



The Importance of Conservatorship: A Family's Perspective

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Keith Peerson
2 weeks prior to death

Keith was so enjoying life. He actually started losing weight. Our biggest mistake was not getting guardianship before he was 18. Please let your parents know how important it is to apply for and receive conservatorship before their child turns 18.

We didn't have a very good understanding of the law. And unfortunately, our Regional Center didn't help in that matter. When we moved and changed Regional Centers, I knew we would have a struggle because they really emphasized having the "clients" get out on their own. Even though Keith lived away from home, he was in a non-PWS group home and that bothered me. As soon as he was placed, his counselor didn't see him for two months! Guess her job was done with him and it was on to the next "client." She had worked with Keith since we moved here and always made the comment about him getting out on his own! We thought it until this past October when he went to his Day Program and called to say he wouldn't be coming home. We didn't know where he was! We received a letter from his counselor stating basically if we didn't approve of his moving out, we couldn't have any contact with him! Keith did call after two weeks. He came to visit for Thanksgiving and told me that he didn't say those things, his counselor did. Not realizing that we only had a couple more months with Keith, I let it go.

I know that the job of a Regional Center caseworker is a tough one, but while we were trying to support Keith to be "independent" as much as possible, we also knew that he could *never* live on his own. Even when he moved out and I finally talked with his counselor, I asked her (it had been two weeks since he'd left our home) if she knew he needed his CPAP machine to breathe at night; she was just going to ask about that. Hmm, that information was in his file. Then she asked me if he snuck food. Hmm, shouldn't you have asked that *before* he moved out? *Of course* he snuck food... he was a 385 pound stealth!

I appreciate everything that PWCF and PWSA (USA) have taught us throughout the years. I am still continuing our membership as I think Keith would want this. And there still needs to be a cure.

For more information about Prader-Willi syndrome please contact the Prader-Willi California Foundation.

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