



WEEKS' UPDATE

July 2017



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And Now, Summer!

My husband, daughter and I spent a fun Memorial Day Weekend in the Beaver's Bend area of Oklahoma, hiking, boating, zip lining, makings'mores and gazing at the beautiful stars we don't see in the Dallas area. Southeast Oklahoma is beautiful, with hills, forests, and clean lakes—if you haven't been there I highly recommend it. And now, summer. Summer is filled with graduations, weddings and



vacations. Summer also marks the end of the Texas legislative session. Several bills are on the governor's desk, and Governor Abbott has called a special session beginning next week. The regular session was a mixed one for individuals with disabilities.

The Legislature did not allocate funds to reduce the waitinglist for Medicaid waiver programs, which provide home and community-based services for children who are severely disabled, so that they don't have to go to a nursing home or institution. If you place your child on the list you will be number 132,000, and your wait will be at least 12-14 years. The Legislature also refused to raise the pay for attendants who care for these children—these attendants make only \$8 an hour. It is increasingly difficult for parents of medically fragile children to take care of them.

The good news is that the Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting the schools from limiting the percentage of students who can receive special education services. The Texas Education Agency had set a de facto 8.5% cap, despite the fact that nationally the average of students needing special ed services is 13%. Disability Rights Texas, for whom I serve as vice-chair of the board, was instrumental in bringing this issue to the forefront.

I hope you enjoy your summer!

Tresi

Estate Planning for Military Families



Celebrating the 4th of July reminds us all how important it is to honor those that have served our country, and those who are currently serving. This time is also a good opportunity for members of the military and their loved ones to consider setting up or revising an existing estate plan. Military families need to consider special estate planning issues that others do not.

[READ MORE](#)

Four Practical Uses for an ABLE Account

We have previously written about the pros and cons of ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014) accounts. These accounts allow many people with disabilities or their families to establish tax-free savings accounts that won't affect their ability to qualify for, or remain on, government assistance as long as the account balance does not exceed \$100,000. But ABLE accounts can be more than simply a savings vehicle. The accounts can be used in many creative ways, either alone or in conjunction with other planning tools, to make a big difference to families with special needs children. [READ MORE](#)



Build Freedom From Court Interference Into Your Estate Plan



If you feel that the matters of your estate should be kept private and that your assets should be used for your care during your lifetime and then distributed to your loved ones rather than eroded by court fees, you're not alone. And luckily, all it takes to get there is a proactive attitude toward planning your estate. [READ MORE](#)



"My wife and I needed legal representation to pursue our daughter's guardianship. From the very first phone call, we knew the Weeks Law Firm was a perfect fit. And it was. A life event such as the guardianship process for children with disabilities who become adults with disabilities requires a careful, compassionate, and professional touch. We received that. Each person in the firm has a discernible, palpable, and personal approach with our family, matched with the requisite legal knowledge and professionalism you would expect. Simply, we turned the matter over to them and they represented us well. We highly recommend them. Thank you Tresie, Sherrie, and Laurie, for walking with us in this journey."

Tresie and Lena attended **"A Lecture and Discussion with Dr. Temple Grandin"** in April, hosted by UNT's Kristin Farmer Autism Center. It was incredibly inspiring to hear from Dr. Grandin, and an honor to

meet her!



 UNT KRISTIN FARMER
AUTISM CENTER

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EST. 1890



*Celebrating Hugely Important People, HIPsters
At the Fourth Annual Community Ball*



Upcoming Events

July 29, 2017: The 9th Annual “Adventures in Autism Intervention and Research Conference” will be held at the Kristen Farmer Autism Center at the University of North

Texas in Denton. The Weeks Law Firm will be a participant in the resource fair. For more information: <http://autism.unt.edu/conference>.

August 1 – 3, 2017: 2017 TAVAC Conference in Grapevine, Texas. The Texas Association of Vocational Adjustment Coordinators' mission is to transition students to achieve independence through career education. Educators across the state will be there. The Weeks Law firm will participate as a resource to attendees.

August 2 – 4, 2017: Tresi will keep updated on the most recent law at the **University of Texas Estate Planning, Guardianship and Elder Law Conference** and the **Texas NAELA Conference** in Galveston.

August 12, 2017: A Look Ahead Conference in Arlington, Texas is a quarterly mini-conference series for families and individuals living with disability, the people who support them and the community at large. Tresi will be speaking on "Guardianship and Alternatives". For more information: <https://www.alookaheadseries.com/>.

August 29, 2017: Family Legal Documents 101 Workshop. Participants will learn about the legal documents needed to protect your family. Click [here](#) to register for our next workshop. Registration is free, but spaces are limited.

Past Events

July 7, 2017: Tresi spoke at **Focus on the Future** to a group of parents and educators on Special Needs Planning. Focus on the Future Training Center is an accredited and highly regarded private school in Plano, Texas for students, ages 3 to Grade 12, with Autism and other developmental disorders.

June 29, 2017: Tresi hosted our **Family Legal Documents 101 Workshop**. Participants learned about the legal documents needed to protect your family. Click [here](#) to register for our next workshop. *Registration is free, but spaces are limited.*

June 20 and April 11, 2017: Tresi hosted our **Special Needs Planning and Trust Workshop**. Attendees learned what legal documents they need to protect their special needs child. Click [here](#) to register for our next workshop. *Registration is free, but spaces are limited.*

June 19, 2017: Tresi participated in the **University of Texas CLE Special Needs Trust Planning Committee** meeting in Austin. She is a member of the planning committee and past speaker at the annual conference.

June 3, 2017: Tresi enjoyed the annual picnic and board meeting of the **Association for Independent Living** in Dallas. Tresi serves as a board member AFIL, an affordable residential program for adults with intellectual disabilities. www.afildfw.org.

May 25-26, 2017: Tresi and Jenny learned about recent legal developments at the State Bar of Texas **Elder Law and Guardianship** conference in Dallas.

May 12, 2017: Tresi was the featured speaker on "Special Needs Planning and Protection" at the **NAIFA Dallas Race for Success** conference at the Lone Star Park in Grand Prairie. NAIFA is the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors.

April 29, 2017: Tresi, Sherrie, Lena, and Laurie enjoyed the **4th Annual My Possibilities Community Ball**. The Weeks Law Firm was proud to be a Gold Sponsor for this amazing community event. My Possibilities passionately pursues the ideal that everyone deserves the opportunity to grow by providing education, events and enterprising opportunities to their HIPsters (Hugely Important People). www.mypossibilities.org.

April 24, 2017: Lena served on the committee for **Camp Summit's 23rd Annual Golf Tournament**. The tournament was held at Bear Creek Golf Club in Dallas, and it was a great success! Camp Summit provides barrier-free outdoor experiences for children and

adults with disabilities throughout the community. www.campsummittx.org.

April 21-22, 2017: Tresi was in Lubbock for the quarterly **DisabilityRights Texas Board Meeting**. She was pleased to be appointed as Vice Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee for Disability Rights Texas. www.disabilityrightstx.org.

April 20, 2017: Tresi spoke with the **Collaborative Divorce Collin County** group about issues involved with child support for children with disabilities, and the potential effect on government benefits.

April 13, 2017: Tresi and Lena were excited to meet and talk with Dr. Temple Grandin at UNT's "**Lecture and Discussion with Dr. Temple Grandin**" in Dallas. Dr. Grandin is widely considered one of the most important voices in the Autism community; she is a respected scientist, author, and speaker.

April 6, 2017: Tresi and Lena attended the **Ability To Give Luncheon** hosted by Connecting Point of Park Cities at the Dallas Country Club. Connecting Point not only provides an education, nurturing, and social daily programming, but also encourages people of all ability levels to give back to their community. www.mycppc.org.

Plano's 1st All-Abilities Park

Looking for an outdoor activity for this weekend?
Plano's 1st All-Abilities Park is now OPEN!

"Located at 2601 Maumelle Drive near Schimelpfenig Middle School, the new playground within the park serves children with disabilities and includes experiences that involve movement and climbing as well as a mix of tactile, visual and auditory features." - [Plano Profile](#)

