

Franklin Probate Court beneficiary of grant from Columbus Foundation

By KEITH ARNOLD - The Daily Reporter| Monday, January 30, 2017|

Franklin County Probate Court announced recently the receipt of a \$25,000 grant from The Columbus Foundation to increase services to indigent wards of the court.

The grant is to pilot additional services to those wards under guardianship with the Franklin County Guardianship Service Board, according to the court.

“I am very grateful for the trust and confidence that The Columbus Foundation has placed in the board,” Probate Judge Robert G. Montgomery said. “When you have organizations such as the foundation supporting your cause, you know you must be doing something right.”

The Guardianship Service Board is Ohio’s first public guardian program, created by the Ohio Legislature in June 2014 at Montgomery’s request.

It was devised by the judge to ensure the care and treatment of incompetent, mentally ill and other vulnerable people in Franklin County.

The board consists of three citizens — one individual appointed by the probate judge, another appointed by the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board and a final individual appointed by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Current membership includes Chair Jane Higgins Marx, Larry James and Frank New, in addition to an executive director, Jack Kullman.

Montgomery’s vision was to move the guardianship system toward a social-services model versus an attorney model for service delivery, he said.

A social-services model allows social workers and other professionals with specific expertise in working with vulnerable populations to ensure service delivery more efficiently and at less cost to the taxpayer.

State law also allows a probate judge to accept donations to fund the delivery of guardianship services, such as the grant provided by the Columbus Foundation.

“I have enjoyed working with community leaders to ensure the care, treatment and safety of the most vulnerable citizens in Franklin County,” Montgomery continued. “I want to thank The Columbus Foundation for its vision and generosity by awarding this grant to help fund the protection of those citizens unable to protect themselves.

“I look forward to continuing to engage with the social services community to ensure adequate funding for our indigent guardianship program.”

The Columbus Foundation recognized the board’s needs as a shared interest of one of the funds it administers.

“This grant from the Henry E. Coyle Fund honors donor intent to support people in our community who have developmental disabilities and who are at risk,” foundation Executive Vice President Lisa Courtice said. “The Guardianship Program is an outstanding resource designed to support some of our community’s most vulnerable residents.”