

A Serious Omission

To the Editor:

While Lynn Ingram's article in the February issue ("A Lawyer Helps: MSU Law's Eviction Diversion Program Builds Better Lawyers") accurately describes the good work being done with the Eviction Diversion Program at the 55th District Court in Ingham County, an essential partner in the program was inadvertently omitted. I take full responsibility for this omission and feel compelled to come forward to describe the excellent contribution of Elizabeth (Liza) Rios and Legal Services of South Central Michigan.

Legal Services has been an integral part of the planning, organization, and operation of the program since before its inception in September 2012. In fact, it was Liza, along with Ingham County Department of Human Services Director Su A'lyn Holbrook, who first approached us at the MSU Housing Law Clinic to see if we would be interested in participating in the program. Just like at MSU, Liza oversees and supervises a group of law student volunteers from Legal Services—including David Arb and Allison Paris—at the program on Wednesday afternoons. In addition, she is an executive board member of the Greater Lansing Homeless Resolution Network, a group in which most Eviction Diversion Program community partners are members.

The affiliation with the Homeless Resolution Network helps our Eviction Diversion Program members understand how Ingham County's social-services network operates and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of our program's objectives.

Liza is a consummate professional, and Legal Services is a cornerstone of the Eviction Diversion Program. For these reasons, I must insist that Legal Services be acknowledged and share in whatever success the program may experience now and in the future as it evolves and spreads to other districts.

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Resolving Adult Guardianship Battles Outside the Courtroom

To the Editor:

In his article, "Adult Guardianship: The New Divorce" (March 2013 *Michigan Bar Journal*), Doug Chalgian observes that "[f]amilies that want to battle will almost always find a way" in guardianship matters. The battle may be heading into a new arena beyond the courtroom, however, as recent experience shows.

A growing number of probate judges are encouraging or ordering family members to try to resolve their contested guardianship matters through mediation. While

statewide data regarding the number of cases managed by private mediators is not available, of the 106 guardianship cases mediated through Community Dispute Resolution Program centers in 2012, 76 percent of the contested adult guardianship cases resulted in agreements reached by the parties themselves.

This collaborative approach to problem solving may not completely resolve the kinds of lengthy family disputes that typi-

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cally come to light in guardianship litigation. But mediation may help family members move forward in a less contentious and adversarial manner. Given the success mediators have had in helping parties work through the challenges of their parents' aging, lawyers may want to discuss with clients whether mediation might be preferable to a "battle" over decisions about their parents' care.

Doug Van Epps
Lansing

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