Diana Willard (Joplin, MO)—School to Guardianship Pipeline, Avoided appointment of a Guardian

My name is Diana L Willard I am 62 yr. old I live in Joplin Mo

I was Born in Carthage MO in 1959 and back then they told my parents that I need to be moved to a warmer climate or pick out my coffin because we lived near a wheat farm, my allergies and asthma was so bad. I was born premature, looked blueish purple, was a breach and went without air for a long time due to my umbilical cord being around my neck.

When I was 3 in Carthage a boy hit me in the head with a baseball bat and my skull was showing. The county Dr. Sewed me up, he told my parents that if I stayed in the area then I should be institutionalized. They told the county doctor no.

We then moved to CA where they found out I had Seizures, EMR (Mental Retardation) yes that is the word in the early 60's and I would be uneducable. They were wrong I graduated from High School with a Medical assistance certification and went to a Junior College where they found out I had Dyslexia. Then went to Bryman's instution of nursing for CNA. Then went on to work in a hospital for 10 Years and sever Dr. Offices. Moved back to MO and they said my degrees in Nursing and Hospital work was not good.

At the Age of 16 My parents were told by the school system was told that they needed to get guardianship and power of attorney. They called my Neurologist who said as long as I have been treating this child, she can talk not always straight or accurate but she has a heart for people and you will not take that from her. My neurologist had been treating me since I was 6, he even signed for me to get my driver's license under the condition I stop chewing my pills and start swallowing them.

At the age of 62 being on the Hope waiver with staff support living in my own home that my parents got for me before they passed away has meant everything to me. Without my staff support I would not be able to do have the things I do in this time. I'm looking towards spending your life working in the community and supporting others with disabilities without a guardian. I have my staff support to assist with somethings I do in my daily life. Without my staff assisting with cleaning up this report it would not be readable.

I have no problems with making my decisions, but my staff help me track and accomplish my goals. My staff helps keep me on track as I navigate through the DMHC, CMS rules, health and senior services, and EBT in there ever-changing regulations.