

# FRANKLIN COUNTY GUARDIANSHIP SERVICE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT – 2023



Franklin County Guardianship Service Board  
80 E. Fulton Street, 4th Floor | Columbus, OH 43215  
Phone: 614.525.2279 | [www.guardian.franklincountyohio.gov](http://www.guardian.franklincountyohio.gov)





Dear Supporter,

As 2023 ended, the Franklin County Guardianship Service Board's (FCGSB) licensed social workers and dedicated support staff continued to serve 470 people as their most important advocate, their guardian. Being someone's guardian allows us to provide guidance to some of our most vulnerable Franklin County residents.

In keeping with our mission, over the course of last year, we became more intentional about our intake process. We are guardian of last resort. As such, we strive to ensure that guardianship applications are submitted only for those who have no one else to facilitate their care. We also educated more families and friends to encourage an application from someone the person already knew. In addition, we made significant efforts to work with our existing clients' families and other guardianship agencies to find alternatives that would best serve the client. All these efforts resulted in manageable overall growth for FCGSB in 2023.

During the month of October, we honored 52 clients who had passed in the prior year. A twenty-one-gun salute and a rendition of Taps were added to this year's ceremony to honor those who had served our country. While some of those who passed were not with the FCGSB long, we feel privileged to have been a part of their lives and to honor them in this ceremony every year.

Our Holiday Wish List Gift Drive was another success in 2023. Often, our clients do not have anyone to celebrate the holidays with; therefore, the donated gifts that are wrapped by our entire staff and given to each client help us ensure holiday cheer is spread throughout the season. We are tremendously grateful for all those who donate to ensure this important effort continues.

In closing, our existence and ability to provide guardian of the person services is possible thanks to our loyal financial supporters. We thank the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services by way of Adult Protective Services, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, The Ohio State University Hospitals, Mount Carmel Hospitals, Ohio Health Hospitals and all who supported our holiday drive. We remain most grateful to the entire team at the Franklin County Probate Court for their continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Melissa G. Messina, Esq., MBA  
Executive Director

Jane Higgins Marx, Esq.  
GSB Board Chair

Visit us on our website: <https://www.guardian.franklincountyohio.gov>

### **Our Mission Statement**

The mission of the Franklin County Guardianship Service Board is to implement the laws enacted by the Ohio legislature in a professional and dedicated manner to ensure accessibility, fairness, and courtesy in the administration of guardianship services to assigned wards in Franklin County.

# GSB Financial Snapshot – 2023

## Income

■ ADAMH - 60%

■ Board of DD - 12%

■ Board of Commissioners - 8%

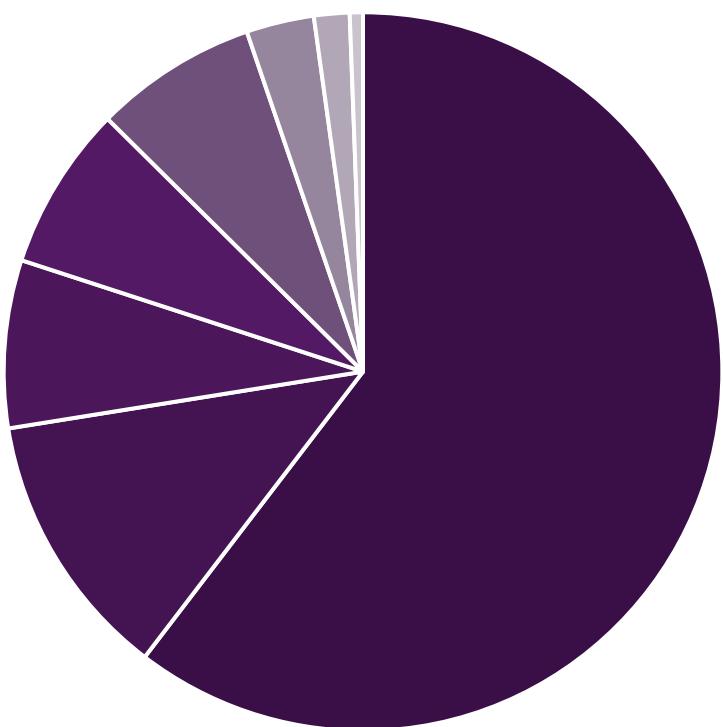
■ JFS/APS - 7%

■ OSU Wexner Medical Center - 7%

■ Mt. Carmel Hospitals - 3%

■ OH Health - 2%

■ Other sources - GOE fees, misc. - 1%

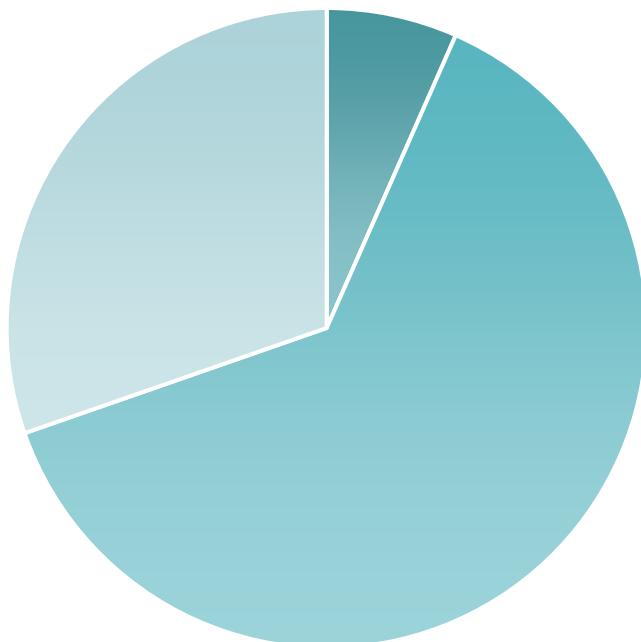


## Expenses

■ Services & Materials - 7%

■ Salaries & Wages - 63%

■ Fringe Benefits - 30%



## 129 Total Referrals

- ADAMH - 7
- APS - 33
- Board of DD - 18
- Mt. Carmel - 16
- Ohio Health - 7
- OSU - 31
- Probate Court - 13
- Successor Appts - 4

• Onboarded 104 clients after appointment



19 clients regained competency and no longer require a guardian

537 after-hour calls responded to



- Nursing Facility - 222
- Community - 111
- DD Housing - 69
- Group Home - 30
- Transient - 16
- Assisted Living - 12
- Jail - 5
- Hospital - 5



3,805 face-to-face meetings with clients



FCGSB found alternative guardians for 12 clients

# GSB Year in Review - 2023

59 clients located out of county across 27 counties in the state of Ohio



Adults aged 18-97 served by FCGSB  
60 and below: 225  
60 and up: 246



## Client Diagnoses



- Mental Health - 33%
- MH and DD - 22%
- MH and AOD - 22%
- Medical only - 8%
- DD - 7%
- MH/DD/AOD (Comorbid) - 5%
- Alcohol or Drug (AOD) - 3%
- DD/AOD - 0%



3,182 consents given

470 active cases by referral source at year end

- ADAMH - 54
- APS - 78
- FCBDD - 91
- Mt. Carmel - 23
- Ohio Health - 15
- OSU - 102
- Probate Court - 31
- Successor Appts - 76

## Success Stories\*

### *A Story of Perseverance for Our Clients*

KC was hospitalized from November 2022 until August 2023 due to complex behaviors, mental health concerns, and placement barriers. FCGSB became his guardian in January 2023. Upon appointment, it was discovered that he should qualify for services from the Board of Developmental Disabilities (BDD) but was never linked. Significant efforts were made to have him linked, including multiple appeals and submission of evidence to prove his need. In the interest of trying to have him housed despite not being linked to any BDD, an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) agreed to visit him while hospitalized to assess him for possible placement. After meeting with him, they agreed that their group home was appropriate for him and agreed to place him. Since he has lived at the ICF, he has thrived. It was quickly discovered that he can speak despite being labeled non-verbal in the hospital. KC has not had any aggressive behaviors and has shown ability to socialize with his roommates and enjoys group outings. He also started attending a day program and has proven to be very high functioning. Because of his ability to function so well, another group home is being considered with similarly functioning roommates and more community activities so he can continue to thrive. FCGSB's tireless advocacy has paid off for KC and we couldn't be prouder and more honored to watch him grow.

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### *With just a little help, self-advocacy prevailed....*

FCGSB became JW's guardian in 2019 by successor application due to an intense family dynamic that required a change to improve JW's wellbeing. Upon FCGSB appointment, JW was in the hospital. It was quickly discovered that she had spent a very long time at Twin Valley Behavioral Health (TVBH) and was closely monitored by the ADAMH board. She had multiple behaviors causing her the inability to find stable housing. She was not in a good place. FCGSB worked diligently early on to stabilize her by connecting her with resources and advocating for her with agencies and medical professionals that could assist her. It took some time, but stabilization came. Her behaviors became nonexistent, allowing for more opportunities to come JW's way, many of which she started to foster on her own without the need for FCGSB assistance.

This past year, JW had to make difficult medical decisions and did so with great insight and consideration of the quality of life she deserves. She was able to advocate for herself and only asked for FCGSB assistance to validate the fact that JW was not being monitored by an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team and was living independently in the community. When checking on her, FCGSB found that she created and maintained appropriate personal boundaries with family and friends, obtained her driver's license, and found and retained a job in the community. During this time, she also completed training and became certified to be a Peer Support Professional at TVBH, something she is extremely proud of.

As JW stabilized, she recognized the need to move from a dangerous living situation and was able to locate and move into her own, much safer apartment. She also worked well with her payee to learn how to live on a budget and locate services in the community that can help her stretch her limited income to take care of her needs. Just after she moved, her FCGSB Social Worker Designee toured her new apartment and witnessed JW's pride and newfound confidence in herself. It was obvious she was thriving and that FCGSB serving as her guardian had become obsolete. Therefore, at the end of 2023, with FCGSB's help and advocacy, JW graduated from guardianship. It was an honor to serve her, but a bigger honor to help her be restored.

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of GSB clients

## GSB Community Outreach Efforts



*OSU Marion College of Social Work Club*



*GSB Client Receiving Gift*



*GSB Gift Wrap Event*

The FCGSB works hard every year to provide our almost 500 clients with a small gift at the holidays. We seek donations through corporate sponsorship as well as our social media networks. Our clients are very excited to be remembered and are overjoyed with a gift.



We honor our deceased clients at an annual Memorial Service in October. This aligns with National Guardianship Month.

This past year, we honored 52 clients of which 4 were veterans. We honored those who served our country with a military burial. Our staff gathered at our mausoleum to share our memories as well as offering our clients' family or friends to also share a memory for us to read. We have begun live-streaming this service as our space limits attendees. This has proven to be an emotional time for all of us and is a very special remembrance of all the hard work and love we provided to our clients' lives.

# Community Partners

Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County  
Visit: [adamhfranklin.org](http://adamhfranklin.org)  
(614) 224-1057

Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities  
Visit: [fcbdd.org](http://fcbdd.org)  
(614) 475-6440

Franklin County Probate Court  
Visit: [probate.franklincountyohio.gov](http://probate.franklincountyohio.gov)  
(614) 525-3894

Ohio Health  
Visit: [ohiohealth.com](http://ohiohealth.com)  
(614) 788-8860

Franklin County Board of Commissioners  
Visit: [commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov](http://commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov)  
(614) 525-3322

Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services  
Visit: [jfs.franklincountyohio.gov](http://jfs.franklincountyohio.gov)  
(614) 233-2000

Mt. Carmel Hospital System  
Visit: [mountcarmelhealth.com](http://mountcarmelhealth.com)  
(614) 546-4000

Ohio State Wexner Medical Center  
Visit: [wexnermedical.osu.edu](http://wexnermedical.osu.edu)  
(614) 293-8000

## 2023 Franklin County Guardianship Service Board Members

Jane Higgins Marx, Chair  
Nikki Mesnard, Secretary  
Bob Ryan, Vice Chair

\*\*\*\*\*  
**GAIN INDEPENDENCE.  
GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR DECISIONS.**  
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**Feel at home again.  
Make progress toward goals.**  
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**Find safety and security.  
Support individuals and family members.**  
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