

February 28, 2013

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services, 2013 Oregon Legislative Session.

Attention: Sen. Alan Bates, Co-Chair and Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair.

This is my story:

Since my great grandson was born, I have been his Permanent guardian. As my great grandson grew he became very behavioral. I was involved with many different providers for him and getting him the best treatment possible. At the age of 12 his behavior became unmanageable and AP was taken into DHS custody. This broke my heart. I completely engaged in all DHS mandates and felt like I was getting nowhere. I really felt like the agency wasn't willing to return him to me because of my age.

In March of 2012 I was referred to peer support services through Oregon Family Support network. Through the peer support services, I received a family partner who came and met with me and took time to really get to know me and my story. She began helping me look for a new safer place to live. This was no easy task. My family partner came to FDM meetings with me and helped me get my voice heard at the table. She also went to court hearings for support. There was a time I wasn't feeling well and my family partner was able to attend court for me. This was very helpful.

In June of 2012 my guardianship was dissolved and my great grandson moved in with his father. Even though I want the best for him this was incredibly hard for me since I had cared for him all his life. My family partner stood by me and helped me move forward after this had happened. Even though AP wasn't coming home to me I still needed to move to a safer place. My family partner and I worked hard on finding locations that would accept my application. The first few didn't work for different reasons. I thought to myself "It's a wonder anyone can help me with the state I am in", but she continued to listen and offer good suggestions that were helpful. My family Partner never gave up on me even when I gave up on myself. She was always there to listen and press forward.

In August we were able to find an apartment that accepted my application. This was great. However I needed help with the move in cost. My family partner was able to find funding that covered almost all the move in cost. I am now settled in my apartment that is much safer than where I was before. Although I don't see my great grandson as much as I would like, he seems to be doing well. I am thankful for the support of my family partner and not sure what I would have done with out her.

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