

Sophia: From lonely, isolated and exploited, to safe and happy.

One of our MAGiC members who is a professional guardian/conservator submitted the following Guardians-in-Action story (names changed to protect privacy). The MAGiC member who submitted this story felt that it was a success because “When I initially met the client, she was alone in a huge house, isolated and being financially exploited. Now she is in a safe, supportive situation, where she has a companion, lots of activity and is receiving the care that she needs. In addition, the perpetrator who exploited Sophia was brought to justice.”

This success story about “Sophia” began as an emergency conservatorship which was referred to one of our members by a metro area APS a couple of years ago. Sophia was an 85-year old woman with dementia and traumatic brain injury who was living alone in a large home in Anoka County. Her significant other died in 2014, and left her all of his assets, including the home. Eventually, a friend/neighbor became Sophia’s attorney-in-fact under a power of attorney. The POA and his wife financially exploited Sophia for more than \$100,000 (including gifts to his family members and investment in real estate that did not include Sophia’s name on any documents).

In late October 2015, Sophia fell in her home and suffered a hip fracture requiring hospitalization. While Sophia was hospitalized, the POA was arrested for financial exploitation. Sophia, concerned regarding the care of her cats, left the hospital and returned home against medical advice. The county initiated emergency conservatorship proceedings, which eventually resulted in a general conservatorship. Guardianship was not put in place. Instead, Sophia worked closely with the conservator and together Sophia and the conservators advocated for what Sophia thought was best for herself. The initial recommendation at the care facility was for memory care, but Sophia and her conservator resisted this and Sophia remained living in her home with extensive services until her move to an assisted living facility. Sophia moved in December 2015, and the house was sold a couple of months later.

Anoka County prosecuted the perpetrators, and Sophia ultimately received full restitution (and the perpetrators received jail time).

Sophia met another assisted living resident, a widower, and they developed a relationship. He has strong family support, and his family has included client in family holidays and activities. In March, 2017, Sophia moved with her significant other to another assisted living facility, where they share an apartment, resulting in reduced expenses for both. Sophia is happy and doing well.