

## Scent of Field Work

### Compilation of Stories from the Field.

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# Chapter of Compassion

## Mother and daughter's relationship renewed following years of estrangement

**The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship helped mediate the renewed contact between a ward of the state and her daughter which in turn led to a significant improvement in the mothers' quality of life.**

An 85 year-old widow, Holocaust survivor, and ward of the state, was living in her privately owned apartment in southern Israel, with a foreign care-giver. She had a son and a daughter who were estranged. She had been suffering from Alzheimer's for many years and prior to becoming a ward of the state, her husband acted as legal guardian.

While her husband was in a coma prior to his death, the son had his mother sign a power of attorney giving him control over her affairs; this being the first step in his plan to request he be appointed her legal guardian. At this point the daughter, who had had no contact with her parents, given past family difficulties, filed for the appointment of an external legal guardian. According to the daughter, due to the complex and delicate situation between herself and her brother, she did not trust him and did not want to have to handle the situation by herself.

The elderly woman became a ward of the state under The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship. It is the centers' policy to involve children in their parents care. At some point, the daughter approached her mothers care coordinator and asked to revise her medical treatment. At times this was done in the face of opposition from her brother. For example; the daughter asked that her mother be included in daytime activities for the elderly at a center for the mentally ill. The son objected, arguing that the elevator in his mothers' building was often broken, and he fears his mother may get stuck in the elevator. To dispel these fears, the center approached the building committee to repair the elevator. This issue settled, the mother began to participate in daily activities which she enjoyed greatly.

The center involved the daughter, a nurse by profession, with regard to medical treatments, tests and medicines given to her mother. In this manner she slowly reconnected with her mother. A year later, she agreed to be appointed her mothers' health care guardian. Although at her insistence, the center remained her mothers' legal guardian minimizing conflicts with her brother.

According to the daughter, thanks to The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship she is free to care quietly for her aging mother.

## The power of resolution

**The tenacity of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship led to a renewed medical diagnosis for a state ward leading to a transfer from a closed facility to a facility that better suited her needs.**

A 70 year old widow with no children lived alone in an Amidar subsidized housing building in the center of Israel. Occasionally, she would visit her family in Romania. Following one of these visits, her neighbors reported that she returned in poor physical condition, confused, restless, delusional, and was found wandering the streets minimally dressed.

She was admitted to an inpatient ward in a geriatric hospital and declared an infirm dependent suffering from confusion, a chemical imbalance, Parkinson's disease, loss of memory and orientation, lack of judgment and grip on reality, and unaware of her situation. The courts made her a ward of the state under The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship.

While making a routine check with the medical staff in the geriatric institution, a representative of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship discovered that the elderly woman would help the staff set and clear the meal tables. The representative expressed concerns with the health coordinator and asked for a reassessment of the woman's condition.

Based on the new tests, the geriatric psychologist found the woman suffered from a static form of Parkinson's which progresses very slowly. Originally, the woman had been diagnosed with a severe form of Parkinson's and was receiving large doses of medication which caused excessive alertness, emotional swings, temper tantrums, and psychotic states of confusion. "Anti-depression treatment, with the current medications listed, may be harmful to the patient. According to expert opinion, the patient is not necessarily cognitively impaired or infirm". As a result, her medication was adjusted and she was transferred to an open facility which better suited her needs. This decision was received by the patient with excitement and tears of joy. She explained that she was not allowed to leave her ward and that she missed having her freedom.

The ward was willfully transferred to a nursing home and a few days later even went to visit her home, where she was able to pack some significant belongings. She is now fully integrated into the nursing home and greatly satisfied.

## **The way back from a nursing home to a private residence in the community**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship initiated the move of an elderly, 72 year old woman, from the nursing home where she had been living a few years, back to her home with a foreign care giver. This resulted in her rehabilitation and an improved quality of life.**

The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship was appointed guardian for an elderly, 72 year old woman, who had been in a nursing home for a number of years. Reviewing her situation, the staff came under the impression that despite her lengthy stay in the nursing home, she had not yet adapted to life there, and that it may be harming her quality of life.

The centers Jerusalem office assessed the woman's financial situation and it was found that she has the means to hire a live in foreign care-giver. They decided to explore the possibility of returning her to her home, accompanied by a care-giver.

Together with locating a suitable care-giver, the center began preparing her home for her return.

With the patient back in her home, a clear process of rehabilitation began. During her stay in the nursing home she become passive, while the staff cared for her every need and organized every aspect

of her life. Upon her return home, she began to slowly show initiative and "returned to life". She became more independent and less dependent than in the past.

## **Refused to move to a nursing home without her beloved dog**

**Efforts made by The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship helped locate a nursing home that would agree to receive a Holocaust survivor living in neglect, along with her pet dog.**

The ward, a Holocaust survivor born in 1932 in Germany, had been sent along with her sister during World War II, to Britain as part of the "Kindertransport" rescue mission. In recent years she suffered from a significant decline in her medical condition, which caused a range of problems from paranoid behavior, self-neglect, inability to manage her household, money squandering, to suspicion of others and a general lack of cooperation. She was diagnosed to be suffering from dementia with a psychotic disorder, poor judgment and lack of awareness as to her situation.

The ward lived in a private residence in northern Israel and raised a dog, four cats and 10 kittens, who defecated all over her home. This neglect became harmful and unhealthy.

In light of the escalating neglect and the fact that she could not take care of her needs,

The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship, Haifa office, in cooperation with community officials and one of her children, decided to move her to a nursing home. The ward refused to make this transition without her dog. At first, no nursing home was found that would agree to accommodate the woman and her pet.

Following concentrated efforts, a nursing home was located that agreed to accept the woman and her loyal and devoted dog. She integrated well into the nursing home. Today she enjoys the social activities in the nursing home, she cooperates with the staff, keeps herself clean and tidy, and the dog ... lives in her room in the nursing home.

## **Even at 101 years old there is still no place like home**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship succeeded in bringing together an estranged family to help pay for a foreign caregiver and enable their 101 years old mother to continue to live at home as she so wanted**

Due to a decline in her cognitive abilities, the ward, a 101 years old woman living by herself in Jerusalem, was deemed in need of 24 hours a day help and supervision. However, the ward's financial means were not enough to enable the hiring of a foreign caregiver.

To prevent her transferal to a nursing home, the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship together with the Welfare Services' social worker turned to the ward's feuding family members. It took many meetings, discussions and appeals to bridge their differences and distrust of each other and persuade them to together pay for a foreign caregiver for their mother.

The entire family finally came on board and together they give every month 4,500 NIS that pays for a foreign caregiver. This financial support enables the ward to continue to live at home - which is what she so wanted.

## **Security Blanket for a Client at Time of Operation "Pillar of Defense"**

**A representative of The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship personally accompanied a client who was housebound and terrified by rocket attacks in Southern Israel during Operation "Pillar of Defense".**

In April 2012, whilst a barrage of rockets fell on the City of Ashdod, a 60-year old client, living alone in a rented apartment, told us of her fears as a result of the sirens and rockets falling on the city, since her apartment is not bullet proof and has no secure room, meaning that she is forced to take shelter in the public stairwell.

The woman, who lives alone and speaks only Russian, has a son who is serving in an active combat unit in the IDF, who makes sure to visit her in his free time. She has no one else to rely upon since apart from the occasional visit from her son, no one visits her.

As a result of her fears regarding the fighting in the south, the Beer Sheva department of the Israel Center for Legal Guardianship suggested to the client that they come and escort her to the ICLG representative's house, where there is a secure room, until the emergency situation passes. However, the client was too afraid to undertake this journey.

In light of the heavy shelling on the city, the ICLG representative took it upon herself, at personal risk, to visit the client on a daily basis in her home, kept up constant phone contact several times each day and night throughout the escalation, and phoned each time there was a siren to encourage and give her emotional support until the sound of the siren subsided.

## **A ward can now spend time with his children and brother at will**

Acting to fulfill the wishes of a ward, the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship brought about the annulment of a visitation arrangement the ward had with his children and brother and discarding of any restrictions on his meeting them whenever they wanted.

The ward is a 68 years old man, bound to a wheel chair following a leg amputation and suffering from dementia. He lives in the North, in private residence, adjacent to his common-law spouse.

After being appointed his guardian, the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship Center, Haifa and North District, discovered that there was a long-standing visitation arrangement - set by the court - between the ward and his children and brother, which allowed a meeting of only 2 hours a week. Talks with him made clear that this was deeply upsetting for him and that it is very important to him to see his children more often and without restrictions.

A legal consultant from the Center applied to the court requesting to change the visitation arrangements. Recently, the family court decided to annul the visitation arrangement so that the children and brother

can now visit him whenever they want. The ward was thrilled and so happy that from now on he could see his children and brother without any restrictions.

Another concern was that the ward may be exploited financially. The deed to the couple's joint house was transferred to the name of the common-law spouse alone. To address the matter, the Center appointed an attorney to try and reverse the transfer and protect the ward's claim on the property.

## **Elderly Ethiopian ward can enjoy the food of his childhood, despite son's objections to additional expense**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship enlisted the help of all those involved in the care of a ward to persuade the son to use his father's National Insurance benefits to purchase the traditional food his father wants.**

The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship was appointed guardian to the property of an 84 years old Ethiopian immigrant residing in an absorption center. His son used to take the ward's National Insurance benefits so that the ward was left without any financial means and even without food.

The elderly man's wife had passed away. Among other ailments she had also been underweight. With the appointed of the Center's Jerusalem District as guardian, a treatment program was put in place that included food deliveries from the supermarket and purchase of traditional Ethiopian food; payment of rent directly to the absorption center and a standing order to pay for medication.

Influenced by his son, the ward at first strongly resisted the food deliveries and they were left at the office of the absorption center. The Center initiated a meeting between all those involved in the ward's care from the community and from the absorption center and with the ward's two children. Following the meeting, the son began to cooperate and persuaded his father to accept the food deliveries which are now a fixture in his life so that he is never without food.

In addition, the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship arranged for rent to be paid regularly and has recently arranged for new clothes to be purchased for the ward. The Center helped fund a memorial service, in traditional Ethiopian form, for the ward's late wife.

## **In a lightning quick operation, the estranged daughter of a ward who had passed away was located and was able to pay last respects to her mother**

**In a race against time, workers at the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship managed to locate a daughter who had had no contact with her mother for over 10 years, and inform her of her mother's passing.**

The resourcefulness of a worker at the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship's Haifa and North District prevented a ward being buried without her children. After a 10 year disconnect, the ward's daughter was located and enabled to come to the funeral.

The court appointed the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship as guardian of the elderly woman following reports by the welfare authorities that her daughter and son in law stole money from her and left her destitute. After the report, the daughter and son in law cut all contact with her and no longer took care of her. After the Center was appointed as guardian, the ward was moved to a geriatric center. Throughout the years, the woman had no contact with any family members and the staff as well as the residents believed that she was childless.

When the Center was notified of her passing at 74 years old, her file was reviewed and it was then discovered that she has a daughter, son in law and grandchildren. The workers asked to delay her burial until her family was located.

The Ministry of Interior was unable to locate the daughter in their records. The Center worker applied to various institutions and found that the daughter and her husband had changed their surname. Using the Internet, the worker managed to find the son in law's cell phone number – however, that turned to be erroneous. Not giving up, the worker mined the social media and found out the son in law's daughter from his first marriage. Through her she located the address of the ward's daughter and went there to tell the daughter of her mother's death.

Two hours later the daughter, son in law and grandchildren arrived at Haifa, driving from the center, in order to take part in the funeral of their mother, mother in law and grandmother. "I was sure that mother had passed long ago," the daughter said. "Despite the disconnect between us, I am grateful that the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship enabled me to pay her my last respects."

## **Overnight operation to find a ward who left a retirement home unaccompanied and did not return**

**With great dedication, workers of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship searched for and found a ward who had left a retirement home in the afternoon and did not return by late at night. A more suitable nursing home was found and the ward was immediately moved.**

One evening, the Center's treatment coordinator for the Be'er Sheba and South District received a call from a retirement home reporting that an 82 years old man, single and childless, staying in an open department for infirm residents, had left the home and had not yet returned.

Fearing for his safety, and concerned that the ward may not remember how to return to the home or has been hurt and cannot call for help, it was decided to report his absence to the police. A team from the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship joined the police to search for the ward who was finally found near his old home.

It was clear immediately clear to the Center team that he cannot be returned to an open department at a retirement home and that he must be moved to a secured department to prevent his leaving again and getting hurt. The District Director put in an emergency call to the regional psychiatrist late at night, and a hospitalization order for the ward was immediately authorized. At the same time, workers began looking for a suitable nursing home that could accept him immediately, that very night. An appropriate home was found and the ward was moved to a mentally infirm department, where he still resides.

# From “enemy” to trusted friend

**The persistence of the Treatment Coordinator of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship led to the creation of trusting relations between herself and a ward who asked for the Center's continued guardianship.**

The appointment of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship as guardian to a mentally ill 55 year old man, the process was beset with many difficulties. The ward's mental illness included psychotic attacks with outbursts of rage and out-of-control spending, and episodes of deep depression and even suicide attempts. The Center discovered that the ward's bank account was greatly overdrawn, in addition to struggling to pay back several loans as well as mortgage payments. As the Center took over the management of his financial affairs, the ward became very hostile and angry towards the Treatment Coordinator of the Tel Aviv and Center's District, refusing to cooperate with her and being very verbally abusive.

Despite his hostile attitude and lack of cooperation, the Tel Aviv and Center District's Treatment Coordinator straightened out his debts and mortgage, restrained his spendthrift behavior. As a result, his financial situation slowly improved and stabilized. Throughout, the Treatment Coordinator held countless meetings and conversations with the ward, explaining again and again his financial limits and how he can make do with what – something that the ward was very resistant to accept.

After a while, the option of being released from the guardianship was brought up with him, but still at the same time the Treatment Coordinator continued to resolutely work to balance his finances and contain his spending. After 3 years, a management forum was held at the ward's mental health unit to discuss their patients, including the ward. At the meeting, the path the authorities should take with the ward was debated. The ward surprised all those present when he asked not to remove the Center's guardianship over his property (although he wanted the guardianship over his body to be removed).

This marked a transformation in the relationship. He became very trusting of his Treatment Coordinator and accepted that she had his best interests at heart. Today, the connection the ward has with his Treatment Coordinator and the care he receives from the Center are empowering factors in his life. Because of the Center's management, his loan from the bank has been paid in full and his mortgage is paid regularly from his benefit.

Every month, if there is a balance in his bank account from the previous month, this is added to his monthly expenses allowance. The ward now confides everything to the Center, medical issues, his romantic involvement with the woman he ended up marrying, and all his plans for the future. He learned to responsibly manage his financial affairs and the Center allows him a lot of independence while still overseeing his accounts.

## **Following your Gut**

**When a ward who on the previous day was reported to suffer from pain in his legs did not answer the phone, the Treatment Coordinator of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship insisted on personally going to his home, where she saw him on the floor, unable to move.**

The helpful cleaning lady of a 67 years old, childless ward, living in private residence in Jerusalem, reported that the ward, a diabetic, is suffering from severe pain in his legs, finds it difficult to walk and cannot go to the doctor. The Treatment Coordinator's suggestion to call an ambulance to go to an emergency room was refused by the ward.

The family doctor visited him the day after and reported that it didn't look like there was a break, but that further x-rays and tests were needed to reach a diagnosis.

The Treatment Coordinator of the Center's Jerusalem District tried to call him several times on the phone, but he did not answer any of her calls. The Center's representative, who visits him once a week, noted that this is quite common behavior for him as he usually does not answer his phone. Nonetheless, the Treatment Coordinator felt uneasy. She decided to drive to the ward's home, together with the district's Property Coordinator.

Behind the door, they shouted to the ward to open the door, but he replied that he cannot walk. They looked through the window and saw him sitting on the floor by the bathroom, unable to move. The Treatment Coordinator told him that she was going to break down the door and call an ambulance. When they entered the house, the ward was sitting on the cold floor, half naked and unable to stand up or move. The Treatment Coordinator covered him and gave him fluids.

When the paramedics arrived, they lifted him, examined him and decided to immediately take him to the emergency room: his blood sugar level was very high, he had cardiac issues and lowered body temperature. The ward objected, but the Treatment Coordinator authorized his evacuation to the hospital. It took a whole month at the hospital, but the ward was finally stabilized and transferred to the rehabilitation unit for continued treatment and monitoring.

## Meeting a Ward through a Crack in the Door

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## **Guardianship as a humanitarian gesture for an Eritrean refugee, without legal status or financial means, who was found unconscious**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship agreed to be guardian to the body of an Eritrean refugee, without legal status or sources of income, found hanging from an electric pole**

A 25 years old Eritrean refugee was found hanging from an electric pole. It wasn't clear whether he attempted suicide or was attacked. He was found unconscious and at first couldn't be identified as there were no identity papers on him

He was taken to the Sha'arei Zedek hospital which applied to the Center for Legal Guardianship's Jerusalem District to become guardian of his body so that the hospital could medically treat him. It turned out that he had no legal standing or sources of income, and the Center's Exceptions Committee decided to agree to become his guardian, for humanitarian reasons.

It was discovered that he was a refugee from Eritrea, an only child to parents living overseas. It was difficult to find contacts for him as none of his friends, employers and cousin, living in Israel, refused to be identified as they were staying in Israel illegally and if they were exposed the immigration authorities may expel them from the country.

Over the months he was hospitalized, Jerusalem District representatives were called on to make several medical decisions for him, like feeding him through a gastrotomy. Because of his severe injuries and brain damage, the possibility of transferring him to a different hospital specializing in patients on ventilation was brought up, but at the end was not carried out. During the entire four months he was in the hospital, a Center's representative visited him twice a week.

After four months he passed away, and through the mediation of the Center, he was buried in the Chevra Kadisah – Jerusalem Community foreigners plot. In addition to his handful of friends and employers, representatives of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianships also participated in his funeral.

## **To give from the heart and from the soul**

**Staff from The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship were called to the apartment of a ward who had fallen from her bed in the night and lay helpless for hours in her soiled clothes, in the absence of a caregiver**

The message received in the office of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship, Haifa and Northern Israel district, was from a caregiver in a nursing company who reported that the 82 yr. old ward in her care had phoned, and told her that she had fallen out of bed at night, was still laying on the floor and could not get up. The caregiver asked for the keys to the wards apartment, so that she could reach her in a few hours.

Without hesitating, the managing secretary of the center, together with the care coordinator, went immediately to the wards house. When they reached the apartment they spoke with her by phone and she said that she was still laying on the floor and still could not get up. A locksmith and emergency healthcare services were then rushed to the apartment.

After breaking in, they found the ward as she said, on the floor in her soiled condition. She had been laying on the floor for hours, with no food or water. The managing secretary and care coordinator gave her some water then bathed her in the shower for she was in a unsanitary state. They then dressed her and tried to persuade her to leave the house and go to the hospital for tests. The ward refused at first, but after two hours of persuasion agreed.

## **The Chapter of Minors**

**Alone in the world at the age of 16**

**The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship was appointed guardian for a minor, left destitute after his mothers' death. The center renovated and rented the mothers' apartment, and is working with Italian authorities, the minors' birthplace, to ensure his rights and financial security as an adult.**

When he was 16, this minor lost his mother and was left destitute. Upon receiving the notification, The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship, Tel Aviv and Central Israel office, together with The Center for Legal Guardianship of Minors, placed the minor in the home of a friend from school.

He was upset that a tombstone had not been placed on his mother's grave, this because he did not have either the means or the ends to organize it. Two weeks later, the funds to finance the tombstone were donated. The minor was consulted for the wording on the tombstone and insisted on writing that his mother died following great suffering and hardship.

After placing the tombstone, the Center began work to ensure the minors' future: a claim was filed with the National Insurance Institute for Child Allowance and Survivors Benefits; the family center the minor was appointed to by social services was surveyed; a meeting was held at the school where he studies, in the presence of his teacher, school counselor, welfare officer and representatives from the center. At the meeting it became clear that besides a torn shirt from the shiva (mourning period) which he wore all the time, he had no other clothes. The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship immediately approved a budget to purchase appropriate clothes for the minor.

The apartment where the minor and his mother lived was surveyed and found in a state of great disrepair. The house was filled with trash, bottles and empty cans. The floor of the apartment was covered in filth blocking the door and entrance and two large trucks were needed to remove the garbage from within. When clearing the refuse, attention was paid to saving items of sentimental value for the minor as a keepsake, such as photo albums.

The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship renovated the apartment, keeping in mind that the apartment may serve as the minor's residence when he reaches adulthood. Until then, the apartment was rented so the minor could make use of and enjoy the money.

During the clearing of the apartment, documents were found indicating that the minor was born in Italy, where his mother had lived as a student. His father was apparently an Italian citizen, who, upon the minors birth, had insisted the child be put up for adoption and not be raised by his mother. With these documents, the Center is operating with an Italian lawyer to find out if this minor has rights as an Italian citizen.

## **From a Candidate for Deportation to an IDF Soldier**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship worked to prevent the deportation of a minor girl whose parents passed away, arranged for legal residence status and for her recruitment to the IDF.**

In 2005, the minor girl immigrated to Israel with her mother and brother (her father had died in the Ukraine). In Israel, the mother became sick with cancer and passed away. The girl was left an orphan without legal status (since she is not Jewish) and there was a real concern that she and her brother may

be deported. The girl stayed at the The Israel Goldstein Youth Village, near Jerusalem, while her brother - who is older, lived in the South.

Once the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship-Jerusalem Region, was appointed as the girl's guardian, it began working to legalize her status in Israel, vis-à-vis the Ministry of Interior. After many meeting with Ministry of Interior officials, the Center succeeded in arranging a General Temporary Status for her, which would hold until she reached 18. The Center also arranged for the issuance of an orange (temporary) ID certificate.

Even before she reached 18, the Center assisted the girl to apply to the Ministry of Interior for Permanent Residency. At the same time, as the girl very much wanted to enlist to the IDF and serve the country, the Center helped her through the processes involved in enlisting to the army. The Center sent letters to the Recruitment Bureau asking the army to take her situation into consideration, recruit her and recognize her status as a Lone Soldier. Thanks to the great efforts the Center put into this, the girl was recruited to the army.

Parallel to this, the Center submitted a claim on her behalf to the Surviving Relatives Department of the National Insurance Institute for Surviving Relative Benefits and Living Stipend, for the entire period since she had lost her mother. The National Insurance Institute recognized her as a Surviving Relative and paid her all the monies to which she was entitled retroactively.

The representative of the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship, who visited her regularly at her boarding school, developed close and warm ties with the girl. The representative's family became an informal surrogate family for the girl who spent most of her weekends there.

## **Four days before losing his entitlement the minor boy received a benefit due to the death of a mother in the year after giving birth**

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship worked to fulfill the minor's National Insurance rights arising from the death of his mother when he was three weeks old, entitling him to a benefit that helped meet his needs.**

When the minor boy was two and a half months old, the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship-Tel Aviv Region was appointed guardian of his property, after his mother who had AIDS passed away when he was only three weeks old. A distant relative was appointed his foster family and guardian over the minor's body.

Following the Center's appointment as his guardian, it began the process of fulfilling his rights vis-à-vis the National Security Institute. A preliminary inquiry seemed to show that he was entitled only to a Child Allowance and Surviving Relatives Benefit. Nonetheless, further inquiries were made by the Center vis-à-vis different wings and departments of the National Insurance Institute and it was found that the minor, since he was orphaned during his first year, was entitled to a special benefit and recompense due to the death of a mother shortly after giving birth, in the sum of 2,500 NIS a month for 12 months. The claim for this benefit is time-limited and may be submitted only up to the infant's one year birthday. The claim was submitted in time – just 4 days before the minor turned one – and he received 30,000 NIS from the National Insurance due to this special benefit.

At the same time, the Center looked into the minor's rights regarding a property that belonged to the mother. Orders of Probate were issued regarding the grandmother who passed and then for the mother who passed. The property was mortgaged, and due to the mother's medical condition when she had taken the mortgage, it did not include life insurance, so it was impossible to rescind it.

Despite this, the Center and its legal advisors worked to have the mortgage rescinded. An application was made to an inter-ministerial committee, the bank's Receiver and finally, after a persistent effort, the mortgage was rescinded.

During the time the Center acted as guardian and worked intensively on the boy's case, regular contact was maintained between the Center's representatives and the relative who was the child's foster family. She applied to the Center several times for assistance including help in circumstances that normally are beyond the Center's mandate. She received attention and support, including when the minor went through frequent hospitalizations and when she needed assistance vis-à-vis the welfare authorities.

The relative who was appointed the minor's foster family went completed the adoption process and her adoption of the minor boy has recently been officially recognized. The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship's appointment as guardian of his property was therefore terminated.

## Bar Mitzvah Celebration

**The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship undertook to help celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of a minor boy who was removed from his family under an Emergency Injunction and living in a boarding school.**

The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship was appointed guardian to a minor who was removed from his mother when he was eight years old, after being found severely neglected and physically abused by the partner of his mentally ill mother. Since then the minor has been living at a children's village in the South.

When he turned 13 years old, the boy told the National Service girl that visited him that his dream is to have a Bar Mitzvah celebration like all other children. He said that at the children's village there is usually a small celebration for all the children and he wants a large party just for himself.

The National Service girl, together with the Center's team threw themselves into making the boy's dream come true. They turned to a company that specializes in activities for children and it agreed to volunteer its services. A large celebration was held for the boy at the children's village that included activities, food and a lot of fun, with all the other children.

The boy was delighted beyond measure.

The Bar Mitzvah celebration followed other matters that the Center dealt with on behalf of the minor: It was discovered that the mother had married her violent partner and changed her family name to his. The Ministry of Interior automatically changed the boy's name as well since he was a minor. The people familiar with the boy said that if he found out that his dead father's name was taken from him, it will cause the boy a severe emotional crisis. The Center therefore went to the court, unbeknownst to the boy, to request that his last name be returned to that of his father's.

In order to preserve the boy's roots, such as they were, the Center worked to renew his contact with his grandmother who had been an important part of his life while he was living with his mother, and may have been his only support in the terrible reality of his life.

## **It is so easy to imagine you alive, so hard to believe that you are gone**

**This was written by a minor boy on his mother's headstone, after the Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship located and enlisted the help of a headstones supplier to erect a headstone on the mother's grave, although the law and the National Insurance Institute's regulations did not entitle her to it.**

Two years after the passing of the mother of a 15 years old boy, he finally has a place to commune with her memory. Thanks to the assistance and initiative of staff members of the Haifa and Northern Region Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship, a headstone was erected over the grave of the mother, two years after her death, on which the boy asked to inscribe "It is so easy to imagine you alive, so hard to believe that you are gone."

When the boy was 13 years old, his mother had cardiac arrest and collapsed in front of him, passing away at age 47. The boy was left without a family and so was put with a foster family. The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship was appointed his guardian.

To the pain of losing his mother was added the fact that she was buried in a cemetery for non-Jews without a headstone. This was in accordance with the law that dictates that a deceased person who did not receive a benefit from the National Insurance before his death is not entitled to a Death Benefit. Because of this there were no funds for a headstone.

The Israeli Center for Legal Guardianship and the boy's foster family tried to persuade the authorities to take into consideration the boy's situation and go beyond the letter of the law to provide a headstone for the mother's grave. However, they were met with impassable bureaucratic obstacles. Despite explaining about the boy's growing distress due to the lack of a headstone over his mother's grave, the authorities would not relent.

The Center's team took initiative and applied to several headstone suppliers, asking for their help in the matter. One supplier was so moved he immediately announced that his company will erect a headstone free of charge as a humanitarian gesture.

The boy and his foster family, helped by the Center's team, took two weeks to decide what to inscribe on the headstone, a process that was accompanied by great pain and emotional outbreaks. In the end he wrote, "To our dear mother, from your son and your family."

# Chapter on prevention of exploitation and financial abuse

## The mother requested that all her inheritance be bequeathed unto her daughter, the neighbor had her sign a will for his benefit

**The Israeli Center for Guardianship acted on canceling a new will that a mother had signed in favor of a neighbor, instead of the previous will which granted her daughter all her belongings and assets.**

The Israeli Center for Guardianship was appointed as guardian for a woman in her 50s. She'd been hospitalized in a psychiatric institution after her mother passed away, a holocaust survivor. She was her mother's entire world, and was therefore written in her will as the sole inheritor of all her assets including an apartment, monies in the bank and financial compensation from Germany.

With the appointment by the Tel Aviv region of the Center as guardian for the woman, after her mother died, it became clear that before the Center was appointed, a neighbor who lived in the same building as the mother, had requested the inheritance registry to execute a probate in his favor, in evidence of producing a new will that the mother had written 5 years after she had already bequeathed all her money and assets.

In accordance with this, the Center filed in the name of the daughter an objection on the validity of the will, due to their suspicion that this new will was made under undue influence, subterfuge and deceit. It was discovered that the new registration took place after a significant deterioration in the mother's functionality, including memory disturbances.

After long judicial proceedings, the court decided that both wills must be valid side by side, through an understanding that in all cases the daughter's interests and welfare must be prioritized. Part of the monies were transferred to the neighbor and the rest were given to the daughter under the discretion of the Center. When the daughter passes away, the neighbor or his heir will be entitled to the monies that remain and the Center will hand over the money.

# Victim of a foreign workers union

**The Israeli Center for Guardianship intervened to protect a 46-year-old foreign worker, who fell victim to a Union for Foreign Workers exploits.**

A 46 year old man from the south of the country, physically and mentally ill, lived on social welfare on his own, and fell victim to exploitation until he hired the Center as his guardian.

The man was signed by a Union for Foreign Workers and his disability was exploited for the benefit of a foreign worker, who was employed by them somewhere else, but was written as a caregiver for this man. The foreign worker was caught by the immigration authorities and due to a lack of proper documentation, was deported. Parallel to this, the man was sued as being his employer and a partner in this crime.

The Israeli Center for Guardianship in the Be'er Sheva region in the south represented this man in a petition to the court for administrative matters, and there was a worry that he'd be fined with various expenses due to the supposed hiring of the foreign worker not in accordance with the law.

The man had a hard time explaining himself in court, which is why the Care Giving Coordinator and a representative of the Israeli Center for Guardianship intervened and attested that the man's home and situation could not allow for a foreign worker to stay with him, nor could he afford hiring help.

Due to the testimony, the Union of Foreign Workers could not claim compensation from the man.

# The Neighbor's Sting

**A neighbor of an elderly woman befriended her, transferred the deed to her house to his name, and sold it. The Israeli Center for Guardianship returned her the funds meant for her welfare.**

With the appointment by the Jerusalem region of the Israeli Center for Guardianship as guardian for the 83 year old elderly woman from the Jerusalem area, who lives in an old age home, it was deciphered that previously, a neighbor who lived close by had signed her, illegally, on the deeds to her home so as to transfer the ownership to his name, along with documents declaring she had received funds which were never transferred to her. In the end, the neighbor sold her apartment and made hundreds of thousands of shekels, illegally.

When the Center was appointed as guardian, and the land transaction was discovered along with the exploitation of the elderly woman by the neighbor, the Center filed a lawsuit against him in the family court, who in turn ruled that the neighbor must transfer to the woman all the money he stole from her. After the neighbor's appeal against the judgment, that was rejected, the woman received her monies, which went to improving her quality of life, including the purchase of new dentures, settling debt she was in and her general well being.

Along with the appointment of the Center as guardian for the elderly woman, dozens of pieces of jewelry in their original packaging were found in her apartment in the old age home. As the jewelry had never been worn or even opened from their original packaging, it was deciphered by the Center that she had purchased them by telemarketing companies who took advantage of her situation. The Center sued the company, the jewelry was returned and she got her money back.

## **The brother took over his assets, the court ruled to return them**

**Following a petition by the Israeli Center for Guardianship, a man was able to reserve his rights on land and numerous assets, after his brother had taken over them, due to him being his guardian.**

The Haifa and north region of the Israeli Center for Guardianship was appointed as guardian for an elderly man from the north who suffers from slight retardation, is 84 years old and of Druz background. The dispute with his family members was over property. It turned out that his brother, who was his guardian, signed in his name a wave of rights over their parents' inheritance and took them to himself.

According to the Druz inheritance court decree, his father had bequeathed all his assets (lands, some intended for farming and others as residential areas), equally, to his three sons. The brother who was appointed guardian asked the Druz court, in the name of his disabled brother, to have him removed from owning any part of the estate, without compensation. The court accepted his request and the lands were written under the guardian brother. Since the sons of the 3<sup>rd</sup> brother who had passed away apposed the court's decision to change the status of the inheritance, the court reversed the decision and appointed the Israeli Center for Guardianship as guardian over the assets of the man.

The Center was acted via a lawyer who wrote a warning in the taboo for land assets, in order to prevent further actions without the consent of the Center in order to protect the rights of the man.

## **The bank returned stolen funds from the wards' account**

**After the announcement of the appointment of a guardian for an 85 years old gentleman, it was found that checks for tens of thousands of Israeli Shekels were drawn from his account, with his forged signature. The Bank agreed to the demand of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship to return the funds, which were needed to arrange for the wards care.**

With the appointment of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship, Be'er-Sheva department, as guardian for an 85-year old widower living alone in his community, suffering from severe dementia, with an institutionalized mentally handicapped daughter, the wards bank was notified and instructed to cancel all checks and credit cards drawn on his account.

Upon receiving the wards bank statement, it was clear that a few days after the bank had been notified, forged checks in the amount of tens of thousands of Israeli Shekels were drawn from the wards account and passed on to collection agencies.

The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship filed a complaint with the police and contacted the bank, demanding that no additional checks be honored in light of the suspicion that someone was in possession of a checkbook and making use of it.

After the police chose to close the investigation due to lack of evidence, The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship's legal assistant contacted the bank demanding the return of the amounts incurred by fraud from the wards account. The bank admitted its' mistake, and agreed to repay the funds drawn from the wards account from the date that the center announced its' appointment as guardian.

With the appointment of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship as guardian of the ward, his neighbor, who worked as his caregiver and was the only person he trusted, resigned her position. The ward refused to accept any other caregiver and expressed a lack of confidence in any person sent on behalf of the Center who tried to enter his home. After much effort, the Centers' representative was able to acquire the wards trust and develop a caring mutual relationship. She visited him a number of times, served him home cooked meals and brought him groceries.

All attempts to preserve the wards natural environment in the community, while trying to arrange a new caregiver failed. When he began to refuse to shower, eat, and became confused, The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship realized that his poor physical condition required transfer to a nursing home or assisted living facility, despite the wards unwillingness.

Psycho-geriatric testing found that he needed full observation institutionalization. The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship staff tried to convince the ward to make the move so that the transfer to an institution would be consensual. When the ward realized that his situation would be better in an assisted living facility, he consented. This transfer was made possible thanks to funds stolen from the wards account that had been returned by the bank.

## **An attorney-in-fact with power of attorney lodged a caveat on a wards apartment, in which the ward received no compensation**

**The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship voided the sale of the home and raised**

**the various community entities to finance the continued presence of a ward in his home and allow his optimal well-being.**

The appointment of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship, Tel Aviv and Central Israel department, as guardian to a 65 year old mentally handicapped man, suffering from additional brain damage due to a stroke, was done following the discovery that he had "sold" his apartment to an attorney he knew. In respect of the sale transaction, the lawyer, who had power of attorney for the ward, lodged a caveat in his own favor, and the ward did not receive any compensation in return. In addition, the lawyer took a loan of approximately NIS 20,000 from the bank in the wards name, to be used to renovate the wards apartment and adapt it to his needs.

The ward objected to the appointment of The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship as his guardian and demanded that the lawyer should continue to serve as his guardian. The lawyer also objected to the appointment of the Center and claimed that the ward was not in need of a guardian. He even appealed the decision to the Supreme Court which rejected the appeal, returning the case to family court, which upheld the appointment of the Center.

With the appointment, the Center filed an application to the courts for a judgment declaring that the sale transaction is canceled and withdrawing the caveat from the Land Registration Bureau. In view of the fact that the wards account did not have sufficient funds to finance these legal proceedings, The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship paid for them out of its budget at cost of NIS 18,000.

In light of the wards financial situation, he had to live on close to nothing. The Israel Center for Legal Guardianship tried to raise funds from various sources, but had no success. In light of this difficulty in which the ward had no financial resources, his foreign caregiver announced her resignation.

Following a request to the Ministry of Health, the ward was approved an inpatient code and he was moved to a nursing home, all the while, reiterating his request to return to his home.

After much effort, the Center's employees were able to harness various sources to increase the wards monthly income, to cover the gap between his income and expenditures. The ward's aunt agreed to support in the amount of NIS 500 a month; the association of the local synagogue, which he attended for prayer for many years, funded support in the amount of NIS 800 a month, and welfare services received aid from a program for the disabled in the community in the amount of NIS 1,000 per month. This combined income was able to make the change and allow the ward an optimal quality of life.

The ward returned to live at home, with the assistance of a new and devoted foreign caregiver. The ward happily began attending the local senior citizens club several times a week. He is now involved and active in community life.