Membership, P.O. Box 320621, West Roxbury, MA 02132.

Information on registration, can be found [here](#).

The MGA is now offering rolling membership, whereby you will receive 12 months of membership starting on the date of your application/renewal.

The MGA has openings for positions of leadership in 2016. If you are interested in joining the Board or becoming more active, please contact MGA President, Sarah Peterson, at [sarah@zalkinlaw.com](mailto:sarah@zalkinlaw.com).

## **MGA in the Community**

The MGA will be offering a two-part conference series in collaboration with the Social Law Library this fall. We are offering discounted admission prices to MGA members! The programs will be held on **September 24, 2015** and **October 21, 2015** from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The **September 24, 2015** program will cover the topics of Substituted Judgment/Rogers Cases and Financial Issues and will feature an opening address by the Honorable Chief Justice Angela Ordoñez of the Probate & Family Court. The **October 21, 2015** program will cover End of Life/Life Sustaining Treatment and Ethical Issues. **The September 24th program is SOLD OUT, but there's still time to register for the October 21, 2015 date. Space is limited. Register today!**

You can register online using this [link](#). Don't forget to use your coupon code as an MGA member to receive your discount!

### **Save the Date!**

The MGA annual networking breakfast will be held on **December 10, 2015** at the Dedham Hilton located at 25 Allied Drive, Dedham, starting at 7:30 a.m. This is always a wonderful event and a great opportunity to meet your fellow members and learn more about the MGA. More details will follow.



## **Legal News, Resources, and Information**

Preplanning by guardians is extremely important. If you serve as guardian, either for a loved one or as a professional guardian, you must understand that there will be final expenses when the protected person dies, and plan accordingly. Read more about this important topic [here](#).

The Special Needs Fairness Act is making its way through Congress, having unanimously passed the Senate on September 9, 2015. If it passes the House and is signed into law the Act would amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to allow individuals with disabilities to establish their own supplemental needs trusts. As the law now reads, the trust must be established by a parent, grandparent, legal guardian of the individual, or a court. To read the text of the Act, as proposed, click [here](#).



## **SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY HELPS PEOPLE WHO WORK**

**By Kristen Alberino  
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in Quincy, MA**

People with disabilities are challenged with both overcoming barriers and with convincing others that those barriers do not define them.

That's why we wanted to mark this October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month by reminding you that Social Security is an earned benefit for millions of disabled individuals, and we can assist them in going back to work. The Social Security disability insurance program, or SSDI, is perhaps the most misunderstood program of Social Security. Some people may think that SSDI recipients have never worked and are taking advantage of the system by receiving money for minor impairments.

Nothing could be further from the truth. First, anyone who qualifies for SSDI must have worked enough to pay into the system and be "insured." Second, Social Security has some of the strictest requirements in the world for disability benefits. To qualify, a person must not only have an impairment that will last one year or more, or result in death, but they must be unable to perform any substantial work.

Consequently, Social Security disability beneficiaries are some of the most severely impaired people in the country, and they greatly depend on their benefits. You can learn more by visiting the Faces and Facts website at [www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityfacts). At the website, you will find many personal stories of those who have benefited from Social Security when they needed it most.

We also have incentives that give beneficiaries with disabilities - who are able - the opportunity to return to work. These work incentives include continued cash benefits for a period of time while you work, continued Medicare or Medicaid coverage, and help with education, training, and rehabilitation to start a new line of work. In some cases, we may even be able to deduct certain impairment-related work expenses from your countable income, making it possible to earn more and also remain eligible to receive benefits. Examples of these expenses are wheelchairs, transportation costs, and specialized equipment needed for work.

Social Security also offers the Ticket to Work program, which gives participants a "ticket" to go back to work while keeping their disability benefits. This program is free and voluntary. Ticket to Work gives access to an employment network, which offers assistance with job searches and placement, and vocational rehabilitation and training.

Those who enroll find the Ticket to Work program makes it easier to explore whether going back to work is right for them. Some even find that they are able to eventually get back to work and earn far more than the disability payments they once received.

Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work) for more information on the Ticket to Work program and work incentives. You may also call 1-866-968-7842 (TDD 866-833-2967).

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Thank you all for your continued support of the MGA! We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event!

Sarah Peterson, Esq., President

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