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# **Stark County Court Angel Program Evaluation**

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# Stark County Court Angel Program

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AMY J. DAILY



Research Brief | October 2018

## Evaluation Components:

1. Description of program
2. Feedback from volunteers
3. Feedback from stakeholders
4. Recommendations



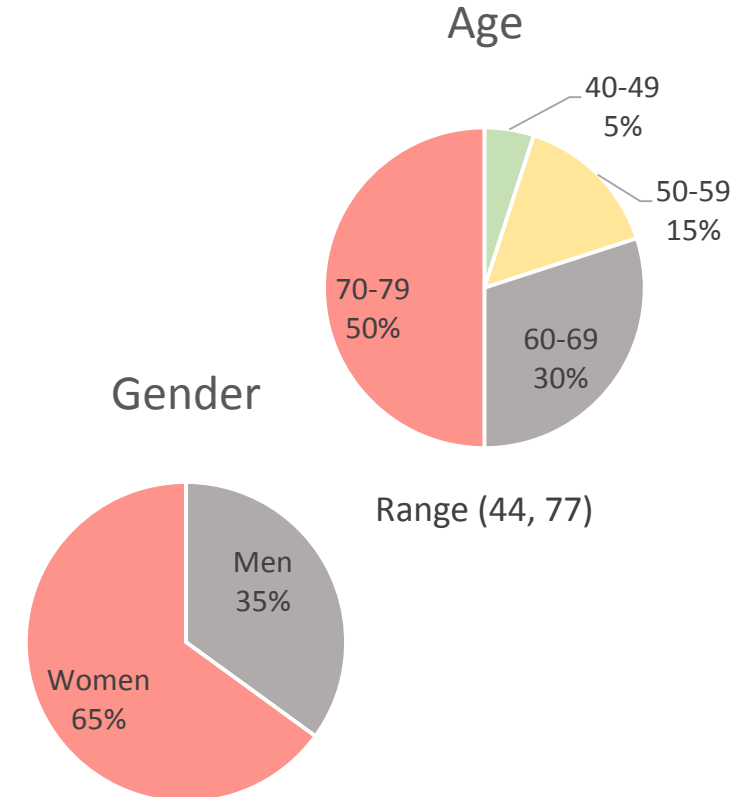
# Methods: Interviews with Staff

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- » Program staff and leadership interviewed individually during site visit.
  
- » Questions regarding practice, including: roles and responsibilities, processes, and staff perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the program.

# Methods: Court Angel Interviews

- » 19 Court Angel volunteer interviews
  - » Randomly selected from the 77 total volunteers
- » Number of visits of participants
  - » Average number of visits: 21, Range=(1,79)
  - » 65% of participants completed under 21 visits
  - » 80% of our sample was over 60 years old



- » Questions regarding motivations for involvement, value of the program, and recommendations for improvement.

# Methods: Stakeholder Focus Group

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- » Purposive sample of 12 community stakeholders
  - » Participants included individuals from the Board of Developmental Disabilities, professional guardians, volunteer guardians, and a Court Angel volunteer
- » Open-ended questions regarding the value and how to ensure the sustainability of the program.

# Findings

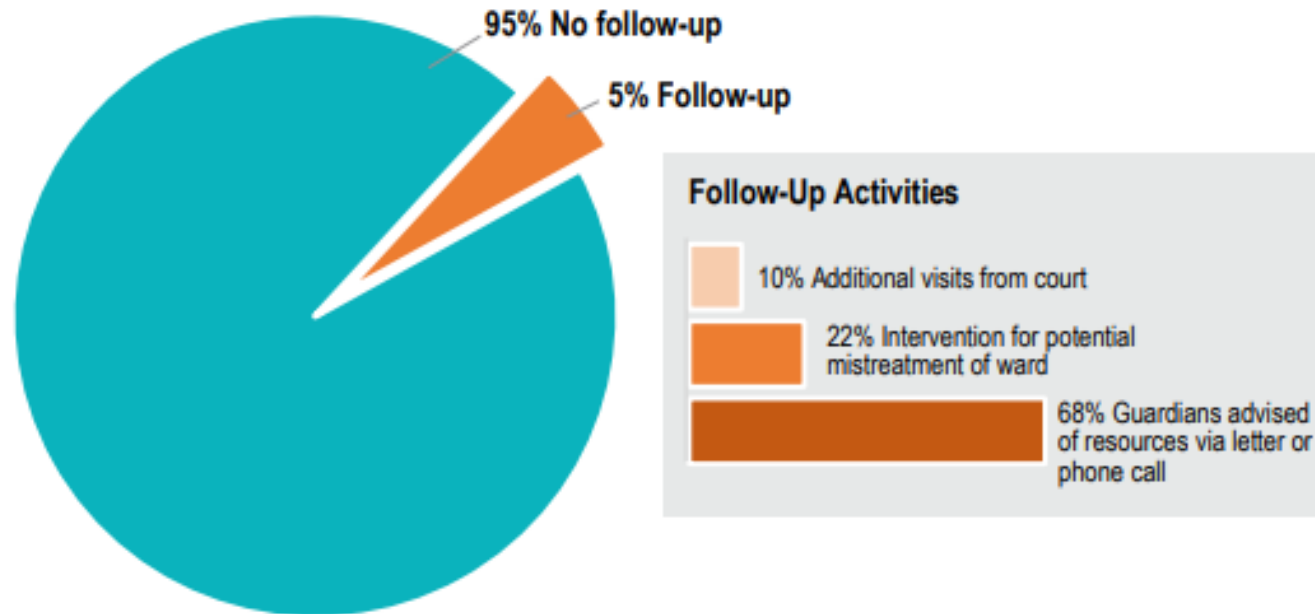
# Description of Program

*Table 1. Process Description for Court Angel Program*

<i>Case Review</i>	Case summaries are prepared by the program staff that include pertinent information about the ward and guardian. High intensity cases are screened out and designated for a visit by professional staff. In the cases deemed appropriate for volunteers, the guardian is informed via phone and mail that a visit is upcoming.
<i>Case Selection</i>	The volunteer reviews the available cases, selects one or more cases, and documents their selected cases in the log book. The volunteer then makes plans to visit the ward and/or guardian.
<i>Visit, Documentation, Recommendations</i>	The volunteer makes a visit and completes a reporting form based on their assessment of the ward and the guardianship arrangement. The volunteer documents recommendations for the court indicating if additional follow up is needed.
<i>Program Staff Review</i>	Program staff review all reporting forms and decide if additional follow up is needed based on the documentation and recommendations of the volunteers.
<i>Court Follow-Up</i>	When a case is determined to require additionally follow up, the case is sent to the Judge. The Judge decides an appropriate course of action such as making a phone call to the guardian, providing a resource referral, or sending out professional staff to assess the case.

# Outcomes of Court Angel Visits

Figure 1. Percentage of Court Angel Visits Requiring Follow-Up





# Volunteer Motivations & Rewards

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- » Desire to help and make a difference
  - » Personal experience with raising children with special needs
  - » Being an advocate for others
  - » Meaningful activity in retirement
- » Personal interest in learning about guardianship
- » Having rewarding experiences with guardians and wards
  - » Witnessing the care and dedication of guardians
  - » Connecting with others in similar situations
- » Feeling appreciated by court staff

*“If I can bring one little thing to the table by visiting, I feel like I have helped somebody.”*

*“My experiences have helped me become a strong advocate for a population that may not be well understood.”*



# Volunteer Perceptions of the Value of the Court Angel Program

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- » “Eyes and ears” of the court
- » Support to wards and guardians
- » Extra layer of support

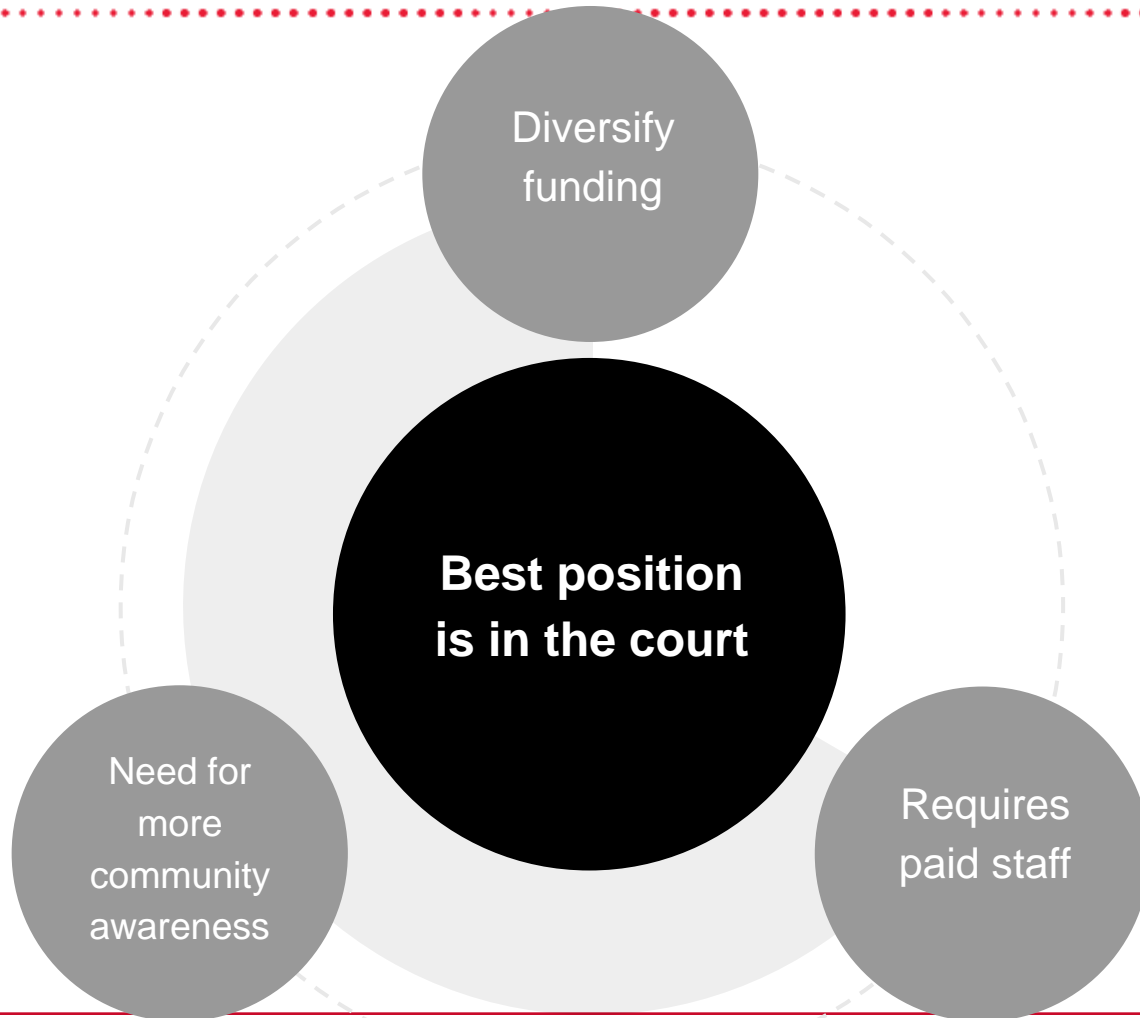
# Volunteer Suggestions

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- » Review paperwork and reporting forms
- » Continue to educate the community about adult guardianship and the Court Angel Program
- » Recruit volunteers with unique skills and experiences

# Focus Group Comments

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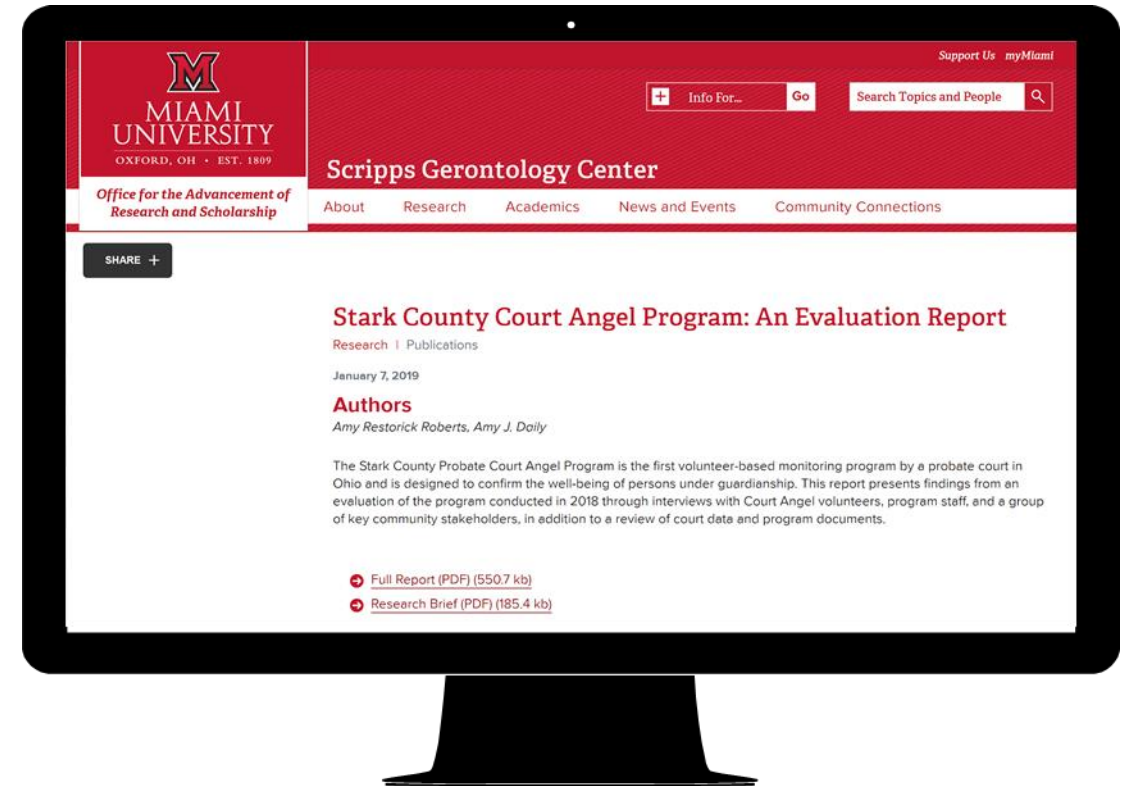
## Sustainability Ideas

# Advice for Other Counties

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- » **A volunteer-based monitoring program can be set up fairly easily.** Stark County is willing to share materials with other counties who may decide to replicate or modify the program.
- » **Adequate funding is required to address needs in the community to better monitor wards.** Grant opportunities and county funding may be available for pilot programs.
- » **Getting the word out and promoting the program is important.** Invest time in raising awareness in the community through speaking engagements, press releases, and radio interviews.

# Full Report & Research Brief



## Scripps Gerontology Center Miami University Publications Page

<https://miamioh.edu/cas/academics/centers/scripps/research/publications/2019/01/stark-county-court-angel-program.html>

# Q & A

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