

# Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.

## Guardianship and Conservator Services

*Enriched Lives...*

*Enlightened*

*Communities*

*Since 1973*



### Quality Services

Beaverbrook STEP, Inc. is a private, non-profit, Woman/Minority certified organization that provides a comprehensive array of progressive, community based services for over 200 adults with intellectual, developmental and related disabilities and their family members in eastern Massachusetts.

Incorporated in 1973, Beaverbrook STEP's mission and philosophy focus on empowering individuals to make their own personal choices and decisions about their lives in order to achieve full community inclusion. Using a person centered planning approach, STEP focuses on strengthening relationships among individuals, families and communities—relationships that support the people we serve, helping them to realize their dreams and live meaningful lives as productive and active community members.

Our community based services include 24 hour residential, supported living, day, employment training, family support, self-advocacy, social and recreational services. We also have a comprehensive Guardianship program for individuals who need part or full time, permanent or temporary guardianship or conservator services. Beaverbrook STEP's Guardianship Program serves individuals statewide and is approved by the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Developmental Services.

**Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.**

**85 Main St., 2nd floor**

**Watertown, MA 02472**

**(617) 926-1113**

**[www.beaverbrookstep.org](http://www.beaverbrookstep.org)**



## WHO WE SERVE

Beaverbrook STEP is an organization committed to serving adults with intellectual, developmental and other related disabilities and their family members. We provide services to individuals from 18 years and up, including students who are aging out of Special Education services (Turning 22), young and middle aged adults and seniors who are aging in place.

Many of the individuals served are dually diagnosed. STEP also serves adults diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, adults in need of mental health and/or behavioral supports and adults with complex and multiple physical and medical disabilities.

## COMING OF AGE

Our work begins with students and their parents several years before they reach age 18 years, planning for transition to the adult system of services at graduation or when special education services end at age 22. We educate students and family members about Coming of Age issues that need to be addressed as the family prepares for the transition to the adult service system.

In Massachusetts individuals gain all of the rights and responsibilities inherent with adulthood in our society today at age 18. Beaverbrook STEP works with families to evaluate their family member's capacity to make decisions in their own best interests and to determine if there are areas of living where they are not competent to make informed choices.

## GUARDIAN & CONSERVATORSHIP

Beaverbrook STEP's professional staff, clinicians, consultants and affiliates complete a comprehensive intake process for all referrals, using our comprehensive financial, auditing, assessment and clinical resources, including:

- ◇ Appropriateness of placement;
- ◇ Issues related to the Probate Court appointment process;
- ◇ Scope of guardianship or conservatorship;
- ◇ Presence of a Roger's Guardian;
- ◇ Assessment of housing and daily living/personal care supports;
- ◇ Financial, medical, health, safety and quality of life status;
- ◇ Property and/or asset management;
- ◇ Goals and skill development—informed consent status; and
- ◇ Activities, community integration, social connections assessment including an understanding of family members and friends.

The principles of competency, substituted judgment and primacy of the individual are fundamental to the guardianship process at Beaverbrook STEP. We give the utmost care to ensure that the rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens are uniformly applied to our citizens with special needs.

*Planning is the key ingredient in any successful journey. The journey from special education to adult services inevitably occurs due to the mere passage of time. Making that journey as smoothly and successfully as possible requires a knowledge of what to expect and being prepared to make important planning decisions.*

*Frederick Misilo, Esq.*

*"Coming of Age in Massachusetts"*





## GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

Beaverbrook STEP's guardians and conservators provide services including but not limited to:

- ◇ Attending ISP and related meetings, as needed;
- ◇ Meeting with the individual at least quarterly;
- ◇ Responding promptly to letters and telephone calls from the individual, his/her service coordinator and others regarding the individual;
- ◇ Responding promptly to all correspondence regarding the individual, as needed;
- ◇ Reviewing the individual's records regularly and before the ISP meeting;
- ◇ Responding to emergencies and being available when they arise;
- ◇ Consulting and helping with decision making concerning medical, behavioral, day, residential and other services, as needed.

### THE GUARDIANSHIP PROJECT

#### PROJECT DIRECTORS

The Guardianship Project is directed by 3 highly accomplished, dedicated and professionally recognized social justice advocates for people with disabilities:

- ◇ Virginia Connolly, MEd, LCSW, LMHC, an accomplished pioneer in the field of intellectual and developmental services, has served as Executive Director of Beaverbrook STEP for over 30 years;
- ◇ Diane Iagulli, social justice advocate and executive leader in the field of disabilities since the 1970's has a life time of achievements championing the legal rights and principles of primacy for individuals with special needs;
- ◇ John Keegan, MBA, a dedicated and committed business professional in the non-profit sector, has extensive experience implementing progressive supports for individuals with forensic and legal issues.

#### ADVISORY GROUP

Overseeing The Guardianship Project is an esteemed group of advisors who direct the mission, principles and goals of the project:

- ◇ Frederick M. Misilo, Jr., Officer, Fletcher, Tilton & Whipple, P.C., and Chairperson of Elder Law and Special Needs Practice, is a leading guardianship/adult services attorney and author of "Coming of Age in Massachusetts;"
- ◇ Gary Blumenthal, President/CEO, MA Assoc. of Developmental Disabilities Providers, is an active, influential and prominent voice for individuals with disabilities; he is the respected leader of MA disability providers;
- ◇ Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director of The Arc of MA, is a highly respected advocate, leader and spokesperson for individuals with disabilities and their families;
- ◇ Jeffrey Keilson, is a consummate professional and recognized local, state and national leader in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities; he helped pioneer the Self Advocacy Movement.





## Qualifications and Training of Guardians & Conservators

At Beaverbrook STEP, our goal is to provide qualified guardians/conservators who are approachable, knowledgeable, and understanding of the individual's interests, needs and desires. They are charged with making each individual's services as personalized and independent as possible including oversight of a service plan that provides improved outcomes on behalf of the individual in the most efficient, effective and professional manner possible.

Toward that end, STEP recruits guardians/conservators with the clinical background, education and experience required to meet the needs of individuals served. All guardians/conservators are required to complete our comprehensive training program that focuses on Duties & Responsibilities, Ethical Issues, Self Determination, Least Restrictive Alternatives, Informed Consent, Primacy of the Individual and Best Interests of the Individual.

### Guardianship Resources

National Guardianship Association  
(See Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics)  
[www.guardianship.org](http://www.guardianship.org)

Massachusetts Guardianship Association  
[www.massguardianshipassociation.org](http://www.massguardianshipassociation.org)

Massachusetts Probate and Family Court  
<http://www.mass.gov/courts/court-info/trial-court/pfc/>

The Arc U.S.  
[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

The ARC of Massachusetts  
[www.arcmass.org](http://www.arcmass.org)

MA Disability Law Center  
[www.dlc-ma.org](http://www.dlc-ma.org)

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