



My name is Desi Kluth, and I am from Waukesha County. I've been on the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities as a self-advocate board member since 2019. I've lived independently in my own apartment with my cat for over 10 years. When I was in my early twenties, I was going through a hard time, and I was put under guardianship because my family thought it was the best way to support me and keep me safe. I bounced around group homes for several years because my family was told that I wouldn't be able to live on my own. Movin' Out, an organization that helps people who need support find homes to live in, had several openings in an apartment complex in my town. The building was brand new, and I was so excited to move in. Over the next several years I learned about self-advocacy, living independently, and supported decision making from my time on the board and all the wonderful people I've met throughout the state at conferences I attended.

For the last several years I had been thinking about petitioning my guardianship to get my rights back. I had spent time researching what it would look like for my life and at the same time building a support network of people I could trust. In November of 2024 I submitted paperwork to the court to petition my guardianship. I was nervous because overturning guardianship isn't always an easy thing to do. I spent time meeting with my doctors for evaluations and with my support network to get my supported decision-making

agreement filled out. My court date was scheduled for three months out from last November when I filled out my petition paperwork. The court date was finally here and it was a stressful day until I was in front of the judge and got to talk about why this was important to me. My attorney was a wonderful advocate for me and helped me work through my nerves when the judge was asking me questions. I talked honestly about what my life would look like without guardianship and the judge decided to overturn my guardianship! My rights were restored March 3rd, 2025!

It wasn't an easy process, but it went much easier than I thought it would go. I am so happy how it went, and I've been enjoying making decisions about my life, for myself! I will continue learning how to live independently and ask for help when I need it but overall, I'm just glad that I'm the one in control of my life. Never give up if you have a dream and even if it seems like the odds are stacked against you, still try! If you don't try you will just stay in the same situation forever. Don't let your fear determine your future!