



State of New York
UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM
SUFFOLK COUNTY
SUPREME COURT JUDGE'S CHAMBERS
JOHN P. COHALAN, JR. COURT COMPLEX
400 Carleton Avenue
P. O. Box 9070
Central Islip, New York 11722

Hon. Marian Rose Tinari
Justice of the Supreme Court

Hon. Chris Ann Kelley
Acting Justice of the Supreme Court

PERSONAL AND UNOFFICIAL

March 6, 2024

Re: Guardianship Corp. and CEO, Robert Heppenheimer

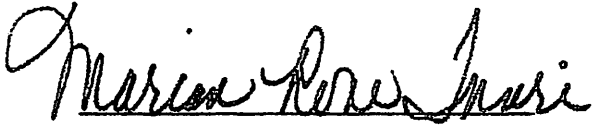
To Whom It May Concern,

Kindly accept this letter in support of Guardianship Corp. and its CEO, Robert Heppenheimer. We preside over matters in the Suffolk County Guardianship Part, and have had the opportunity to observe the outstanding work of Guardianship Corp. Briefly, guardianship proceedings brought under Article 81 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law seek the appointment of guardians those alleged to be incapacitated. Examples include individuals suffering from traumatic brain injury, dementia, and birth injuries. Sadly, many have no family ties and are indigent. Guardianship Corp. is one of the few resources available to address the needs of those for whom there are no family members to act. Historically, in these types of cases, courts relied on attorneys to serve as guardians, however, that option has become rarely available largely because such appointments can last years, often decades, and require a great deal of time and attention. Because such appointments are for wards with no assets, it is extremely difficult to find guardians to take on these cases.

Guardianship Corp. is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation created to aid individuals who have no one else to act on their behalf. Each person, each case, is different and often challenging. Guardianship Corp.'s model is cost effective and highly successful. It has garnered national attention. Unfortunately, its funding is inconsistent. We have, as you are no doubt aware, an aging population spread over a large geographic area. Unlike other areas of New York where an underserved group can be seen via public transportation, Long Islanders rely on cars and every visit is time consuming and often expensive. The overarching goal, as articulated in the statute creating our current guardianship system, is to accord each person the "greatest amount of independence and self-determination and participation in all the decisions affecting such person's life." In short, it is the goal of the guardian to ensure that everyone is accorded the dignity he or she deserves. Bob Heppenheimer does exactly that with those entrusted to his care.

It is our sincere hope that a consistent income stream for the continued operation of Guardianship Corp. be established and that its model be scaled up to support more indigent incapacitated individuals. We would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further and thank you for your attention to this matter – one which truly so directly affects the voiceless among us.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marian Rose Tinari".

Hon. Marian Rose Tinari

Justice of the Supreme Court

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chris Ann Kelley".

Hon. Chris Ann Kelley

Acting Justice of the Supreme Court