October 7, 2013

Mr. Constantino,

Enclosed are over 300 letters from parents, guardians, staff at Murray Center, and community members who are OPPOSED to the closing of Murray Developmental Center.

Thank you,

Rita Winkeler
Murray Parents' Association President
618-210-9678

601 Parker
Bartelso, IL 62218

Friday, July 19, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

My sister Nancy Wright has been a resident of Murray Center since it first opened. Nancy was admitted there as the result of physician malpractice which resulted in severe brain damage, blindness and impaired mobility when she was 2 years old. My mother took care of Nancy in our home until she was 8 years old when doctors convinced her that she could no longer provide the level of care that Nancy needed.

Nancy is now confined to a wheelchair, blind, cannot feed herself, has occasional seizures and is 100% dependent on the staff at Murray Center to care for her in every way.

Before Nancy's father passed away he worked for the railroad, so Nancy's has a sufficient source of income that pays for her care, so she is not a financial burden on the state as so many would like for you to believe.

In the late 70's early 80's there was a brief period where the State of Illinois decided that Nancy was too old to reside at Murray and she was transferred to a nursing home in Mount Vernon where we were assured that she would receive the same level of care she was getting at Murray. Upon admission to the new facility she was placed in a very scenic room with 3 other patients and the staff claimed to be very attentive, so on the surface all appeared to be good. It was only a month or so later that we made an unannounced visit to see Nancy and discovered that she was relocated to a small storage room at the facility. It was literally a mop closet where her bed was actually in the same room and in contact with mops, brooms and cleaning agents. The paint was peeling off the walls and the smell was unspeakable.

My mother was beside herself and furious at this facility and the state for making promises that they could not keep. During her stay at this nursing home Nancy was also attacked and injured by another patient that was found to have been unsupervised. With Nancy's inability to defend herself we were very lucky her injuries were minor. When my mother complained to the staff they admitted that they have been overwhelmed with the need and could not provide the level of care that Nancy needs. While my mother investigated her legal options the state soon after declared Nancy and the others that were sent away as "grandfathered residents" of Murray Center and were allowed to return after about a year in the Mount Vernon nursing home.

Given everything I have heard about the states plans to close Murray and again remove Nancy from the only home she has known for over 40 years, and send her to facilities where patient abuse and neglect have already been in the news and where the facilities are in disrepair, how can I be expected to believe that this will be different than what happen in Mount Vernon?

I love my sister very much and I granted a dying wish to my mother that I would care for Nancy as her brother and guardian. I didn't think that this would be so difficult since I knew that the staff at Murray Center would be there to provide for her. Now I can't sleep at night thinking about what is going to happen to her if she is moved. I find it extremely hard to believe that any of the facilities that the state is proposing will be able to provide even the minimum level of care that Nancy requires and I fear that her health will fail as a result.

Please help my sister by keeping Murray Center open. Life has treated her so unfairly, she deserves to receive proper care and attention. Thank you for your time in reading this letter.

Regards,

Glen A. Zahn
3508 Eagles Hill Rdg.
St. Charles, MO 63303
314-884-5049

Mr. Kevin Casey and Mr. Mark Doyle July 9, 2013

Illinois Dept. of Human Services

100 South Grand Ave. East

Springfield, IL 62762

Dear Mr. Casey and Mr. Doyle,

I am writing in response to your letter dated July 3rd informing me of your intention to continue pre-transition assessments, evaluations, and other planning activities with Murray Center residents. Please know that representatives of the Dept. of Human Services and representatives of Community Resource Alliance do **not** have permission to do a pre-transition assessment, evaluation, or any other planning activity with Brian Megenity.

Brian has been happier and more stable at Murray Center than he has in any other setting. Throughout his adult life he has had six different placements in CILAs. Each one was fraught with more serious problems than the staff could handle and required police interventions and/or hospitalizations. His last placement attempt in 2008 was disastrous. All these CILA failures have taken a heavy toll on Brian.

Now, he is aware that Murray is being threatened with closure and, in recent months, he has become increasingly anxious about the possibility of being forced out of the home where he feels safe, loved and well cared for. My family and I are very concerned that a conversation with, or pre-transition assessment or evaluation by, a DHS or CRA representative could have a significant de-stabilizing impact on Brian. We are not willing to risk that.

We ask that you inform all members of the transition team that they do **not** have permission to engage in any type of planning activity with Brian until further notice. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Rosanne Megenity

Cc: Rick Starr

We, the family of Brian Megenity, hope these documents clearly show that Brian is not capable of living in a community setting. His experience at the Froman House was his sixth group home placement. His other five experiences were fraught with similar problems which, at times, required police intervention and/or hospitalizations. The only reason a sixth placement was attempted is that Brian had made so much progress during his first four years at Murray Center, we felt it was time to give him another chance. But away from Murray, he rapidly regressed .

What we have learned from Brian's failed attempts at community living is that when he is away from the structure of a more secure setting, his anxiety spirals out of control. He becomes rageful and violent, and puts everyone in his environment at risk of harm. This pattern seems to be intensifying as he ages.

In 2008, when he was finally transitioned back to Murray Center, he immediately stabilized. He settled back into the structure he needs in order to feel safe enough to sleep at night, and to cope with the various elements of daily living. During the eight years Brian has lived at Murray, he has been more stable and happier than he has ever been. His moods and behaviors are handled with skill and respect. They do not escalate to dangerous levels. In fact, Brian does not test the limits there the way he does in less secure settings. The stability of the setting and the support of the staff enable him to be involved in the community. He enjoys attending the Kaskaskia Workshop daily. He participates in outings to restaurants, movies, parks, etc.

In July and August 2008, it took several weeks to convince the Department of Human Services that Brian needed to return to Murray. During that time his behavior was threatening the safety of everyone in the house, and, because of the level of his violence, he was denied admittance to all nine area hospitals. We were terrified that before his return would be approved, he might seriously hurt or kill someone. And spend the rest of his life in prison.

As you consider whether to allow Murray Center to remain open, we ask that you think of Brian and the many other residents who receive excellent, individualized care there. There are those who will be unable to function or get the care, security, and close monitoring they need in a community setting. If you close Murray Center, their lives could be ruined.

Respectfully,

Douglas K. Megenity, father

Rosanne Megenity Peters, sister/guardian

Mary E. Megenity, mother

Lisa C. Uthoff, sister

To the ~~Governor~~ Judge

Murray Center should stay open for all the clients to live and all the staff to work. I am a client who lives at Murray Center I like it here it's my home. But there making me leave I am very unhappy. Please wont you change your mind. I am safe here and I feel very safe. I enjoy doing all the activities and routines. Please don't make my life boring.

Sincerely
Ramey Stanley

PLEASE KEEP WARRNMURRY
.G
CENT.
OPEN FOR US WHOLIVE IS
WORK KEIS HERE DAY AFTER DAY,
MUCH MORE THAT WE ALL
ADOR ABOUT IT AT IT
THAT IT'S STAFF
MEMBER REIS
DOIS FOR US TO KEEP
ALL US RESADENT TEIS AT IT
SAFE WELL CARRED FOR DAY AFTER DAY

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

# Dear Judge Aspen

1 message

**kris harrington** < tiki.girl.4@gmail.com> Wed, Jul 31, 2013 at 8:11 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge Apen
I am writing to you on behalf of Christopher Harrington's gaurdian and mother. Christopher is one of many people that lives at Murray Center in IL. Christopher has severe autisum with savere aggressions. He has been there for almost 7 years and calls it his home. I was told it was the last place he could go because of his condition. In fact Christopher had to be denied at many places before coming to Murray Center . Now governor Quinn is closing this state government run facility and wanting to put them in 4 bed room housings that is not good for him and many others. So why would it be good for him now. This change would be like starting over for him and putting him in danger at the same time.

Do you think governor Quinn really has the welfare of the people at Murray Center in mind by putting our loved ones in danger?

When Christopher went to Murray Center and I had to leave him there because of his aggressions. I cried not only missing him but by them sending me letter after letter of him being tied to the bed because of his aggressions. Changes are very hard for him and takes a long time for him to adjust. The staff at Murray Center have worked very hard working with him and to get his meds right for him to be what he is today. It took 4 years of hard work and his leg and arms being tie to the bed to get him under control. At first it took 5 people or more to get him under control. I am happy to say, we my husband and I don't recieve the letters like we did so long ago. In fact there were times we would get 2 or 3 letters a day back 4 years ago. Now we get 1 or 2 every few months.

Do you think this is right of governor Quinn to take that away from Christopher and us as parents?

The only facility for Christopher if they had room would be maybe Chicago IL and that is 5 hours away. Christopher comes home on holidays and Birthdays and this would be such a hardship for us. He would not have the quality of life like he does now. With the rate of autisim and the other disabilities rising. We need more of these facilities open not closed. We need to have the right of being close to our family members not farther away. My husband is ready to retire and I Just had open heart surgery in March of 2013. For Christopher and the others at Murray Center that we have come to see and grown to be very attached to like family. This would be a hardship and a danger if Murray Center was closed.

If governor Quinn was in the shoes of the people that lived at Murray Center and had a loved one that he felt was safe and cared for to the best of the care givers at Murray Center. He would not take his love one out of a safe envirenment and put them in a dangerous envirenment as he has done by closing these facilicies all over the state of IL. So many people has died by Governor Quinn moving them.

Do you think he has the right to make Christopher's life more difficult then what he has already endured or put him in danger. I think not!!!

I was told once that even one person can change many lives. We are asking you Judge Aspen for you to be that voice for us parents but mostly for our loved ones at Murray Center. To keep Murray Center open for the safety of our family members and so we can visit and bring them home so they have a quality of life they need and deserve.

Thank you so much for reading my letter. I am only his mother that loves him so very much and wish I could do more.

Kris Harrington

7-29-13

Dear Rita,

Please help me!!

If I was Richard Lewkowski, that it what I would be saying!

My brother Richard can not & will never speak due to severe Mental Retardation. So I am pleading his case for him!!

My name is Cindy, Richards sister. My brother was placed in the care of Murray Center when he was a young child. My parents Jim & MaryAnn were assured & promised that Richard would be able to live his life at Murray loved and cared for. My parents cried when they left him but did so because Richard was so severe, they could not help him. His mentality is of a 3 year old and he is 61 years old now. They trusted!! They visited often and were so happy to see how well he was taken care of and due to the structure & familiarity Richard thrived. Until their death, they were in frequent contact. Richard, now orphaned, due to my parents death must be

allowed to remain at the only home he Knows. The Murray center is home, and the community itself is home, and has loved and caved for my brother Richard.

- Please — speak for those who can not!
- please hold to the promise made to Richard and his parents Jim and MaryAnne when they made the decision to make Murray Center Richards home.
- Richard thrives there - He can not be moved! His condition is too severe. In most ways Richard is still a child - Don't take him from the only home and community he has ever known.
- It would be detrimental to Richard and to everyone including Murray Center and its loving community

Please help !!

Love,
Richard Lewkowski (Murray Resident)
written by his sister Cindy Parkins

To the Honorable Judge Aspen,

My name is JoAnn Pingsterhaus, and I have been employed at Murray Dev. Center for about 26 years. I'm writing to express my opposition to the closure of this wonderful place.

I'm not exactly sure where to start with trying to put all my thoughts on this matter into a letter form. I guess it's because I, like the entire Southern Illinois region, am so outraged by Gov. Quinn's so called "transitioning" plan and rebalancing initiative.. Someone once said that there is a difference between ignorance and stupidity. Ignorance is defined as the lack of knowledge, or simply not knowing any better. Stupidity is knowing better, and doing the same thing twice yet expecting a different outcome. Has the Gov. not learned anything from the closure of Lincoln Dev. Center? 26 of its former residents died after being forced to move to less suitable settings. We've yet to fully study and understand the harmful effects of the Jacksonville closure. Why then, is he expecting a different outcome with the closure of Murray Center? Is he suggesting that we do the same thing, yet expect a different outcome? Hmm... He can't really claim ignorance, when the entire Southern Illinois region is trying to educate him on the harmful effects that this closure brings to these people.

I started working at Murray Center when I was 18 years old, and very naive. Within weeks of completing my required training, I was placed on a cottage where my eyes quickly became open to the reality that people with profound disabilities were being helped to reach their fullest potential in life. This was not your stereotypical "institution" where I thought people would be wearing straight jackets and placed in padded rooms all day long. But quite the contrary, this is a home, a refuge for people with disabilities to feel safe and loved. A place where they can reach their maximum level of functioning within their abilities to find happiness, joy, and love from everyone in their environment.

I started as a Mental Health Technician, but a good many of my years have been spent in the dietary dept., first as a SSW and then as a SSC1 or supervisory role. I want to point out that our residents have a very wide variety of special dietary considerations. They range from brittle diabetic diets, low cholesterol, bland ,salt free bland, gluten free, 1200 calorie,1500 calorie, a multitude of different food allergies, and consistencies such as regular foods, chopped foods, pureed foods, and ground mashed foods, thickened liquids to honey consistency...etc. These are the residents who have the ability of oral consumption of foods. We also have about 12-15 different types of liquid nutritional support for those people who require tube feedings. I would like to point out that these peoples nutritional needs were established by utilizing our **on site team** of the best Registered Dietitian and Speech-Language Pathologist in the State of Illinois. Our residents face a multitude of ever changing nutritional challenges due there physiological needs and inabilities. You can't find these required and vitally necessary services in a group home! This has proved itself recently when within one hour of a "pre-transitional visit", the Cila staff phoned Murray Center to inquire about what type of diet a resident should have received. I'm sorry, but if you truly provide person centered planning, would you not know that the person required a salt free bland pureed diet?

*as white men, would be guaranteed the 'unalienable Rights' of; Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness'."* In one of his most famous quotes he says, *"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal.'"*

In order for these people to have the best life possible, and to keep their God given rights, they must not be stripped from the services they require or the place they call home.

I ask you to consider this when making your decisions about regarding the transitioning process that is so called "person centered". Ask yourself, "Am I really giving the people who live at Murray Center their unalienable rights of life, liberty and happiness? Do I believe that they, too, are created as my child's equal? Am I acting in a way that is demonstrating a government that is truly for the good of these people? Is this about policy or is it about doing the right thing? Will community placement really afford these people with the BEST opportunities and provide for equality in their lives? Make a difference in these peoples lives and halt the closure of this wonderful place so many call home.

Thank You,
JoAnn Pingsterhaus
206 Sunset Dr.
Bartelso, Il 62218

Judge Aspen;

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE LETTER AND PUT YOURSELF IN KAREN AND MY SHOES. THANKS

I challenge each and every person that is trying to close Murray Center, to spend one day at the facility. These people that are trying to close Murray obviously have never stepped foot in it. They need to visit the facility and learn the needs and care of the residents. I'm sure if one of their loved ones were going to be uprooted and stuck in some group home that truly cannot tend to their needs would think twice before closing Murray.

I have a sister Karen and she is 54 years old. Karen was put in a home when she was 6 because my parents could no longer give her the care she needed.

I'm 51 years old and every time I go visit Karen, I cry when I see the physical and mental handicap these residents have. Some are not able to get out of bed and have feeding tubes; others are in wheel chairs that recline because they cannot hold their own body weight, while others just sit and stare and make loud noises. Some can walk and talk but not one of these humans can take care of themselves.

Most are not able to feed, dress or bath themselves. They are helpless!

Karen was at A.L. Bowen Center in Harrisburg for many years and was treated and cared for like the physically and mental handicap should be. Then the State decided to turn the place into a Prison. **(Really? lets kick the disabled out on the street so we can house criminals and that is just what they did. These people were born with handicaps and had no choice, but criminals have a choice and choose to do wrong things but the handicapped still gets punished and kicked out of their homes. Where are peoples morals???)**

Because the center was closed and became a prison Karen went to Anna Mental Health Center in a group home only to get her front teeth knocked out by a guy that beat and raped her. **(Where was the staff??? The home she was safe in was forced to close to house assholes like this guy)**

From there Karen was in a facility at Swansea that was privately owned. They had an overwhelming turnover of employees, because they did not know how to care for the residents and the facility was not equipped for them. The nursing staff over medicated the residents so the workers could deal with them. Because of that Karen was hallucinating. **(These residents are human beings just like us and they did not choose to be born like this. Private facilities cannot house these people to meet there needs.)**

From Swansea Karen went to Murray Center where they got her medicine lined out and shows her the attention she deserves. Murray Center by far has been a God send to Karen and all the others that live there. The staff treats the residents as if they are family. It takes special people to work with the disabled and these employees are great. **(Karen finally found a place she can call home and now the State once again is interfering and not caring about these people)**

I hope you take everything you have read to heart and feel the pain I do when I'm told the State is trying to take Karens home away once again.

There are numerous ways the State can save money without closing down Murray Center and throwing these helpless humans out to the wolves is not the answer.

**Please make the right choose and keep Murray Open!**

**Donna Woods**

Gmail by Google

# Judge

**Decenda** <d.whitelow@hotmail.com> Wed, Jul 24, 2013 at 7:32 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge

I'm a employee at Warren G. Murray Center I work there for over 12 years and I'm a single parent. It was a blessing when I got this job not only did it help to prove for me and my family but I have a extended family the individuals that lived became part of my family. I have become a sister to some a homegirl and sometimes I feel like a mother to others. Closing Murray Center would destroyed our bonds and the individuals home that some only have known. So behalf of my family and the individuals I ask you to be merciful with your decision.

Sincerely
Decenda Whitelow

Sent from my Kindle Fire

July 28, 13

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN;

My name is Karen Wiebler and I have worked at Murray Center for over 21 yrs. Over my years at Murray Center I have had the joy of taking care of wonderful men and women who have became like family to me, I have along with my coworkers have became their friends, surrogate mom's and dad's, sister's and for some of them a familiar face they need to see to know that they will be taken care of safely. We become friends with their families and who the families relay on to watch over them if they live far away or who they put their trust in to make sure they are safe. We as caregivers know the importance of WGMDC is to the individuals, parents, community in which we work. We provide a loving, secure enviroment to the individuals who are unable to live with family due to medical or behavior issue's. This is their home and for alot of them it's the only home they have known. And WGMDC is important to them, me, my family, and this community. Please help "SAVE THEIR HOME"

Karen Wiebler
405 E. Clay St.
Ashley, IL 62808

Apple Cottage B2 Group

Dear Judge Aspen,

My Name is Nancy Potter I am a Mental Health Tech at Warren G Murray Development Center I have worked There four 20 years.

I am writing you today to incourage you join our fight to keep Murray Open.

I have Many Personal Resons to want this as you can emagine. But you have to keep focased on the Individuals that live there and try to keep personal reason. aside.

The individual at Murray are like family to all the employees at Murray you become very attached to them quickly.

Murray has been a part of our Community For Over 50 years Working there 20 years I have seen many changes But One thing remained the same, Give these people as close to as Normal life possible. No matter what their disabilities mental or physical. Murray does that very Well.

I challange you to Look at all State facilities and compare. There is just something about Murray and the Surrounding Community People really care weather you worked or lived in the community 1 year or 20. What Polical Party your County or District is in shouldn't be a factor in were you stand on the Closure list. Quality of Care and Previous Record Should!!

Thanks for your Time.

Saving Murray Center.....July 30, 2013

I have personally worked with the residents living in the Warren G. Murray Center for several years now. I have learned what makes them happy and what makes them sad.

As I met so many, I grew to feel that they are happy and content living there. Now, things are so up in the air for them. Constant turmoil not only to them, but to their parents as well.

I am in charge of making things safe for them, along with making them comfortable. That has been and always will be my goal and job there.

I have enjoyed meeting them, talking with them, although some are not able to speak. They do have ways of communicating with me...even without speaking. Their actions their movements, a nod of their head, or a tiny little smile. That lets me know that they are happy with what I do for them. That is reward enough for me. After all, that is what I want to do for them, and their well being.

Closing the facility has been a constant worry for me, because I fear for the safety of these residents. They have become so content of the care that they receive and that should be a top priority. Unfortunately, the State sees otherwise. It would be and will be a disaster for these residents if this happens.

They have NO real way of communicating, NOR do they truly understand what is going on. That is the sad part about all of this. They are moved not knowing where they are going and unsure of their new surroundings.

I have lived in Centralia, Illinois all of my life, as have a lot of those who are residents of Murray Center. Now, they are to pull up roots of the home that they know and move elsewhere. They have no guarantee that their needs will be taken care of. This is truly sad.

All I can say is that they need to be in a stable place where they feel safe and are taken care of. That place is Warren G. Murray Center, which has been their home for many years. Please let them remain in their home.

Sincerely,

Ty Baker

Ty Baker
Centralia, Ill

SAVE MURRAY CENTER. July 29, 2013

This is a personal letter written for those who can not speak for themselves. I shall try to do this for them and speak for them.

Centralia, Illinois is a small town, but it is a caring town. The residents of Murray Center are not animals, and should be treated with dignity and respect. They are living human beings, that unfortunately have been given challenges in life that they can not handle on their own.

That is where the care of Murray Center comes in. I have met MANY of those who live in the small community of Murray Center. Many have touched my heart. It saddens me to know that some have been taken to other places to live, where they have NO idea of how to care for them.

Meanwhile, there are the Parents of Murray Center Residents along with those who are Wards of the State. Unfortunately, the State has been so unfair to them. They are living people and should be given the best care that they can get. Such is the care at Murray Center.

As for me, I am a Friend of Murray Center Residents and will do all I can to see that the Residents there are treated and given the qualified help that they need.

I have lived in Centralia, Illinois my entire life and some of those in Murray Center have been there most of their lives as well. It bothers me to know that the State has decided that those residents would be much better off to live in Cilla Homes. I have seen the care that the residents are given at Murray Center, and how they thrive and enjoy their lives. I have seen the smiles on their faces and it pleased me to know that they are happy and well taken care of.

Unfortunately, in these homes that the State wants them to live, they do NOT have the care and quality of living that they should have. I have heard some of the horror stories of those who have been taken to these homes.

I will do all I can to keep the Murray Center a safe haven for those who reside there. Hopefully this is seen by others as I do.

Sincerely,

Tamara Baker

Tamara Baker

Centralia, Illinois

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

## Letter to Judge Aspen

1 message

**ldmmd13@comcast.net** < ldmmd13@comcast.net> Tue, Jul 30, 2013 at 3:30 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

It saddens me to see that our state is trying to close one of the best places for special needs people

in Illinois. Any one who has a loved one that resides at Warren G. Murray Center knows how well they are taken

care of and accommodated with their disabilities . My sister, Lynda Lee Vais is one

of the first residents to reside at Warren G. Murray Center and has been there for

the last 47 years. That in itself says alot about Murray Centers care and devotion

to their residents and the quality of life there. This is her home.

My parents searched all over for the most accomodating in her needs, programs, safety and loving place for my sister, Murray Center was chosen

above all other homes. The caregivers there are very knowledgeable in there care, understanding and go above and beyond what is expected of them. The grounds are safe.

I do not have to worry that something will happen to Lynda as her disabilities prevent her from speaking, making decisions and taking care of herself. The homes are secure and the caregivers are very alert and attentive to each individual.

There are also special programs and activities that Lynda attends with Murray Center in the community.

Murray center even has a foster grandparent program which helps both the community and the residents. .

All this said, I feel Warren G. Murray Center needs to remain open. There is no other place that can

accommodate these types of special needs disabilities and my sister the way they do. Murray Center and there caregivers are truly a

blessing for our loved ones.

Thank you for your care and understanding in this matter.

Laurie (Vais) Lange

717 Barbara Lane

McHenry,IL 60051

815/344-0323

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Murray Center

1 message

**Carla Bauer** < csbauer@hotmail.com> Tue, Jul 30, 2013 at 8:34 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Murray Developmental Center is a residential community that is home to approximately 250 special and unique individuals. They are cared for and supported by an equally special and unique set of individuals who function not only as their caregivers but also as their family, some of them the only family they know. The people who live at Murray Center are considered an enriching part of the community in which they participate in every activity available in this town and beyond. Some of them have lived here since they were children.

Murray Center has so much to offer. There are physicians 365 days a year who check on and attend to the residents' medical needs. Nursing services are available 24 hours a day. On staff, available five days a week, are the services of a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, 2 clinical pharmacists, a speech-language pathologist, a dietician, activity therapists, social workers, experienced Qualified Intellectual Disability Professionals, an x-ray technician and a wheelchair carpenter who custom designs chairs to meet each individual's need. Also available on grounds are the services of a dentist, a psychiatrist, a podiatrist, the Eye Clinic, a psychologist, lab services, EKG services and x-ray services. They have a carpenter, plumber, and electrician whose services are available 24 hours a day if needed. They have a foster grandparent program in which people from the community come to Murray Center to interact with the residents. They also have an inground swimming pool, a Bistro where the individuals serve food they have helped prepare, an entire cottage devoted to activities, a gymnasium and gardens which the individuals tend. They even own a house where families may visit with their loved ones in private. They have many dances in which the residents dress up, have their hair and nails done and faces made up. They absolutely love it.

Murray Center has individuals who ride public transportation to utilize the library. They go to the polls to vote. They attend community events such as ballgames, plays, the Balloon Fest, the Halloween parade, local festivals of all kinds, dances and concerts. They patronize stores, restaurants, the movies and swim at the recreation center in the winter. They visit the orchards, attend church, visit the St. Louis zoo and attend Cardinal games. They participate in a fashion show put on by a local clothing store.

It is difficult to understand how anyone can justify destroying someone's home because "that's what's best for them." According to who? Ask those who live there and their families and they will tell you what is best for them and that is to remain at Murray Center.

Respectfully,

Karen Bolen

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

My name is Sandra Davis and I have been employed at Warren G Murray Developmental Center for about 7 years. I have grown to love the residents that I care for as if they are my very own family. I spend about 90% of my life and time providing care for the people on elm cottage at Murray Center. They receive really good care there because they are so well loved by their providers. I am very close to them and would not allow any harm or wrong doing to them happen. The state is not allowing them the choice to decide where they will reside. Many of the residents have only known Murray center as their home for most of their lives.

There is one gentleman that I am very close to. He asks me every day that I am there to read to him. He communicates through what we call a talker box and he chooses his own books. The book we are working on right now is called "Save our lives". The book is the story about the explosion at the Centralia NO. 5 coal mine that happened right here in Centralia in March of 1947. He loves for me to read to him about History. If he were sent somewhere else to live, would someone else pick up where I left off? Who would read to him and make him happy?

The residents are not only loved by their care takers they are also loved by my two daughters ages 14 & 15 who have volunteered there since 2010. They help take the residents to their dances and parties and they spend time dancing with them and talking to them. They even take them to the Murray games. When it was first announced that Murray was going to be closed my 15 year old was in the hospital for Diabetic Ketoacidosis. She was very sick and she cried so hard and kept telling me that we have to save them. If they close what will happen to them. Both my daughters told me they wanted to take them home with them. They said it felt like the state was coming in to take their loved ones away forever.

Murray Center is a very important part of our community and so are the residents, they are a part of our community and their home should be saved from Quinn. He is not thinking clearly about their lives at all instead he is putting them at risk. Please save them.

Sincerely, Sandra Davis

July 29, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing you today to ask you to stop the closure of the Warren G. Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL. My brother-in-law, Mark Winkeler, is a resident who has lived there for 16 years. He is not able to function on his own or in a group home. It would place an extreme hardship on him and his family if Murray Center closed.

Mark is safe at Murray Center, where they have specialized medical care available to him, including round the clock nurses and dedicated professional staff who can care for these fragile people. If the state privatizes his care, what measures are in place to protect him and the other residents who would leave Murray Center? This is his home. He cannot feed himself. He will never live a safe, independent life due to cerebral palsy. He cannot be placed in a group home, and why move him away from the family that loves him and the staff that has dedicated their lives to caring for those who cannot care for themselves?

I also have to ask you--what plan does Illinois have in place to deal with those handicapped persons who cannot be placed in group homes? What is the state going to do differently? In light of past practices in other states, like Pennsylvania and Indiana, closing down group homes has only increased injury to the handicapped and decreased resources that they need. The severely disabled have a moral right to live in community-based facilities like Murray Center, as group home care is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Closing this center would be unacceptable and inhumane.

Thank you so much for listening. This is a chance for you to truly make a difference. The residents of Murray center are people's children, brothers, and sisters. How would you feel if you had a family member in Mark's place?

Please work to keep Murray Center open.

Sincerely,

Sara Jatcko

4927 N. Damen Ave. Apt. 3F

Chicago, IL 60625

Gmail

# Murray center

**charter.net** <happyhrt@charter.net> Tue, Jul 30, 2013 at 7:17 PM
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Judge Aspen

Please save the Murray Center there are people who needs your vote and concern. The people there needs to know we care about them and will keep them safe from harm. The workers also need there jobs in southern Illinois. There is not another care facility like the Murray Center PLEASE HELP THEM.....

Martha Cachola

Sent from my iPad

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing today because I am deeply concerned about the proposed closure of Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL. My brother, Mark Winkeler, has been a resident there for sixteen years. He was born with cerebral palsy. Mark and cannot speak, feed himself, dress himself, or use a toilet on his own. While he has made great developmental strides with the help of the devoted and knowledgeable staff at Murray Center, he will never be able to live without constant care. My family, friends, and I are angry and afraid about the possibility that Mark will be forced to leave the facility where he has spent most of his life, where the staff know him and can provide the individualized care he needs, and where a devoted group of parents and community members will look out for him. We do not know where else Mark would go if Murray Center were to close – neither group homes or nursing homes offer the developmental, educational, and medical services he requires.

I write to you not only because of my concern for my brother Mark, but out of concern for the 275 other residents at Murray Center. I have visited there many times, and have volunteered there. I have seen the various disabilities that many suffer from. Some residents are on respirators, others require frequent medical attention, and all require specialized developmental and medical care. Those of us who have spent time at Murray Center know that the residents are safe with Murray Center's round-the-clock on-site medical staff. Such services are neither available – nor economically feasible – in a group home or nursing home setting. Moreover, the countless years of professional experience embodied in Murray Center's five hundred employees means that each resident is treated as an individual, receiving the care they need and deserve. I am deeply disappointed in the State of Illinois's willingness to wantonly discard all of these employees and leave the residents they have cared for to an uncertain future.

I strongly ask that you oppose closing Murray Center. This is bigger than party, or politics, or budgetary concerns; it is about caring for those who are incapable of caring for themselves, or even speaking for themselves. Our State, and its government and citizens, should be judged by how we have chosen to treat our weakest members. We cannot in good conscience push the budgetary mistakes we have made onto those who do not, and should not, bear the responsibility for those mistakes.

I invite you to visit Murray Center, meet the residents and employees, and speak with their families. Once you have seen the residents and heard their stories, you will understand the critical service that Murray Center provides to the community, and the state as a whole.

Sincerely,

Robert Winkeler

Chicago, IL

To whom it concerns,

I Christine Frost have worked at Murray Center for 13yrs now. Many of the individuals I help take care of I have been with the whole 13yrs. They are like family to me and I believe I am like family to them. The care they get here is unbelievable they are what I would called "spoiled" and we like to treat them that way. Its <u>not</u> a institution, its a home - their home!

Sincerely
Christine Frost
Mental Health Tech 2

7-28-13

Dear Judge Aspen:

No way should Murray Center be Closed. That is the home of our loved ones. I would rather be put in the ground with my boy then to see him put out of his home like trash. How does one person have the right to do that. Hes not God. He is heartless. Where can they put all these people? No one could take them in their home + Care for them. So many need special Care + treatment. Murray is a very nice + Caring place, one of the very best we have. I never I been in a Couple more + seen how terrible they are. I think people should not be

allowed to put them in
their home, as they could
not care for them like they
should & aren't equipted to do
so. Its money some are
wanting as they have no
rides like care they need.
I in my own opinion
think Obama wants
Mercy for a reason for him.
We him some thing in mind
I think & so does a lot of people
No human person could
do this. Why don't they
get these DRs & try to do
some thing. They go out
at Mercy & know the
~~Care~~ care these people need &
& the shape they are in I
don't think they tried to get
them involved in their.
Have the Senators to talk
to them & see if they can't

voice their opinion. I know
my self I could not care
for my boy at home. I
thank God every day for
a place like Murray & the
wonderful workers.
Will sign & hope for the
very best.

Ailene Reese

7-29-13

Dear Judge Aspen,

Mark Winkeler, a son of my friends Jitty and Rita Winkeler has resided at Murray Center for the past nineteen years. When it became too difficult for them to care for him at home they moved him to this residential home. Mark loves it there. He is cared for and gets the medical care he needs. He has free reign of the cottage where he walks around and is always safe. Mark functions as a nine month old, and needs constant watching and care. He does participate in outings in the community, going to car shows, shopping, out to eat @ local restaurants, and visits @ his home with

his parents every weekend for several hours. Murray Center is needed in Southern Illinois as there are very few services available for the disabled. Mark, like the rest of the residents of Murray cannot receive these services in a community placement. Please help the residents stay in the place they know as home — Murray Center in Centralia IL.

Thank you

Margaret Crow
521 W Second
Trenton, IL
62293

July 27, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

Our autistic son, Mark Bridges, lives at Murray Center. We know of no other place that could care for our severely handicapped son's complex needs. Mark, who is 43 yrs. old; functions socially less than a 3 yr. old, his speech communication is very limited, and his behavioral problems of physical aggression can be dangerous to himself and others. Murray Center staff is able to care for all his needs.

Mark must take psychotropic medications for his behavioral problems to reduce the number and severity of physical agression. These are Zyprexa 20 mg. and Buspar 30 mg. Murray staff monitors the medication with regular lab blood tests and monthly reviews the meds benefits and side effects. They have a registered nurse on duty everyday to check on Mark. Murray tries to administer the level of medication needed to give Mark the best quality of life.

Since taking Zyprexa can lead to Type II diabetes, a Murray Center dietitian provides Mark a diet avoiding this.

Mark's behavioral problems have decreased to fewer and less violent occurrences. We attribute this not only to his proper medication, but also to Mark's feelings of satisfaction while living at Murray Center.

Your Honor, please keep Murray Center open.

Sincerely and Wholeheartingly Yours,
Edward Bridges
Carolyn Sue Bridges

Edward Bridges
Carolyn Sue Bridges
[Parents and Guardian of Mark Bridges]

Dear Judge Aspen

I am Mary McGowan, Jeffery McGowan's Grandmother. We have brought his Mother To See him in The past when i was abbe To Travel and we Knew he was well cared for. it is the only home he has ever Known. As i am sure is true for alot of The people That They care for. I Truely believe To displace The people who desperately depend on Them could be devastating.

Mary J. McGowan

Dear Judge Aspen,

I think Murray Center should remain open. It is home for the weakest people of our community. This home is where they get the care and love they need! The staff can provide them with the high level of support they need. Please keep their home open. It is the right thing to do!

Sincerely,
Martha Sinclair
Martha Sinclair

Dear Judge Aspen -

Murray Center should remain open forever. My niece is there and has been for quite a while. I am her guardian and the only person she knows. I go to see her as often as I can which isn't too often now because my two children a boy & girl do not want me to drive the car from my home. I am 91 years old and cannot take her into my home and take care of her. I wish I could.

She is very happy at Murray Center and feels like it is home to her.

If we try to move her, she gets very upset and I am afraid her blood pressure will go up.

Please do all you can about keeping it open for her and other people like her that have no where else to go.

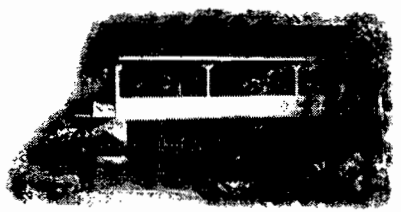
Please do all you can. I know you try to help us do you can.

Thanks you so Much!

all my love,

Luella Mann

(Judith Ann Ashmann is my niece.)



Gmail by Google

# Letter to judge

**battle4@charter.net** <battle4@charter.net> Thu, Jul 25, 2013 at 4:48 AM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

My name is Harry Battle and I am an employee of the WGMDC. I have worked here for 11 years. I have worked with some of the same individuals for most of this time. They have become family to me and I have become family to them. I see them more than I see my own family.

Murray Center is their home, but they are here for a reason. The staff at Murray meet their needs whether that be behavioral or medical. Total care is provided where needed. The individuals are also a part of the community. They go to the many stores, restaurants, movies, and parks. Murray Center should remain open because it is their home.

Sincerely,

Harry Battle
Mental Health Tech

II

Elm Cottage, WGMDC

Re; Murray Center Developmental Center Closing.

I am writing this letter to seek your support to oppose the closing of Murray Center in Centralia IL. The Murray Parents Association and guardians have been working continuously in many ways to help keep the Center open.

Murray Center has been an exceedingly flourishing residence, where my brother (William "Billy" Rohr) has lived for the past 40 years. Billy has received the best of care since Billy needs 24 hour care. Billy is blind and profoundly disabled since birth and needs constant care for ALL his needs. Billy needs constant care and guidance even to perform the simplest of task, i.e. bathroom visits, feedings and finding his way around, he communicates with grunts and groans. When I visit Billy, I get a tremendous amount of relief that he needs are exceedingly met. When I sit in Billy's annual meeting, I am very impressed with all the staff that in some shape or form touch Billy's life at Murray Center.

From the time you enter the entrance until the time you leave; you will always feel a strong sense of pride in regards to the grounds, landscaping and physical structures but also (most importantly) to the people and staff that call Murray Center their work home. If you haven't visited the Center, plan on a visit if you are in the area, you will be very pleasantly amazed.

This center must not close...in fact this home should be the center piece for excellence in our state for people with disabilities. We must find the means to keep Murray Center open for Billy and all the other residents that call Murray home. Please visit the center as you would a school, a fire house, police station or any other entity that the State has taken the task to fund and regulate.
I will work along with other family members, staff and public servants to keep and maintain this facility open.

Best Regards

Wayne Rohr

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

# Letter to Judge Aspen from Betty Hughes

2 messages

**Derek Scott** < kjcaea7777@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 1:46 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

My name is Betty Hughes and my daughter resides at Warren G. Murray Center. My daughter has made the Murray Center her home for the past thirteen years. She is very happy there. Before this she was in a small group home, and this did not work for her. I have heard so many talk about how much better the small home environment is for the clients. This is not true of ALL the clients. My daughter did not thrive in the smaller home. The home she was previously in was not able to restrain her. Many see physical restraints as cruel. I assure you the alternative is much more cruel. Because they could not restrain her from hurting herself or others they had to use drugs to calm her. Prior to the drugs they gave her she had put her head through two windows while having a behavior. When they drugged her it was like she ceased being who she was. She didn't recognize me, she sat and stared into space like a zombie. I can't say she no longer has behaviors. The fact is my daughter still has them on occasion,but the Murray Center takes good care of my daughter without the drugs that take away who she is. I visit her regularly and she is always happy and well taken care of.

I am getting on in age and took comfort in knowing my daughter was in a place she was happy. Now with the talk of closing the Murray Center I am filled with fear for my daughter. You can't help but worry. She's my little girl and I love her. Routine is so important to my daughter. She has lived at the Murray Center for thirteen years. It is home. I know that the State is struggling financially. I have to believe there is someplace else to cut the budget than the homes of the mentally disabled. Please don't see a Center, please see the faces behind the doors of the Warren G. Murray Center.

Pray fully,
Betty Hughes

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

# Letter to Judge Aspen from Floyd Hughes

2 messages

**Derek Scott** < kjcaea7777@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 2:16 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing to ask you to please keep the Warren G. Murray Center open. My daughter Carolyn has lived there for over thirteen years. It was very difficult to place my daughter in a home, but she needed more care than I could provide. The Murray Center provides that care. I write to my daughter on a weekly basis and visit her on a monthly basis. She is very happy in the home she is now in.

She was in a home before this one, that could not meet her needs as well as the Murray Center. She was in and out of the hospital all the time at the smaller home because they just didn't have the means of caring for someone with Carolyn's needs. They began to drug her to keep her under control and Carolyn would sit catatonic, not recognizing anyone. The Murray Center was able to give us our daughter back. She laughs, and smiles, and recognize us.

She thrives on routine as many mentally disabled individuals do. She counts on this routine in her life. Please help us continue to give that to our daughter. There are always going to be financial barriers in this day and age, but the mentally disabled should not be the place we tighten the budget.

I have had multiple strokes and my income is very limited. I cannot send Carolyn to a private facility. It breaks my heart to think my daughter may lose her home. I'm her father and I want to make sure that my baby girl is taken care of and happy. I know many use the argument there are other homes Carolyn can go to. The fact is the workers have become Carolyn's family as much as the physical address. The workers are a part of her life, the other residents are part of her life, the community is a part of her life. Please don't pull her away from what she knows, her home.

Sincerely,
Floyd Hughes

21-Jul-2013

My older brother, Phil Adcock, has lived at Murray Center since 1991. He is happy to be there, and he does not want to be forced to move. His wishes are paramount, but I also hope that he may remain at Murray Center.

Phil is immobile, nonverbal, and completely dependent on those around him for assistance. I have read the letters from DHS, and I have listened to Kevin Casey speak, but I remain concerned that Phil would not receive the level of care in a community home that he now enjoys at Murray Center.

Even if Phil received an equivalent level of care in a community home, he would see no benefit in leaving Murray Center. He already participates in the community as much as possible, but his activities are necessarily limited, due to his immobility and fragile health.

I am also concerned that community homes already in use have had major problems, such as leaking roofs and weak floors. I fear that an immobile and nonverbal person like Phil would be in real danger from problems like these.

And I also fear that other residents of Murray Center who are mobile and verbal would be in danger in these homes. My understanding is that some of the residents of Murray Center were unable to live in community homes in the past, and I do not believe these past problems have been addressed, or even fully acknowledged.

I respectfully ask you to take all of these concerns into consideration, and I urge you to do all in your power to keep Murray Center open and operational. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Adcock
4 Greenview Ct.
Springfield IL 62704-2145
Personal cell: 217-652-5191
Personal mail: adcockea@echoalpha.info

July 21, 2013

Re: Federal Lawsuit/ Governor's Decision to Close Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL

Dear Judge Aspen:

The closure of Murray Center will be devastating to its residents. Parents, guardians, employees, the City of Centralia and surrounding area are stunned at the prospect of its closure. The specialized care its residents demand cannot be provided in a community arrangement; the results will be disastrous, among them abuse, negligence, violence, imprisonment and in many, many cases death. Along with their profound mental retardation, many have multiple disabilities requiring 24/7 nursing care, such as epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, feeding tubes, behavioral problems, etc. and many are wheelchair bound.

The residents of Murray Center have been integrated into their own little community as well as being part of the community of Centralia. Murray Center's excellence in the care of its residents has never been questioned; it's all about the money; the agenda of special interest groups such as ARC and Equip for Equality and DHS's agenda to rebalance the system and doing it on the backs of our most vulnerable.

When touting their agenda and the so called 'success' of Jacksonville's transition , the Governor, DHS, and ARC never mention their placement of profound individuals and how they are coping but they do applaud the higher level individuals and brag of how they can shop, walk the neighborhood, pick their own bedroom, go to movies, etc. It's as if the profound do not exist, making it the most grievous part of their agenda. As we continue to say, 'One size does not fit all.'

St. Mary's Hospital and the people of Centralia have for 40 plus years accepted the residents of Murray as their family. Everyone involved in caring for these residents are special and have over the years made Murray the highest rated facility in the state.

Therefore, we are imploring you to look past the misguided decision of our governor and his officials; DHS; ARC; Equip for Quality and other rebalancing advocates and see the reality the Governor's decision will have on our most vulnerable residents. We cannot stand by and watch this catastrophe happen.

We thank you for your attention and pray your decision will set a precedent in this country whereby the most profound will be provided the services they deserve and not be used as pawns in political gamesmanship.

Sincerely,

Richard and Melba Gonzalez

626 West Market St., PO Box 61, Red Bud, IL 62278

618-282-2858

July 22, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a member of the Murray Parents Association, and I have 2 sisters who currently reside at Murray Development Center in Centralia. My experience with an Illinois Development Center is PERSONAL and direct. I am not spouting what research tells us; I am speaking of the facts I know.

My sister Angela is 48 years old and has lived at Murray for 13 years. She has had many diagnoses, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, oppositional behavior disorder, endometrial cancer, and osteoporosis resulting in the fracture of ribs, leg, hip, and arm. She became a resident of Murray as an emergency placement after 2 group homes were unable to handle her behavior disorders and asked that she be removed. At both homes she was sexually and physically abused. She has thrived at Murray and loves her cottage and the employees. This is her home and a second family!

Angie is recognized and welcomed in the community of Centralia when we take her out. There are so many outings for the residents of Murray, many more than are available to the residents of group homes. So often communities resent and are fearful of residents of group homes, but that is not the case in Centralia! The community of Centralia WANTS Murray to remain open and has joined Murray Parents Association in its efforts to keep Murray open. What will happen to my sister Angie when she is returned to a group home situation where she has been abused and resented? I know. Do you?

My sister Madonna is 56 and has lived at Murray for 31 years. She was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome about 12 years ago. The life expectancy for females with Rett is around 45. Madonna is one of the OLDEST Rett females in the United States! That is due to the excellent care she has received at Murray. Madonna is one of the medically fragile residents of Murray. She can do nothing on her own. She must be bathed, dressed, fed a soft diet, and moved from her specially designed wheelchair to her bed by others and equipment. Despite her incapacity, she is fully aware of her surroundings and needs the stimulation of activities provided at Murray. NO GROUP HOME CAN DO THIS, much less at a smaller cost as Kevin Casey claims.

Murray is unusual in that it has such a large percentage of medically fragile and extreme behavior disordered residents. Only 10% of the residents have the state as guardians. The 90% with family guardians chose Murray over all the other facilities in the area because it was best equipped with trained employees, programs and medical services. We, the family, have decided that Murray offers Madonna and Angela "a safer way of living with quality, independence and equality". Tony Paulauski, Kevin Casey, CRA, and Governor Quinn can't override our decision without endangering the lives of my sisters! There IS a need for CILA's. One shoe does NOT fit all! SODC's are the best fit for some. A group home will NOT be able to offer the same level of care to everyone at a savings. The decision to close Jacksonville resulted in a rush to meet an unrealistic timeline which caused harm to residents and an employee. Please stop this madness!

Finally, I ask you to look at the report prepared by the Attorney General of Pennsylvania several years after the closure of all the SODC's in that state. The closure plan was designed by Kevin Casey and is the same plan being used in Illinois by Kevin Casey again. He hasn't learned anything from his mistakes, but WE can.

Thank you,

Gayle Munie

gmunie@aol.com

7937 Ingram Road

Rockford, IL 61108

815-985-4803

## (no subject)

1 message

**Susie VanBlaricum** < susie58van@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 22, 2013 at 8:07 AM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Dear Judge Aspen

I am writing to ask you to please Save Murray Center! My sister Willa Dawn Wright is a resident at Elm Cottage. Murray Center has been her home for over 40 years. She is severely mentally and physically disabled. She needs 24 hour care 7 days a week. She cannot walk, talk or do anything for herself. She has a feeding tube and wears diapers and needs nursing care also. The employees at Murray Center are part of her family and give her the absolute best care. When my family and I visit her we are always extremely happy with the care she receives. Not once in over 40 years have we ever been unhappy with her care. In my opinion Governor Quinn nor anyone with a heart could close Murray Center IF they would see for themselves the need for this wonderful home. I know that any other type of home for my sister and these residents will never work due to their disabilities. I pray daily that Murray Center will be saved. Thank you for your time and I pray that God will direct you in your decision.

Sincerely,

Susie Wright VanBlaricum

*Wayne & Phyllis Daniel*

*1604 Hillcrest Avenue*

*Carmi, IL 62821*

HONORABLE JUDGE ASPEN:

AS PARENTS OF A DISABLED CHILD WHO IS 37 YEARS OLD LIVING AT MURRAY CENTER IN CENTRALIA, ILLINOIS, WE ARE WRITING IN CONCERN OF THE PROPOSED CLOSING OF MURRAY CENTER. MURRAY CENTER IS A "GOD SENT" TO US. OUR SON WAS BORN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY, MENTAL RETARDATION, SELF ABUSIVE BEHAVIORS, PLUS OTHER HANDICAPS. HE IS BLIND AND HE IS TOTALLY DEPENDANT UPON SOMEONE FOR ALL HIS NEEDS INCLUDING EATING, BATHING, TOLETING, DRESSING ETC. HE REQUIRES AROUND THE CLOCK CARE. WE TRIED TO KEEP HIM HOME AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, BUT WE WERE INJURING OUR HEALTH TO CARE FOR HIM.

SMALLER COMMUNITY HOMES ARE NOT THE ANSWER FOR OUR SON. HE REQUIRES ONE ON ONE CARE, CONSTANT MEDICAL MONITORING AND THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE IN THESE TYPE HOMES. **KEEPING MURRAY CENTER OPEN IS A MUST, NOT ONLY FOR OUR SON BUT FOR THE 250+ WHO HAVE SIMILAR DISABILITIES**. MURRY IS THEIR HOME AND THEY ARE HAPPY THERE. OUR SON GETS SO SELF ABUSIVE IF WE TRY TO TAKE HIM HOME. HE LOVES HIS HOME AT MURRAY, AND BEST OF ALL WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO WORRIES THAT HE IS CARED FOR BETTER THAN WE COULD DO AT HOME. THE STAFF IS WELL TRAINED TO HANDLE EVERY SITUATION, AND THEY TREAT THE RESIDENTS AS FAMILY. YOU DO NOT FIND THIS EVERYWHERE.

CENTRALIA ACCEPTS MURRAY CENTER AS A BIG PART OF THEIR COMMUNITY FOR WHICH WE CAN SAY NOT EVERY COMMUNITY ACCEPTS THESE TYPES OF HOMES. THEY ARE SUPPORTIVE IN EVERY WAY.

AGAIN WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO RECONSIDER THE CLOSING OF MURRAY CENTER. MURRAY IS NOT A NORMAL STATE OPERATED FACILITY. IT IS A HOME TO 250+ RESIDENTS WHO DID NOT CHOOSE TO HAVE THE DISABILITIES THEY ENCOUNTER, BUT WITH THIS CARING STAFF AND HOME LIFE IS FOR THESE RESIDENTS IS AS FULL AND HAPPY AS THEY ARE ABLE TO ENCOUNTER.

SINCERELY,

WAYNE & PHYLLIS DANIEL

29 July, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am the guardian of Leilani Boyd. Leilani is 70 years old woman with an IQ of 05. She is an infant in the body of an adult. She is non-ambulatory, able to stand but not walk. She has been unable to reach a goal of propelling her wheel chair 6 feet. Due to attempting to eat inedible objects and rectal diggings she requires checking every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day, for her own safe being. As all infants need, she requires assistance in all aspects of her life from eating to diaper changing.

I cannot imagine the challenge that Murray Center faces with patients such as her. They attend to her needs, as well as other patients, and their medical requirements. Challenge is an understatement. With the excellent care that she and others are receiving, I can't imagine the devastating effect of relocating Leilani and others to a home or another facility.

I am asking, actually pleading, that you keep Murray Center open. I am not only her guardian, I am her brother. I am concerned about her care.

Raymond Boyd

Gmail
by Google

# Muray Center letter

**jeff ware** <jjware1@charter.net> Tue, Jul 30, 2013 at 9:55 AM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Hi Rita. Here is a little letter for the center. You are fighting so hard! Praying things go well for you all!

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a concerned citizen of Southern Illinois. There are many reasons to be concerned living in Illinois but one reason stands out tenfold and that is–the future of the residents of Murray Center.

I know several people that will be harmed personally by the center closing either by losing their job or their spouse losing their job; however my co-worker's son stands to lose the most because he will lose his home. The only home he feels at peace. A place that he feels safe and loved. Even though he has a wonderful family and a home away from home, he feels most at home at the center because that is where his needs can be best met. The staff gives utmost care along with love and concern.

In closing, I know my coworker, Rita Winkeler, would not allow her son to be cared for by anyone but the best and that is the staff of Murray Center. Even before the decision to close Murray Center was ever a thought, Rita raved about the care her son received there.

So My question is...if it were your child what would you want to happen?

Please keep Murray Center the "home sweet home" it is for those who live there. "Home sweet home" for those who count on others to make loving and intelligent decisions for them. Let's not let them down!

Sincerely,

Debbie Ware

Sent from my iPhone

Kent A. Williams

10300 Nora's Path Lane

Knoxville, TN 37932-1575

August 2, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen:

I am the brother of and the court-appointed guardian for Scott Williams, a resident of Fir Cottage at Murray Developmental Center. Scott has very severe mental developmental disabilities and has been in State of Illinois DHS facilities since the mid 1950s. Shortly after the death of the last of our parents in 2008 I assumed legal guardianship of Scott.

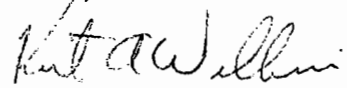
My concern with the closure of Murray is that Scott could not function in a small group home placement with minimal security and less-than-adequate living assistance. He is 63 yrs old, ambulatory but cannot speak or maintain normal socialization with other adults. He is also sometimes inclined to try to "elope" from residential facilities, however has never been off DHS property because of the attentiveness of Center staff. My sister (only other sibling of Scott's) and I are afraid that if he elopes from a group home that he will be danger from traffic, falls, and other hazards he does not comprehend. He also needs nearly 24-hr observation to deter some self-injurious characteristics of his disease.

I must also add that my sister and I have been very impressed with the care Scott has received at Murray. He has done much better health-wise since being moved from the now-closed Howe Developmental Center (Tinley Park) about 5 years ago. The Murray staff is very caring and dedicated in their job performance.

In summary I ask that at minimum Murray stay open for the care of those with extreme mental and developmental disabilities. From what I observe from my visits to Murray, this is probably a majority of the residents. Putting these residents in "for profit" homes with inadequate staff or staff not trained in very intensive care will put these folks at high risk and eventually burden the state, hospitals, and local communities with the resultant difficulties.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. If you wish to discuss this further please call me at 865-310-1780.

Sincerely



Kent A. Williams

8-1-2013

dear Judge Aspen
we are the friends or family of Nancy Russell whose son Jimmy Russell lives in Apple Cottage at Murray Center - Centralia, Ill.

We believe this is the best place for Jimmy therefore Murray MUST remain open. He has had 5 group home failures. Murray staff are highly qualified, trained, kind. This makes no sense to close Murray at the whim of Gov. Quinn. It makes no financial sense at all. Please do

the right thing for "those less fortunate". This closure scares me to death. Jimmy is loosing his home, his girlfriend, routine, job, friends, security.

Most sincerely

Nancy Russell - Jimmy's MOM

| | |
|---|---|
| ~~Dotty~~ Roberts | 217 260-9216 |
| Pat Pratt | |
| Terri Lovell | |
| Sandra Lunney | 497-1243 |
| June Larson | |
| Mary Marcuso | 267-7093 |
| Myra Grazer | |
| John Sullivan | 448-3633 |
| Doris Sullivan | |
| ~~Stan~~ Hammeren | |
| Don Hammeren | 446-2291 |

Jayne Webb 217 5168229
Sheila Huxted
Elaine Carlson 217-446-1891
Kaye Scheffel 217-918-1700
Nancy Fields 217-4420265
Pat Trimble - 217-354-4811
Carol Davis 217-446-8776
Marla Trimmer 217-733-2836
Teri Ayres 805-488-6050

**John & Waltraud Martin**
**8318 E. Holly Street**
**Scottsdale, AZ 85257**

Dear Judge Aspen,

We are writing to urge you to keep the Murray Center open.

Our son Gerald has been domiciled there for fourteen years and we believe he has received far better care at the Murray Center than he is likely to receive in any other institution should the Murray Center be closed.

We are informed, moreover, that things have not gone well for some former residents who have already been moved elsewhere, and we are very concerned that relocation from the Murray Center, such as has been proposed, will unavoidably result in impairment to Gerald's future mental and physical well-being.

We strongly believe that it would be in the best interest of our son Gerald, as well as other residents of Murray Center to remain there. For the sake of their continued good care and treatment, we urgently ask you to rule in favor of keeping the Murray Center open for the benefit of our son, as well as the other residents, who most likely will otherwise suffer from reduced quality of care in other facilities less adequately suited to their needs.

Sincerely,

Waltraud Martin / Mother, Guardian

John Martin / Father

John & Waltraud Martin

2 AUG 2013

Dear Judge Aspen

My name is James Doyle, I am a brother (Guardian) of John Patrick Doyle (Pat). a little history on Pat, at about 20 Pat was committed, his mother Helen Perry Doyle could no longer handle him. His earliest placement was Galesburg. I remember visiting him there. It was about a ¼ mile walk down a central hallway with large boys yelling off, it was noisey with chanting, yelling. Pat didn't do well there, each visit we found large bite marks on him also abrasions. His transfer to Murry Center was a God send. He's been at Murry since late 70's. They tried Pat in a less restrictive environment, it didn't work out at all; they had to go get him.

In the early 90's Pats Grandfather Zoltan Perry died. I handled Pat share about $72 thousand, after a couple of I increased this to almost $80 thousand dollars. I turned this money over to the State of Illinois.

Pat has always received the best

of care at Murry Center Carla Bauer, the workers at Apple Cottage, health care staff have always been conscientious hard working & compassionate. Pat is on strong psychotropic medication, he is pretty severely retarded. He can't make it in a community & persons home with less care & less supervision.

Pat has lived most of his life (56 years) at Murry Ctr.

Judge Aspen I realize this case brings a heavy burden onto you. Pat & most of the Residents desperately need Murry Center, with it smaller group cottages & excellent care. I have my doubts that Pat survives even if moved to a large state institution (State Operated Developmental Center) I pray for Pat & all the disabled people at Murry Center. Thank You Judge.

Very Truely Yours
James Zoltan Doyle
107 Blossom Terrace
Washington 122 61571

August 2, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in regards to the closing of the Murray Center. I have a son who has been in that center since the age of seven. My son needs the best 24-hour care which I am unable to give. He is incapable of eating, walking, bathing, dressing, and speaking (clearly) on his own. I feel Murray center has been nothing but good to him and is the best place for him. If the Murray Center closes who will care for my child in the right manner. I'm not fortunate enough to hire some to come out to my home to be with him and care for him. It is hard for me to believe after all these years the city would consider closing the center down, knowing the help their residents need. Although it would be wonderful to have my child home with me, the Murray center is the best home for him.

Sincerely,

Frank Donaby

6009 So. Racine 2nd fl.
Chgo. Ill. 60636
4-30-13

Warren C. Murray Center
Centrella Illinois

Dear Gudge Aspen:

I'm the aunt of (Quin Brown.) wanting you, to ask of you to consider the importance of such facility + the securitness. Please consider the closing of (W. Murray Center.) which is necessarily needed with special trained faculty + staff with training of each one special need.

Thanks & Love
Love

Mary E Stewart
(Quin Brown aunt)

Dear Judge Aspen,

My name is Mazell Brown, and my son Irvin is a resident of Murray Development Center. In the year 2000, my son was in Heritage Residential Alternative in Charleston Il. One day Irvin wandered off from Heritage without any staff member noticing. An attendant at a local service station saw him and took him inside, and called Heritage to inform them where he was. This is not a good felling for any parent. The following week, they called and told me about Murray Development Center. Murray's 24 hour watch system would be better suited for Irvin because of a larger staff that is trained to deal with him.

My son has been safe there ever since and has never wandered off because the staff knows where he is at, at all times. It is his safe "home away from home".
No community center or nursing home without a 24 hour watch would be capable of caring for my son.

I ask you, as a mother who loves her son, please don't close Murray Center. This center has been a place where I know my son is safe and will be kept out of harms way. Irvin will always need to be under close watch, and I feel he receives the attention he needs at Murray.

Thank you very much for considering my request,

Mazell Brown

Helen Cockrum
5500 NE 63rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73121

Dear Judge Aspen:

I have attached a letter that I received from Kevin Casey, Division Director of Developmental Disabilities, IDHS and Mark Doyle, Transition of Care Project Manager, Office of the Governor for your review. In the letter these two men address how former residents are making their own meals, doing their laundry, going for walks or playing basketball at a local park and one particular resident even works for a paycheck and enjoys going out with his girlfriend to concerts.

I personally wanted to cry as I read the letter and the more I read I wanted to scream but as I finished the letter I decided to just pray for these people. First of all the letter is insulting to me as a parent and guardian. My daughter does not walk, talk, and is legally blind and feed by tube but she is very happy in her environment at Murray. Murray Center has been her home since the 70's.

Before moving to Murray she was at the Jeri-Lee School for Children in Arnold, Missouri. The school closed without much notice and we were left to find a home that could give Deneen the type of care she required. The Honorable Late Senator Hall from E. St. Louis helped us get Deneen into Murray. However, the move from the school in Missouri to Murray was very hard for her. She just does not handle transition well at all. Now that she has been at Murray so long and is older and with more complicated issues I cannot imagine what a move would be like for her.

These so called rebalancing initiatives of enabling hundreds of people with disabilities to move out of large institutions and live in their own homes in the community might be fine for some individuals but there are many that would not survive. Before moving to Oklahoma I was a member of the Murray Parents Association and served as a board member so I know the type of resident that calls Murray their home and I know the majority of these residents could not survive as described in the attached letter on tree-lined streets living a life of choices and dignity.

*The closure of Murray is about taking people aka residents that are unable to manage daily living skills without being supervised and putting them in home.* People who do not deserve to be treated as pawns and moved about by those that have never come face to face with them. Moving these people from one environment to another could be both emotional and discomforting to them. Such moves have with other institutions proven to have long range negative impact on these people.

Why is it that the weakest, the most vulnerable people who have little or no voice are the targets of budget cutting times? Giving voices to the voiceless has never been quite so visible. NOW we speak for THEM! You can speak for them. We ask you to "Find a

way to stop Murray Closure." Save Murray Center the only home they have had for most of their lives. They are Illinois Citizens and deserve being properly cared for. Just simply making life bearable and possible makes a difference to so many.

Yes it is about people aka employees. So many will lose their job and the community will feel the financial consequences this will create. Where will these people go and what will they do? Join the unemployment line? People who work at Murray provide physical care, stability, learning opportunities, recreation, emotional, spiritual care and they provide a much needed routine. To the residents they are family, friends, and not just employees. They take care of them on every level including spiritually. They are also skilled workers that do many things to make the RESIDENTS home a happier place to be. These residents will most likely will never ride, own or drive a bike, car or other motor vehicle but they are comfortable in their custom wheelchair or just enjoying the environment Murray provides.

The people aka as the residents of Centralia brought the Center to Centralia and have for years recognized that the residents are PEOPLE aka Illinois Residents. The outpouring of concern about the closure should be evidence enough that Centralia and surrounding communities do not want the Center closed.

SERIOUSLY what will the closure of Murray do to the Community? Service will be stopped, a 120 acre site will be vacant, there will be a negative impact on the community and surrounding communities and the depressed area will become more so depressed but most of all the sounds that once filled Murray Center will be gone. The building will most likely be renovated for something else and maybe even something similar in nature. But people will be suffering the emotionally from being forced from their home and friends. These residents that reside at Murray have what is as close to close to the American Dream as many of them will ever know. Moving Murray residents into community care setting will be a critical move for many of the residents. Community care in itself leaves a lot to be desired for people with much less specialized needs than the Murray Center residents. These residents are simply not candidates for community care.

I pray that you will rule to keep Murray Center open and allow the residents to continue enjoying their "home."

Sincerely

Helen J. Cockrum
Guardian: Deneen Richele Cockrum

Pat Quinn, *Governor*

Illinois Department of Human Services

Michelle R.B. Saddler, *Secretary*

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

July 17, 2013

Helen Cockrum
5500 NE 63rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73121

Dear Ms. Cockrum:

As we mentioned in last week's letter we want to keep you informed every step of the way as we move forward with rebalancing Illinois' system of caring for people with developmental disabilities.

The rebalancing initiative is enabling hundreds of people with disabilities to move out of large institutions and live in their own homes in the community. In this letter we would like to tell you about three former developmental center residents who are thriving as they integrate into new lives in the community. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) visited them in their quiet, tree-lined neighborhood and found that all three men, each a former state-operated developmental center resident, are thriving and living a new life of choices and dignity. They make their own meals, do their own laundry, go out for walks or play basketball at a local park. One resident, Michael, works part-time earning a paycheck he uses for shopping with his girlfriend or going to concerts. Roommate Donnie enjoys creating art projects, while Ron enjoys being closer to home and seeing his mother more often.

Through the person-centered planning process we were able to work with the residents, their guardians and their provider to develop a transition plan process that ensured that they would have a range of choices in which all of their needs would be met.

We look forward to working with you on pre-transition assessments, evaluations and other planning activities to develop a successful transition plan for everyone.

As always please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kevin T. Casey
Division Director of Developmental Disabilities, IDHS

Mark Doyle
Transition of Care Project Manager, Office of the Governor

Dear Judge Aspen -

My name is Shirley Bramlett. My brother Ray Lee White lives at Murray in Centralia.

Ray Lee is very very disabled & Challenged. He even with his limitations has been a joy to our family.

He was in Benton first till it Closed. He has had wonderful Care both places. If he hadn't he would no longer be with us.

We truly appreciate all the staff & workers at Murray. Our sincere hope is your will not Close the place he thinks of as home. I have 2 brothers & a sister besides Ray Lee. We are of ages 78-87 not in good health so we truly depend on you to help us. He can't even feed himself alone so he Could not do any of the things mentioned but the Clients can do if they are moved.

Thank You for your attention

Shirley Bramlett

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am currently an employee at Murray Center and in the past have worked in Residential and CILA homes. I can honestly tell you the CILA homes are not equiped to meet the needs of the individuals at Murray Center. The training I received while working for CILA's was practically no existant. One actually told me to treat the residents as I would a baby.

The individuals at Murray Center are cared for by highly trained staff. The training process is on going and the ratio of staff to individuals is ~~[illegible]~~ where it needs to be and is constantly assessed by professionals.

The individuals at Murray Center are individuals who most CILA's are use to dealing with. Their behaviors and medical needs honestly ~~is~~ are out of their ~~[illegible]~~ not going to be met. There in my opinion will be more police involvement, and I believe the individuals will be neglected and/or mistreated from my past experience with CILA's.

Here at Murray Center we have oversight of our actions. We not only are reviewed by our supervisors, but our coworkers. Our Training lasts almost an entire year, where we are paired with experienced coworkers who have worked with the individuals, some for more than 20 years. If we step even a toe out of line we no longer have a job.

At CILA's the staff is one maybe two people. They are to care after as many as 16 people at a time. Some of the individuals at Murray Center are so violent, that when they have a behavioral episode they must be mechanically restrained. Some of those individuals it can take up to 4 or 5 People to do this.

I just find it hard to believe the individuals that have been in my care will receive equal care they get here at Murray Center at a CILA placement.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Juengel
PO Box 85
Richview, IL 62877

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writting this letter on the behalf of the most vunurable citizens of Illinois. These special individuals deserve the best care that they receive at Warren G Murray Center. They receive these services which will stop, when they are ripped out of their homes, and moved into other facilities I'm sure you, or any of your loved ones would union by being moved out of your home and placed in another home. Where there is no familarity.

The staff here know these individuals and know when they aren't acting like themselves. Which we notify the nurse ~~im~~ immediatly. Where they are able to be assessed.

The individuals do attend off campus activities. They go on fishing trips, fairs, picnics, shopping, movies, bus rides, restaurants, parades, and other off campus activities.

These individuals do their living here. They are a important part of this community. These individuals aren't a business. They are living, breathing just like you and me. Not to turn a profit on their backs.

Sincerly,
Jennifer Cross

July 26, 13

Judge Aspen:

Thank for listening to our case & cause. We, the staff have really enjoy taking care of the ~~individuals~~ residents and sharing the days with them. We have volunteers from Mater Dai come here, and it is very eye opening for them to see these residents, and alot of make a career of Murry Center. They give alot of their own time to help with activities and projects. Murry Center is home for the residents & they get good care everyday & nursing staff is always available if needed.

Sincerely,
Laura Brookhead

July 26, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

The individuals who reside at murray Center are well cared for by Staff. This has been their home for many years & the only place they know. We are their Voices. We spend so much time with them, we know when they are not feeling well, not in a good mood, or happy. We are here on Weekends and holidays. Sometimes we are the only family they know.

They have many activities. Dances, prom, they put on a Christmas program every year. Outings to lake, basketball games, football games, picnics, and swimming in the summer, we have a pool on grounds.

We have 24 hour nursing. Some residents are in such a routine they don't like any change. It causes behaviors. Are the people (staff) trained to deal with this?

Do you really want to uproot these individuals from the only home they have ever known?

Sincerely,
Crystal Benson

To Judge Aspen

I want Murray Center to stay open because I love our ~~kids~~ individuals here & dont want them to go anywhere else and be mistreated.

Grandma Shirley Herring

P.S. But most of all I love these individuals very much & would miss them terribly.

To Judge Aspen.
I'm a volentier at Murray Center and won't want it to close. There are great residents here. It would break my heart not knowing what would happen to them. Please see it in your heart to save Murray Center.

Kathleen & Robert Paquette
"Foster Grandparent Program".

Judge Aspen,

I believe Murray Center should stay open because, the individuals that reside here, are well taken care of here. Murray Center provides medical and mental provision that are monitored by Doctors, nurses, psychologist and physical therapist, and mental health technicians. These people put together a plan for each persons life that lives here.

To shut their homes down would be a scary world for most of these individuals. I pray that you find it in your heart to keep Murray Center open for the individuals lives that live here. We are the only place that can handle some of their needs.

Thank You for your time.
Roxanne Jones

**Judith C Kempf** < judkem1@msn.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>
Sat, Jul 20, 2013 at 6:53 PM

***Honorable Judge Aspen,***

***Judge Aspen I am writing to you again because I am so upset about a letter that I received today from Mr. Kevin Casey and Mark Doyle. In this letter they told me about three former developmental resident who are thriving as they are integrated into new lives in the community. they said they are living lives of choice and dignity.( As if our residents at Murray Center aren't). They said these people make their own meals, do their own laundry. and go for walks or play basketball.at a local park. one is suppose to have a part time job earning a paycheck that he uses for shopping with his girl friend.***
***Judge, this paints a real pretty picture. If its so then I'm happy for them. But! these 2 men have no clue.....Do you not think if my son was capable of doing such I would want it for him Certainly I would.. My son is a deaf mute , that can't even dress himself because he has damage to his whole right side. He can't even go to the bath room by himself. He has the mental capacity of a 2 year old. he wouldn't even know how to get a meal if his life depended on it. He would starve to death . This letter made me so mad and sick to my stomach what they are trying to do. My son is good compare to some that live at Murray Center. Let me***

***tell you something about Murray Center since my son has lived there all but 7 years of his life. He is 50. Never ever a day that he has been away from me have I worried about the treatment he has gotten at Murray Center. I can honestly say I have never ever been worried about him being abused. The people that work there have known him since he was a little boy and treat him as if he is their own son. If anything happens like for instance him falling they call me right away. The closing of Murray Center is the biggest mistake this state will ever make. It is a wonderful caring place. This Mr. Casey and Mr. Doyle have no clue what Murray Center means to us parents of a developmental disabled. Let alone that it is a safe place for my son to live as long as he lives.***

***Thank you for your time Judge Aspen.***

***Judith Kempf.***

***Mother /guardian of***

***Jeffrey***

***Sanders, daisy resident Murray***

***Center.***

*to walk off and leave my 7 year old baby at the center. Now I know that Murray Development Center was God sent.*

*Using common sense Judge Aspen I would like for you to put yourself my place. What if you had a son. Damaged from pure doctor neglect. You know that this grown man has the capcity of a 2 year old. Wouldn't you want the best place in the state of Illinois for him to live out the remainder of his life.. He has no concept of how to dress himself, no concept that things out there can hurt him. When he was placed at Murray Center he was the first deaf person that was placed there and the staff knew that he would need extra care and I can tell you they gave it to him. They are treated him like he was their baby. A 7 year old baby. They knew that they would have to look out for him if there was any kind of emergency. Like a tornado or something like that. They made special effort to keep him safe as they did all the residents of Murray Center. Not just Jeff.*

*Judge Aspen, I hope that when you make your decision about the closing of Murray Center that you will put yourself in the place of the parents of a disabled loved one. We have no place to put our loved ones that could compare to W.G. Murray Center.. I wake up at night thinking what if they move Jeff some place that he wouldn't be as cared for as he has been. They make his food, make sure he eats it, they clean him up*

*after he messes on himself. He wears Depends like a baby wears diapers.*

*This past December I had a care plan meeting for Jeff at Murray and present at the meeting was a lady that took care of Jeff when he was first admitted to the center. 43 years ago now is that dedication or what. 43 years of taking care of the people with disabilities. They sure don't do it for the money. When I met her I thanked her for all she had done for my son all these years. She said "He was my Baby".*

*Jeff entered Murray Center in Aug. and at Christmas we tried to take him home for a visit with his grandparents. He screamed and cried all night. My mother told me. Judy take him home....So that's what I did. And when we got to his cottage he took off running and he stopped screaming. I never again tried to take him home. Murray Center had become his home. When* I left *there I cried myself. I know other people feel the same way. Murray Center is their loved ones home....*

*Judge Aspen, I know I have gone on but from my heart I hope you can understand where I am coming from. Its not easy I know.....Thank you so much for you time.*

*Judy Kempf, mother guardian of Jeffrey Lee Sanders resident of Daisy cottage Murray Center.*

July 19,2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Murray Center is part of the Centralia community in many ways. Murray Center enables people to help not only the families that live at the center but also the employees working there.

For the families that live there, Murray Center has become a safe haven for the people.

For example: Client A has moved from Howell to Lincoln and ended up at Murray Center. They have had many problems adjusting to the moves they have made and were treated very badly by some of the people they have come in contact with.

Client B: came from the community and they were treated badly by their own family. Client B has finally been able to live a calm life without people touching them inappropriately or causing them bodily harm. Client B has found Murray Center to be a safe haven. For people that cannot defend themselves Murray Center has provided a calm, homey environment that is safe and free of harm.

Client C: came to Murray Center from a community setting. Client C did not like showering and Murray Center employees had a very hard time getting them to trust that he was not going to be hurt or miss treated in the shower. It took a team of people to work with client C to get him into the shower. However, Murray Center employees were able to work with them and they were able to build their trust and now Client C will go into the shower and remain calm in the shower more than when he first came. His trust may never be full restored, however Murray Center has become a safe haven for Client C.

Client D: came from other state facilities and has also been treated very badly.

Client D: is getting ready to transition out into the community. A transitional meeting

was held in order to inform the new providers of what client D likes and dislikes and of the foods they like to eat as well as the activities that they enjoy doing.

When client D went for the first visit to this "new home", nothing that was discussed in the meeting was in the home. There was nothing that client D could interact with such as the blocks they enjoy or the rocking chair that they enjoy sitting in. There was food on the counter but client D was not allowed to have any because the food belonged to someone else. Client D did not understand why they could not have a few cookies. From the perspective of a Murray Center employee client D was not made welcome into this new home nor did client D want to stay. When they went out to look at the back yard, which had a big cornfield at the property line. Client D looked at the back yard then walked straight to the car which was in front of the house. Client D found nothing to hold their interest in this "new home."

When client D was shown their "new bedroom" there was no bed or dresser that was theirs. The room was empty with bare walls.

Murray Center has provided a safe haven for the people that society does not want. It has provided jobs, learning and safety for people in all areas of the Centralia community.

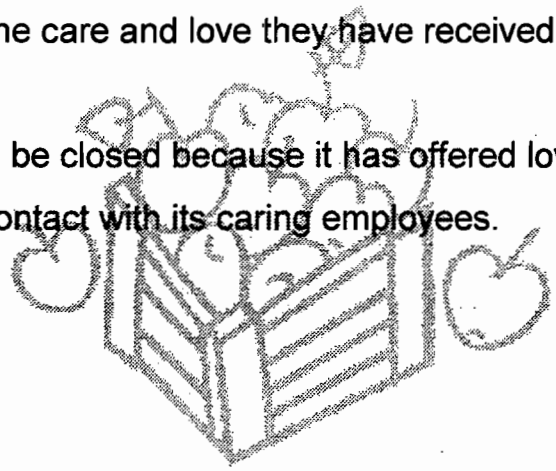
To close a facility that has provided so much to one community is unfair to the people that cannot speak for them selves. It is also unfair to the community that has declined as far as employment standards. Many companies have moved south and we have not been able to get others to move in to replace them. Murray has become home to many people that society viewed as problems and unlovable. Many of the people living at Murray were also court ordered to be placed there because of their problems that society could not deal with or help with. When Howell, Jacksonville or Lincoln closed, the state was not concerned about placing the people in a group home at that time. That is why they were placed at Murray Center. Now that money has become available to support these people, which it has always been available, the greed of

politicians has come running out of the woodwork.

Sir or Madame, it would be in the best interest of all parties to keep Murray Center open. This facility, is 200 hundred miles outside of Chicago and 100 miles from Springfield. We matter to the people that live and work there, we matter to the relatives of the people that live there and to the community that we are supporting. We matter because our lives are intertwined with the people that cannot speak for themselves and that are not able to advocate for their loved ones. Many of the families have kept their loved ones at home for as long as they possibly could and the guilt that has come with placing them in Murray Center has been a huge burden for them. Until they realize the care and love they have received there.

Murray Center should not be closed because it has offered love, support and kinship to all that have come in contact with its caring employees.

Sincerely,



Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am an employee at Warren G. Murray Developmental Center. I have worked at Murray for over 10 years and I enjoy working with the individuals that live here. This facility is on the closure list and I am asking you to please keep this place open. This is the only home some of our individuals know and we are their extended family. We provide quality care, emotional and physical support, and we care about their safety. I have watched some of our individuals be transfered to other CILA's and they end up coming back to Murray Center because they weren't ready for the transition or the other home wasn't trained for their needs. The staff at Murray know the individuals and can provide the care they need. Please consider these individuals when you make your ruling.

Sincerly,
Jamie Deadmond

7/27/13

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am an employee of Warren G. Murray Center in Centralia, IL. I would like to give you my imput on the possible closure of this place. First of all my concern is for the residents that live here. Some of them have been here for many years, this is their homes. Some of them are being placed in other places like this one and not group homes. To me this is so wrong. Some of these residents cannot be in group homes I know that, but WHY NOT LEAVE THEM HERE WHERE THEY FEEL AT Home?? Since EFAC and Public HEALTH have been here we have seen behaviors go up. These residents I BELIEVE KNOW THERE is Something going on. I have a brother that is Mentally Retarded so I have a very sincere heart + care for these Residents. My Prayer is you will let these residents keep their home HERE!! If there is a closure of this place it will really hurt the ecomony around here.

Thank-You for Taking time to hear our concerns.

Kay Barnes

7-27-13

Honorable Judge Aspen

I Hope you Decide TO Keep Murray Center OPen. THIS iS THeir Home. THis iS THe ONLy Home MANy OF our Residents HAve Ever Known.

THANK YOU!

Jeff Ruhl

**Rose Meier** < rmeier1155@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 22, 2013 at 8:16 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Monday 7/22/2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I'm writing you to ask for your support to keep Warren G. Murray Center open. The facility is home for 250 + residents. Many of them have been there so long, it's the only home they remember. My sister, Debbie Hester has been there over 47 years. She has the mentally of an 18 month old. Debbie can't walk or talk and has to be fed through a feeding tube. She also has cerebral palsy. She can't be placed in a community living arrangement. Most of the residents that live there are like her, they need around the clock care. The staff treat them with love and respect. The staff have been there long enough they know how to communicate with the residents. The families took a lot of time finding the right place for their loved one. It was not an easy choice for any of us.

Some of the residents did try community living, it didn't work out for them. Either their family members didn't like how they were treated or the place didn't want them there, because they couldn't handle them. Murray is a safe place for our loved ones, it needs to stay open. Our loved ones lives shouldn't be put at risk so the state can save money.

Thank you for your time.

Rose Meier
2148 W. Grand Ave
Beloit, WI 53511
1-608-290-0420

## Murray Development Center Residents need to stay in their homes.

1 message

**Jan Monken** < janmonken@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 22, 2013 at 9:24 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

My name is Jan Monken and I have been a volunteer at the Murray Development Center for many years. I have seen first hand how the residents are treated. The residents are given opportunities through the center that make a very happy home for them.

Individuals are welcomed out in our community. They truly are considered residents of our small community. It might be Wal-mart, it might be Kentucky Fried Chicken or any parade in town. The Murray residents are there.

The parents associaltion built a swimming pool for the residents. Often when you drive by, the residents will be on their patios having a cook out or just enjoying the weather.

Wonderful staff who really care about the residents make each cottage just like a home. The residents like to go out in the public but are always happy to go back "home" to see their fellow resident and the exceptional loving staff.

I am not against CILA homes for those that can adjust and do well in one, however, the staff would have already placed the resident in one if they were ready for that step.

I have served on committees with some of the residents. If it is something they are capable of handling, they are allowed to participate.

I have watched the residents in parades, competing in activites like "Special Olympics" or providing part of the Christmas Program. Our community suppports these residents so well that there is only standing room for the Christmas program where residents are adopted by community members for the afternoon. Many of the residents are well known out in the public. We just love them!!

I want to advocate for the most fragile of all citizens. They need Murray Dev. Center and we need them to stay in our community.

July 19,2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Murray Center is part of the Centralia community in many ways. Murray Center enables people to help not only the families that live at the center but also the employees working there.

For the families that live there, Murray Center has become a safe haven for the people.

For example: Client A has moved from Howell to Lincoln and ended up at Murray Center. They have had many problems adjusting to the moves they have made and were treated very badly by some of the people they have come in contact with.

Client B: came from the community and they were treated badly by their own family. Client B has finally been able to live a calm life without people touching them inappropriately or causing them bodily harm. Client B has found Murray Center to be a safe haven. For people that cannot defend themselves Murray Center has provided a calm, homey environment that is safe and free of harm.

Client C: came to Murray Center from a community setting. Client C did not like showering and Murray Center employees had a very hard time getting them to trust that he was not going to be hurt or miss treated in the shower. It took a team of people to work with client C to get him into the shower. However, Murray Center employees were able to work with them and they were able to build their trust and now Client C will go into the shower and remain calm in the shower more than when he first came. His trust may never be full restored, however Murray Center has become a safe haven for Client C.

Client D: came from other state facilities and has also been treated very badly.

Client D: is getting ready to transition out into the community. A transitional meeting

politicians has come running out of the woodwork.

Sir or Madame, it would be in the best interest of all parties to keep Murray Center open. This facility, is 200 hundred miles outside of Chicago and 100 miles from Springfield. We matter to the people that live and work there, we matter to the relatives of the people that live there and to the community that we are supporting. We matter because our lives are intertwined with the people that cannot speak for themselves and that are not able to advocate for their loved ones. Many of the families have kept their loved ones at home for as long as they possibly could and the guilt that has come with placing them in Murray Center has been a huge burden for them. Until they realize the care and love they have received there.

Murray Center should not be closed because it has offered love, support and kinship to all that have come in contact with its caring employees.

Sincerely,

# Murray Center

1 message

**Loretta Maddox** < ljm4519@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 22, 2013 at 4:34 PM
Reply-To: Loretta Maddox <ljm4519@yahoo.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

I am the mother of a resident of Murray Center. Kevin W. Yingst has lived at Murray Center for 42+years. The care he gets at Murray Center is second to none. His caregivers are like family to Kevin he had meningitis when he was 8mo. old. It left him unable to function on his own, he cannot walk, talk or sit etc. He functions at the level of 6mo.old baby. HE is on a feeding tube & needs around the clock care to ensure his well being, including access to nursing care around the clock, he receives that at Murray Center. He would not get that kind of care any where else nor would the other274 residents.

Group homes and nursing homes cannot provide this.

It is politically expedient, but morally wrong to balance the budget woes of Illinois on the backs of the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. They are without voices of their own and must depend on friends and family to advocate for them.

If there were sufficient community-based resources for the developmentally disabled, many parents would have using them . The medically fragile residents need intensive nursing care 24/7. Murray Center is the only one who provides this kind of care. Please Keep Murray Center Open For The Benefit Of Our Loved Ones. Their has to be other ways to Balances Governor Quinn's spending and others, besides taking the only home these helpless children have ever known.

Loretta Maddox Yingst

July 18, 2013

The Honorable Judge Aspen

The impact of Murray Center in Centralia, IL, closing would be devastating for many reasons.

First, only a small percentage of the population of Murray Center would be able to be placed in a CILA or group home. A very large part of the population is either very medically challenged or behaviorally challenged, making their candidacy for a CILA or group home next to impossible. These facilities simply don't have the staff numbers required to effectively care for these types of individuals (this is now evident after some recent incidents of Murray individuals who were on "pre-transition visits" to a local CILA home). These individuals live at Murray Center because there are no other options for most of them. The only other option would be to move them to another state-operated developmental center, with the closest one being 1 ½ to 2 hours away. The frequency of family visits would most likely decrease, as family members would not be able to accomplish the travel involved. Many times, it is these family visits that keep the individuals positive, and they look forward to them. The Murray Parents' Association is very active and involved in their lives, providing support and extras that they would not otherwise have.

Secondly, of our Murray Center population, roughly 25% have lived at Murray Center for 40+ years, 11% for 30+ years, 17% for 20+ years, and the rest for 20 or less years. The maximum residency is 48 years, with the average residency being 25 years. As you can see from these numbers, Murray Center has been the home of these individuals for many years, and some of them for most of their lifetime. Transitioning these individuals would be difficult, as small changes often become large obstacles for them. Imagine how difficult it would be for them to be transferred out of the home they know, where they feel safe and comfortable with the trained staff that have cared for them daily for years. The population at Murray Center is made up of 8% mildly retarded, 8% moderately retarded, 18% severely retarded and a whopping 65% profoundly retarded individuals. There is all this talk from those pushing for community living about how the individuals make their own meals, do their own laundry, etc. That is because those higher functioning people are capable of this. Profoundly and severely retarded individuals won't magically be able to do these things that they are incapable of just because they live in a community home. 58% of the population has a psychiatric diagnosis in addition to being mentally retarded, and 21% have gastrostomy and/or jejunostomy tubes. Both of these diagnosis require special care; I don't see how this will happen in the 2-4 bed CILA homes.

Another very important reason is the negative economic impact the closure of Murray Center would have on Centralia and the nearby communities. Employing roughly 550, Murray Center is the third largest employer in an already economically fractured area. The unemployment rate in Marion County alone is very high. For many employees, relocation is not an option with aging parents in the area. Also, the possibility of selling one's home would be tricky to impossible with no employment in the area if Murray Center closes. I can only imagine what the unemployment number will climb to following the closure of a large employer like Murray Center. Businesses, schools, churches, and services of all kinds would be negatively affected. Many would not survive. Another population affected by Murray Center's closure and the economic decline of the area is the youth. How can they possibly build a life here? There will be no jobs, no services, declining school systems, etc. There would be nothing to draw them here or keep them here.

For these reasons, I feel Murray Center is not expendable. People's lives depend on it. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Lueking

116 S. Oak Street

Hoffman, IL 62250

dclueking@yahoo.com

7-19-13

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I urge you to rule in favor of keeping the Murray Center facility open.

It is difficult for me to understand why we should be having such a decision to make! In a day where our society collects and spends on new parks, fire trucks, offices, computers, and fine things of all kinds, have we overlooked the most important needs? Are we not defined and measured by how we take care of the most needy of our people?

"A people that values its privileges above principles, soon loses both"
D. Eisenhower

Keep Murray Center,
Roland Kiehe - Bartelso, IL.

P.O. Box 371

Phone 618-526-8178
Fax 618-526-2118

WHITNEY H. KAMPWERTH
*Attorney at Law*

Law Office of Marsha D. Holzhauer
276 North Main St.
Breese, Illinois 62230-0371

July 19, 2013

RE: Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen:

As a lifelong resident of Clinton County, I always knew of Murray Center, and I had a picture in my head of what it was like on the inside. I pictured a building similar to a hospital, a quiet place, with not much joy or excitement.

Just this year, I had the pleasure of visiting Murray Center and meeting some of the residents. My employer's son, Darby, is a resident on Apple Cottage. One Sunday, she took me with her when she went to pick him up to take him to Dairy Queen.

Boy, was that picture in my head wrong. As soon as I walked in I was greeted by a resident who showed me his radio, another resident talked to me about his girlfriend who lives down the hall. I was shown their drawings, introduced to their friends. A few steps down the hall was a church service, with live music! The whole place was full of outgoing residents, activities and caring staff. I was almost overwhelmed with all of the smiles! I didn't want to leave, but Darby was ready for his ice cream!

I think it is easy to assume Murray Center is just an "institution," but it is the furthest from it. If anything can be called a community, it's Murray Center.

Sincerely,

Whitney H. Kampwerth
Attorney at Law

To Whom it may concern — 7-20-13

I am writing this letter to share with you my feelings on the announcement to close the Murray Center. I have been employed there for 11 years, and have been very lucky to meet and take care of the residents who call Murray Center their home. We are not only their care givers but we are their family, friends, and in many cases their voices. We know what they like and what they want. We know their personalities and what they are trying to say when they cant. We have been here when holidays and birthdays come, and help them to celebrate. I am very blessed to have been a part of these peoples lives. To close murray center would truly be a tragedy. These people have called Murray home for many years, and to move them would be very hard on them as many do not adjust well to change. Please help keep Murray Center open for these people who call it home.

Thank you for listening -

Kelley Winegarner

I, Debra Hall work at Murray Center. I see these residents every day. I strongly disagree in the closing of Murray Center. Some of the residents have been here since infancy. This is their home and only family. They have all their needs met here.

We have had residents come here from other centers. Some come with hardly anything to wear and no coats in the winter. We have seen these residents change for the better. Such as one - become more independent - getting a job, becoming more inter-active since living here - going to activities on and off campus.

We are able to take some for XRay and Dental, Hearing Appts. on campus. We had others communicating with devices that operate with the use of buttons with their chins or eye contact.

We have seen some of the places that they want them to live in - the conditions are unsafe for them - water under houses, leaks when it rains, flooring weak.

Please come and see our residents and their home - you can see this is the best place for them. We have professional trainers - here for them. We have the best for them now and in the future. Please keep Murray Center open for them - some have already paid the price - been hurt or died - because some new homes don't have trained staff or ones who care properly for them.

Thank You - Debra Hall

7-20-13

To whom it May Concern:

Murray Center should not close cause if it does we will be losing part of our family. We are the best people to take care of our love ones. Murray Center is a good fit for the people that live here And for the people that take care of the residents that live here. Most every individual that lives at Murray belones here. They can not survive out in the community. They have special needs And need special care And only Murray Center Staff can provide. The individuals thinks of us as there family And we see them as our family. It will hurt our families also And the community And the ~~sorrounding~~ surrounding Communities.

Thank You
Derrick Carr

August 4, 2013

Janey Willis
608 West Plum Street
Percy, Illinois 72272

ToThe Honorable Judge Aspen:

I am writing you to ask for your help and support with adverting the closing of Murray Development Center in Centralia, Illinois.

This has been my daughter's home since 1984. The staff and other residents are her family. How can anyone, the State of Illinois and/or the Governor say to her "you and your family can not live here any more because over the years the State of Illinois has made some bad choices with the tax payers money and due to no fault of yours you and your family are being evicted. Yes evicted is what this really is. How can anyone other then me, her legal guardian ,be entitled to make this decision ?

All the press and outrage seems to be about the closing of prisons and mental health facilities for the criminally insane. The people in these facilities are there because they were convicted of crimes against society. The residents of Murray are there thru no fault of their own, yet it seems they are not cared about and do not deserve more compassion and help then criminals. What kind of people are making this decision. A decision that may cost my daughter her life or at the very least the quality of life she is used to and deserves.

Ask yourself this question "what would you do if tomorrow some one knocked on the door of your home and told you that you and your family must move out because the person at your door did not manage their money over the years and will now decide where you will reside and due to no fault of you or your family you will have to bare the consequences. What would you do? Fight for your home and family. That is what I am asking you to do for my daughter and her family, and Murray Center.

I really fear for my daughter's health physically and mentally if she has to leave Murray. A change such as this in her life and routine will be tragic and a mental strain on her that I am not sure can ever be made right. With my daughter's physical and mental problems she is not suited for a group home and they would not be able to care for her and take care of her needs, I tried this at one time. I also am not trained nor do I have the knowledge to care for her as she needs. Murray has all these things and have proven they can see to her physically and mentally all these years.

Please I am asking you to give my daughter and her family the legal rights and quality of life they have a right to.

Thank you.

Sincerely
Janey Willis
Mother and Legal Guardian of Debra Ruth Duensing, Resident of Murray Center

Dear Judge Aspen.

My son, Brock Remillong, has called Murray Center "home" since 10/06. His school years were in the Special Ed programs. In those years he developed increased physical aggression, schizoaffective disorder bi-polar type. In other words, Psychatic Disorder, NOS. The meds required to treat these behaviors was and still is prescribed by a psychiatrist or physician Murray Warren has a remarkable Inter-disciplinary Team! About five years ago, Brock's swallowing became problematic, i.e. liquids and solids, going into his lungs. After numerous trips to Specialists in Springfield, Il., attended by us along with staff at Murray Warren, it was determined Brock would best be served with a feeding tube! You can imagine his difficulty dealing with this as many functions revolve around food. However, with the caring, concerned staff at Murray, he has acclimated well. Thanks to the wonderful staff, so have we. Also they have designated a one-one person for Brock to prevent "sneaking".

over

So Judge Aspen, I'm certain you can imagine how devestated we all would be if Murray closed, where in the world would all these residents end up?

Thank you, Judge Aspen, for your concerned commitment to the issue of Murray Center, remain open, or what!?!

Sincerely,
Patricia Crahan
Mother/guardian
1-314-707-5551

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

**Murray Center**
2 messages

**Linda Marcinkowska** < marcinkowska@yahoo.com> Tue, Aug 6, 2013 at 9:14 PM
Reply-To: Linda Marcinkowska <marcinkowska@yahoo.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Attn: Judge Aspen

I am writing this e-mail to show my support to keep the Murray Center OPEN. My sister is a resident at Murray Center and has been for quite some time. I feel that it is imperative that you reconsider NOT closing the Murray Center. I do not feel that moving the residents to other facilities is in the best interest of those affected. The residents need special care and I feel that moving the residents to another facility would be very detrimental. I feel that it takes a special person to be able to provide good care to the residents. My sister is very content and moving her I feel would totally be a major setback for her.
PLEASE consider all persons that will be affected by closing the Murray Center - the patients, employees, family members, community members to name a few groups.
"PLEASE" keep Murray Center OPEN.

AUGUST 5, 2[illegible]

DEAR JUDGE ASPEN –

MY SON, LANCE DICKENS, A BOGART RECIPIENT, WAS PLACED IN MURPHY DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER BY A ILLINOIS JUDGE, STEVENS, IN THE MID 90'S – "BECAUSE IT IS THE BEST, MOST CARING FACILITY FOR DEVELOPMENTALLY HANDICAPPED IN THE STATE", HE SAID

I HEARTILY AGREE. THE PERSONNEL ARE LIKE FAMILY TO THEIR PATIENTS – THEY TRULY CARE. THEY ARE BLESSED.

A VISIT THERE WILL CONFIRM HOW "SPECIAL" IT IS.

SINCERELY

Mr. Robert L. Dickens
714 LINDEN, OAK PARK IL 60302
(406) 222-7148 | 223-1146 CEL

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## letter for Judge Aspen

1 message

**Tiffany S. Crahan** < teeth2clean@yahoo.com> Mon, Aug 5, 2013 at 5:44 PM
To: Ritawreads@gmail.com
Cc: pjcrahan816@gmil.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

I'm writing this letter in regards to my brother Brock Remillong, who is in the care of Murray Warren Center. He's been in Murray Center since 2006, and certainly calls this place home. Due to the caring and kind staff , among the training these employees endure, I'm not sure where Brock would be without this facility. My mother, his guardian, is 72 years old with health issues of her own, and cannot care for Brock alone. He is now being tube fed due to health complications and has numeros other mental disorders that are controlled by medicine regualted by doctors and nurses at Murray. I'm deeply saddened about the news I've heard of other residents that were put into other "homes" and some are now in jail and/or living in horrific living environments. Think of your family when making your decision about this amazing residential facility, these poor individuals call HOME!!!!! WE are thier voice, as some have become wards of the state.

It breaks

my heart to know that the people that have authority and make these decisions can allow them to live like this. Jail is NOT the answer for them!!! To live in unacceptable, dangerous houses that the State of Illinois is finding for them is also not the answer!!! Please think long and hard about them, visit their homes, try and put yourself in their shoes, pretend they are part of your family. Life is tough for them and the family members that have raised them. Put yourself in the caregivers shoes too (staff at Murray), takes very special, patient people to be able to care for them. Brock has a one-on-one caregiver due to his complications with swallowing and not allowed to eat or drink anything. Brock will sneak food or water anytime he can, and will aspirate causing pneumonia and ultimately death.

Please be selective in making your decisions about Murray Center. Each and every one of these individuals deserves a safe, clean, and comfortable living environment that they have called their home for many, many years!!!

I can be reached at (314) 703-7959, or by e-mail if need be teeth2clean@yahoo.com.

Kind Regards,
Tiffany Davis

August 3, 2013

Re: Closing of Murray Developmental Center, Centralia IL

Dear Judge Aspen:

We are writing in opposition to Governor Quinn's proposed closure of Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, Illinois. As parents/guardians, we believe that the least restrictive/most appropriate placement for our son is Murray Center.

Geoffrey, now 46, has been at Murray since 1980; to him, Murray is home. Because Geoffrey has very little 'expressive language', it is difficult to accurately assess his functioning level; however, all tests over the years have consistently placed him in the 3½ - 5-year old range.

Living at Murray Center gives us the assurance that Geoffrey is safe and well taken care of; he requires 24-hour supervision for his personal safety and physical well-being. As with most 4-year olds, Geoff is not always aware of the inherent danger in his surroundings – traffic, wandering onto someone else's property, his inability to make his needs known verbally, or resolving conflicts with other residents who do not understand him.

While there may be many mentally and physical challenged individuals who are able to function in a less-restrictive environment than Murray, Geoffrey is not one of them.

He needs help on a daily basis taking care of his physical needs;

He is not able to function in a work environment, other than basic tasks in a sheltered workshop, such as the Kaskaskia Workshop,

which he attends on a daily basis;

He cannot prepare a meal for himself, take care of his laundry, or attend to other basic personal skills.

In all periodic/annual evaluations of Geoffrey since his initial placement at Murray, staff has concluded (and we agree) that Murray Developmental Center is the least restrictive/most appropriate placement for Geoff. Deciding that all residents of Murray (or any other state facility) are capable of functioning in a community setting is no more logical than assuming that all individuals with cerebral palsy will respond satisfactorily to the same physical therapy regimen.

We urge you to make permanent the temporary restraining order preventing the State of Illinois from proceeding with plans to close Murray Developmental Center.

Sincerely,

Arnold E. Blair Nancy L. Blair

Champaign, Illinois

Joanne L. Edwards

401 Crestview Drive

Steeleville, Illinois

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing in response to the Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois where my sister has been a resident for the past 15 plus years. She has spent the last 47 years in a state facility due to the severity of here mental retardation. Murray Center has been the best by far. She started out at AL Bowen Center in Harrisburg, Illinois which was an amazing place until our governor decided to close it and turn it into a boot camp. From there she went to Anna Mental Health in Anna, Illinois until she was raped and got her front teeth kicked out by an inmate who was transferred there from the Mental Health Center in Chester, Illinois. I'm sure it's quite obvious why my family decided to then move her to Swansea, Illinois. She was a resident there for 5 years until she started having seizures and they no longer could accommodate her. So onto Murray Center she went, where she has thrived, loves the workers, the atmosphere, daily strolls outside on the sidewalk and enjoys the interaction with outside organizations.

My sister was born with her disability and doesn't have the mental capacity to fight for her life or to even make the decisions on where her life would go. Unlike..... the dead beats that our wonderful State of Illinois continue to feed, bathe, house, support their alcohol and drug habits through the good ol' welfare we continue to hand out. When they CHOSE to put themselves into bad situations and to make bad decisions.

It's a crying shame that this is happening to our families "again" who is very close and visits our sister on a regular basis. Yes, we have not shut her out of our lives she even comes home for the holidays. By reading my first paragraph it looks like this is a cycle that the State of Illinois continues to ride. Can you imagine being displaced from your home four (4) different times to be thrown into a new atmosphere, learning all over the daily routines, etc...etc.... and keep in mind the mental capacity of the folks-VERY stressful I would think!

FOR THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE GOOD IN YOUR HEART - PLEASE KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN – TAKE A VISIT AND I'M SURE YOU WILL LEAVE WITH AN UPLIFTING SPIRIT IN YOUR HEART.....

Sincerely,

Joanne Edwards

146 South Farmingdale Road
Pleasant Plains, Illinois 62677

August 6, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen:

As a former 31-year employee of the State of Illinois working in administration, I am very much aware of how the State will attempt to justify (after the fact) how they determined to close Murray Center. If you disregard Mr. Moss, a lobbyist working with the Governor and his two assistants, Mr. Doyle and Mr. Casey and their manufactured facts, you will understand why we the parents/guardians humbly requests your assistance in keeping our loved ones at Murray Center where they can continue to receive a loving environment and help with their many problems.

My son was perfectly healthy until he was five years old and received his shots to go to kindergarten. Within a year he had stopped talking and developed many other problems. Since that time his health has deteriorated to the point that he is bedridden about 95% of the time. Without the outstanding help from the Murray staff throughout the years he would not be able to sit in his wheelchair twice a day for a hour or so. By working with him they made sure that he was able to keep his neck strong even though his little body was so disfigured to sit in a wheelchair. He has many health problems and Murray Center staff takes excellent care of him.

Please don't let a few bureaucrats, a lobbyist, and a misinformed Governor make a big mistake by closing down Murray Center. Murray is not a large institution as the Governor and his staff have said, it is just a little neighborhood and community where love lives.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter that effects so many individuals, those that are handicapped in some way and those that love them.

Respectfully,

Barbara Braner

Barbara Braner

To Judge:

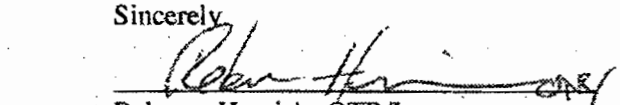
I am writing this letter as a concern of mine about the removal of Murray Residents from there home and moving them into "community assisted living accommodations"

I work at St Mary's hospital in Centralia IL. Unfortunately I had the misfortune of witnessing how a resident who was recently moved form Murray center into a CILA. On July 15 2013, I had a pt scheduled to see me for an Occupational Therapy evaluation. My pt was brought in by a caregiver who literally had no knowledge of pt medical history, surgical history, medications or why they had a Dr ordered an OT evaluation for hand contractures. Pt caregiver admitted she worked in that CILA for a few weeks but did not know much about the resident. She could not tell me what the facility wanted from my profession or history relevant to OT evaluation. Multiple times when I questioned about pt condition the caregiver answered I don't know. When OTR questioned about w/c parts and if all parts were on wheelchair, due to pt in poor positioning and pt had increased risk of falling out of and tipping wheelchair over. Caregiver had no idea if the wheel chair she was in was the patients or someone else's, or if it had additional foot rests and how to position w/c to keep pt from tipping over.

Pt was very agitated throughout my evaluation. I brought in sensory calming activities to calm pt down and caregiver was using them to stimulate pt. bopping them on the head with a pin wheel. Really who would enjoy this? Especially when the person was already way to over stimulated .The patient would shout out, I think the caregiver felt the resident was a baby. But my interpretation was the resident was getting more agitated.

Sadly I feel this is happening more then what is being reported. If you have additional questions please contact me and I will share more details of this incident.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Henrichs OTR/L

618-436-8639

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

## Letter yo Judge Aspen

1 message

**Diane Exbom** < truetodyan@att.net> Fri, Aug 23, 2013 at 9:13 PM
Reply-To: Diane Exbom <truetodyan@att.net>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

My brother is 54 years old and has been at Murray center almost 40 years.

My mother had my brother in at least 3 different places before we were blessed with Murray Center. The facilities that my brother had spent time in before Murray Center were appalling, to say the least.

Sir, I cannot impress upon you enough that the quality of care my brother receives at Murray Center is exceptional. The care they have given my brother over the years far exceeds any of the prior facilities my brother had been in.

This center is a godsend. The staff and the "family" at Murray Center care about the residents and treat them with dignity and respect. My mother appointed me guardian of my brother and although I cannot visit due to the distance I can rest easy knowing that my brother is in his home and is getting the finest care he could receive anywhere.

The staff at Murray center have always kept me well informed of any and all issues with my brother. Although I cannot visit my brother on a regular basis I have a peace of mind that he is in a safe, truly safe place.

When I first found out that the Center was set to close I was not only devastated I was truly frightened. I was and still am truly scared where my brother might be sent and what kind of care he may receive.
At this point I can only pray that Murray Center remains open.

I pray that the home my brother has had for almost 40 years is not taken from him or any of the residents. Murray Center is a safe, clean, caring, nurturing and comforting environment.

We appreciate Murray Center and again hope and pray that Murray Center remains open for many more years to come.

Thank You,
Diane Exbom (sister to Bobby Lord)

**Local Woman and Family Celebrate 20 Years at Warren G. Murray**

For twenty years Heather Decker has been happy, healthy and cared for at Murray Center in Centralia. Due to her medical needs, her family relies on the people and services provided at Murray.

There are Nurses, QMRP's, many types of Therapy Techs, dieticians, and a Doctor who makes rounds. The rest of the staff are equally praised for their dedication to each individual. The residents are treated with the love and respect of a family member. The staff takes our loved ones out into the community and they bring many community activities to the Center. Murrays tends to retain long-term employess that have known our daughter since the day she moved in. That is very reassuring to us because she can't tell you if she isn't feeling well. They know her well enough to realize when she has health issues. Not only do they care for her, but they care about her. That makes a huge difference. When she needs it, the local hospital is top-notch and their staff also knows Heather and her medical history.

The State wants to move the residents into 2-4 bedroom homes, yet most of them are unable to live safely in that type of environment. It is like comparing apples to oranges when you realize all of the professional staff available only at the larger SODC's. The medically needy will most likely be recommended to the nearest SODC which is 4 hours north of here. Once Murray closes all of southern Illinois will be without these much-needed services and never again will this quality of care be available locally. We worry not just for our loved one, but for the devolopmentally disabled people who will need this service in the future.

Murray Center brings in 10-12 million dollars annually from federal funds earned by the disabled, so it is not a financial burden on the state. Also the amount it takes to care for a resident per year has been grossly exagerated in reports from the State. Most of this is not known by the general public, so the truth needs to be heard. We encourage you to contact your local politicians and ask if they support these local services. They should. If not, use that information the next time you vote. Call them now and tell them that this is not the right thing to do.

If it does not benefit the State and does not beneift the individual, then why is this happening? We have several hundred citizens of Southern Illinois whose lives and families will be greatly affected by this. The State is not giving them a choice and we need to be their voice. Most all of these residents have parents, relatives and gaurdians who love them very much. The State needs to know that if there were a better place, we would have already moved them there.

-Nelson and Terrie Eubanks

8/8/2013

My name is Judy Groner and I have a 25 year old daughter who has lived at Murray Center for six years. For 18 years my full time job was taking care of my daughter, Kathryn. Her last year at home was the most difficult as her self-abusive behavior had turned into a full blown crises.

I would spend each day, trying to stop Kathryn from banging her head, as-hard-as-she-could, against walls, tables, windows, bathtubs, door jambs, dashboards or any hard surface she could find.

I would spend each day, trying to hold Kathryn down on her bed so that she would not punch herself in the face. She would yell, scream, cuss and spit at me.

I would spend each day, trying to keep Kathryn's knees covered with a blanket. That way, when she would crack her bony knee into her forehead, the blanket would provide some small amount of padding for the already quarter-sized wound on her forehead.

During her last year at home, Kathryn was admitted to seven different treatment facilities within Illinois, Missouri and Ohio. No one could help her!

Dr. Cynthia Rogers of Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis said "Kathryn would benefit immensely from a very structured environment with intensive behavioral modification as part of the treatment." When I would ask different medical professionals where I could find that kind of help, they basically said 'I don't know.'

We finally found help for Kathryn right here in Centralia, Illinois! The Assistant Center Director, at the time, said that in her 32 years of working at Murray Center, she had never seen a case quite like this before.

Kathryn is a success story- in the making! She has gone from self-injury 27 times per day down to once per week. She goes to restaurants, movies, church, shopping and participates in Special Olympics. She attends Kaskaskia Workshop and earns a paycheck. Most importantly, she visits with family and friends.

I fear, at this time, that moving Kathryn from the safe, structured environment she now calls home will be a detriment to her progress.

I fear, at this time, that community placements are not appropriately staffed or trained to care for her behavioral needs.

Murray Center has given Kathryn a wonderful quality of life. But, more than that, they have given her dignity! And, isn't that what every human being wants and deserves?

Thank you!

Judy A. Groner

Nashville, Illinois

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

## Spellcheck!

1 message

**Mike Lewkowski** < mikelew@everestkc.net> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 9:40 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Rita,

I noticed in my letter that there were two spelling errors...I should have spell checked! Here is the corrected version that you should send to Judge Aspen.

Thanks!

Mike Lewkowski

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am writing this letter to you because my brother, Richard Lewkowski, a 48 year resident of Murray Center, cannot. If Ricky could write a letter it would probably read something like this:

Governor Pat Quinn wants to close my home, Murray Center. This is absolutely the wrong thing to do. Governor Quinn and IDHS Director Kevin Casey claim that the rebalancing initiative will enable people like me with disabilities to live in our own homes, in a tree lined community, make my own meals, play basketball and even work part-time to earn a paycheck that I could use for shopping. Well, Governor Quinn and Director Casey, you really don't know me or the majority of my friends here at Murray Center. This IS my home. I cannot hold a job or make my own meals. I am not too proud to tell you that I suffer from PKU, a severe form of mental retardation that I have had since birth. The lack of a critical enzyme in my body prevented my brain from developing. I have the IQ of an 18 month old child. My parents could not provide the 24 hr care that I needed while they raised my 6 other siblings. They loved me so much that they found Warren G. Murray Center 48 years ago. Murray Center provides my home and my community...the community that Director Casey describes that I need. I cannot live on my own. I need the Specialized care that the people at Murray Center provide for me. I cannot do the simple things in life that you all take for granted. I will tell you this, though, the wonderful people at Murray are my extended Family. I have certain routines that we do daily and weekly. I go to Kaskaskia workshop. I know where my room is and where I go to have my daily meals. The people at Murray have all taught me this and they continue to provide the constant care that I truly need. Please do not close Murray Center and take my home away from me. There is nowhere else in the community that I would rather live. Judge Aspen, I ask that you protect me since I cannot fight for myself. This is not an institution! Murray Center is my home. The people who work here love me and I love them! Please do the right thing and keep Murray Center open for me and all of my friends here. Thank you.

Richard Lewkowski

Thank you for reading my letter.

Respectfully,
Michael Lewkowski
Brother and Guardian of Richard Lewkowski

The Honorable Judge Aspen,

As you consider the case of closing Murray Center I hope you will think of the agony that will be imposed on the helpless inmates that have no realistic hope of improving their lives. My granddaughter has been a relatively hopeless case for most of her life. Her entrance to Murray Center made an amazing improvement in both her life & also in the lives of her loving parents who had exhausted all avenues of hope. Murray Center is a really wonderful institution and certainly should not close. The reports I hear indicate that State does not care about the placement of those patients but are only concerned with their profits. Please use your court as a means of providing proper care for these helpless inmates. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Groner

Amanda Bell
4016 Bjerkesol Dr.
Champaign, Illinois
61822

July 22, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

Amongst the greed and corruption that encases Illinois government, you are our beacon of hope. I am writing to implore you to save the Warren G. Murray Center. My brother James has lived at the Murray Center for 46 years. James is severely autistic, bi-polar, and has no language. James is highly anxious and can not handle change. Over the years he has had some violent outbursts due to anxiety and frustration. Because the Murray Center staff is so well trained and familiar with James, these outbursts have been managed very well. James is on a "Chopped diet" and is a choking hazard. James has been saved three times by vigilant staff members at meal time. My brother goes to workshop every day but is not really able to do most tasks. He is in "training". James could not survive in a community home placement. There would not be enough trained staff on hand to handle James. Although the least restrictive environment is the

goal for all handicapped individuals, it simply doesn't work for everyone. The Murray Center is a wonderful home for my brother James. It is sunny and bright. The campus is large and well cared for. The grounds include gardens, a fountain, and a working swimming pool for the residents. The buildings are in great shape. The state just put a new roof on all the buildings. Every time I visit James, I am so impressed with the cleanliness of every building. This is an <u>exceptional</u> facility. My brother has had the same nurse for years. The staff is well trained and there is little turn-over. The town of Centralia supports the Murray Center and its residents. Other developmental centers and community homes should be using the Murray Center as a model! Please save James' life and keep his home open. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am confident that common sense, ethics, and kindness will save the Warren G. Murray Center.

Sincerely,
Amanda J. Bell

Dear Judge Aspen,

Our daughter Jane is a 54 years old lady. She is profoundly mentally retarded. She lived at home for her first six years and five months. Doctors in Champaign said we had to take her for help, and we took her to Murray Center to live. She has seizures and behaviors. The help at Murray know what to do for her. She can't walk. She is in a wheelchair. In all the years she has lived at Murray Center she has never had a bed sore. She is well taken care of at Murray. The town comes frequently to be with the residents, and there are foster grandparents that come. At Christmas they come and there is a big party for all the residents. Our Jane is safe, happy, and well cared for by her "family" at Murray.

Sincerely,

Shirley Rieman
9135 North 100th Street
Wheeler, IL 62479

## To the Honorable Judge Aspen:

A home to 252 adults with developmental disabilities is slated to close this year unless you intervene. Murray Center exists to provide intensive behavioral and medical habilitation with the goal of assisting each individual to live in the least restrictive setting possible. As a result of the treatment provided by a trained, stable workforce and a team of expert professionals, lives have not only been markedly improved but many lives have been saved.

Donna has Rett Syndrome, a rare genetic defect characterized by slow deterioration of all abilities. Doctors at Rush University Hospital in Chicago praise the care she received at Murray Center since she has far surpassed the expected life span of age 40 and now, at age 54, is the second oldest person living with Rett.

Due to spastic quadriplegia, Philip was unable to voluntarily move any body part with the exception of his head. He arrived in 1991 in a dilapidated wheelchair and his only means of communicating was to raise his eyes to answer "yes" and look to the side for "no". The speech-language pathologist at Murray Center began training him to use an electronic communication device. Today with a 3000 word vocabulary, he conveys his wants/needs, thoughts, opinions, questions, and wishes. As speech therapy continued, he developed literacy skills and now can read and compose written messages. He continues to demonstrate progress so therapy has been ongoing since his admission in 1991. Speech therapy at Murray Center is not limited to 26 hours/year as is the case in CILA situations.

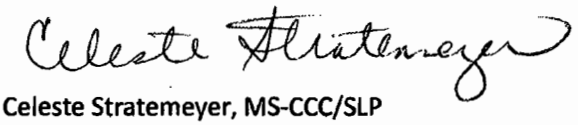
Earl arrived with complex medical needs including a tracheostomy due to bilateral vocal cord paralysis, which he had lived with the past 20 years. Upon admission he expressed his greatest desire was to have the tracheostomy tube removed. Earl underwent a series of medical procedures to open his airway just enough to allow for trach removal but to keep his ability to eat/swallow intact. Over a period of 18 months, daily speech therapy was needed to strengthen his respiratory support and to enhance his communication abilities. The trach was successfully removed and Earl's health improved exponentially enabling him to attend off grounds work setting.

After seeking help from seven different treatment facilities in three states, Kay and her family were in crisis when she arrived at Murray Center. Her self-abusive behaviors required use of a helmet, shoulder pads, and knee pads all day to keep her safe. Intensive treatment began to reduce dependence on psychotropic medications and eliminate self-abuse. Kay needed a consistent, structured environment led by trained staff to undergo these changes. Today, she no longer requires protective gear to get through a day. Kay is active in the community and enjoys time with her family. She attends off grounds work setting and is hopeful of continuing to progress toward a less restrictive living situation at the time her parents and Individual Support Team determine is appropriate.

Kim has an insatiable appetite. Morbidly obese upon arrival, Kim could not walk to the dining room for meals. Murray Center's dietitian and therapeutic recreational therapist carefully coordinated a plan to save Kim's life. Through facilitating good diet choices and exercise, she has lost over 100 pounds.

If people required ICU level of care at a hospital but were denied it, the whole community would be outraged at the injustice. Individuals living at Murray Center require intensive care but Illinois is denying them this care in their community. This is why Murray Center matters to Illinois.

Sincerely,



Celeste Stratemeyer, MS-CCC/SLP

Speech-language pathologist

2 Magnolia Drive

Centralia, IL 62801

(618) 214-1656

7/22/13

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am writing to you in support of the Warren G. Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL. which is the center of a lawsuit involving the Murray Parents Association against the State of Illinois.

My name is Tom Tate and I have worked at Murray Center for 34 yrs. I am one of the lead RN's at our facility. I have served on various committees including Human Rights Committee, Behavioral Intervention Committee and Psychotropic Review Committee. I have served in several different capacities in direct care as well as management positions. I have experience with a previous facility closure in Lincoln, IL. I helped monitor that facility for over a year during the closure process and I literally drove one of the vehicles transferring some of their residents to Murray. I was a Transition Team leader after the transfers. The fact I'm trying to establish is I have extensive knowledge of the residents currently living at Murray Center, the facility itself, and how some residents from a previous closure were handled.

Our Residents are some of society's most fragile individuals both medically and psychologically. They can be extremely sensitive to change. I have seen the mere changing of a bedroom assignment or the changing of a roommate cause severe emotional and physical outbursts .Many of our individuals have lived at Murray 30 or 40 years. It is all they know and it is no doubt home to them. Moving them without proper transitioning will have grave consequences for some.

Our residents range from the most medically compromised to residents in great physical shape but have severe mental and behavioral issues. We have people who are capable of causing great physical harm to their self as well as others. We have others who are fed through feeding tubes and breathe through tracheostomies and are totally dependent upon staff for their care. The thought that all these individuals can be integrated safely into the community setting is wrong. The range of disabilities involved is just too complex.

I'm urging caution in any decision involving these special citizens. One thing I am sure of, they are all currently in a SAFE place at Murray Center.

Respectfully,

Thomas W. Tate

Thomas W. Tate RN

To the Honorable Judge Aspen,

Once again I find myself pleading for my son to be able to remain in the home he loves so much. Gary's story began a little over 20 years ago. Gary went into placement at the age of 9 when it became obvious that his Dad and I were unable to work, support our family and keep Gary safe 24/7. Murray Center or any state facility was not our first choice but it became the best choice for Gary!

Choice must remain an option for Guardians like myself who are court appointed to be able to provide the level of care and safety that my son and others need to provide for their complex medical, behavioral and safety needs. IDHS is taking choice away from Guardians who have been appointed in a court of law to be the best decision maker for a person who is intellectually impaired to the point where they can't make their own decision. I would love to have my son in my community In a CILA home but at this point, I sincerely have serious concerns for my son's safety and well being. I would like to tell you why. It is hard to be brief but I will try.

First- I am a Psychiatric nurse with 30 years experience in a hospital setting. I am unable to provide identifying information about any specific cases because of HIPPA. My inpatient unit is where our loved ones with intellectual impairment are sent when the group home cannot handle them . I have seen many cases where the group home that the person has resided in refuses to take them back. In at least two recent cases these patients ended up being sent to a State Operated Developemental Center . Many times they are sent up North near Chicago with no regard to where their family lives. One young person who asked to stay in touch with me told me her mom is no longer able to visit her because it is too far away! When behaviors occur in group homes, often the Police are called. Sometimes the person is handcuffed or even tasered! The police are simply not trained to deal with this population and it is a travesty to me that the person ends up being treated as a criminal. This is not the correct preparation for being ready to move to community care!

Secondly, my son and others have complex medical needs that are immediately cared for at Murray should the need arise. Sadly, many of these group homes are not equipped with life saving devices such as the Automatic External Defibrillators, oxygen and emergency medications. Even if they were ,they have no medically trained personnel on hand to properly administer their use. Being a nurse, I am able to tell you that direct care givers , even though they may be trained in CPR and first aid, often times panic and yell for a nurse! I sincerely fear for my son's medical safety! I have not even mentioned how wrong I believe it is for unlicensed persons to be administering cardiac, respiratory and neurological medications! Mistakes can be and have been devastating!

Lastly, I do not believe that 1-2 persons are adequate staffing for my son and others like him. This is already documented in one case of 2 residents recently moved from Murray to a group home who got into an altercation that resulted in a

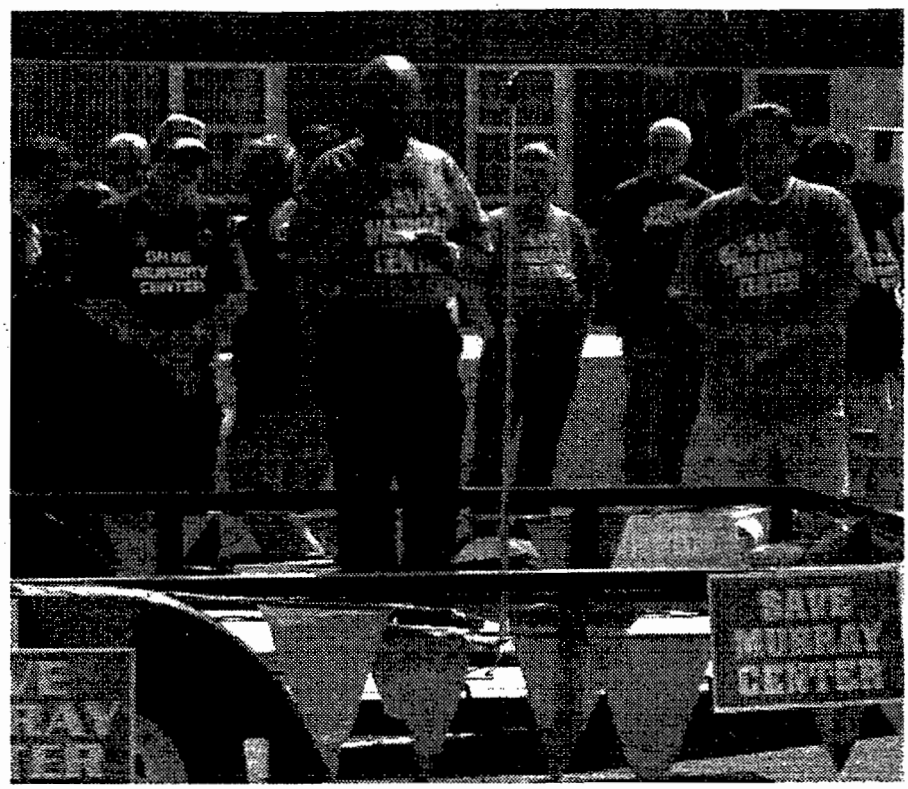
trip to the hospital for one of them. There was one young lady caring for these two men and she was unable to keep them safe or herself for that matter! ONE STAFF AT NIGHT IS UNACCEPTABLE AND UNSAFE WITHOUT A DOUBT! This is how they are operated. I have had this confirmed to me by friends who operate group homes of 15 or more beds.

Your honor, in closing I would like to say this. I think it is laudable that we want full inclusion in the community but here is my concern. For years ,Illinois has ranked as 49th in the care they give to our special citizens! They have done very little to improve their lives or to close the SODC's. Does It seem coincidental to you that when the state is on the verge of bankruptcy that all of a sudden IDHS ,at the request of the Governor, hires an out of state firm to expedite the closures of two SODC's? Why was Murray one of the first chosen to close ,when it has overwhelming Guardian support and an active Parent group that demands excellent care for the clients, when another SODC has been under the threat of decertification and may be at this very moment? I have asked this question of several people and have never been given an answer! It just does not make sense!

Your Honor, I beg of you to help me and my fellow Guardians protect our loved ones! Demand accountability from IDHS! I could speak to you for hours of all my concerns and events that have harmed people with special needs but I fear I have used too much of your valuable time now! Thank you for listening to me and considering my concerns as you make decisions that will have lasting and serious implications for those who are not able to advocate for themselves! In summary, I simply believe strongly that the state is putting the cart before the horse! Let's do the preparation work that is needed before we put special citizens very much in harm's way!

Sincerely,

Gary and Barbara Allen
( Parents and Guardian of Gary Allen Jr.)
barkay@hotmail.com




Reverend Donald Jones

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Ka

This is my son Judge Aspen. He has a lot of trouble with his speech but he insisted on "saying his piece" at a rally to help save his home. He did the best he could. Barb Allen

Murray Center residents speak out,

Murray center letter

Honorable Judge Aspen,

As a life long friend of Barb and Gary Allen I feel I must write and ask that you stop the closing of Murray Center. To close it would unjustly put Gary Jr. at risk, but more importantly it would be unfair to turn his life upside down. He has had enough to cope with his whole life as have his parents and siblings. He is loved and missed at home but for his safety they found a place perfect for him. He is happy there, is treated well and thrives. He is part of a community that accepts and cares for him. He will never be able to live the life that most parents dream of for their child due to his mental ability BUT he has a very good life, a safe life, and is very well taken care of. That is the life his parents have been able to choose for him and I dont feel it is right that the state of Illinois or anyone should have the right to take that away from Gary or to take the confidence of knowing their son is safe away from Barb & Gary. I know they have been fighting this along with other parents for sometime and that they feel you are listening and that you really care so I Pray that you do your best to help protect the people who need it most and allow the parents the right to have their children in a safe place that they have faith in, not a place they fear . Thank you for listening and PLEASE HELP ATHE MURRAY CENTER AND THOSE WHO RESIDE (and wish to remain) THERE

Ginger Huston

my letter to save my cousins home

My name is Lori Stewart-McDaniel. I have a very dear family member that lives at Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois. On behalf of my entire family, we are strongly against the closure of Murray Center. Although we would love to have Gary closer to home, we are confident that we are not equipped to care for his needs.

As much as we love to have him home, Murray Center is where he considers home. I have had the wonderful opportunity to visit him at his home. I find the staff to be very professional, devoted and loving towards Gary. I have also been lucky enough to have met many of his wonderful friends. These residents at Murray Center have grown up together. For some of them the residents and staff is all that they know and consider family. To move them out of this home could only further devastate these individuals.

I have attended Birthday parties in Centralia when Gary preferred to be with his friends there, but also wanted his family to be present. During these times I realized what a part of the community these individuals already are. I also realized that many of them do have severe behaviors to deal with. I was impressed by how well issues were handled by the staff.

I live in Palmer Illinois and with a busy work schedule, volunteer work as a Girl Scout leader, College, and a family of my own I find it difficult to make the long drive to Centralia. I managed to make the long trip for a rally to support this wonderful cause. I was so overwhelmed by the support that not only this town, but the surrounding towns, have provided. The have definitely accomplished a "Sea of Green". The closure of this facility will not only devastate the residents. It will devastate Centralia and all of the surrounding communities.

I hope before anyone has the opportunity to shut down such a wonderful facility, and take the homes and jobs of so many, that everyone involved takes the opportunity to take a drive through this part of Illinois. I also hope that you take the opportunity to meet the wonderful people involved, the residents and the staff! I urge you to NOT CLOSE MURRAY CENTER!!

July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I would like to express my concern for the proposed closure of Murray Developmental Center. Murray is home to over 200 people that require specialized care, a type of care they would not receive in the proposed plan to move them into CILA homes.

Murray Center is needed: it's home to so many special people, it's a part of the community of Centralia, but most important Murray offers the care and living environment that is required to allow the people that live there to obtain their fullest potential in their life with the medical guidance and professional staff to care for them . This type of care can't be found in a CILA home.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Shelly Seelhoefer

Shelly Seelhoefer
11806 Charlene Rd
Bartelso, IL 62218

July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I have visited Murray center and didn't realize how important this place is for those who require specialized care. Some of the best people work there, they really care about the people who live there. I realize they can find another job but the people that live there just can't find another home. This is the only home they have known or have come to love that offers them a sense of security.

I can't imagine if I didn't have a choice and someone told me I had to leave my home, I would be so upset. Murray center has so many programs that benefit the disabled people that live there along with school programs and experiences. My high school volunteers at Murray by doing activities with the residents.

Murray center is not just a home to the disabled that require a special level of care, it is part of the Community that involves the people that live there. It amazes me what they can achieve by living here. If something special is required, they have someone right there to help.

Murray center also has more severely disabled people that require more care, but it is available twenty-four hours a day. Murray is needed, it allows the disabled people living there to be the best they can be, they all deserve that chance along with the care.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Nolan Seelhoefer

Nolan Seelhoefer
11806 Charlene Rd
Bartelso, IL 62218

July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

Murray is home, a home to over 200 disabled people that rely on it for their twenty-four hour care. It is not just a place to live, it has so much to offer. The residents and staff participate in different activities throughout the year.

Murray serves a wide range of people, from higher level to some of the most severely disabled. Please keep Murray center open for the people that live there, they rely on it for their care. It has been home to so many and that is all they have ever known.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely, Nic Seelhoefer

Nic Seelhoefer
11806 Charlene Rd
Bartelso, IL 62218

July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am writing today to express my concern for the proposed closure of Murray Developmental Center. Murray is home to over 200 people that require specialized care and the Governor's plan to move these people into CILA homes is not the right or humane choice.

The Governor never took the time to even visit Murray Center when he had ample opportunities. He knows it is wrong but can't face the people that live there or their guardians.

Murray Center needs to remain open, it is home to so many that have been there for years. The people that live there and call it home have already had to suffer the consequences of not having a normal life, please don't let them take the one true place and people they rely on away, it is all some of them have!!

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Kurt Seelhoefer

Kurt Seelhoefer
11806 Charlene Rd
Bartelso, IL 62218

Gmail

# Letter for Judge Aspen.

**Mary Ann Brand** <granny-67@hotmail.com> Wed, Jul 24, 2013 at 10:09 AM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Rita: I am sending this letter to you for Judge Aspen.

Honorable Judge Aspen: My name is Mary Ann Brand, my daughter, Dana VanMeter, resides at Murray Center. Murray Center has been her home for the past 29 years. Dana was placed at Bowen Center in Harrisburg, IL on the advise of several of her Doctors. When Bowen Center was re-designed, I was told I had no choice except to place her in a State Mental Facility. Since I could not handle her at home, this is what I did. While at that State Facility she suffered a beating, 4 of her front teeth were knocked out and as a result she started having seizures, which she still has to this day. Finally, after my threats (I had learned a lot at that time about laws), we had a meeting at this facility and I was finally allowed to follow my instincts and was allowed to move Dana to Murray Center. While she has been at Murray Center, she has thrived. She is loved, comfortable, taught what she can be taught as a mental age of 15 months. She has had several hospitalizations while at Murray; however, she is always very well taken care of and I am kept well informed about her progress. She is happy, content, and is learning at Murray Center. My husband & I are very, very happy with her care at Murray Center. Murray Center is not only a center for developmental disabled, it is a HOME to all of these residents. The staff at Murray loves Dana and she knows it. When we visit her, the staff tells her mom & dad are here and we can hear her yell all the way down the hall as she is excited to know we are coming to see her. The staff is always interacting with the residents and a person can feel the love & compassion for the residents when you walk thru the door. Thank you for reading this letter and if you have any questions, my phone # is 417-592-0033. I can't travel for the Court Hearing, however, I appreciate your time in reading this and the time you are taking in studying this case. I think you will find that the residents at Murray are right where they need to be, for their own health, safety, and education. In sincere appreciation, Mary Ann Brand.

July 22, 2013

Rita Dinkeler
PO Box 222
Bartelso, Ill 62218

I think of Murray Center should stay open. It is a part of community & these residents need this home.

Brenda Miller

128 Old Hwy 50
Xenia, Ill 62899

July 22, 2013

Rita,

I think this Murray Center should stay open. The people need this.

Kevin Wells
130 Old Highway 50
Xenia, IL 62899

Dear Judge Aspen

SHAWN –39—STUCK ON 2
WHY HE NEEDS MURRAY CENTER

1. Behaviorally Unpredictable:
   Shawn can be quietly sitting on the floor looking at a magazine one minute and the next throwing that magazine across the room and anything else he can get his hands on. He's so fast!! If there is nothing left to throw, he slaps himself along side his head and sometimes faints. All of this before anyone can get up to stop him. Stopping him is not an easy task. He's super strong when agitated.
2. Emotionally Unbalanced:
   Shawn will laugh and cry at the same time. He does not know how to express himself. When he was younger and going to his neurologist in St. Louis for Epilepsy, we were told that such behavior is a form of seizure activity also.
3. Communication Disorder:
   Shawn does NOT TALK. He has a profound range of Receptive and Expressive Language disability. He has no concept of right or wrong and thus would not be Able to tell anyone is something or someone is troubling him.
4. Shawn has no awareness of danger and does not know what to do in an emergency. He has no concept of hot or cold. As a small child he touched a hot electric burner but did not cry. One time his finger was smashed between a door, he did not cry. However if a stranger walked in the room or someone sneezed or moved a chair he would laugh/cry and become emotionally upset and agitated.
5. Leukopenia:
   Shawn was always sick when he lived at home. He went to special education classes at the age of 3. The classes were in a public school ten miles from home, so he was transported by a school bus with many other children. All the travel and school stress was overwhelming him. Besides constantly being ill, he developed a seizure disorder and began taking seizure medication.
6. Toilet Disabilities:
   Constant training never achieved success. Many tests were done. We were told that his digestive and bowel tracks were so hyperactive that the x-ray machines had a hard time keeping up. The doctors said he probably was not physically aware of the necessity to use a bathroom. He has constant bowel seepage and wears a depend all the time. He has always and currently performs fecal digging and smearing. Many times we were called to get him off the bus or from school because of the fecal mess on his hands. That is not acceptable behavior in the community!! We've been there and done that!!!
7. Sleep Disorder:
   Because of Shawn's hyper-activity , he does not sleep much. Ten minutes can last him for days. He does not like to lay down and most of the time dozes off sitting up Indian style and falls forward.
8. Medical Care:
   Doctors and Dentists in the community do not want behaviorally unpredictable patients. They do not like their expensive offices demolished and their staff are not qualified to handle my son. We have been there and done that too!!!!!

Shawn lived with us for 13 years. The trials of community acceptance, services, and daily needs were overbearing. There was no peace. Every moment was tense and on guard. His behavior destroyed most of our furniture and our sanity. Shawn needed more care than we could provide. After several tours of community homes and Murray Center we decided that Murray Center was the best place for our son. Shawn entered Murray Center in June of 1985. Through the dedicated, trained, and caring staff, Shawn adapted to life there. He has calmed down somewhat and has been able to discontinue his seizure medication because of the structured routine lifestyle there. He's still very unpredictable!!! Shawn lives in Daisy Cottage. About a year or so ago Murray Center moved Shawn and his M.C. brothers to Berry Cottage. When we would visit we could see the unhappiness and fright in his eyes. He was very nervous and short tempered. About six months later, Murray Center moved the "Daisy boys" back to Daisy Cottage. The next visit we could see the change back to the old Shawn. His eyes were brighter and he was calmer and much happier. He was home again!!!! If just that change from cottage to cottage affected him so negatively, we do not want to see him move to other unsatisfactory housing. Community homes are fantastic for some but not for Shawn!!!! He requires structure, continuity, and close supervision, which Murray Center provides!! A move from Murray Center could possibly be life threatening to Shawn. Please, Please do NOT evict our son from his home. Life for Shawn and us, as parents, is devastating enough.

Loving parents
Joe & Margaret Winkeler
570 South 4th. St.
Breese, Il. 62230
618-526-4598

Joe + Margaret Winkeler

To Whom it may Concern:

I am writing this letter, hoping and praying that Murray Center will get to stay open.

It's the only home that the residents know. To move them wouldn't be a good thing for them. They are getting good care there, and the CNA's are really caring, as some of them can't walk or talk. (residents)

It would really hurt the economy. As alot of jobs have been lost, in other closings. The workers there, have families, care and a home. It would be terrible for them to lose their jobs.

Please don't let these residents be put in group homes. They won't get Quality care there, as they do at Murray Center.

I have two daughters that work there, and I'd hate to see them lose every thing that they worked so hard for.

Sincerely,
Dorothy Williams

July 22 2013

To HONORable Judge Aspen

This closing of Murray Center will Hurt CENTRALIA Big Time it is so important To keep it open There are Lot's of FAmily's who depend on it For A living. One more Business closing in CentrALIA will Hurt. THANK you for your Support.

Bill & VALinda PRATT

Honorable Judge Aspen:

I beseech you would grant the permanent injunction to keep Murray Center open and operating for the well-being, safety and health of the individuals who call Murray Center home. I am in fear and dread of Governor Pat Quinn's closure plans which appear to lack any logical strategy. People's lives are being placed in jeopardy by Governor Quinn's short sighted approach. Murray Center is a much needed "safety net" to protect individuals with physical/mental disabilities.

I have been employed at Murray Center going on 22 years. I have seen many Murray Center's individuals grow up and grow old. I am quite aware of the care and needs our individuals deserve, and I do not believe such care would be given outside of Murray Center. The staff is well trained and receive constant upgrade in training to meet the needs and care of the individuals. This training and familiarity is what make the staff vigilant to the individuals' physical, medical and psychological needs.

From when I first received training 22 years ago to be a Mental Health Tech, it was stressed that it was our purpose to help each individual to reach toward his/or her potential. For some this meant getting to the level to even leave Murray Center. Some have, but for most they will need the constant care Murray Center has and will always offer to enrich the individual's life. CILA homes pick and choose the individuals they will accept. But if an individual's needs and care is not in their ability or desire to render, CILA homes have relied on the abilities of facilities like Murray Center to accept these individuals. Murray Center has always stepped up and met the needs and care of any individuals who came to us to live.

Also, when it comes to the physical needs of our individuals, the dietary needs and requirements have to be considered. It is my concern, as one who has been in the Dietary Department for the past 9 years, if the dietary needs of our individuals will be met outside of Murray Center. Murray Center meets these dietary needs according to the dining ability of the individuals. The food preparation ranges from regular diets, to chop diets, to ground mash diets and pureed diets. Some have calories limits and some have diabetic diets. Food preferences and dislikes are considered and food allergies are made aware of. Even how some medications will react to certain foods. All of these variables are factored into the daily meals. Will these requirements be met or ignored in CILA homes?

Once again, I will say that Murray Center is a much needed "safety net". The fear I have is if Murray Center is closed, in the end, our individuals will be "warehoused" into low income nursing homes where their well-being, safety and health will be placed in danger. Instead of a life which is enriched, it will become just a life of endurance. Illinois is best served with Murray Center being that refuge and a home to those who need the care they deserve. My hope is, Your Honor, you will see this truth and render the permanent injunction. The Illinois citizens who live at Murray Center and their family and friends will be appreciated.

Humbly Submitted,

Brian M. Aldrich
411 N. James Ave.
P.O. Box 283
Centralia, IL 62801

*The Honorable Judge Aspen:*

*My name is Susan Aldrich and I have lived in Centralia all my life. For the past 17 years I have been employed at Murray Center. For 10 years I was a Mental Health Technician , for 6 years I was a Support Service Worker in Cottage Dietary and now I am in clothing/laundry. So I have cared for the individuals at Murray Center in many ways. In doing this I feel honored and privileged. In having cared for the individuals in so many ways I have a great concern that these needs will not be met if the are moved out of Murray Center.*

*These individuals are like family. I care for them the way I would want my family to be cared for. I am a very family orientated person so I take my job serious when it comes to taking care of these individuals.*

*As a youth my father farmed the land that Murray Center sits on now. Then my father helped build Murray Center. Now my brother and I both work there. That is what I call a 'Family Thing' and that is why Murray Center means a lot to me and my family.*

*I have made many friends over the years and I treasure these friendships. We are a FAMILY at Murray Center in many ways.*

*Murray Center is Centralia. You cannot think of Centralia without thinking of Murray Center. Murray Center is home to so many fabulous people. Their families have become our families over the years. We won't stop fighting to SAVE THEIR HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

*Sincerely,*
*Susan K. Aldrich*

To Whom it may Concern:

I would like to voice my concerns about Murray Center. The individuals that live here think of this as their homes. Even if they cannot talk their body language tells it all. Some have begged to stay here. If anyone from Springfield or Chicago would come here to see first how it is. Mr. Quinn needs to come for one visit. They are very happy here and the staff thinks and treats them as their own. I look at it like this, I can find another job but they only have one place they call home and its Murray Center.

Diana Rainey
Staff

July 2013

Judge Stephens:

I am writing you today because you have a very important decision to make in the lives of 200+ people who happen to live at Murray Center. These individuals are just depending on you to make sure that their lives remain safe. They currently live in a loving and caring environment with people who have cared for them for many years. These are the people they trust, these are their family.

We have all heard and read in the newspaper about what has happened to others in a facility where they were loaded up in buses and shipped away. I would not like to be responsible for such a thing. I would not be able to sleep at night. Some of those people are not accounted for.

This facility is a place where safety and love are cornerstones in our beliefs. We provide a special service to the individuals we serve. It would be a shame to see that end.

Thanks for your consideration

Christy L Adams LVN

July 24, 2013

To Judge Aspen,

Warren G. Murray Developemental Center, needs to remain open because the individuals that reside there deserve to continue getting the remarkable care that they are provided on a daily basis, plus they are like family to ~~them~~ us and we are like family to them.

The individuals can't express how they feel but most of them have been here for many years with the same staff who knows when they need something or need medical care. It's not fair to remove them from their home and put them some where unknown, when they are well taken care of here @ WGMDC.

Thank you,

Felicia Tally-Gillespie

The Greater Centralia
ILLINOIS
Chamber of Commerce
& Tourism Office

7/ 22/ 2013

Re: Closing Murray Developmental Center

Dear Judge,

On behalf of the Greater Centralia Chamber of Commerce and its 350 members we urge you to allow for the continuation of the compassionate care for our citizens who currently reside at Murray Center. I have personally been involved with Murray Center for many years and know many who work there including a staff pharmacist. These residents will never receive the necessary care required at a CILA. Their lives will be literally be put in jeopardy and I believe in many cases result in unnecessary and premature death.

These residents are our friends; we see many of them at our fairs and festivals throughout the year. The parents and guardians of these residents want their loved ones cared for at Murray rather than an involuntary confinement the Governor would have people believe is the case.

The reality is many of the residents at Murray will die if placed in CILA's. Many states that have closed similar facilities are now deciding that was a mistake and reopening a facility to care for such residents as ours at Murray. Murray should not only remain open it should be expanded to house residents from other less functional state run centers.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Kelsheimer
Executive Director

*130 South Locust, Centralia, Illinois 62801 Office 618.532.6789 Fax 618.533.7305*
*Time & Temperature 618.532.6795*

July 19,2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Murray Center is part of the Centralia community in many ways. Murray Center enables people to help not only the families that live at the center but also the employees working there.

For the families that live there, Murray Center has become a safe haven for the people.

For example: Client A has moved from Howell to Lincoln and ended up at Murray Center. They have had many problems adjusting to the moves they have made and were treated very badly by some of the people they have come in contact with.

Client B: came from the community and they were treated badly by their own family. Client B has finally been able to live a calm life without people touching them inappropriately or causing them bodily harm. Client B has found Murray Center to be a safe haven. For people that cannot defend themselves Murray Center has provided a calm, homey environment that is safe and free of harm.

Client C: came to Murray Center from a community setting. Client C did not like showering and Murray Center employees had a very hard time getting them to trust that he was not going to be hurt or miss treated in the shower. It took a team of people to work with client C to get him into the shower. However, Murray Center employees were able to work with them and they were able to build their trust and now Client C will go into the shower and remain calm in the shower more than when he first came. His trust may never be full restored, however Murray Center has become a safe haven for Client C.

Client D: came from other state facilities and has also been treated very badly.

Client D: is getting ready to transition out into the community. A transitional meeting

was held in order to inform the new providers of what client D likes and dislikes and of the foods they like to eat as well as the activities that they enjoy doing.

When client D went for the first visit to this "new home", nothing that was discussed in the meeting was in the home. There was nothing that client D could interact with such as the blocks they enjoy or the rocking chair that they enjoy sitting in. There was food on the counter but client D was not allowed to have any because the food belonged to someone else. Client D did not understand why they could not have a few cookies. From the perspective of a Murray Center employee client D was not made welcome into this new home nor did client D want to stay. When they went out to look at the back yard, which had a big cornfield at the property line. Client D looked at the back yard then walked straight to the car which was in front of the house. Client D found nothing to hold their interest in this "new home."

When client D was shown their "new bedroom" there was no bed or dresser that was theirs. The room was empty with bare walls.

Murray Center has provided a safe haven for the people that society does not want. It has provided jobs, learning and safety for people in all areas of the Centralia community.

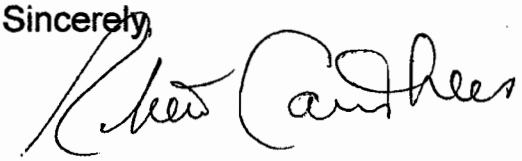
To close a facility that has provided so much to one community is unfair to the people that cannot speak for them selves. It is also unfair to the community that has declined as far as employment standards. Many companies have moved south and we have not been able to get others to move in to replace them. Murray has become home to many people that society viewed as problems and unlovable. Many of the people living at Murray were also court ordered to be placed there because of their problems that society could not deal with or help with. When Howell, Jacksonville or Lincoln closed, the state was not concerned about placing the people in a group home at that time. That is why they were placed at Murray Center. Now that money has become available to support these people, which it has always been available, the greed of

politicians has come running out of the woodwork.

Sir or Madame, it would be in the best interest of all parties to keep Murray Center open. This facility, is 200 hundred miles outside of Chicago and 100 miles from Springfield. We matter to the people that live and work there, we matter to the relatives of the people that live there and to the community that we are supporting. We matter because our lives are intertwined with the people that cannot speak for themselves and that are not able to advocate for their loved ones. Many of the families have kept their loved ones at home for as long as they possibly could and the guilt that has come with placing them in Murray Center has been a huge burden for them. Until they realize the care and love they have received there.

Murray Center should not be closed because it has offered love, support and kinship to all that have come in contact with its caring employees.

Sincerely,



July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

Please allow Murray Center to stay open! The specialized medical care and experienced staff allow Murray to be one of the top SODC's in the State of Illinois. It amazes me how or why the Governor chose Murray to close when it has proved to be above and beyond other facilities.

What is more upsetting is that the Governor never even took the time or opportunity to see how Murray operates, who it serves and why it is needed so very much!!

Murray is a home, not just a facility. It offers so many opportunities for the people living there to live to their fullest potential. Not only the opportunities but the level of experienced care can't be beat.

While the state is in a financial crisis, it is understandable that cuts need to be made, but those cuts need to be placed on the frivolous spending. Murray should not be closed, it is needed for those people that call it home, they depend on it along with their parents or guardians and they all deserve that. The type of care that Murray offers can't be replaced.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Dolores Gerdes

Dolores Gerdes
605 North St
Bartelso, IL 62218

July 23, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen,

The specialized medical care and experienced staff that Murray offers makes it one of the top SODC's in the State of Illinois. Then why would the Governor choose Murray to close when it has proved to be above and beyond other facilities? So frustrating for those that live there, parents and guardians and the employees.

Murray is a part of the Centralia community along with the people that live there and have lived there for years! It is all most of them know and come to trust. Living at Murray allows them to remain active, and also live to their fullest potential with some of the best care around. Please don't let Murray close, it is needed for the level of care and to keep a home to more than 200 severely disabled people that rely on it!!

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Dolores Seelhoefer

Dolores Seelhoefer
407 S. Clinton
Bartelso, IL 62218

**Dear Judge Aspen:** **July 30, 2013**

**Our heavenly father sits on high in his heavenly kingdom, but he looks down low on earth. He looks on the earth to observe those who he has set up in position of authority, power, and prestige to see how that voice and action can make a difference, especially in the lives of those who are less fortunate than others.**

**The question God presents is: who would go for me, and who shall I send? Well, Isaiah, the Old Testament patriot and prophet of God, responded by saying, Send me (Isaiah 6:8). Who would go and speak for those who are less fortunate than we are, especially the residents of Murray Developmental Center. God is saying would you, Judge Aspen, stands in my place and fills the gap until I come. Help the residents. Give them compassion like I have given you thru the years, demonstrate the mercy and grace in which I have so kindly lavish on you. I did so, because, I love you, said the Lord our God. Stand for those who cannot help themselves. Stand for those who cannot defend themselves. Stand for those who do not have a voice to speak on their own behalf.**

**Our sons and daughters didn't ask to be born with special needs. If we could read their minds, they would be delighted to experience their own independence. Who can tap into their desires, their hopes and dreams and silent cries? The quiet tears that only God sees and ears.**

**Murray Developmental Center provides protection, shelter, care, and good nutrition. The working staff is attentive to the needs of the residents.**

**My son has been at Murray Center for many years and he loves it there. Knowing that he is safe from those who would pray on the helpless gives parents like me peace of mind.**

**The parents at Murray Center look to you, while you look to God. We pray that you say 'YES' to keep Murray Center open for good.**

**One day we will leave this earth; and the question, would not only be what we did in the name of Jesus. The question will also be what we did**

**for those who could not defend themselves. Those who where born less fortunate than ourselves.**

**We hope when that great day comes, we will hear our Lord God almighty say; Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make you ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord. (Matthew 25:21).**

**Sincerely,**

Doris Richardson

**Doris Richardson**

7/28/13

Dear Judge Aspen,

This is very important to me & my family about keeping Murray Centre open, as my Daughter, & Sister & Brother to Dawn has been through so much trouble from being put in those small 8 & 16 homes for over 10 years. Over medication & abuse as the people in charge was not trained to take care of them & stop the abuse.

Dawn was home with her family for 22 years, no problems. We took her every where & she went, she worked in the School Cafeteria in

her Jr year of High School & Senior year she worked at the Nursing Home in the Laundry Dept. then after graduation went to a work shop everyday Then at 22 she developed Schizphrania & started hitting at me & Her Dad. so the Police reported it to the State & not long after that some woman came & said Dawn was to be put in a Home. Well that went great as it was a New Home had & The people Ran it for 5 years & all the Children were happy, then it got to much for them & they sold it to 3 men that was in there for the money &

It was awfull, no body was on proper meds. We had her in Hospitals & they could not seem to find any thing that would help, then put in other home & then Hospitals & fenally the state decided to put her in "Choats" in Anna, Ill, for 6 months to get her Balanced on Meds. then we could take her back home, Well the Date we had to go & pick her up she was in Hospital with NEUROLEPTIC MALIGNENT SYNDROME & I took my Husband & I from May to Decembers to get her limbs back working, alot of Therapy & Dec 1997

We brought her Home for 5 years then the "Schizophrenia" came back & we managed with help from the State to get her into "Murray Centre" & she has been there 12 years & enjoys it there, she is very friendly with the help & girls in her Cottage

So am I asking after 12 years & she calls it her home & friends they keep her Balanced on her Meds so. Please think strongley on keeping it open for all of the People who live there & work there as they all need it for sure Yours Truly Parents & Guardians

Mr & Mrs Faure Parents of Dawn
who we love dearly & would hate to see her moved.

July 28, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

My name is Mildred Stephen and my son Steven Newkirk lives at Murray Development Center in Centralia IL where he receives 24 hour care.

Steve cannot communicate his needs. He had seizures when he was 3 months old and cannot talk, walk or bathe himself and has no control with his body. At Murray Center he has 24 hour care and it is a safe place for Steve and others who cannot take care of there self.

I'm 81 years old
Steven will be 55 years old Sept 6, 2013
I pray for Murray Center to stay open for our love ones

Sincerely
Mildred Stephen

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

Murray Center is home to some of Illinois' most fragile individuals. The services provided at Murray Center cannot be duplicated in the community. Murray Center is in a very rural area. Services that the disabled would have access to in an urban area are not available for our loved ones in the community. The medical and psychiatric care available on the Murray campus frequently mean the difference between life and death for our residents. As a mother of a severely disabled resident who lives at Murray Center, and the guardian of my brother who lives in the community I am well aware of what each can offer. As my son needs round the clock nursing care and constant supervision I know these things will not be available in the community. My brother, who is high functioning, is able to live happily in the community, but finding psychiatric care and dental care for him continues to be a struggle. The nearest psychiatric care for him is an hour away, and dental care is nonexistent. Recently he needed two wisdom teeth removed and we contacted over 12 dentists before we finally found one who would do the surgery, but only if we paid for these services upfront. Dental care for my son Mark will likely not be available in the community because his needs are much more involved, and few dentists will have the knowledge and expertise of how to care for someone with his disabilities.

Another grave concern for me is the lack of oversight and inspections of community based homes. Murray Center is inspected and reviewed a minimum of five times a year by both federal and state agencies. Community based homes are inspected at most every three years, and often these are paper inspections only...no one looks inside the home to see the conditions. These infrequent inspections do not provide adequate oversight to ensure the disabled are receiving the quality, consistent care they need.

Murray Center is HOME to over 250 people. The residents of Murray have always been part of the community of Centralia, participating in all facets of community life...attending church, concerts, going to baseball games, eating out at various restaurants and shopping at local stores. The center provides the safety and structure the residents need, as well as allowing them to participate fully in the community.

Murray Center is a treasure. Replacing these services and the love and care the staff provide will be impossible in the community. Nothing will be gained by closing the center, but much will be lost if the Center closes. It is a necessary and vital service for the disabled in Southern Illinois.

Sincerely,

Rita Winkeler

Rita Winkeler
618-210-9678

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Steven Graham and the closing of Murray

1 message

**Robert Penrod** < robertdpenrod@gmail.com> Fri, Aug 2, 2013 at 8:29 AM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

Rita, Please forward my comments on to Judge Aspen.

Dear Judge Aspen,

My nephew, Steven Graham is a resident of Murray Center. He is in his mid forties, and has the mental capacity of a person a few months old. He has cerebral palsy, almost no verbal skills, and is completely dependent in all areas of his life. Murray is his home, and he has been cared for by people who can only be described as "called" to this profession. They are skilled, and compassionate care givers, to the most needy of our society. The very thought of this center being closed by the state is frightening in it's scope. For any government, that provides food stamps, welfare to the healthy unemployed, housing, medical care, and other benefits adfinitum, to consider closing an institution, that is indeed absolutely necessary to these citizens of the state of Illinois, is deplorable. The fact that this is even being considered is proof of how the soul of our country has been corrupted. These few, residents of Murray center, are the "least amoung us"....and cannot survive without our help. Please rule in favor of keeping the center open. Thank you.

Robert D Penrod (Steven Grahams uncle, and gardian in the event of my sisters death)

July 17, 2013

To the attention of the Honorable Judge Aspen

Dear Judge Aspen:

I have been reading with intense interest the Illinois Legislature's attempts to close facilities that care for our most vulnerable citizens. My nephew, who is profoundly mentally and physically disabled, is currently housed at the Murray Center. He is but one of hundreds of individuals being humanely treated at such facilities. Murray Center, among other centers in the State of Illinois, is a facility that is slated for closure. All one has to do is look at the history of such closings. Not too many years ago, it was thought that closing mental health care facilities was for the good of the patients and their communities. Good for whom?? The result of that nonsensical thinking was mentally ill individuals unable to care for themselves or find employment, ultimately ended up homeless. Their lives were far worse after such closings. I am employed at a local homeless shelter as a case manager for the chronically homeless. Aside for the fact that some of my clients are physically disabled, most have some form of mental illness.

I am fairly confident that the Illinois Legislature would like us to believe that some type of security system/over-site would be put in place. Again, all one has to do is look at the understaffed Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and nursing homes to realize it would be virtually impossible to provide enough inspectors to guarantee the safety and humane treatment of patients moved to small private settings. In my humble opinion, it is far more reasonable and realistic to observe the care of helpless patients in larger secure settings, as opposed to hundreds of small home based situations.

I implore the Illinois lawmakers to rethink their decision to close such facilities as Murray. If history is to be our guide, the State of Illinois needs to resolve these issues in favor of those who do not have a voice.

Thank you Judge Aspen for your time and thoughtful consideration of my letter in support of the profoundly disabled.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. Roberta Stengler
1103 S. 4th Street
St Charles, IL 60174
630/584-0710

July 30, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

On behalf of my son I am writing to keep Murray Center Open!!

I kept him with me for twenty years, as I grew older + he grew bigger especially + older, his care was extensive in my mind.

I talked to his doctor whom had cared for Steven + had diagnosed his problem @ the age of 8 months old.

He recommended only Murray Center. I + my visited unexpected + toured the facility. I was well pleased with the care + love given to each child!

my son has been there over 2 yrs. He gets excellent care + he is happy. The children are loved + well cared for every day. I do not worry that Steven is not safe or not well cared for. He is! I can call any day or night + talk to staff regarding my son.

I have never wanted Steve to be anywhere else. He is loved, cared for + his needs are met.

Please allow Murray to stay open. I ask for all the children's sake as well as my son.

Sincerely
Sophia Graham

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Judge Aspen

3 messages

**Margie Holtgrave** < cows26@outlook.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 10:17 PM
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Judge Aspen
I have worked with the developmentally disabled adults in a private setting. We know our limitations and some medical and behavioral issues are not doable in the community or in a private setting. In the past I know several of our residents were sent to Murray Center for because we could not handle them. Behaviors needed higher level of trained staff.

Illinois need both state and private settings, those state settings needs to be located not only in northern Illinois. Keep Murray Center open A good facility in the Mid/Southern region of Illinois. Murray Center has gotten great ratings and reviews from surveys and provides great service to the residents as well as the community in our area.

Martin Holtgrave

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Letter to Judge Aspen

2 messages

**Derek Scott** < kjcaea7777@gmail.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 2:30 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

My sister is a resident at Murray Center. She is 34 years old, and has lived there for almost half her life. I wish you could see her eye to eye. She has a beautiful smile, and claps her hands when she is happy. When she's sad she cries. She has friends and favorite foods. She loves to go for car rides around the community and loves going to work there as well. She enjoys the workers at the Murray center, and they enjoy her back.

I said all that to just say this. Please keep the Murray Center open. Many of the residents call it home. Home is not just a roof over your head. I think of all the emotions that tie into the word home. My sister is mentally disabled, yes. That doesn't mean that she does not have those same emotions about home. The Murray Center is her home. Please keep it open.

God bless,
Susan

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

# KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN

2 messages

**Paolino, Cindy** < cindy.paolino@medtronic.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 3:21 PM
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Rita,

Please ask the judge to keep Murray Center open--

My wifes brother Richard Lewkowski is a resident and has been since childhood----the center is his home! The community is his home!
He has known no other home or community and we as a family feel it is extremely dangerous to transfer him now as an adult. He is severely retarded. We are frightened to think what would happen if he was moved-- The community and Murray center do not see his mental retardation as something negative -they love and care for him because he is a person. We must preserve those communities in this country that are able to do this!

Please don't let them dehumanize Richard or the loving community by closing the Murray Center-
Please speak for those who can not---do not just randomly close facilities that are working so positively for residents and the community!!

Thank You,

Jim Paolino

July 19, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

Murray Center has been a part of the Centralia, Illinois community since it was built some 50 years ago. The residents are considered part of the community since they get out in the community. They have the right to vote if they are registered. Murray Center has been the only home that a lot of them as ever known. A lot of the residents don't have a family so Murray staff is their family. The staff loves the residents as their own family. When the staff brings their family in for a visit the residents love seeing them and spending time with them. The residents will remember the family member's name and will call them by it. The more mentally challenged enjoy seeing familiar faces and will laugh and smile at them. The more mentally challenged that need special care will not survive in a CILA or group home. They will not get the care they deserve like they get out at Murray. Murray has the nursing staff and technicians that will spend the time to make sure they are cared for. The residents that can't speak for themselves or have some one to speak for them don't have the say so as to whether they want to be moved, or not so staff has speak for them. We have a group of high school students that come out every other Saturday and spends time with the residents such as playing basketball, coloring with them or taking them for walks. The residents enjoy their visits. The ones that are severely mentally challenged enjoy listening to someone read to them. And watch the smiles and laughs that they get back. They will not get this attention in group homes. The residents go on van or bus trips to see the important places in the community and the surrounding communities. They also to shopping, out to eat in restaurants, to the show and fishing. They enjoy all these things. If any individual is in a wheelchair and are blind the staff will talk about what is going on and the residents enjoy this. It would be a shame to take them out of a home and place them in another strange place they do not know. You will have major behaviors from this. The staff spend a lot of time with the residents interacting and making sure their needs are met. At Christmas time we have a Volunteer Christmas Program where the residents will have their own volunteer spending time with only them and getting Christmas presents from Santa, which they enjoy. It is a joy to go to work every day and see smiling and laughing residents. There is no other place that the residents can get the love and joy like they do at the home they are at now. I am asking you please to keep Murray Center open for the residents and their home. Murray is not a place to close. I have been out at Murray for 25 years and have watch a lot of the residents grow up. We have many special needs residents that need the staff and their home at Murray. Thank you,

Deborah Opolony

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed closure of Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois. I currently work as a Registered Nurse at Murray Center and my heart aches for the families being put through this misery and web of lies. As a health care professional, I realize the value of peace of mind, health, happiness, and safety. These individuals hold a special place in society, being put at the mercy of those that care and make decisions for them. I, like many other employees, love the individuals as my own. It is all I can do to bear hearing the cries and desperate calls of those being forced to go on group home visits or even just mention the idea of Murray Center closing. I cannot imagine any other place I would wish to start my day but with the ones I love at Murray Center. As a former nursing home employee, I can tell you from first hand experience that the 24/7 care individuals at Murray receive would be a rare occasion in a community setting. A number of individuals at Murray are wheelchair bound and I take pride knowing pressures areas are readily found in the community, but not at Murray. Murray not only provides a loving and stimulating home, but a balanced diet, therapy, nursing care, daily physician rounds for those needing service, a safe environment and a list that could go on and on. I do not want you to be confused though, thinking that as an employee of Murray I think we're the best foot for all because that is not the case. Murray is a home to those who need stabilization care, have been attempted in community placement but failed, or need the constant care for the severe behavioral and medically fragile individuals. Murray employs strive to help individuals gain independence for successful community living, but like it has been said before, one size does not fit all. I urge you to consider the facts, and deeply examine what Murray has to offer. Seeing how far some individuals have come and the trust they have now gained after former group home experiences and/or abuse is not something that should be take lightly. Many lives and families fate is in your hands. No matter the outcome though, I am proud to say, "I am a Murray Center employee."

Sincerely,

Alicia Creed, RN

**Murray Center Letter**
1 message

**RANDY GEORGE** < r_george59@yahoo.com> Mon, Jul 22, 2013 at 11:27 AM
Reply-To: RANDY GEORGE <r_george59@yahoo.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

To Honorable Judge Aspen

In reference to the proposed closure of Murrays Center.

Murrays Center is home to some 250 or so people, and most if not all of them call it home. Murrray is a very unique place, it has all the tools in place to keep these people happy and safe. every person who lives here has their own special needs that murray is capable of taking care of. If only you could view each one of these peoples historys you would see that most of them have tried to live at different places in there lives and failed and have eventually made it to Murray Center, this is the place in which they can and do call home. If you could see these people in there everyday lives you would see that most of them go to some type of day training 5 days a week they have different types of outings such as parks or out for dinner or maybe just swimming or fishing. All of these people have some type of special needs and may not be able to go to all of these but here at murray we know which one can go.

As for as the parents are concerned most of them have had there loved ones in different types of homes before they made it to Murray Center. Murray Center seems to be the last stop for most of these people because when the parents see what Murray can and will do for these people the parents feel good about having there loved one live there. Many of these parents come to visit often and feel very comfortable about how there loved one is being cared for.

The state of Illinois has always had the tools in place to try to transition these people out into new homes and that process seemed to be working just fine. Just like anything else is life not all of these people are the same and should not be treated as if they are either. These people have very special needs and only a few will be able to be moved to new homes without creating hardships on them. This was being done by the state before with fairly good results, but by thinking of them as the same and that they must all move is very irresponsible on our part remember most of these people cant make these decisions on there own they require our guidance. Parents and guardians should have the rights to choose what is in the best interest for there loved ones and the state should not be choosing for them. Every parent in this country wants what is best for there children, and by the government taking away these choices they are taking away the parents rights on what is best for there children.

I am sure you have heard of the wonderful things that Kevin Casey has done for 3 or 4 residents that they moved out of jacksonville but you haven't heard of the hardships they bestowed on the

other 170 that they don't mention. If this was the right thing to do we would all be hearing 180 success stories.

thanks for listen to my concerns;

Randy L. George

To Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am the 89 year old Mother, on a walker, of a multi-handicapped 54 year old son. Gregg is the youngest of our four children. My husband is deceased.

Gregg entered Lincoln SODC at the insistence of his medical team at age 4 in 1963 and at age 7 Gregg was transferred to the WG Murray Center in Centralia. Centralia is only a 100 mile round trip from our home, which I have made weekly and many times much more, ever since.

Gregg has cerebral palsy - spastic diplegia, visually impaired, cannot walk, has no receptive and expressive language and short attention span. Gregg uses his wheelchair to ambulate, has some transferability, needs staff to assist him for bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating. Gregg has limited socialization skills, prefers to manipulate a ball of wooden spools that he as tied together with shoestrings.

After Kevin Casey's visit to Murray and the MPA meeting at which he stressed over and over again that the Murray Center would be closed no matter what we did and that our residents would be placed in a two or four bed facility in the community, in which I do not think Gregg could survive, I was offered a placement in a 100 bed ICFDD in my hometown of Swansea. This Specialized Living Center was one of six built at the time I was on the State Board of the ARC. I was instrumental in having it built here. The SLC Board made the offer in appreciation of the many years it took to get it up and running. I met with my children and we finally all agreed since it was only five minutes from my home we would accept their generous offer.

The placement did not work out - even with Murray and KWI workshop making many visits endeavoring to help in any way they could.

By the time Gregg failed - the CRA had moved into Murray, and no none could return, nor any new placement made. I, by the grace of the Good Lord, was then offered an opening at Bryan Manor, another 100 bed ICFDD in Centralia where he is currently a resident, and Gregg could then return to his old workshop KWI - where he has been a happy client since 1987.

I have dedicated my life to the betterment of these residents but my days are numbered also. I firmly believe **"ONE SETTING DOES NOT FIT ALL"**. I have been at Murray since its first administrator and know well - Murray has come a long way!!!! We, the MPA, which I was also instrumental in its inception, are fighting desperately to keep Murray open and operating. Murray is needed in Southern Illinois as a residential center and a resource center for all the community settings.

Murray, highly accredited, newest in the state, with its seven 100 bed homes and beautiful133 acre setting, could not be in a better community than Centralia. Without a doubt, the residents are members of the community.

Centralia is Murray and Murray is Centralia!!!!

**I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT MURRAY REMAIN OPEN!!!**

Respectfully Submitted

Anita R. Becherer
6 Westgate Drive 618-593-3722
Swansea, IL 62226 arbpfb@msn.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

My son Mark has been living at Murray Center for 16 years and we call it his HOME. It would be be devastating to him if Murray Center would close and he would be forced to live in a group home that Arc so much loves. I can sleep at night knowing that Mark is being WELL taken care of by a WELL trained staff. All of our son's needs and then some are taken care of. A kitchen staff has asked us if he could take Mark for a walk on his own time and we gave him permission. The excellent staff at Murray Center will always call us if there is something wrong with Mark. I feel that the staff at Murray Center is like family to us. We laugh and cry with them. Our son has the freedom to roam wherever he wants to. Mark is 29 years old and has the mentality of a 9 month old. He can't talk, feed himself, and he wears a diaper. He can only walk and Murray Center gives him this freedom. Please do not deprive him of this. Arc will tell you that a group home is better than Murray Center but guess what. I have a brother in-law that lives at a group home. We visit there every week. The clients there can talk, walk, go to the bathroom by themselves, clean themselves, feed themselves. They do their own laundry, help clean up and they work at the workshop. The only thing that our son can do and that is walk. **In a group home our son could only walk the hall like an animal in a cage.** In Murray he can walk the whole building. My brother in-laws group home has only one staff working and there was an incident that happened when one of the clients just took off all his clothes and took off. We took care of the rest of the clients while he went after this client. If they all wanted to go out for supper and my brother in-law didn't want to go due to his violent behavior guess what...they didn't go. With only one staff on duty what are they to do? The group home has bedrooms that are nice looking but guess what? My son's room is decorated in Cards-Cub theme. We had his room painted and we bought and picked out the color. We picked out the curtains. In other words we did his whole room the way we wanted. You know I could go on forever. I wish I could have my 2 minutes at the hearing but you would only hear me cry for my son and the rest of the children there. I will close for now but I will leave you with these words.

**KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN!!!!**

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THIS WERE YOUR CHILD??????**

Bernard Winkeler
P.O. Box 222, Bartelso, IL 62218 618-765-2436

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I was first introduced to Murray as a volunteer. As a college student at the U or I, I worked there in the summer as a student worker. Although retired now, as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist I strongly advocate for people who are behaviorally or medically challenged to have their leisure needs and desires met. In order to meet this goal, the staff in the activity therapy dept. offer choices in each category. For instance, swimming in the center's pool may improve functional ability by promoting physiological fitness - although enjoyable it is therapeutic to the individual(s); a person may learn how to correctly throw a bowling ball during visits to the local bowling alley (leisure ed) and recreation (enjoyment of participation) occurs in numerous settings such as taking in a movie, going shopping at Wal-Mart or attending a music concert.

Therapy, leisure education, or recreation participation may be offered to the individuals at Murray through a variety of community settings. These include but not limited to (as the individuals often have new ideas for their leisure choices) Kaskaskia College,the local AMC theatre, local bowling alley, local parks, local farms, the Centralia Rec Complex, Centralia High school sports, restaurants, grocery stores, rummage sales, lakes (fishing),orchards, parades, library and museum etc. Additionally our people request to participate in a variety of Special Olympic competitions including snow shoeing, basketball, track & field, bowling etc. I might add that so far no one in Centralia (we are a small community) has seen any of the four individuals living in a CILA at any of these places.

Leisure skills are taught during these therapeutic activities which assists our people to become more independent in their leisure skills. Often programs are planned so the individual can practice newly acquired skills or experience enjoyment. An excellent example of this is going on a bike ride in a nearby neighborhood.....this is AFTER teaching proper braking & safety skills. Another individual has learned to use the computer so that he can read - this is an example of how the speech pathologist provides necessary supports for those who are more medically challenged and yet desire leisure opportunities. Working on etiquette and proper behavioral attitudes are important so they can visit the rec center and fitness center.Community integration does not stop there. Individuals that live at Murray request to attend St. Louis Cardinalgames, Grants Farm, Grizzlie games, Carnivals and circuses. Several of our individuals participated in a local fashion show at the cultural center.

One of Murray's greatest assets is the 20 by 40 in ground heated swimming pool. Therapy, attainment of skills and enjoyment are provided at this pool that has a lift for those who are unable to use the ladder. Again, as our individuals have learned swimming skills and demonstrated acceptable behaviors, they are integrated into the community where they visit the water park in Salem and the Centralia Rec Complex. For those who are more medically involved, the activity staff in conjunction with physical therapy aides bring those who cannot benefit from being in Murray warm therapeutic pool.

**Judge Aspen, I could go on and on. The point I am trying to make is that we have these folks best interests in mind and from a professional stand point, I strongly believe that this facility is needed and should remain open for those who are not ready or cannot survive in a home that does not have these opportunities for education and skill development. I was a part of the interdisciplinary team who recommended placement for those who had attained the goal of living in a different placement.....that is one of the biggest reasons there are fewer people living at Murray now, than several years ago! The staff at Murray are NOT against placing folks but must be done when that person is ready!**

Thank you so much for listening,

Melissa Cavitt, CTRS
27225 W. 4th St. Rd
Centralia, Il. 62801

7-21-13
To Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am petitioning you to keep the Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois open for the residents that call it their HOME!

This is a community –a family—and had been my brother's home for 47 years. I was 14 years old when my brother, at age two was stricken with post infectious encephalitis resulting in severe brain damage. I watched him suffer a fever of 108 for over a week that left him unable to walk or talk. He is also visually impaired and at the age of 53 has an intelligence of about an 11 month old baby.

My brother was hospitalized for 14 months and finally brought home to his other 3 siblings. At age 4 he was given the chance to have a new home at Lincoln. But we were thrilled when the Warren G. Murray Children's Center opened two years later and he could be closer to us in Belleville. My parents made a hard decision to place my brother, but felt it was in his best interest as well as his siblings.

It WAS the best decision! Gregg blossomed under Murray's care. This facility is a community of caring, trained employees who do an unbelievable job. Many of the residents need full time nurses or medical aides at all times. Some can have behaviors that could harm themselves or others. These "least of our brethren" have called Murray their home through a stable environment that the community or foster homes could not possibly offer.

This sanctuary for our loved ones has been their home for over four decades, giving relief and comfort to families who fought their own sorrow and grief. My mother began the first Murray Parent's Association in her living room 40 years ago. She has continued to be an advocate, not just for my brother, but for all the residents at the Murray Center. At age 89, she should not have to worry about his place of living. We as a family agonized over what we should do about the potential Murray closing. Mom was offered a placement five minutes from her home in a 100 bed ICFDD facility. We accepted this offer, but it was not the place for Gregg. By the time we decided this was not the place for my brother, the CRA had moved into Murray and no one could return there. Mom was then offered a placement at Bryan Manor in Centralia which would allow him to return to his workshop at KWI and be in the community he was so used to. It did my heart good to see him greeted by a Mc Donald's worker in Centralia, who also worked at Bryan Manor. You see, the whole town welcomes these residents!

We continue to advocate for Murray, the residents and workers and the community. My mother spends hours on e-mail sending on all the information she can to share with the members of Murray Parent Association. These "forever children" need to be first and foremost on your mind. Not as a money-saving commodity, but as human beings that need you to do the humanitarian thing. ARC is advising the Governor in the wrong direction. And Kevin Casey has no idea what the needs of our Murray residents are. His promises are a joke and if he shares a few success cases with you, make sure you compare them to residents like my brother. The children they advocate community living for are at a much higher developmental level than the residents of Murray. I devoted my life to the education of the children of Illinois with 17 years teaching special children and 17 allowing the integrations of special students to benefit from classes within my regular Grades one and two. This included a blind student. I know very well the differences between students able to handle integration with the normal population and those who are too severe to do so. Do NOT close the Murray Center!

In addition, hundreds of staff and workers would lose their jobs in a town that cannot possibly absorb that kind of loss. These families own homes, shop, send their kids to the local schools, worship and participate in life in the town of Centralia. There is no way for them to sell their homes, get another job and sustain their families. The economy of Southern Illinois is a weak one to say the least. Please consider their lives, as well. They give so much to our loved ones. Don't close the Murray Center!

Another consideration is the financial problems of the State of Illinois. It is interesting to me that so many cuts

**are being proposed when the Governor's budget has actually increased! Murray Center is not a great cost to the state due to federal reimbursements and social security received by the residents. It is actually the only center that makes more money that it costs the state to run.**

**Judge Aspen, I am desperately requesting that you do the humane thing and guarantee these severe and profound residents and their parents and families a premiere place to reside while considering the faltering economy of this area.**

**Thank you,**
**Cynthia A. Evans,MS**
**nanabompa2@aol.com**

My name is Bobbi Gormann. Ive been a registered nurse for 17 years worked at Murray Center on Elm cottage- the most physically disabled residents for 10 years. Ive been blessed to care for 100s of people with disabilaties. I was honored to care for a young man named Lyndall Mcdaniel. These are words from his sisters mouth concerning the care Lyndall recieved once transioned to a higher level of care. " My brother lived at Murray Center for over 22 years. It was not just a place where he lived it was his home where he was surrounded by qualified caregivers who understood his physical disabilities and loved him as if he were their own family. Because his health had deteriorated and the doctors felt it was medically necessary he required "skilled care" he was moved to a Belleville nursing home. He received the worst care ever and was dead within 6 weeks at the young age of 39! My family took shifts throughout each day to make sure he was taken care of , we gave constant verbal and written care instructions to the staff but still we would find him with his face lodged against the bedrails. Daily he was laying in urine and feces soaked sheets and clothing and sometimes choking on his vomit and tube feedings backing into his lungs. He suffered emotionally, was homesick and wasnt physically able to speak to make his needs known to these strangers. He was vunerable and at their mercy and they failed him. Nursing assistants are certified to care for the elderly, they are not qualified or educated to handle the special needs required for the mentally and physically handicapped individuals. Please do what is right for the people who call murray center their home. dont force them to be displaced and suffer any more than they already have, allow them the right to stay in the only home most of them have ever known and receive the love and care provided by the qualified staff. Respectfully Tammy Stollard." For years the State of Illinois has enforced the hightest standard of care for these individuals and now the State wants to displace these people into lesser care facilities... shame on them! Please reconsider closing Murray Center.

Thank you for your consideration, Bobbi Gormann

RN

July 25, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen:

We are writing to request your help to keep Murray Center open. We would like to help you understand the value of this facility to our loved one Wayne and to us as family members overseeing his care. We are greatly concerned about the plan to close this facility in favor of a 2-4 bedroom group home model. We do not believe that comparable care can possibly be provided in this type of setting. On the contrary, we believe that should he be forced into a small group home that not only will his needs not be met, but that he would be at risk for abuse and neglect which could result in a serious medical event or even death. Murray has the policies and procedures in place to ensure his safety and well-being. The facility has the proper oversight as dictated by the ICF/MR standards. Small groups homes do not have this level of oversight.

Wayne is completely dependent on others to care for absolutely every need. The spasticity in his body is so severe that he cannot walk or feed himself. He is fed pureed food and must be positioned correctly to minimize the risk of choking or aspiration. His wheelchair is fabricated on the Center grounds to provide cushioning to meet his particular needs and is always well maintained. He has many medical problems that include recurring respiratory issues, cerebral palsy, severe spastic diplegia, hypercholesterolemia, seborrhea dermatitis, epilepsy, hypothyroidism, hypothermia, acid reflux disease, neurogenic constipation and osteoporosis. He is also visually impaired and has a mild hearing loss. He suffers from profound mental retardation and is unable to express his wants or needs. If he is hurting he must depend on others to interpret his sounds, gestures or physical/vital signs. He is unable to point to an area of his body to tell someone where it hurts. He would not be able to defend himself in an abusive situation or even be able to report what had happened.

Murray has done an amazing job keeping him healthy. Wayne receives 24 hour nursing care and the doctor visits the cottage daily. He also receives physical therapy 5-7 times a week and occupational therapy 3-5 times a week. Wayne must be repositioned every two hours to prevent pressure sores. It takes two staff and lifting equipment to move him. They clearly follow this protocol, as he has never had a bed sore. He is always clean and well kempt when we visit. The nursing staff is very proactive in managing his health. They contact us with even minor injuries or health issues. This provides a great deal of comfort. We have serious doubts as to whether or not this level of care and attention to detail would take place in a small group home. He would be very vulnerable in this type of setting.

Murray staff provide a nurturing environment and really care about the residents. Many have been long-term employees of the Center. This provides consistency for the residents. We have met two generations of caretakers for Wayne. Group home are notorious for having high staff turnover. One very concrete example we can

share with you that demonstrates the level of caring exhibited by Murray staff occurred a few years ago. Wayne was believed to be terminally ill and spent time in hospice. We were informed on one of our visits that Murray staff had recently been there to visit him. We were very touched by this act of kindness and compassion.

Wayne is included in activities both on and off the Murray campus. This includes things like going on shopping trips at various stores, interacting with animals at local farms, going to local parks and lakes as well as nature tours. On campus activities include things such as attending dances, parties, and cookouts. He goes on nature walks, visits with others in the sheltered areas around the campus and utilizes the campus swimming pool. He attends workshop 5 days a week.

Community is not about how many people with which one lives, it is about the people one is surrounded with. The Centralia community has embraced the Murray residents for many years. The residents are welcomed in local establishments. Centralia and the surrounding communities have rallied to save the Center and raised substantial funds to fight this closure. It is a remarkable effort demonstrating the level of support for the residents and the Center. We hope you will take note of this. This is a wonderful center that provides vital services to the most severely disabled and is truly a home for Wayne and others like him.

Please approve our request for a preliminary injunction to keep Murray Center open.

Thank you,

Laurie Stengler, guardian

Gary Stengler, brother

945 Honey Lane,
Crete, IL 60417

7/27/13

Dear Judge Aspen,

I as a mother (guardian) of Jacob House, am writing this letter with great concern with what may happen to my son, and the rest of Murray residents.

Jacob has been moved several times since the age of 18. He has been in several group homes, but since he has been at Murray Center he is very satisfied, and seems to be more contented, and less nervous. He has changed a lot, and for the better. Jacob really likes it at Murray. And the employees really like him, and they are all very concerned about the residents, its not just a pay check for these employees.

Jacob, was in a group home in Decatur, Il. He was sick all the time, They found Jacob down the street several times, and the police would bring him back to the group home.

They pumped Jacob full of drugs, then it got to the point they didn't know what to do with him, so they ask my permission to move him to a ~~home~~ institute in Chicago, where

they gradually weened him off all drugs. Then they sent him to Murray center, so it would be closer And the family could see him more often. He is very happy at Murray. So I'm asking please let him be able to stay there.

So please as a concerned Mother, that loves her child, as all the rest of the parents do I am begging upon please, not to close Murray Center.

Sincerely,
Irma Shuff
Ward House Mother.

The Honarable Judge Aspen
My birthday is coming up soon and what I want most of all is for Murray Center to stay open. I have two cousins who work at Murray Center, but most of all I have a family member who has lived there most of his life. that is his home. When I first found out about Murray Center it brought me to tears. I wondered what would happen to all those residents. I am concerned about their well being. I may be just 10 years old but I understand what it all means. please don't forget the workers. I will pray that you make the right decisions. Follow your heart and hopefully it leads you the right way

Sincerely,
Hallie DuBois

July 27, 2013

Honorable Judge Aspen

Re: Murray Developmental Center closing

Dear Judge Aspen,

This is my sister-in-law, Marsha Mahlandt. Marsha has been diagnosed as moderately retarded with an IQ of 35. She also suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder. She has lived in several facilities since the age of five. She turned sixty this past January. She is generally very sweet natured, but occasionally has emotional and physical outburst due to frustration or confrontation. Marsha attends workshop, Monday thru Friday, which she enjoys immensely, and looks forward to her small "paycheck" on Friday so that she can buy sodas. She does not require a lot of "things" in life, but what she does require is routine and consistency in a safe environment.

Marsha thrives on routine, whether it is when she eats her meals, takes her pills, or goes to bed. She needs things to happen on a regular schedule. It is difficult to bring Marsha home. She is always happy to see us, but then she immediately needs to return "home" (to Murray Center) where she knows the routine and feels comfortable again.

Marsha came to Murray Center several years ago, after an unsuccessful attempt to move her into a group home. In her group home environment, Marsha had more violent outburst, several trips to the hospital where she had to be physically restrained (very unlike anything we have ever seen with Marsha), and finally was told that she could no longer stay there. We are still not sure what went on in this group home, but we believe there were issues with some of the employees, who did not seem to have the qualifications or the education needed to handle this type of client. It truly was a very unsafe environment for Marsha.

That is when Marsha was accepted into Murray Center. What a blessing it has been for all of us, but especially for Marsha. She seems so happy and so much calmer. The staff is wonderful and you can tell they truly care about Marsha and the other clients who call Murray home. It takes a very special type of person to work with handicapped people and we have finally found a caring environment for her with people who care about her as much as her family does. Marsha is an integral part of the Centralia community, as well. She visits Walmart, McDonalds, and other restaurants regularly. It is amazing to see that when we take Marsha out for dinner in Centralia, the waitresses greet her warmly, often times by name, and treat her with loving respect. Centralia has indeed opened their arms and hearts to these very special children.

Marsha has not lived at home for 55 years. Her father is deceased and her mother is 82 years old with failing health. The stress and worry of having to move Marsha once again at her age is too much to bear. Will she cope? Will the new workers understand her needs? Will she be safe? All, very valid questions.

I am begging you to reconsider the plan to close Murray Center. Would you kick your own children out of the only safe home that they knew? I know you wouldn't. These clients cannot help themselves. They cannot fight for what is right. They just want their daily routine. And they deserve to receive it in a safe place surrounded by caring individuals. This happens at Murray Center every day.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter. Again, I beg you to keep Murray Center open for the sake of the families who so depend on this type of quality care, but especially for all of the residents who truly call this wonderful place "home".

Sincerely,

Patti Mahlandt

1220 Willow Creek

Breese, IL 62230

618/526-2103

mahlandt@charter.net

7/22/13

TO The Honerable Judge Aspen,

My name is Phil Adcock. I live on Elm Cottage at Murray Center. I have lived here for 22 years. I have went through a closure at my other home named Styrest Nursing Care in Carbondale from the age of 8 until the year 1991.

I use a communication device to communicate to staff, nurses, & doctors. I also use my eyes to sign yes or no. My reasoning to keep Murray Center open is as follows:

- I need my friends and nursing staff.
- I am scared that if I have to move the staff will not know what I need or how to calm me when I get upset.
- Will they know my schedule or what channels I like to watch.

Please keep my home open!

Thank you,
Phil Adcock

Wrote by staff
for Phil

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

## Judge Aspen letter

1 message

**Doris Florczyk** < dorisflorczyk@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 9:30 PM
Reply-To: Doris Florczyk <dorisflorczyk@yahoo.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Judge Aspen:

I am writing this letter on behalf of our son Donald, who resides at Murray Center in Centralia, IL. He has called Murray Center his home for the last 16 years where he has made much improvement and has thrived ever since.

I would like to briefly describe Donnie's childhood. His diagnosis at 1 year old was that he was severely and profoundly mentally retarded and probably couldn't hear or see. Thankfully time would prove that he could hear and after many doctor visits we would find out that Donnie is legally blind and is indeed profoundly mentally retarded with cerebral palsy. He has had surgeries to try to correct the spastic tendencies in his legs which caused his legs to "scissor". That has helped and has made it more comfortable for him, but unfortunately not enough for him to be able to walk and remains quadriplegic. He was often sick as a child and while attending special education classes in the public school system I was informed that Murray Center would be the best place for him. They felt that he had gone as far as he could go and needed something much more than they were able to give him. Even more painful was that he needed something more than I could give him. I was devastated and in denial.

About a year later someone had given me some advise that would forever change the course of my life and that of my sons. I didn't know much about Murray Center so a friend suggested to me that I should get a job there so that I could see for myself that Murray Center is not an institution. It is a home. It is a community within itself as well as part of the community of Clinton County. That turned out to be the best advice anyone could've given me. I made, probably the scariest but the best decision I could have made for myself, but more importantly for Donnie. I did get a job there and about 8 years later when Donnie was 14 years old, he was admitted there. I was still heart broken but I knew it was for his very best. And the very best is what I wanted for my child. Just like any parent wants for their child.

It's been 16 years since he was first admitted and along with all the professional staff that has helped him to make great strides and have kept him in overall good health, I cannot tell you all the ways that he's flourished in every aspect of his life. He has excelled in everything from the development of his social skills, audio and visual health, occupational and physical therapy, to a healthy and vibrant young man who has made a lifetime of happy memories. Memories that include Special Olympics, dances, parties, (holiday, birthday, etc.), festivals, trips to the bowling alley and movies, shopping. The list goes on and on, but I think the best is the love he's received and been able to share with his fellow "brothers and sisters" who he's spent 16 years with and the "mother and father" relationships he has established there were life changing for him.

In a group home, or CILA, or in My home, Donny would have been isolated and would not have had the opportunity to excel into the person he is today. He would not have "LIVED". He would have died inside and to force him to move back into a world with little stimulation, activity and away from his friends and "family" will surely bring about depression, regression, isolation, and death in one form or another.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter and for your careful consideration of the lives of Gods most vulnerable children. I pray that your decision will reflect and glorify the One True God and his kingdom, not our man-made rulers and kingdoms that are only temporary and will surely pass away. God Bless You!

Sincerely,
Dave and Doris Florczyk

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

July 24, 2013

The Honorable Judge Marvin E. Aspen
United States District Court for the Northern District of
Illinois Eastern Division

Re: Case # 13 C 01300

Dear Judge Aspen:

I am the sister and guardian of a severely developmentally disabled adult who resides at Murray Center in Centralia. My brother, Dougie is 53 years old and Murray Center has been his home since 1976. Prior to him living at Murray Center, Dougie was a resident at Lincoln in Springfield. My parents had to make a very difficult decision to move Dougie into a home when he was 6 years old. As you can imagine, this was a very painful and difficult decision for them to make, but one that had to be made because of all of Dougie's disabilities and the medical care that he needed.

You see, Dougie is profoundly mentally retarded, he has severe Cerebral Palsy, Profound language disorder, Epilepsy, Encephalopathy associated with prematurity, Spastic Quadriplegia, Osteopenia, Mild Dextro Scoliosis, Anemia, Degenerative changes in C1-C5 Cervical Spine, PICA behavior, Onychauxis, Onchomycosis, GERD, Erosive Esophagitis, Chronic Constipation, Chronic Allergic Rhinitis. He is visually impaired of object perception, Mild Nuclear Sclerosis, Constant alter Exothropia. He is mostly non-verbal. He is wheelchair bound. It became too hard for my parents to handle all of Dougie's disabilities because he needed around the clock medical care.

Our mother passed away 13 years ago, our father is now 78 years old and his health is declining, our father signed guardianship over to me because of his declining health and lack of understanding of Dougie's medical care. Dougie is the only sibling that I have. We now have a close relationship that we never had before. When I go to Murray Center to see Dougie, he knows who I am and he is happy to see me as much as I am happy to see him. The staff is always telling me how much they enjoy taking care of Dougie and sharing with me things that he has done.

Almost 3 years ago Dougie got very sick; he could not eat or take his medicine. Dougie had very bad seizures, lost over 25 lbs very quickly. The staff at Murray Center was very good in caring for him; they gave him the very best care possible. They knew that something was wrong with Dougie's throat because he would not eat his favorite things, and he would point to his throat. Dougie made many trips to St. Mary's Hospital where I had to make the decision weather or not to have a feeding tube inserted into his stomach because his Esophagus was eroded. I chose to have the feeding tube inserted with the understanding that it would be used to supplement if Dougie wouldn't eat, and so that he could be given his medicine on a regular schedule. When Dougie returned to Murray Center he was given his meals and his meds through the tube.

Now, with the hard work and care that the staff at Murray Center gives him, Dougie has had the tube removed and is thriving, gaining weight, taking his meds, and eating. Dougie will eat almost anything you put in front of him. He especially loves the cheese puffs that the staff buys for snacks, and he gets really excited when I bring him French fries and hamburgers from McDonalds, M&Ms and Coke. Dougie has had a remarkable recovery and has gained all of his weight back and then some. I attribute that to the staff at Murray Center.

Dougie is a very happy individual, he loves his home at Murray Center because it is the only home he knows and he loves the staff that takes care of him there. The staff knows him well and he lights up that smile of his whenever someone walks by him and talks to him. Dougie enjoys teasing the staff that care for him, he enjoys listening to music and attending the special events that are provided at Murray Center for the residents. The other residents and staff at Murray Center are his family. His smile will warm your heart!

Just imagine being trapped inside of a body that cannot walk or run. Imagine what it must feel like to have someone say that they want to take you away from the only home you know and from the people who love you and care for you. Imagine someone saying that you're not important enough to get the care that you deserve because the budget needs cut. Dougie cannot survive in a community group home because he needs around the clock care to ensure his well being. Dougie also has to be watched very closely because of his PICA behavior, anything that he gets his hands on goes in his mouth. Community group homes do not provide that kind of 24/7 care that Dougie needs.

Imagine if God had not created Dougie or others like him. God had his reasons for making Dougie the way he is, we may never know those reasons. I believe he made Dougie and others like him to make the rest of us better people. It is our responsibility to take care of God's special people and to protect them. Dougie and the other residents at Murray Center do not deserve to be moved from the only home that they know or from the family they have there. Please keep Murray Center open for Dougie and the other severely developmentally disabled residents who need the 24/7 care.

Sincerely,

Judy Clifton
2804 Idle Acres Lane
Edwardsville, IL 62025
Judyclifton223@yahoo.com

Carolyn K. Green
1120 Ralph Terrace
St. Louis, MO 63117

July 24, 2013

RE: Murray Center Must Stay Open

Dear Judge Aspen,

My name is Carolyn K. Green and I am a sister to John Green who lives at the Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, Illinois. I am writing to express my concern about the possible closing of the center. John is developmentally disabled and has found an exceptional home at the Grape Cottage. He has multiple physical disabilities in addition to his mental and social disabilities, and the staff and size of the facility at Murray Center are exactly what he needs for providing routine and consistency in his everyday living. Moving John to a small group home has me very worried about not having proper supervision, medical resources and the continual routine that he relies on.

John grew up living at home with me, my siblings and my parents, and we all learned early how to tend to John's emotional state and physical needs. He went on to stay with my parents until they were older and he moved to Murray Center as an adult in his 40's. It was a tremendous relief for my mother and us siblings when we found a facility that could take John, welcome him and jump right in with the experience and skills to make him feel at ease and safe in his new environment. Medically he has never been better taken care of. My mother was especially relieved to know that John accepted immediately the medical care given to him at Murray Center while in our home setting those efforts were very difficult to make happen. He is well cared for there, and we family members feel very assured that the staff have John's interest at heart and provide a professional regimen for him that meets his particular needs.

I do not want to face the options for John if Murray Center closes. He is now in his 50's and change is hard for him as it is, but more so, I am not confident that the level of consistency offered by living in a smaller group home is going to give John a feeling of safety and stability. I am not confident that the medical care will be readily available if he has a seizure or has some other physical need. I am worried that John's social disabilities will make it hard for him to remain at ease in a small group setting. Murray Center has the right amount of "Institution" and professionalism in the mix for John and for so many of its residents. Please help find a way to keep the program alive and the facility open. Many of Murray's residents are not as capable even as John and I know that they, too, need the level of care offered at Murray and groups homes are just not going to work for them.

Thank you for your consideration of the critical issue.

Sincerely,

Carolyn K. Green

July 28, 201

To Whom it may Concern,

As a employee of WGMDC and a Group leader of 14 behavior boys I see 1st hand the importance of staff who are familiar with their behavior's and staff who know how to handle their behaviors from years of experience It would be unsafe ~~for~~ them, the community and how unfair to place them into moving for away, promising them jobs pets, swimming pools and all kinds of false promises. Please "Save Their Home"

Thank You,

7-28-13

To Whom It May Concern.

I have been employed at the Murray Center since February. While being employed there I have grown fond of the care and well being of the individuals that call Murray Center home. To see them being relocated to a unfamiliar environment along with unfamiliar staff would create behaviors along with injuries to other individuals and staff. Staff have been highly concerned about the individuals being placed away from home Murray Center is Home please save their home.

Thank You
Ludodson
Apple Cottage

1

7-24-13

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a second shift employee on Apple cottage for two ½ yrs. When I started it was truly a joy to not only work here at Murray Center but to give great care to the individuals that call Murray Center home. Since the announcement of closing their home I have seen the change in the individuals. Please save their home Murray Center is home to some the only home they ever had.

Thank You

7-26-13

To The Judge:

If the home of the individuals at Murray Center closes not only will they be displaced I will also be and my mom want be able to provide me with health insurance. I just graduated from high school and deeply would need health insurance along with my mom. Please save Murray Center

Thank
Johnson

P.S. Think of it as if the individuals were your kids how would you feel about their home being taken from them?

Dear Judge Aspen,

I have seen many things in life that are absolutely crazy. But never as crazy as the proposed closure of Murray Center.

I have worked here for twelve years, becoming part of many of these individuals family. How can anybody take away from someone who is at a disadvantage such as those who live here at Murray. How is it that it can so easily be decided to take away all they have ever known.

These people deserve to have their voices heard and not forced out of their home. Here at Murray, we help individuals learn self help skills and give them the many opportunities to thrive in the community.

I have nothing against CILA homes. But I believe one size does <u>not</u> fit all. What is best for some does <u>not</u> necessarily mean that it's best for all.

Please, I ask you to stop and think to yourself... if it were your

family member, would you want what was best for that family member, or would you want what was best for someone who was on a power trip trying to take advantage of people who can not defend themselves.

Please, help us make a stand for those individuals who can't make their voices heard. Help us save their home.

Sincerely,
Stacey Mooney
618339-7069

07/26/13

JUDGE ASPEN, I AM A MHT 3 AT WARREN G. MURRAY CENTER IN CENTRALIA, IL, AS A WORKER THERE, I SEE 1ST HAND THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE HERE & THE CHALLAGES THEY FACE IN THERE DAY TO DAY LIVES, THINGS THAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED, THESE PEOPLE WITH THERE HANDICAPS CAN NOT DO FOR THEMSELVES, THEY STRUGGLE EVERY DAY & WITHOUT THE CARING & DEDICATED STAFF TO TAKE CARE OF THEM 24/7 THERE LIVES WOULD BE MUCH, MUCH WORSE, TO TAKE THESE PEOPLE OUT OF THE CENTER & MOVE THEM TO CILA'S TO LIVE IS JUST A IMMORAL & HORRENDOUS THING TO DO TO THEM, SOME OF THE PEOPLE THAT CALL OR CONSIDER MURRY THERE HOME HAVE LIVED HERE FOR 20 TO 30 OR MORE YEARS, AND HOW WOULD YOU FEEL TO BE TOLD YOU HAD TO MOVE FROM YOUR HOME TO A PLACE YOU NEVER HEARD OF & NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY! I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST CILA'S BUT AS IN THIS WORLD ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL, AND CILA'S ARE NOT FOR EVERYONE, SO I HOPE THAT YOU WOULD TAKE WHAT I HAVE WROTE INTO CONSIDERATION & HELP US STOP THE CLOSURE OF MURRY CENTER & SAVE THERE HOME, JUST AS YOU WOULD DO TO SAVE YOUR OWN.

SINCERELY

William A Wiesler
618-973-0809
William A Wiesler
VETERAN OF U.S.M.C.

7-30-13

Dear Judge Aspen

I'm very concerned about my nephew's well being and what could happen to him. He has been through so much in his life he just doesn't need any more trauma added to his life (esspecially being mentally handicapped). Andy's mother had a grand mal seizure when he was about 15 years old, she is unable to communicate like normal anymore so he basically lost his mother. That is when I became his legal gaurdian since his dad didn't want to deal ~~with~~ with him or his mother, his father walked out on them. Then he was sent to 2 different group homes, they didn't even know how to handle his issues, they'd call the police, then I would have to go get him out and find another home for him. He went to a total of 6 different homes and facilities before he finally got put into Murray Center. He has been there now for about 5 years or more. This has been the longest ever. They work with him and know how to handle his issues when he gets out of control they handle this the best anyone has ever done. Its just

not fair to take these handicapped people and move them around to home to home. They have to deal with so much as it is without going to different rules and surroundings. The life span of a mentally handicap person is shorter than a normal person, so why should they [redacted] live any different with what time they have. Please leave Murray Center open so my nephew [redacted] can have a some what normality to his short life.

Thank You For Caring
enough to listen
Kitty Thompson

Dear Judge Aspen, Aug. 2, 2013

We are writing to you on behalf of our son, Jason Dowty, who lives at Murray Center in Centralia.

Jason is 39 years old and has cerebral palsy, is mintally retarded, and is legally blind. He does not talk, can't feed himself, and walking by himself is not possible. He requires constant care every day. He has been at Muray since 1990.

The caregivers at Murray have always treated Jason with care and respect. They understand his needs and likes and dislikes. We always find Jason clean and happy when we visit. We know Murray is a <u>safe</u>, caring place that only wants the best for Jason.

Murray is a big part of who Centralia is as a community. We think closing Murray would

be another blow to Centralia's economy. This poor little town has certainly seen better days!

I guess the bottom line is that all of us as parents want the best for our kids, no matter what. There is no doubt in our minds that Murray is the best, safest place for Jason.

We understand the financial problems the State of Illinois is in, but by closing Murray, they seem to be putting so many at risk of having a safe, secure environment.

Thank you so much for taking the time to hear our concerns for the welfare of our kids.

Sincerely, Marva & Curtis Dowty
121 No. 36th
Belleville, IL 62222

Dear Judge Aspen,

Am writing in regard to the proposed closing of Murray Center in Centralia. I realize these people are a minority group and cannot stand up or speak for themselves. However, they have the right to be treated as anyone else. Our governor apparently does not feel the same.

Murray Center has been and is very capable of caring for these handicapped people, and take immediate actions.

Our son has grand-mal seizures, profound mental retardation and we, as parents, feel that this would not be wise for Kenny to be moved to a private setting because he needs 24 hour nursing care. Kenny is confined to a wheelchair.

I am asking you to do everything in your powers to stop the closing of Murray Center. I thank you for your time and effort and with Gods help make the right decision.

Caring parents of Kenneth Forbes

James M + Marilyn Forbes
23628 Timber Lane,
New Douglas, IL 62074

7-31-13

Dear Judge Aspen,

My son David Kinder has been at Murray Center 37 years. It is his Home! David is functioning at 9 mos - 12 mos old. He cannot talk, not toilet trained, their is very little he can do for himself. He is 46 years old. He needs constant supervision or he would get hurt or runs away. Their is no way he could live in a group home - he can't cook, he can't dress himself, can't bathe himself, theirs NO way he could keep himself clean - not toilet trained, he needs help with everything and Murray Center provides all his needs. David is on seizure medicine, he has osteporosis he needs the care he is given and provided.

Would you leave a child at 9 mos - 12 mos. to take care of themself?

Murray staff is helpful, dedicated, loving, caring. David is always clean when we see David, and so is the faculty. I beg you to keep this place open. The town of Centralia needs Murray open also for the employment. Lots of residents, parents, employees, city of Centralia need to help Murray open.

Thank you for reading my letter and helping keep Murray open.

Any questions, please call 618-888-2493 or you may go see David at Grape Cottage if you wish.

Thank you -
Janice Kinder
8631 Duestmon Rd.
Worden, Il 62097

Dear Judge Aspin;

My letter is in reference to the NEED for Murray Center to stay open as an ACTIVE facility. The state of Illinois is a combination of large urban area and rural sprawling countryside. Located in Centralia this site is in the perfect spot for family to visit their loved ones. Even thou todays economy is tough on most budgets, it is still easy for a family to get to Murray from anywhere south of Springfield.

The facility is sound but needs some upgrades. There isn't a building around that doesn't. You cant claim that the center needs to be closed because its a older building...

But the MAIN reason this center needs to stay open is as clear as a blue sky..... Its home.

These folks KNOW Murray as their home.. The staff is family to them. They are comfortable there. They love their rooms and the friends they see everyday. Any one with any training KNOWS that you don't just uproot these folks for the fun of it.. They need the security of the same faces, same walls, hallways, etc.... THIS IS THEIR HOME!!!

Would YOU like it if one day someone came into your home and told you in 30 days your out? ... NO!!!! So why should they be any different? You would fight like hell.... Well since they cant..... WE WILL!

Murray Center is a piece of a large puzzle that can not be discarded. Its worth its weight in gold in the love and security that the staff provides to the residents. Our family members are SAFE there.. They are cared for and watched over. And the most important part of this is; we as parents TRUST the staff to keep our loved ones safe. Trust is never given. Its EARNED..... The staff at Murray has earned our trust...

DO NOT CLOSE MURRAY CENTER!!!!! FOR ANY REASON!! It is needed more than anyone will ever know. As a parent you always worry about your child... If our child was anywhere else but Murray, the worry and fear would be ten fold.... At Murray we know our kids are safe. Please make sure they STAY THAT WAY!!!!

Thank you,
Dan Riesenbeck
Waterloo, IL

*"Time after time Sailor's of the Independence stood up for the freedom and stood down freedom's enemies. In the Cuban Missile crisis, Indy was there. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, you were the carrier on the scene. You delivered our answer, up close and personal. In peacetime and war this great ship and it's battle group have been there as America's shield and America's sword"..... William J. Clinton.*

*President William J. Clinton*

**Anita R. Becherer** < arbpfb@msn.com> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 6:41 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>
Cc: BILLIE MILLER <billiecorrena@yahoo.com>

THANK YOU BILLIE. ARB
**From:** Billie Miller
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 23, 2013 5:21 PM
**To:** Anita R. Becherer
**Subject:** Re: URGENT!!!! DO IT NOW!!!!! PLEASE!!!!! For everyone.....

Honorable Judge Aspen, I have a daughter who has resided at the Murray center for 26 yrs. Correna is so medically fragile that she requires 24/7 care with a 15 minute check to make sure she doesn't get into trouble with positional asphyxiation . NO where else can accommodate her needs for survival. Murray was built to take care of people with great disabilities. Illinois should take the greatest PRIDE in Murray center BECAUSE of it's ability to care for these people who have been given the Worst possible medical and developmental issues imaginable. Murray has trained RN'S, LPN's Professional staff and caregivers to handle their needs and

STILL make sure they are loved and kept safe from harm. I am a former employee , now retired. I love the residents I cared for and they became like family to me. I personally know the training required to take care of Murray center residents. TWO people to a home where individuals have behaviors so severe, besides being medically fragile, is unsafe and will lead to deaths. Sir, please prevent this from happening. Great men with caring hearts built this facility for our LOVED ones, PLEASE, in OUR GOD'S name, protect our children. May our GOD keep you and yours forever in his sight. Thank you ! Billie Miller

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Murray Center

4 messages

**Margie Holtgrave** < margieholtgrave@icloud.com> Mon, Jul 29, 2013 at 9:59 PM
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Judge Aspen

I have worked for 25 years at a privately own facility for the developmentally disabled adults. The state funds these facilities so low they can not afford to keep direct care staff very long. Turnover in staff is over 40%. We are a good facility but we know our limits and most of the Murray Center residents have more severe behaviors or medical conditions that we would not be funded for.

So what happens when a person with uncontrolled behaviors move into the community ? Neighbors call the police on noise or odd behavior? Illinois moves the control of people with unusual behavior in the hands of the police? Who pays the police departments but the taxpayer.
As a Illinois taxpayer I would rather pay a higher tax than disrespect the adults who know no better, really do no wrong, and love their staff who work with them.

I know moving any of our residents upsets them if they are not of a near normal level of function. Look at each of these residents as your child, would you want your child to be moved away out of visiting areas from families, or moved out of their comfort zones, just for political reasons,because we all know this closure is all about politics not about what is best for each individual persons needs.

Margie Holtgrave

Honorable Judge Aspey

Justice

# Locked in

COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

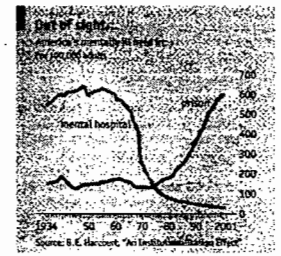
## The costly criminalisation of the mentally ill

SINCE 1994 Tracey Aldridge has been arrested 100 times, jailed 27 times for more than 1,000 days and spent a total of eight years in prison. Most of her arrests have been for trivia: trespassing, prostitution, drugs, disorderly conduct, petty theft or drinking in public, all typical of the mentally ill. Ms Aldridge is so impaired that one jail needed special arm coverings for her, like full-length oven gloves, to prevent her from ripping her veins out with her teeth. More recently, in prison, Ms Aldridge ate her protective gauntlets.

Thomas Dart, the sheriff of Cook County jail, knows Ms Aldridge will end up back in his cells soon because there is nowhere else for her to go. She is sentenced, like so many seriously mentally ill people in America, to rotate in and out of correctional facilities until she dies. Prisons and jails are the main mental-health facilities in the country, something Sheriff Dart describes as an "abomination". He is also angry about how fiscally reckless it is. At only 42, Ms Aldridge has already cost taxpayers $719,436 for her arrests and incarcerations.

She is not alone. Depending on how you measure it, Sheriff Dart's jail is either the largest, or second-largest, mental-health institution in America. On any given day in Cook County jail one building is home to between 2,000 and 2,500 people with diagnosed mental illnesses. Each night's stay costs at least $190. Costs escalate when medical care is included. The Lamp Community, a non-profit working for the mentally ill in Los Angeles, says the desperate cycle of emergency-room visits and stints in jail can exceed $100,000 a year for each homeless person. Permanent supportive housing costs only $16,000.

The history of this quiet disaster can be traced back to the 1960s, when John Kennedy decided to treat more of the mentally ill in the community and a new drug called thorazine promised to help. Over the next decade, however, new centres did not arrive and thorazine was not as good as everyone hoped. Moreover, there was a rise in legal actions against state facilities.




Pete Earley, a journalist and author of a book on the American mental-health system, says that in one year in California 19,000 beds were cut. "There was no place for anyone to go, they were literally thrown on to the street," he says. Matters deteriorated in the 1980s, when large cuts were made to housing programmes. Funds for the mentally ill remain a soft target.

Indeed, these days it is very rare for people to be put in a mental-health institution unless they are a danger to themselves or others. Even when they are held in a hospital, they are unlikely to stay long enough for any course of drugs to stabilise them. If someone decides he wants to walk around naked, or cannot give his name to a police officer, the likelihood is that he will end up in jail. Sheriff Dart, whose job is only to keep people safe while they await trial, says they should be treated better. People should not be pushed out on the street on their release day with "a baggie of drugs". Instead, he is discharging them with videos to help them adjust and counselling about the different services they may be able to use.

He is most excited, though, about a small pot of funding he has found which might divert a few of the mentally ill away from his jail. New arrivals now have an interview, and evidence of any brain disorder is passed to the public defender (a lawyer for those who cannot afford one), who is then able to plead for an alternative to jail. With some philanthropic help from a local businessman, Sheriff Dart has managed to get about a dozen people into a secure former nursing home where he monitors them with an ankle bracelet.

Carla Clark thinks this works well. She is the mother of a young woman, Melissa, who had a psychotic breakdown and who looked certain to be heading into the criminal-justice system. Melissa's problems started when it appeared she was taking something without paying at Wholefoods Market; but when two security guards came after her and she thought they were attacking her, she fought back. This led to a felony charge for robbery.

Her mother believes Melissa needs to be somewhere secure, so much so that she refused to bail out her daughter from jail because she was not taking her tablets. But now Sheriff Dart has found the girl a place in a home, things are much better. Melissa is taking her pills, and there is even a bit of group therapy. "Asylum", says Mrs Clark, "means safe place. What is so bad with that?" ■

7/27/13

Honorable Judge Aspen,

My name is Mark Mcconnaughay, I am 44 years old and have worked with people with disabilities continuously since 1987. I have served these individuals in many ways including working as a Cook, Housekeeper, Habilitation Technician, QMRP, RN, Training Coordinator, Shift Supervisor, and Charge Nurse.

I began work in a 15 bed ICF/DD for minimum wage when I was 19 years of age. I was proud of the job I did and very proud to help the individuals I served move to less restrictive environments. I saw people that I knew and loved move into their own apartments and although we were hesitant we knew that these individuals were prepared as well as possible for that move. These individuals were able to provide their own personal care, prepare their own meals, arrange for and attend physician appointments, balance their own checking accounts, and participate in social responsibilities and relationships. These were a group of people who never should have been institutionalized to begin with, and giving them the opportunity to move to a much less restrictive environment was paramount. Even with these preparations I witnessed tragic deaths from such basic medical conditions as a bowel obstruction, something that could have been prevented with minimal medical intervention.

As time passed, I moved into an opportunity to teach the individuals that would serve persons with disabilities. Part of this teaching included a history of institutions including stories like that of Willowbrook. Certainly the treatment of many segments of our society in that era was something to be ashamed of and the treatment of the disabled was no exception. Many will never forget seeing this on the news and being disgusted. Many assume that this has not changed.

I am certain that if the Governor's plan to close State Operated Developmental Centers had been announced in 2002 instead of 2012 that I would have found myself on the other side of this issue. Ten years prior I would have made a decision based on my knowledge of the history and my personal experience. That opinion would have been made without all of the facts and based on antiquated information.

In 2010 I began work at Warren G. Murray Developmental Center, admittedly this was a decision that was hard to make for me and was based on a need to be able to provide for my family and for my personal retirement. Staff members that work in "community placement" are paid substandard wages, have no protection in the work place, have little to no insurance or retirement opportunities , and few if any benefits. These facts lead to constant turnover which results in lost relationships for the individuals served and a lower quality of care.

I entered into Murray Center expecting to find an institution, what I found was a home! It was definitely a pleasant surprise. I found people who felt safe and respected, people who had opportunities to grow and develop and become as independent as possible. I found staff and administration who would stand up and fight for the rights of the people they served. I found people moving toward there goal at their own rate, people who were encouraged instead of berated when there were setbacks or when it took them longer than expected to achieve their goals. I found a place where I was comfortable and proud to come to work at everyday!

I called Murray a home and it is. It is different from mine but no less a home. It is full of families, different from mine, but no less families. Often when we look at another's home or family we find them lacking, but we are not there to judge it from the inside. This is the mistake that Governor Quinn has made, he has made a decision based on antiquated information, based on old biases and of course based on political concerns that I am unaware of. He has made this decision without ever seeing a single person who lives here. He has only seen the people who work here because we have traveled to him, he ignores us but we continue to attempt to inform him of our concerns.

This decision to close Murray Center is misguided and in my opinion will result in a bad outcome for many individuals. The process as it has gone so far is definitely not a "person centered process", at least not centered on the persons being served. Currently what we see in our home is that the decision to move to another facility is based only on who your guardian is. If you have family or other interested parties in your life you are protected, but if the Office of State Guardian is all you have then bingo, you are ready to transition.

I truly wish I had an opportunity to teach our governor for just one day. If I did I would start with the Trilogy of Service, a tenant I was taught when originally trained (by a Murray Center nurse) in 1987, one I passed on for many years, and one I continue to use every day. It is a way to determine what needs done and when to do it.

1. Protection From Harm- our goal is to teach our individuals to grow and develop and help them become as independent as possible but first they must be safe. How can I teach anyone anything if they are at risk of injury or death? Their focus will not be on learning but survival.
2. Dignity and Respect – this is key, without dignity and respect people learn to resent instead of learning the things needed to be successful.
3. Active Habilitation – this is learning what is needed to become independent, as I said it is the goal but not the first thing we do.

Governor Quinn's plan puts the cart before the horse. He wants to move people to placements that they are not prepared for, he wants to set them up to fail, unfortunately when some of these individuals fail it will lead to harm and in some cases death. Governor Quinn has failed to provide dignity and respect to the individuals he is responsible to, by deciding arbitrarily to move people from homes they have loved for decades he has stolen their dignity, he has shown no respect. Ultimately he has failed to

recognize that mental retardation means slowed learning and will not allow for persons to grow and develop and become as independent as possible at there own pace.

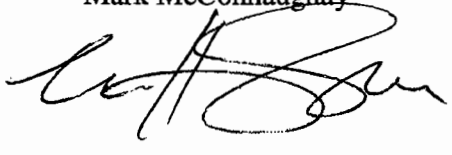
I feel that if Murray Center is closed there will be some who have good outcomes, for example the 3 individuals that DHS repeatedly has used as evidence that the transition from Jacksonville Developmental Center is a success. My fear though is that this process is being pushed by political pressures beyond the control of these individuals and will ultimately result in harmful outcomes for some. If we know in advance that the process being followed may lead to harm we have a responsibility to speak up proactively to prevent harm. If even one person is injured by these abrupt and poorly planned transitions then the entire endeavor is a failure.

Additionally my experience working in the community also makes me aware that there are those who will not be accepted into community placement because of their maladaptive behaviors. Community employers are unwilling to admit some of the more physically aggressive because of the potential for injury to staff resulting in workers compensation expenses, or the potential for injury to their peers resulting in scrutiny from surveying bodies. Community homes will have problems accepting those with sexually aggressive tendencies (we have heard that these type diagnosis have been removed from charts before discharge) because of the potential for lawsuits by families of victims.

This is not a game, having winners and losers is not an acceptable outcome. Imagine if it were your son or daughter that became that loser, that is the fear many of our guardians have. Please allow the staff at Murray Center to continue to teach people how to become winners in a safe, dignified and respectful environment allowing each individual to progress to the best of their ability towards that goal of becoming as independent as possible. Please do not allow Governor Quinn to choose without consideration to close a facility that he instead should be proud of.

In closing I would like to extend an invitation to you to visit the people who live and work at Murray Center if this would be considered appropriate in this context. The lives and well being of many people hang in the balance of your decision, I trust you have already put more consideration into it than our governor has.

Mark McConnaughay



Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## (no subject)

1 message

**Barbara Conyers** < barbaraconyers@att.net> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 9:30 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com
Cc: barbaraconyers@att.net

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am a employee at the Warren G. Murray Center. I would like to describe to you the care that is given to the individual's whom i work with. These are people who are totally dependent on staff for all of their needs. They must be lifted with a mechanical lift to a bath cart to be bathed, using the lift again to be transferred to their wheelchair. They are then put to bed after a time period of two hours, to rest and prevent bedsores. Elm cottage has approx 60 individual's, none who have bedsore's. Also, the care they require includes feeding assistance, all are incontinent of bowel and bladder, cleaning them and diapering. Most are non-verbal and need staff who know them well,and are aware when they are ill or hurting. Closing Murray Center would be morally wrong. These individuals deserve to continue the level of care that they now receive. It is the responsibility of the government to make sure they are in a appropriate setting. As Hubert Humphrey said, that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life,the children,those who are in the twilight of life,the elderly,and those who are in the shadows of life,the sick,the needy,and the handicapped.

Sincerely,

Barbara Conyers

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I have lived in the Centralia area for over 80 years. I have been acquainted with Murray Center since it opened in the 60s. I have always heard about the quality of care the residents receive. I frequently see them in the community, at the shopping center, the movies, at Wal-Mart, and at the yearly parade. They have always been citizens of Centralia, and we have always accepted them in our community and into our hearts. Sadly, my niece and her husband had a baby almost 30 years ago that is severely disabled. When they could no longer care for him at home, due to his many needs, they looked everywhere for someone to care for him. The places they looked were not adequate for Mark's needs, and they finally looked at Murray Center. My niece told me that from the start it was obvious to see the love and care given by the workers. They weren't there just for a paycheck. My niece and her husband bring their son home for a few hours every weekend, but he is always ready to go back. There needs to be places like Murray Center where these very special people can be safe. They also need the good workers they have at Murray who aren't just there today and gone tomorrow. Some of my friends have worked there for over 30 years, and now their children are working there. They are a family, and that is what makes Murray different than other places. It is the love and care given by the staff. Please don't let a wonderful place like Murray Center be closed. It would just be wrong.

Thank you,

Mildred Korzenewski
618-245-3476

July 30, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

My grandson Mark Winkeler has lived at Murray Center for over 15 years. This is his home. He is severely disabled and needs round the clock care. He functions like a 9 month old. I also have a son who lives in a community based CILA. My son is high functioning and able to care for his daily needs and works in a sheltered workshop. A CILA is a fine place for those who do not need medical care, and who are able to express their wants and needs. My grandson Mark is totally nonverbal and will never be able to tell someone if he is hurt, hungry, or mistreated. My son's CILA has had over 53 staff working in the past 7 years.....there is constant turnover and most staff only stay for about 6 months and then move on. This is very stressful for my son but would be devastating for my grandson. He needs the consistent quality care that Murray Center provides. Medical care in the community is difficult to find, and dental care is almost nonexistent. It is extremely difficult to kind any kind of psychiatric care in the community. We searched up to 50 miles away to find a psychiatrist to help with my son's anger problems. We were finally able to find a psychiatric nurse to see him. The training at the CILA is minimal and they are not trained at all for behavioral or medical issues. The team leader, who runs the home, is the 13th team leader in the past 7 years. This is so disruptive for everyone. The homes in the community also are not inspected like Murray Center is. My son's home is inspected only every 3 years, and he usually tells me when the inspectors are coming. Murray Center is inspected at least 5 times a year by different agencies. I want my son's home to have the same quality expectations but that is not emphasized in the community. CILAs are fine for some people but not for the residents of Murray who need consistent, well-trained staff who know the residents, love them, and keep them safe. Please think about what the residents will be losing if Murray closes.....these services cannot be replace in the community, and are not available.

Sincerely,

Margaret Schomaker
Mark's Grandmother
618-228-7589

Jann Cline
416 Flagstone Drive
Belleville, Illinois 62221
(618) 234-3190
janncline@att,net

August 1, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

The **Murray Developmental Center** in Centralia, Illinois, is where you would *run* to, so that your loved one with severe, mental and physical handicaps can live and enjoy life to their max. It's because of the knowledge, expertise and care given by the nurses and staff to each resident that we as parents and loved ones want each client to reach their highest capability and continue to improve more and more.

Most clients cannot verbally communicate; so they can't let people know when help of any kind is needed. Only here at the **Murray Developmental Center** can each person enjoy and live their life to the fullest.

The **Murray Developmental Center** is being referred to as an institution. That term automatically makes a person think of a barbaric and inhumane place to be. CILA is wonderful type of living. They are very good for mild and moderately challenged persons.

**Murray Developmental Center** is where our loved ones receive the best and fullest life possible.

Sincerely,

Jann Cline

July 28, 2013

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am currently an employee at W.G. Murray Center. I have worked here for 13 years with 11 of those on the same building. The individuals who reside at Murray are more than a job to me they are more like family. They have watched my children grow up and alot of the individuals know their names and inquire about their well being.

While employed at W.G.M.D.C. I have seen many individuals transitioned out to C.I.L.A.S, Group Homes, & etc. only to fail and have to be returned to Murray. They just didn't receive the type of care that they required in order to grow as an individual. At Murray they receive 24/7 nursing, dietary diets are followed, psychologist, behior analyst, + etc are all on grounds.

I remember as a child & teen seeing Murray individuals out and about in the community. That is still true to this day. They attend

movies, go bowling, out to the lake, the County fairs, Carnivals, restaurants and etc. The list is just too long to mention everything with all this said it is my request that you rule in favor of keeping the home of these very special and unique individuals open. For many this is the only home and family they know. Thank you for your time.

Truly,
Kimberly Starr
704 Nevada Ave
Sandwich Ill
60548

Judge Asper,

I am writing you in regards to the closure of Warren H. Murray. As an employee of Murray, I feel we are a voice for the silent ones. Murray center is not an institution it is home for many of these individuals. It's their safe place, we must remember yes these are grown individuals physically, but mentally they are children, someones children a living human being who are entitled to the utmost love and respect.

Mr. Quins reason for the closure is so these individuals may be place in the community, although several of these individuals who have already been moved have been taken from their safe home, into community setting, and are now moved to another state facility. Many times when the individuals have went home with family they ask to return back to Murray. On times when they tell you they love them, or make you cards when you are sick or injured. Please I beg of you protect our silent children we are their voice

Sincerely
Sharon C.

Honorable Judge Aspen, 7/27/13

I am an Employee at Warren G. Murray center and I think this home for many Individuals should not be closed. This is the only home many of these individuals know and if they are put into other facilities or group home's I'm afraid they will not make it because the care and love they recieve here they are like our family and we are to them as well and I cant imagine ever being kicked out of my home and being striped away from the people we grew to know and love like family please take these letters to heart and make the right decision.

Sincerely,
Angela
Salmon

P.S
Many people here can not make it in these other establishments and that is harmful to there health..

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen, 7-27-13

I am an employee at Warren Murray Center. We are on the Closure list. I am asking you to please keep it open for the individuals sake. This is there home. The people that work there love & care about each & every one of these individuals. They trust us. They will not get the same love & care that we give them from some other place. Please find it in your heart not to close there home.

Thank you
Karen Gibson

7-26-13

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am an employee at Warren G. Murray Center in Centralia, IL. While the home of many special individuals is on the closure list, I beg you to have a heart for these individuals. "Their" home needs to stay open and be here for the residents Well being, safety and care. Alot of the residents have been placed in Group Homes / Cilas and could not make the transition so came "Back" to Murray Center. I and the other staff take pride in the care and quality of life we provide for our residents. I consider Murray Center my extended family. So please have a heart for what Murray Center "IS" and the care we provide and Stop the closure. Give to the residents what they deserve and what they call home, Murray Center. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Monica Gregory

Dear Honorable Judge Asper,
I'm a Murray Center employee. I'm here fighting to save Murray Center. These residents call Murray Center home. They get they're rights here. I worked at a group home and another facility and we at murray center give Quality Care to our individuals. They get showered everyday, all other ADL's (activities of daily Living) provided, three main meals a day. and 2 Snacks and etc. All the individuals here are a family. We even have Siblings here and they will be said if they get ~~Splitting~~ Split up. The residents live with there friends. Please Judge Asper Save the residents home. They love this place and don't want to go away.

yours truely
Murray Center Employee

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am an employee at Warren G. Murray Center and I would like you to keep this home of very gifted individuals open. It needs to stay open for the safety, care, and quality of life they receive at this home that is second to none. I've worked at the Center for over 21 years and have watched individuals flourish here when they didn't at CILA's, Group Homes, and other Centers. Their needs, medically, emotionally, and physically, are meet and exceeded here unlike anyplace else. On behalf of myself and the individuals, who I consider my extended family, I hope you find it in your heart to keep Murray Center Open.

Thank You!
Mary Helen Kampwerth

Dear Judge Aspen, 7-26-13

I am writing this letter in regard to the pending closure of Murray Center. I am asking you to think long, hard, and deep within your heart before ruling on this case. I work at Murray Center, I enjoy my job and our individuals really thrive there. They have friends here and in the community. Murray Center is their home in every way your home is yours.

I have worked at CILAS, and in my opinion and experience Murray Center has more to offer. When I worked at CILAS they rarely had enough money for activities/outtings, but Murray Center has constant activities on and off grounds. M.C. even has its own pool and activity building for movies/working out/etc and our individuals really enjoy that. Murray Center has trained staff and enough staff daily. The CILAS only have 1-2 staff working most of the time and they have to cook, clean, do laundry, and take care of the individuals, therefore, leaving very little time to interact with them. Every person needs human interaction to thrive. CILAS also go through staff frequently due to low wages and demands. Murray Center has security also which is ~~so~~ added bonus.

CILAS are not for everyone. Some people →

are better off there, but most aren't. Developmentally disabled is a very wide range condition. Every person is different, and everyone deserves the correct level of care during their life. CILAS do work for some, but so do state facilities. Our individuals love their home. Many of those who live at Murray Center have already been kicked out of several homes due to behavioral issues. Murray Center is the best/least restrictive option for them.

Many people make Murray Center seem like a bad place, but it is not. UGMDC is one big extended family for the individuals and the staff. We truly do care about what may happen to each and everyone of them. True, this area will suffer a huge blow if we close, but that is not what is important. We have innocent people's lives in our hands daily, and we must take that seriously. We must be the voices of those unable to speak for themselves. Someone has to stand up for our most vulnerable citizens because if Murray closes many lives will be lost for no reason and hundreds of others shattered. This is life as they know it

and they love it here. They know and trust staff. Most of our individuals know what days staff are off, and if something's wrong they ask and are concerned. The people living at Murray Center are truly amazing wonderful people. I hope all involved have their best interests at heart and not politics or budget. There is absolutely nothing more important or valuable than human lives. All we can do now is pray and await the verdict. Thank you so much for taking the time to read our letters to ensure the best outcome for our individuals.

Sincerely,

Trisha Landert
(618)204-7252
PO Box 453
Sandoval, IL 62882
WGMDC - Daisy Cottage

Dear Judge Aspen,

My name is Virgie Moore, and the Murray Center has been a major part of my life for almost 50 years now. Back in 1963 My husband and I had to make the difficult decision to seek help in the care of our son Michael Moore when he was 6 years old. We knew that Michael needed special care and wanted him to be with other children that were more like him. The Murray Center came as a blessing to our family, being that it was then one of the very few facilities of its kind and was close enough that myself, my husband and my four children could visit Michael as often as we liked. Michael has now been a resident of the Murray Center for 49 years and I could not imagine Michael being anywhere else. Michael cannot hear or speak and is only able to communicate with those that have known him the longest. Taking Michael away from the Murray Center I believe would be detrimental to his health, he has never been forced to adapt to a change of this magnitude before. I understand that budget cuts happen and state funding is low, but the Murray Center is much too important to be closed. I have enclosed a photo of Michael at the Murray Center when he was only 8 years old; he is now 56 years old. Thank you for your consideration, I pray you make the right decision.

Sincerely,

Virgie Moore

July 27, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing this letter to express my opposition to closing Murray Developmental Center. For the sake of the residents who live there and are in need of the vital support and high quality specialized medical care they get at M.D.C., I beg you to keep M.D.C. open.

I will give you an example for my opposition.

Our daughter, Carol Jo Tucker (Fir Cottage) was placed in a state-approved private home by state workers for a week so we could get a much needed relief from the strenuous care required by Carol. My wife and I were at the point of nervous Breakdowns. When we went to get her at the end of the week, Carol was a nervous wreck – shaking all over and whimpering as though she had been abused. It took several weeks before we could get her back to her normal self.

Carol has the ability of a two to three-month old infant, although she is 57 years old. She is in diapers, doesn't chew her food, cannot speak, cannot express herself in any way, and she has the mental and physical ability of one who is only a few months old.

I feel no place except M.D.C. could give the quality of care Carol requires. The staff is familiar with the care that Carol needs and I couldn't give her the care she requires. I can barely take care of myself. I am alone, as my wife, Carol's mother, passed away on October 9, 2011. I will be 91 years old in November of this year. Carol could not survive in a group home, as she has no way of attending to her own needs – food, health, toileting, etc. She has such extreme needs and she would not have anywhere to go if M.C.D closed.

I am not thinking only of my daughter, but also about the caregivers, nurses, doctors, and other employed staff at Murray Developmental Center. They would all be out of work if the Center closes.

So, my reason for writing this letter is: Please, for the sake of the residents and staff, do not close Murray Developmental Center, as another state center would, no doubt, not be a choice.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Kenneth A. Tucker

Kenneth A. Tucker

Father / Guardian

**Mr. Ken Tucker**
1441 S Ivy St. Unit 1101
Canby, OR 97013

7-30-2013

Dear Judge Aspen.

My son, Kirk Butler age 51 has been at Murray center for almost 43 years. He uses a wheelchair for mobility and transportation and has a mental age of 13 mo.

Kirk needs assistance with taking his medicine, bathing, dressing and eating. He wears attends, and is changed every 2 hrs.

His medical needs consist of neurological disorder, cerebral palsy, epilepsy / seizures.

I hope and pray that everything works out, and that Murray center can remain open, as Kirk needs constant supervision. I'm sure 200 or so residents need the care also.

Thank you.

Barbara Butler
4879 Creek Nation Blktop
Mulkeytown, IL
62865

July 29, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing to you on behave of Roy White. Roy is 68 years old and lived at Lincoln Developmental Center and Murray Center most of his life. He moved to Lincoln Development Center at the age of twelve years old until the age of 57. At that time his move was not his or the family's wish, it was a demand because of the changes being made. At that time Roy was moved to the Murray Center at Centralia, Illinois.

I would like to give you a little information about Roy's history. Roy is a very special young man. He loves his family very much. When we go to visit him, we are always greeted with a huge smile on his face that is never taken from our hearts. He would like to run as a youth but does not because he is 68 years old. This is one of the many disabilities that Roy has because his mind only developed to the age of 18 months. Roy does not walk, talk, or communicate as a social man. Roy is confined to a wheel chair all the time and receives 24 hour care.

Roy has become very accustomed with his care givers and the love they show him. They all have a special place in their hearts for handicap disabled people. Roy needs care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He cannot function on his own. He needs daily stability of who is around him, who is caring for him, medication is given on time, and food is prepared properly. Placing Roy in a home with only one or two caregivers is not fair to Roy or the caregiver. Roy is on one floor level with no steps. Roy cannot shop, cook, turn on the TV, take a bath, or eat on his own. Roy is on a special diet because of his health. He has many needs that a special qualified person needs to be responsible for. He needs more care than a person with a First Aide Badge can give him. Roy needs to be cared for by a person with medical knowledge and training.

When Roy's mother placed him at Lincoln it was not a placement any of the family wanted. Roy's father passed away from heart failure. Roy was very young. Roy's mother had to go to work to support the family. Her doctor also said that Roy needed to be placed in a home at that time because of his disability and needs. When his mother placed him at Lincoln Developmental Center she thought it was for his life. It was upsetting to have him moved in 2002 when Lincoln closed because of the government closing the center. After doing a lot of praying and discussing his mother and I placed him at Murray Center Centralia, Illinois. At that time he was place so his mother and I could still visit him. His Mother passed away at the age of 99 believing he would live at the Murray Center until his life was up. Roy adjusted to the move with a lot of care from the staff at Murray.

Roy is being well taken care of at Murray. The staff does a wonderful job seeing when he has a fever or is becoming ill. They know what his hand GESTURES OR SOUNDS STAND FOR. Rubbing his forehead is telling us he is not feeling well, a num num is for something to eat the list can go on. The staff at Murray Center is trained to work, care, and show compassion for these people at the center. They are their foundation in life and another move at his age would and could be unspeakable. He takes special care because of his health issues. Murray has fulfilled this need for Roy.

As I close this letter to you I hope you find it in your heart that Murray needs to stay open for Roy and the others that are living in their home at MURRAY. These kids, young adults, senior citizens, aunts,

uncles, cousins, sisters, brothers all need our help and yours. They need our support to save their home they have become accustomed to. If you decided to close Murray, you are taking away their friends and family that they have grown to love and cherish daily. These people have feelings just like you and I. They have friends like you and I. They trust people like you and I. They just need all of our support and your support. Just take a moment to think about the situation you are putting these people in. Picture uprooting one of your family members, placing them in a home you knew nothing about, and then having to try to trust that the care givers are giving the right treatment. Also don't forget the neighbors that might not like people of this nature and might abuse them! Just let us have Murray Center Open it is for the best of our family!

Thank you for your time. I hope you can value the concerns we have if Murray Center were closed.

Sincerely,

Beverly J Hicks

Barbara Wingert Rohr
4610 Knight Lake Ct
Richmond, TX 77406

RE: Murray Center

Judge Aspen,

I am writing this letter in regards to the purposed closing of Murray Center. Currently living in the state of Texas, I heard about this from the family of one of the patients. Her name is Willa Dawn Wright and she has lived at Murray Center for the past 41 years. Her parents are Mary Lou and Bill Wright. Before that she was my neighbor. Growing up next door to Willa Dawn and all her limitations somehow made me a better person. Even know she never knew this, she influenced me, and how I viewed people with handicaps. I volunteer in Texas as I would hope others do.

I can't imagine her living anywhere else. Murray Center is her home. She was kept at home as long as the family could care for her. I saw Willa Dawn in 1973 when I was a senior in high school. I was on a field trip to Murray Center. The staff was so kind to all the patients and I never again worried about Willa Dawn, until I heard about Murray Center closing.
I know the state wants to close this facility, but these patients need Murray Center. The state of Illinois can save money elsewhere. These patients have had a hard enough life already, please show some compassion for them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, but I hope you will keep the center open. The patients need the excellent care they receive, and the family members need piece of mind for their loved ones.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wingert Rohr

**Dee Fatouros** < deef1923@gmail.com>
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Sat, Jul 20, 2013 at 6:26 PM

Honorable Judge Aspen:

In regard to the Murray Center, I am coming from both a personal and professional position. I had worked in the Department of Mental Health for 10 years as a psychiatric Social Worker on in-patient units. I can factually state that there was indeed a time when people were "warehoused" but that trend has largely passed. What we are facing now is an ill advised rush to place people in the community who simply cannot function in such a setting. I had also seen that during the course of my employment and the unfortunate results such as the harm they had done to themselves & others and the necessary return to the very facilities that had placed them into the community.

My personal stake in the outcome is that I have two brothers at Murray. Neither is verbal--thus they can neither communicate their needs nor any difficulties they may be having. They are subject to outbursts which can be easily handled in a structured in-patient setting but would be far beyond the capabilities of a community provider. There are many Murray residents who are functioning very well--precisely because they **are** in a structured environment. Putting such residents in a CILA, which is ill equipped to handle their special needs, presents a danger to the residents themselves as well as to others.

Closing the Murray Center inappropriately will not save the state money and could indeed end up costing the state way more because of unrealistic assessments regarding the subsidizing of community placements as well as dealing with the fallout of some very bad decisions.

If the state is able to SUCCESSFULLY place enough qualified in-patients into the community so that they can combine residents in fewer facilities, so be it. However, If any facility should remain open, it should be Murray because of its location, the fact that it is newer, it is more accessible for its handicapped residents, it has the expertise to develop treatment plans specific to each individual, and it is apparently operating in the black.

I sincerely hope that this fine facility will remain open so that it can continue its outstanding work for our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely yours,
Diane E. Fatouros
2320 Sherborn Lane
Schaumburg, IL 60193

Phone # 847-985-8157

Honorable Judge Aspen,

I wish to forward this document on to you from a previously written version that is part of the COGFA process. I feel it provides some insight as to why Murray Center is so important and a needed part of the continuum of care for the disabled. Thank you for your time.

Here begins my letter to:

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
ATTN: Facility Closure
703 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Margie Barton. |
| Facility: | Murray Center in Centralia. |
| Position: | I am opposed to the closure of Murray Center. |
| Email: | 1mabhappy12@gmail.com |
| Status: | I am an employee of more than 29 years. |
| Title: | My job title is Habilitation Program Coordinator / Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional |

This is going to take a few minutes, so I would ask that you clear your mind of distractions and prepare to give me your attention for about 20 or so minutes of your busy day.

With that being said, I'll get started. Quite frankly, I have so many conflicting emotions and so much to say that I am unsure of where to start. Have you heard the expression, "What do I have to lose?" Well, I have much to lose, so I feel I must share exactly what's in my heart and on my mind, and hope I can appeal to your heart, your conscience, your humanity and to your sense of decency.

My name is Margie Barton. I've been an employee at Murray Center for over 29 years. For about the past 12 of those, I've been a Habilitation Program Coordinator. When I first entered Murray Center in 1984 as a scared 23 year old college graduate with my new diploma in my hand, I found myself in an unfamiliar community with people I'd never met. I was uncomfortable and unprepared, and I intended to stay here only long enough to find something better. As you can see, that never happened. Murray Center sucked me in and grabbed hold of my heart. For all these years I've never even considered searching for any other job. If there's any truth to the old cliché that home is where the heart is, then this is my home. This is where I belong. These are the people I belong with.

Although my job is challenging and sometimes frustrating, I like it. And I love the people I work with. Each morning as I arrive to work, I walk through the halls of the building I work in. I'm greeted with hugs and smiles, and words of welcome. It warms my heart to be able to work with these very special people every day. I enjoy coaching and coaxing them to overcome behavioral obstacles, encouraging them to look at a situation in a different way, teaching them to adapt to whatever issue they're having to the extent they are capable. These men and women are important to me and they make a difference to me. I'm pretty sure it's reciprocated.

Each person who lives at Murray Center has a story. Each one of them is already an individual. I find it

offensive that our governor has hired a team of "experts" (at a cost of nearly 1 million dollars!) to come evaluate the people who live at Murray simply to tell us they are individuals. We already know that!! And we know their stories. There is a bond between the people who live at Murray and the people who work at Murray. You may prefer that I use terms like 'staff' and 'residents'. In reality, we are all people – although some of us have been labeled by society as 'intellectually disabled', 'physically challenged' or 'behaviorally challenged'.

The people who work at Murray know the likes and dislikes of the people who live there. There are so many 16 hour days spent together that human bonding occurs quite naturally. We know what makes them laugh because we've spent time together being happy. We know what makes them cry because we've spent time together being sad. We know what makes them afraid because we've spent time together being scared and calming each others' fears. We've spent time together being anxious, angry, silly, emotional. We've spent time together grieving. We know what these residents like to eat because we've watched them (or assisted them) at many, many meals and snacks. We know who eats too fast, who eats too slow, who doesn't chew correctly, who gulps their drinks, and so on. We know how each person acts when they have a stomach ache, when they haven't had enough sleep, when they're worried or anxious. We can tell by the look in their eyes or the expression on their faces when something is wrong. We know them, their history, what makes them tick. But more importantly, they know US. That 'history', that bond that exists between the people who live at Murray and the people who work at Murray cannot be replicated or replaced, no matter which home, in which town, or with which new ID Team. These are relationships among humans. These relationships that are built over time. They are irreplaceable and they do not have a monetary value. Nor can any hired "expert" give any advice on how to provide that same, exact service/support/relationship! These important human relationships are at stake here. Wait a minute.... Aren't we the Department of "Human" Services? Shouldn't we be concerned about the "humans" in this process?

Because there is no simple way to tell you the stories of every person who lives in Murray Center who will be negatively impacted in the event they are forced to move from their homes, I will focus on just a handful of people. I want to share with you some of the reasons I support keeping Murray Center open. My reasons have names and social security numbers, and I want you to meet some of them, although I am unable to use their names. Please be assured these are real people, and I want to share parts of their unique stories. I want to provide you with some insight into their lives so you can make your decision and recommendations based on some actual and very real information.

Human Being #1 is a healthy young woman in her 20's with a history of severe aggressive behavior. She came to live at Murray around the time she turned 21 years old. She had been in a CILA and her aggression was so severe she seriously injured a staff person. During her stay at this 8 bed CILA, Human Being #1's own safety was compromised by the actions of one of her peers. Once she arrived at Murray, her psychotropic medication was adjusted to the lowest effective dose, her behavior became stable, and she met the established criteria for community placement. An appropriate 3 bed CILA, very near to her parents was located and Human Being #1 was eased into it by visiting on several occasions for 1 to 5 nights at a time prior to her move. Information was provided and exchanged between the agencies. However, after her discharge from Murray, the information Murray staff had provided became skewed, misplaced, lost, or perhaps it was just ignored altogether. Human Being #1's behavior deteriorated, and within 6 months she was asked to leave her new home and that agency. When she returned to Murray Center she was 60 lbs heavier and heavily medicated. In that CILA, she apparently could not stop being aggressive to her peers and to the staff, and the resources available to them were simply not adequate.

Police departments don't have the training or supports to deal with people like Human Being #1 who are being aggressive. What would they do? Use a tazer? Arrest her? That doesn't even make sense! With crime and terrorism being so real, do we actually want our police departments to use their limited resources to be dealing with issues like this? Issues that could be better addressed with a Behavior Intervention Plan carried out by trained staff in a place like Murray Center? Doesn't that make more sense? What happens if the person gets arrested? They get locked up and fined by the court? How are they going to pay a fine with limited personal monetary resources? Use their SSI benefits? Is that what SSI should be used for? It's support money which comes from taxpayer, isn't it? Does that make any sense at all? After they pay a fine, then what? Does this solve anything? It sounds like a crazy situation, but in reality it does happen. I've seen it.

Another alternative is to seek help at the hospital emergency room. What can be done in an emergency room to stop aggressive behavior? Medication? That's not a good answer either. That's what community agencies have to rely on for assistance - because the community is not ready or equipped. In Human Being #1's history, she has injured people. While she lives at Murray, her parents are assured she is safe. They can also rest a little easier knowing she has a behavior plan that is followed consistently. There are supports in place, and a sufficient number of trained staff available at any given time to ensure Human Being #1 will not hurt anyone. Those same people also ensure no one hurts Human Being #1. How are community agencies staffed? Are there enough people available to actually intervene and prevent injuries? Are those people trained? Will those who earn minimum wage actually intervene at the risk of their own safety? Will they be around long enough to take the time to get to know Human Being #1 and be familiar enough with her to interpret her facial expressions or the look in her eyes? Will Human Being #1 end up in jail? Will she be tazed? Will she end up over-medicated? Will she end up far away from family and friends? Human Being #1 is a person. She's a citizen of Illinois. She has family. She has friends. She has a job. Murray Center, Kaskaskia Workshop, and Centralia are her community. Does anyone have the right to take that away from her?

Are you familiar with an agency called the Greywood Foundation? Remember the first death? Have you ever wondered what happened to some of those traumatized young men? Well, a few of them presently reside at Murray Center. I have no information about the experiences they've gone through other than the on-line newspaper articles I've read. From what I've gathered, those men who lived in that home routinely, yes, ROUTINELY, wrestled and beat on each other until one of them died. How very, very sad. I didn't know him, but I do know he was a person, a citizen of this state, and I'm 100% positive he did not deserve to die for lack of adequate supervision and well trained, ethical and mature staff. I realize that Greywood does not represent all community agencies, but even one death is too many. Yet, I believe there was another before that agency was shut down.

Human Being #2 is young, muscular, agile, and strong. He's just over 6 feet tall, and he's just as cute as he can be. He also has severe Autism. Human Being #2's mother, his primary caregiver, passed away several years ago, when this young man was only 10 years old. Since that time, this very unique and special individual has been moved around to various towns and various schools/programs ever since. We don't know of all the places he's lived and he can't tell us. Nor can he tell us what he's lived through. He did tell me once, "I was so scared at the hospital." This was a significant communication for Human Being #2, as his disability seldom allows him to put his thoughts together to make a meaningful statement. I have no details as to what scared him so badly, which hospital he's referring to, or what the circumstances were. All I could do was to reassure him he would be safe here, and I reassure him every day.

When Human Being #2 came to live at Murray Center, he was, for lack of better wording, a fighting machine. He bit, punched, kicked, and slapped. He spent hours in his bed, covered head to toe, shutting out the world. He distrusted EVERYONE. It's taken 2 years of gentle, consistent HUMANE supports, and Human Being #2 now blows kisses to the female staff who work with him daily. He is able to give and receive hugs. He is able to maintain eye contact briefly, and when he's happy he sings to himself as he works on his projects. He approaches people when he wants something instead of punching or kicking those who come too close to him. He can be redirected and he's begun to seem more relaxed. He attends Special Education classes at the High School, and his quality of life is dramatically improved. Human Being #2 is near and dear to my heart because I can see the intelligence in his eyes. It's not his fault he's been given these challenges in his life. He deserves to have some stability. He deserves to feel safe. He deserves to be happy. He deserves to finish school. He deserves to not be jerked around. Please do not disrupt Human Being #2's life any more. For Human Being #2's sake, please let the pursuit of community placement unfold naturally to allow him the time he needs for adjustments. To do otherwise is unnecessary cruelty.

Human Being #3 lived at Greywood as well. He's physically big and strong. At 6'4 or so, he is a powerful young bundle of anger. He struggles with bullying and pouting. He has a short fuse, and quickly resorts to physical violence - toward staff, toward peers, toward property. When he is angry, he's very destructive – and he seems to be angry a lot. Human Being #3 has severe aggression in his history, and he is very capable of causing serious injuries, possibly even death, to others. His behavior is a challenge even in this structured setting. Human Being #3 also has a lot of good qualities, but he's not ready to live in the community yet. Not at this point in his life. If his world can remain structured enough to keep him from reckless and dangerous behavior, he may eventually mature enough to outgrow some of his behaviors and some of that anger. But he's barely an adult, and maturity takes time. In the meantime, he needs to be kept safe and the people around him need to be kept safe. Human Being #3 needs the structure of Murray Center. Please allow him some time to grow up emotionally and reach a certain level of maturity before you force him back to the community where he's already been traumatized. Human Being #3 needs Murray Center and Human Being #3's family needs Murray Center.

Another young man I want to talk about is Human Being #4. Human Being #4 is in his early 20's, and came to Murray via the court system. He'd been living in a CILA until he assaulted a staff member with an object he used as a club. He was arrested, kicked out of his home, and jailed for 37 days. The court imposed a fine, and Human Being #4 was brought to live at Murray Center. Human Being #4 has ADHD. He's wiry, loud, bossy, unreasonable, impractical, and sometimes not redirect able. He's also polite, inventive, imaginative, and very sociable with an engaging smile. Human Being #4's very personality could make him an easy target for abuse or exploitation in an inadequately supervised setting. His father is a very ill, disabled single parent and is unable to provide a suitable home for Human Being #4. His sister has a young, very disabled child of her own. At best, his family is only able to provide minimal supports for him. If he were to move further away, those supports would come to a complete stop. How is that in Human Being #4's best interest? Human Being #4 has been referred for placement and has actually met with several providers. To date there have been no invitations for him to visit. CRA has actually referred him to the Chicago area, which seems like a great dis-service to him. This man has lived all his 20 something years within a 35-50 mile area in Southern Illinois, and he has friends he sees when he goes places as well as a family who spends time volunteering with him. However, most community agencies do not have the resources or staffing numbers to adequately provide for persons like Human Being #4. That's why he's at Murray Center to start with! Without adequate supervision Human Being #4 could easily turn into a homeless person or be convicted of a crime. He is his own guardian, but he continues to need guidance, training, supports. He needs Murray Center. The last thing he needs

is to move to Chicago and get lost, but that is a very real possibility.

Human Being #5 is a spunky little 70 year old woman. Like a lot of people her age, she has a very rigid routine that she follows. Schedule deviations cause her stress and anxiety. Every day as long as I've known her, as Human Being #5 gets home from work, she finds me wherever I am in the building simply to show me she has gum in her mouth. The gum was given to her to reward her for meeting a good behavior goal at work, and she's proud of it. I just love Human Being #5! She brightens my day. She doesn't tolerate anxiety well, and she will slap her own face so hard it's painful to witness. The solution to prevent her from slapping herself? It's simple! Remove the reason she's upset and don't give her a reason to be anxious! Human Being #5 has had visits to provider agencies. And she doesn't do well. For weeks after an upset like that, she will intermittently slap herself. Human Being #5 has intellectual challenges, but she knows she's safe at Murray Center. She's comfortable with the people she lives with, and she's happy. She doesn't have the cognitive skills to understand that some expert somewhere, who has never met her, thinks she should live somewhere else because it's in her best interest. She simply doesn't care what the experts say. I fear she will not tolerate change well if her home is taken away from her. At age 70, does she really deserve to be uprooted from her home, her job, her friends, her routine, her familiar people, her Murray Center family? I think not! Doesn't she deserve to feel comfortable and safe and be happy? Doesn't she deserve some security, some respect? She's a senior citizen and she's made it evident to those who know her and care about her that she's happy. Our country was founded on the belief that all citizens are created equal and we all have the same inalienable rights - one of which is the right to happiness. Human Being #5 has her happiness right here at Murray Center.

*This is a true development. One of this little woman's friends/peers (Lara) moved recently – in the CRA manner – which is: one day she's here, the next day she goes for a ride in a car and she's never seen or heard from again. There was no farewell party, no forwarding address, no celebration, no good byes. Human Being #5 is only minimally verbal, but she apparently watched and wondered for about a week, then she came up to me and said, "Lara. Where is she?" This interaction between HB 5 and myself made me stop to think about how it must look to the people left behind when someone disappears forever. CRA calls it transition. I believe the people living it see it differently. I'm afraid it reminds me of some of the sinister happenings involving history in Germany. I can certainly see reasons for HB #5 might be confused and afraid of this process.

When Human Being #6 came to Murray, she was quite simply, a mess. She was unable to function in any kind of normal way. She banged her head so severely with her knee that she still has a scar in the middle of her forehead. (Please don't mention it to her, as she is quite self-conscious about it.) Human Being #6 is a personable young woman with a complicated past. Initially she would sit on the floor under the table. She would absolutely not get into a vehicle, whether it was a car or bus. She wouldn't eat anything except pasta, and she weighed less than 90 lbs. Anything and everything was a stressor that triggered severe self injurious behavior and sometimes led to physical aggression. With gentle and consistent care and coaxing, the Murray staff worked diligently and eventually managed to build trust, implement some training, provide some therapy and drastically improve Human Being #6's quality of life. "It takes a village to raise a child." Human Being #6's family had been in such extreme crisis for so long - several years. Their 'village' just wasn't out there. They had sought help from many experts in many different cities. I don't even know all the places they drove to, all the hospitals they entered, all the doctors and therapists and experts they consulted. They simply could not get the help they needed until they came to Murray Center. This is where they found their 'village' - at Murray Center. There is no doubt in my mind that Murray Center saved their sanity and dramatically improved their lives. I saw the holes in the walls of the family home where Human Being #6 had beaten her head and forcefully thrown

her body! Can you even imagine living that way, watching your child's behavior deteriorate to that degree, and not being able to find effective help? I cannot. Human Being #6's mother says she used to spend hours laying over Human Being #6 to prevent her from injuring herself further until Human Being #6 could eventually calm down. No one, and I mean NO ONE, should have to live like that!!! Human Being #6 and her family needed Murray Center. They still need Murray Center. If Murray Center is not available, who will be there to help the next Human Being #6? What if that next Human Being #6 is your daughter, your grand-daughter, your niece? That's a very compelling reason to keep Murray Center open far into the future!! You should meet Human Being #6 now. She's a changed young lady, and we're all very proud of her. Some day she will be ready to move to the community. Human Being #6 needs for that to happen naturally, as she becomes ready, as she develops confidence. Working through some issues, particularly unspoken, private issues that have been internalized simply takes time. I fear she'll regress if the process is rushed.

We have another young man, I'll call Human Being #7 who was removed from his parents' home by the court system. They could not find needed resources in their surrounding geographical (metropolitan) area either. As a last resort, he was apparently locked away. Human Being #7's parents are decent people who care deeply about him. While it sounds inhumane, this was another family in crisis who did not have the assistance and resources they needed. They did what they had to do to keep him as safe as possible. By the way, Human Being #7 is doing well at Murray. He has autism, pica, and elopement behaviors. It is very likely he would endanger himself unless the environment he lives in is closely supervised. Is Human Being #7's community ready for him? Are there supports in place? It's only been 2 years since he moved here and supports weren't available at that time - and he's from a large city in northern Illinois, where one would assume those supports are plentiful and easy to locate. Hmmmm....

Human Being #8 has lived at Murray Center for over 40 years. She's been here since the 1960's when the trend was to put children like her in a place like Murray. She grew up here and she is easing into "senior-hood" here. She has a fairly rare degenerative condition that has taken a toll on her health. She has never been able to adapt well to change. I'm not sure any of us adapt as well in our 50's and 60's as we did in our teens and 20's - and Human Being #8 had problems even then. Human Being #8 has seen a lot of changes in her lifetime at Murray. A lot of people she's loved through the years have come and gone, and she clings to those she still has in her life. She needs multiple reassurances throughout her day that she will be 'taken care of'. She needs to feel protected and secure. Her Murray Center family members are very important to her - at times more important than her biological family. Her Murray family is there when she's going to sleep at night. Her Murray family is there when she gets up in the morning. Her Murray family is there every weekend and every holiday. We're there when she's sad or happy or worried or sick. We were there when she grieved her mother's death. Human Being #8 craves those familiar bonds. She has attended the same workshop, KWI, for well over 25 years. KWI is good to all their clients, but Human Being #8's KWI family ensures she is treated like a queen. Staff there make special allowances for Human Being #8 during Christmas shutdown and some holidays. They go out of their way to keep her happy. Someone will give up a few minutes or a few hours on their day off simply to come in to work and allow Human Being #8 to spend at least a few minutes at "work" so her routine is not disrupted too severely. She's the only client who gets to come to work on those days. Human Being #8 is personable and special to so very many people! She's somewhat of a local legend. Of course, the people who have known her for years and years also know she's likely to hit or slap herself, throw herself to the floor, strip naked, curse, and bang her head when she's upset. Human Being #8 has medical issues and sees several specialists. She has only 1 kidney, having lost the other years ago after suffering a medical emergency related to her condition. Human Being #8 is most assuredly pampered and spoiled, and the services provided for her are about as "individualized" as it gets anywhere! I fear for her health

if her life is disrupted. She has the right to be happy exactly where she is and with the people she loves. The stress related to a move away from her home, her work, her Murray family and her KWI family could very well cost her life. And that would be a tragedy.

Although I could tell you many more stories about the citizens of Illinois who live at Murray Center, I will provide one last story about a young man who lived here briefly in 2011. His story haunts me, although I'm certain he is loved at his new home.

Human Being #9 was 2 days past his 18th birthday when he was brought to Murray Center by staff from Streamwood Hospital. He'd been with them for 45 or so days, with this actually having been the second time he'd been admitted to that hospital. In Human Being #9's history, his family consisted of a single father and a grandmother. Human Being #9's father tried to send him to school but the school didn't really want him. Of course, he was likely a financial burden for a small struggling school district with limited resources. Human Being #9 engaged in aggressive behavior almost daily at school, and that caused him to be sent home. Human Being #9's father was unable to work because he couldn't find any help with his son. He couldn't leave him anywhere and had to keep him by his side. He tried to find resources without success. In desperation, the man even went so far as to take the boy to the local hospital emergency room and left him. That move backfired for him. The staff at the hospital called the police and threatened to have him arrested for abandonment. This family was in crisis and had no available community resources. Eventually, Human Being #9 injured his grandmother, rather severely and he was taken to Streamwood. Then he came to live at Murray. Human Being #9's only psychiatric diagnosis was autism. He was on several medications when he arrived. During his 6 month stay at Murray, we were able to adjust medications and discontinue some of them. If we'd had more time, I'm certain we could have reduced his meds further. We enrolled him in the Special Education classes at our high school, and Human Being #9 thrived! He so enjoyed going to school. He was so proud of himself. His ID Team felt very strongly that Human Being #9 deserved the opportunity to stay in school. After all, he'd missed so much already, what with having been sent home daily. Human Being #9's teacher reported how Human Being #9 would initiate the various daily routines in imitation of the teacher. You could tell by his body language that Human Being #9 was happy and he was proud of his accomplishments. It was heartwarming to see how well Human Being #9 was doing compared to what we knew of his history.

Well, SST was involved in this admission, and a provider was found. Staff at the new agency fell in love with Human Being #9, and he was quickly discharged without regard for his education or any other recommendation from Murray staff. At follow up visits, we saw Human Being #9 at his day program. He sat at a table in a big crowded room with his head down on the table. He had a notebook with him and he'd written his name on a few pages. The staff ratio in the room was probably 2:20 or so, and it was evident by the expression on Human Being #9's face that he wasn't having any fun. At 18 years old, he was most certainly the youngest person there. It was heartbreaking for me. Community placement is supposed to be better for the individual. It's supposed to meet their needs "better". Well, it certainly didn't look that way to me, and I'm not really sure Human Being #9 was convinced of it either. We saw Human Being #9 blossom and thrive at Murray. Then he moved to an agency where he had no one that would advocate for him to attend school in spite of him still being eligible for educational services. The 8 bed CILA that was determined to be appropriate for him by SST staff and his PAS agent is a home where Human Being #9 is the youngest person there. He lives in a home where his housemates are several bossy women who are 2-3 decades older than he is. He attends a day program where he's bored and unhappy. It just doesn't seem fair to Human Being #9. And it isn't right. In my heart, I believe Human Being #9's happiness was sacrificed. I believe he was pushed out of our SODC and rushed to the

first community placement located without regard to whether or not it was the best "fit".

I could go on and on and on to tell you stories about specific individuals who have passed through Murray Center, some briefly and some for a longer period of time. I could tell you success stories where we assisted people to develop their personal potential and move to community settings. I could also tell you additional stories of people who have suffered traumatic experiences in the name of community placement. If you want more information, please contact me and I'll go on. There are so many more stories to tell.

The point of sharing these stories is simply to relate to you that Murray Center IS important. Community alternatives are not always appropriate because many communities, even large metropolitan areas, are simply not ready to absorb those who have special needs. We provide vital services to people in need, to families in crisis. Our SODC is not the same "institution" of the past. Murray Center never was one of those places where anything like the horror stories of old have occurred. Through the years, as society has changed and adapted, so have the services at Murray. The people who live in Murray Center are important to those who work there and vice versa. We are not simply "staff", "residents", "co-workers", "peers". We are family and our lives are intertwined. Our relationships are important. They are real. How can anyone put a monetary value on that?

Do you realize how many lives will be directly affected if Murray Center is closed? (Note: Numbers from this original letter have changed already) 274 plus 547. That equals 841. If you consider each of those persons having only one significant person in their life, that makes it 1,682 people who will sharply feel the displacement. If only half the employees have one additional person in their lives, that is an additional 273 people. By my crude and very simplistic calculations, an extremely low and rough estimate of not less than 2,000 citizens will literally have their lives turned upside down.

The population of this town is less than 20,000 people even if you include the attached villages. A whopping 10% of our population will feel a significant, direct impact from the decision to close Murray Center!! That is simply unacceptable. I cannot even fathom how the rippling effect will be felt.

I have not even touched on the subject of how our Center provides learning opportunities for students. Students completing nursing programs, behavior analysis programs, child care programs, activity therapy programs, and social worker programs have all spent time at Murray, observing, interacting, learning things that can't be learned elsewhere. Murray provides opportunities for people who wish to volunteer. High school students and college athletes who volunteer at Murray are forever influenced by their experiences. You simply cannot assign a monetary value on that.

Murray Center is the only SODC in the state who can tout the fact that we make money. We make money and return it to the general revenue of the state! Is that not significant?? It sounds as if cost of operations isn't really a factor in this decision. The quality of our services isn't really a factor either. We have always had good results from Public Health Surveys. We have never had cause for the Department of Justice to enter our doors. Prior to this "closure process", we had never needed Equip for Equality to open a case here. Now I have to wonder what's changed so much other than the political atmosphere. What is the point of closing Murray? I'm afraid I just don't see anything rational about it. I fail to see a reasonable justification for uprooting the lives of 2,000 people.

I certainly hope you realize that people do not come to live at Murray Center because it's a goal of theirs. Parents don't bring their children to Murray eagerly hoping to get a bed. This is never their first choice.

Rather, it is their last resort. People come to live at Murray because they cannot find adequate services elsewhere. They come because they have no choice. However, they stay because they DO have a choice. And they've chosen Murray Center.

Often, the parents who must leave a child of any age at Murray are also traumatized, sometimes more than their (usually adult) child who needs the care, treatment, intervention, and supports. Some people come to live at Murray after suffering a debilitating illness or a life altering accident. The stories are varied. None of these people, residents or their parents and family members, have asked to be in the position they are in. Fate and circumstance has already given them difficult situations and challenges. It is merely by the grace of God that each of us has not had to make the difficult decision those parents have had to make. It is by the grace of God that we have not found ourselves in the position to be a benefactor of services such as those Murray provides. What would you do if you were? How would you feel? Where would you go? Think about it. Does anyone have the right to toy with these people's lives, with their homes, with their jobs, with their relationships? It's a pretty sad day if the answer to that is yes.

At Murray Center we provide quality services for citizens who face difficult issues. We do what we do, and we do it well. We meet the challenges we are faced with. We adapt to changes. And we manage to somehow achieve seemingly impossible goals. We're proud of what we do, and we get to work with some amazing and awesome people as we do it (some who live at Murray and some who work at Murray). Please allow us to keep doing what we do. People's lives most certainly do depend on it.

Sincerely,

Margie Barton

July 17th, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in regards to the potential closing of Murray Center. I was born and raised in Centralia Il. Murray Center was a place where many college students had their first experience of care giving and led to many of them going on to health care professions. Currently my two cousins work at Murray Center and have devoted their careers to taking care of developmentally challenged people. The thought of closing the facility especially after whet happened in Jacksonville with all due respect is lute crest. Why would you want to close down a facility and risk loosing all the expertise you have in caring for men, women and children of this facility? Not just any one can take proper and professional care of them. My cousins have shown how devoted they are to their residents. I can tell by just talking to them. Further more their own lives as with many others would be incredible disrupted. They can't just transfer somewhere else. They have family in Centralia that they have built their lives around. Not to mention the overall effects economically to an already struggling population.

You prompt attention to this matter and support is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. Byrne

# Please Keep Murray Center Open

1 message

**Cheryl Williams** < cheryl17_69@msn.com> Sun, Jul 21, 2013 at 6:00 PM
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

My name is Cheryl Williams and I have been a Mental Health Technician at Murray Center for over 10 years. The thought that the people that I help take care of losing their home is unthinkable and just wrong. I have worked on two different Cottages and three different shifts during my time here so far. I have worked the other cottages when needed so I have experienced the different levels of our residents and the care that they need. The fact that they would have to call somewhere else home after living at Murray for so long is unethical. Some have only lived at Murray and have for many years. Some since the place opened when they were just children.

As a Technician, we do everything from bathing and dressing to changing their attends and wiping their noses if needed. Some can do this themselves but still need a little Guidance and help on different tasks of daily living. We learn everything from knowing when they are sick and can't tell us to knowing when a behavioral incident is about to happen and how to prevent the episodes from escalating just by using the right words or actions to do so.

The residents of Murray are people like you and me and not a piece of property that gets to go to the highest bidder or who has the most money to build a Cila Home. They have family and for those who don't we are their family and they trust us to take the best care of them possible. There are some that require lots of medical attention and some that have many behavioral issues and shouldn't live away from Murray for many reasons. They shouldn't be dropped off to be taken care of by people who don't know their wants and needs. We should be the ones to take care of them, the ones who know them best.

Closing the Center would be a drastic loss to the economy. The businesses would suffer more than they have already during these hard economic times. Many of us that work there have families and just can't uproot them to transfer elsewhere. Me included....

Please leave Murray Center off the closure list and help us continue doing what we do best and that is providing the care and guidance needed for their daily living. Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Williams

Dear Judge Aspen

I'm writing to ask your support in keeping Murray Center open. I have a nephew who calls Murray home and has for 18 years, I have a brother who resides in a group home, I have an ex-sister-in-law who is mentally ill and resides in a group facility and I am a critical care nurse. I have seen some of the problems that have occurred in the group home where my brother lives when one of the residents with behavioral issues becomes violent and uncontrollable and I have seen the multiple times that my sister in law attempted to stay in a group home only to become more ill and violent and needed to return to the hospital. On the other hand I have seen how happy and safe my nephew is at Murray. He functions at the level of a 9 month old and requires feeding, bathing, toileting etc. At Murray he has the freedom and the space to walk around, visit other residents (he has his favorites) and is cared for by consistent compassionate staff. As a nurse I know how difficult it can be to identify problems in patients who are unable to communicate verbally. Because they know my nephew so well, the staff at Murray have picked up on symptoms or problems before my nephew became very ill. This is not possible in a group home where staff come and go frequently and are not trained professionals.

Residents at Murray participate in the community as their level of development allows, going to church, restaurants, shopping and when able can attend the work shop.

Our most vulnerable citizens deserve to be cared for in the safest environment possible which is not the same thing for each person. For some a group home in the community is an ideal home. For others, an institution with structure, a safe familiar environment and consistent caring staff is many times the best option and the right thing to do for these individuals. And these people feel safer and happier in this type of environment. A less structured environment is very frightening for them.

Thank you for your time

Mary Collins

812-664-2477

July

24, 2013

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

Over eleven years ago my husband and I made the very difficult decision to send our son, Andrew, to live at Murray Center. Andy was nearly fourteen at the time. He is severely autistic and at the time was extremely aggressive. After being turned down by all community and private residential programs, Murray Center became our only option. Since then we have never regretted our decision.

Andy has been well cared for, educated, and behaviors have been managed. He has grown both physically and emotionally. Andy is now 25 years old and attends a career development program on campus called Career Beginnings. He attends many off campus activities such as picnics at Carlyle Lake, the Centralia Halloween Parade. He is well known in many of the restaurants in town. He swims at the campus pool and visits the community recreation center regularly. We visit Andy every weekend and he comes home about every 6 weeks for a weekend visit. After the second night home he always asks to go back to the cottage.

Andy will never be able to be married and have children of his own. He does have the next best thing, his brothers on his cottage and a Murray Center staff that loves him like their own. The 24 hour nursing it provides gives my family and I peace of mind that his health needs are being well managed.

The Murray Center has a very good public health record and operates in the black budget wise. With the federal matching dollars this center continues to make money for the state. The governors proposed decision to close Murray is careless, thoughtless, and just plain wrong!

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for hearing our case. Save Murray Center!

Sincerely,

Denise Schoppet

200 Meadow Dr.

Bethalto, Il.

62010

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

# letter to judge Aspen

1 message

**Sara Masterson** <sbam1978@yahoo.com> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 1:14 PM
Reply-To: Sara Masterson <sbam1978@yahoo.com>
To: rita winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen

Hello my name is Sara Holtgrave and I have been employed at Murray Center for 12 years. Not only do I work at Murray Center I have a loved one that calls Murray Center home. In my 12 years I have seen many individuals come and go. Most of the time when individuals leave Murray Center to make their home some where else it is at the family's request so they may be closer to their families. Some individuals that leave will make their way back to Murray Center because they were not ready to be moved out to another home. Other individuals have moved out and thrived living in the community. Those numbers are small we have many individuals that have made Murray Center home from many years some for as long as 40 years. Many of our individuals that now call Murray Center home have tried to live in the community and the community failed them. About 11 years ago Murray Center received some new admissions from Lincoln Developmental Center. One of the guys that moved into my cottage had been moved from home to home until Lincoln became his home, then Lincoln was closed and Murray became his home. When he first arrived you could tell that he had not been shaved in a while, he did not trust staff, and he was scared. With in 9 months he was a totally different person. He did not mind grooming, would grab my hand and ask me to sit by him, and would participate in group activities. His quality of life had gained so much because of the care and treatment if received from the staff at Murray Center. Another individual we received from Howe is now a great story to be told. He came to make Murray Center his home about 3 years ago and was skin and bones and was leery of staff when they came close to him. He would stand in the corner and chew on his fingers so bad that his finger nails were infected. Howe had just recently pulled all of his teeth and put in a feeding tube because he regurgitated all day long. His skin was always bleeding and scratched up from him digging his skin He is now in his weight range, his fingers are hardly ever in his mouth, and he loves to be around people. He is always smiling and clapping and welcomes all the attention he receives. These are just 2 stories that I experienced first hand the care and transformation of an individual when they make Murray Center a home. My loved one is one that has called Murray Center for almost 40 years. He is close to his mother that is in her 70's and the rest of his family. As his mother gets older it would be harder for her to drive any distance to be able to visit with him. He has very bad seizures and has a bad case of PICA. PICA is where he would eat anything that he can get his hands on whether it is edible or not. He requires to be in view of staff at all times for his safety. He even wears cloth diapers because he will eat them plastic ones. He can not live in a CILA home where most of the time there is not sufficient staff on duty to ensure the safety of the individuals. I have worked at a CILA and am not putting them down, they are fantastic for the higher functioning individuals that do not require total assistance in every thing required to live a productive safe life.

July 19, 2013

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen:

I am writing to express why it is essential to the residents and community of Centralia, Illinois, that Warren G. Murray Developmental Center remain open.

Not only does the Murray Center provide employment to over 550 men and women, it also serves as the home to more than 275 severely developmentally disabled individuals, many of whom cannot function on their own or without intensive round the clock care which the devoted and reliable employees have provided for over 45 years. The families of the residents depend on Murray Center to care for their loved ones because they are incapable and/or unequipped to do so themselves. If there were sufficient community-based resources for these developmentally disabled residents, many Murray residents would already be using them.

For most, if not all of these residents, it takes a very long time to become comfortable and develop trust for their caretakers (the employees) and surroundings at Murray Center. I am familiar with this because my employer has a son that has lived at Murray Center for 25 years and he seems happy to see her when she picks him up for an outing; however, he is even happier to return to Murray Center because that is home to him. It doesn't make any sense to take away everything these residents have known because of a budget crisis.

Please keep Murray Center open.

Thank you,
Sharon Timmermann
Aviston, IL

7/22/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:

Provider Magazine (a leading long term care industry/trade magazine) published an article entitled "Large ICFs/MR Being Phased Out" by Meg LaPorte. This eight page featured article focused on when the State of Virginia was transitioning to a Home Community Based Services (HCBS) care delivery system for the developmentally disabled.

Why is the State of Illinois experiencing problems with their current transition plan? What is the State of Illinois doing or not doing that is causing this negative response to their transition plan? The probably answers are:

> The first reason is because the State of Illinois made a decision to close state operated developmental centers to reduce state expenditures. They decided to forget about their moral responsibility to their most vulnerable citizens. It was a pure economic decision not an informed governance decision.
>
> The second reason is because most of the residents residing in State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) have varied and complex medical/health care needs. They have aged in place over the years and in addition to their severe and profound mental age/functional level they have acquired additional medical/health care needs. SODCs currently meets these needs.

Virginia was faced with this same problem in 1996. They determined that "almost half (residents) have two or more additional conditions and nearly all need help walking, toileting, and eating."

The pertinent question is – how did these two states approach this same issue/problem?

The State of Virginia recognized this medical/health care problem and included a component in their transition plan. They established Regional Community Services Centers (RCSCs). The article states:

1. "Started in 1996, the RCSDs provides specialized medical, behavioral, dental, and respite services to individuals living in the community who have complex medical and behavioral needs."
2. "the Virginia's Department of Mental Retardation, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services considers RCSDs to be a key player in the transition of clients to the community as the centers downsize."
3. "In Virginia, there are services available to people in institutions that are not available to people in the community". "The RCSCs will help bridge this gap".

The Illinois Department of Human Service's (DHS) has totally ignored these medical/health care needs in their transition plan. The current plan does not provide services for these medical needs. There is no formal care delivery infrastructure in place to address these medical/health care needs. The plan appears to just "dump" the residents into the community setting without adequate support services.

Why isn't the State of Illinois being held accountable for a responsible transition plan? If their intent is to close SODCs they need to ensure their community model can need all *current* resident's care needs.

Gerald Haar - On Behalf of Brian Haar - Resident of the Murray Center

7/20/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:

The primary question is: did the Governor, his small group of advisers, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) truly understand the total care needs (particularly the health/medical needs) of the residents living in State Operated Developmental Centers (SODPs).

In the health care field (hospitals, nursing homes, physician office, state operated DD facilities, etc.) the delivery of care process begins with an assessment of care needs. After this process, a plan of care to address the care needs is developed. Then the care staff implements the plan.

DHS did the direct opposite. This would be like your personal physician prescribing a treatment plan for your illness without asking about your symptoms first. The Governor and DHS decided on the care delivery model *first.* They recommended that the State of Illinois utilize only *one care model – a* 2 or 4 bed community house. When they decided on the delivery model *first* they completed the process backwards! It defies logic! They were determined to force a round peg into a square hole.

If care needs were assessed first they would have found residents in SODCs do not have just basic care needs but more varied complex health/medical care needs and behavioral issue needs. The following are questions someone should ask DHS:

> How can an *effective* care delivery model be recommended unless the residents needs are assessed first? Why did DHS hire a outside contractor to do these assessments after the fact?
>
> How can the necessary care resources be determined unless you understand the care needs first? For example, what staff skill levels are required? What care equipment is necessary? What ancillary support services are needed? A care delivery model/system should be developed *after* the care needs are determined.
>
> Why did DHS discharge residents from the Jacksonville facility into this inadequate care model/system when so many health care professionals have communicated their concerns?

There is not a daily medical care component in the community model except to take the resident to the hospital emergency room once the resident's condition becomes serious enough. Think about the pain and suffering a resident will have to incur until the conditions warrants an ER visit? This will subject these developmental disabled persons to unnecessary pain and suffering because the staff is not trained or skilled to interpret resident's symptoms and many of these residents have difficulty communicating their medical condition. This is the reason why SODCs have a medical care component with 24/7 nursing services. This component is an *absolute necessity* to care for heavy health/medical care needs.

Considering the large number of residents DHS wants to discharge over the next several years there will be public scandal. The scope is too large and the services to be rendered too inadequate.

Sincerely,

Gerry Haar – On behalf of Brian Haar - Resident of Murray Center

7/18/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:
My son Brian was born with a diagnosis of Down's Syndrome. He now is an adult with a mental age of 17 months. I will not list all of his health care needs but believe me they are extensive. He is total care.

Many of the residents in State Operated Developmental Centers have similar mental ages and and care needs and have lived at their respective facility for 10, 20, 30, 40+ years. This is their home. If they are moved to a community setting it will have a great impact on their daily quality of life. To understand how great this impact will be you need to understand the mental and emotional profile of a typical developmentally disabled person.

Due to their developmental disability they are not flexible to environmental change. They have a hard time adjusting to change. Their daily routine of living is set in stone. Their lives are very structured. They were created by God to be this way. A simple change in their daily routine is very difficult and upsetting to them.

I cannot imagine how upsetting it will be for Brian and the other residents to be placed in a totally strange environment. To have a special needs resident move to a community setting would be traumatic. Most of them live only within the *current moment.* They understand only the current moment. However, they will know their life is different. They cannot rationalize or understand the "why" of what is happening to them. They will be instantly confused when confronted with something they do not know or understand. They are helpless because they do not know how to adjust to their situation. They will not know how to act. They will not know how to defend themselves. They are truly defenseless against things they are not accustomed to.

If they are confronted with a lot of changes at one time they will experience "mental anguish". I chose the word "anguish" very carefully because it defines a state of pain, distress, anxiety and sorrow. This will be their frame of mind. They will be upset, agitated and unhappy for a long period of time because they cannot understand "what" is happening to them. In most cases their reaction will be expressed as negative behavior. Their mental state of mind can get "stuck" in a negative frame of mind for an extended period of time. They are unable to move on easily. This mental anguish may not last for only a few weeks or months. This mental anguish could last years for some of them. A single change in their daily routine affects their quality of life.

What do you believe their quality of life will be when they are placed in an entirely new environment where their *entire* daily routine would be turned up side down? Their future life will be a private internal hell and they will not be able to cope with.

Don't all developmentally disabled residents deserve to live within an environment where they feel safe and are assured that all their care needs are met? The Murray Center and the other state operated facilities is truly their home where they feel safe and comfortable. Staying in their home is essential for them to enjoy their limited life.

Gerald Haar - Father of Brian Haar / Resident of the Murray Center

7/19/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:

From a resident and parent perspective, what are the most significant issues pertaining to the closure of State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs). The following issues question the current Department of Human Service's (DHS) Transition Plan.

* DHS's statewide transition plan does not provide residents with a future care delivery system where medical/health and behavioral care needs are met within a safe living environment. The current transition plan only provides for custodial care to mild or moderate disabled residents.

* The current transition plan doesn't provide for adequate direct nursing care services. There isn't even a 24/7 medical oversight component except to take residents to the hospital emergency room. If residents required 24/7 nursing services for years is it not logical they will require the same services in the future. The current transition plan ignores these type of care needs. Does this satisfy the State of Illinois obligation to residents with medical and behavioral care needs?

* Current state regulations allow for "community based facilities" to be state monitored much less than SODCs and other long term care nursing homes. SODCs and nursing home must adhere to several very comprehensive inspections each year. Community based facilities are inspected once every three years that covers a lesser scope of regulatory criteria. How does lesser monitoring provide for greater resident protection of abuse and neglect?

* The data below was published on the *Department of Human Services* (DHS) website in July 2012. This data is based on DHS's annual resident testing results.

| Facility | Census | Mental Retardation Range | # Profound / Severe |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fox | 113 | Profound 88% M.R. Range | 90.4 |
| Jacksonville | 163 | Profound 43% - Severe 20% | 102.6 |
| Kiley | 211 | Severe to Profound M.R. Range - 82.5% | 174.0 |
| Luderman | 407 | Severe to Profound M.R. Range - 76.6 % | 31.7 |
| Mabley | 92 | Severe to Profound M.R. Range - 72% | 66.2 |
| Murray | 270 | Severe to Profound M.R. Range - 84% | 226.8 |
| Shapiro | 543 | Severe to Profound M.R. Range – 70% | 380.1 |
| | ---- | | |
| | 1799 | *Weighed* Average of Severe to Profound –1351 Residents or 75.1% | |

The transition plan's community care delivery model is designed to care for more highly functioning individuals (mild or moderate mental age/functional levels). There is a difference in the care delivery requirements. Severe and profound residents will require more and difference care resources. With 75.1 % of all SODCs residents at the severe or profound levels does it not require common sense to at least question if the community care model will be effective?

* A small percentage of residents in SODCs may be able to function within the community model at this time. However, as these residents age in place within their community setting their physical and mental capacity will decline like all senior citizens. How will the community care model address these additional and different care needs in the future. What will happen to all these residents at that time? Who will care for them? This is one of the purposes of SODCs.

Gerald Haar - On Behalf of Brian Haar - Resident of Murray Center

7/19/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:

Like many residents in State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) my son Brian has aged in place over the thirty five+ years he has lived at the Murray Center. His care needs have changed. As a developmentally disabled person ages (like we all do) he/she acquires additional health/medical related care needs along with his/her disability needs. The current SODCs delivery of care system offer both developmental programming and additional nursing services to address these types of aging needs.

The Governor, his small group of advisers, and the Department of Health Services (DHS) believe these type of heavy health/medical care needs can be cared for in two or four bed residential community house settings. Their proposed community care delivery model does not offer a comprehensive care delivery system approach that will effectively deliver the care needed by most SODCS residents. Their model promotes a concept of a *One Size Fits All* delivery system which cannot meet the needs of residents with different degrees and levels of health/medical care needs. The basic premise of this one size fits all concept is much too restrictive. The high percentage of residents residing at SODCs has complex health/medical care needs. The SODCs residents require a wide range of medical services of which their model cannot deliver.

In other words, the community model offers basic custodial type services; not the needed health/medical services. Their custodial model does not even have a medical oversight component. Day by day access to the necessary medical professional expertise of a nurse or certified nurses aide is not included in their model. If the necessary oversight and medical resources are not available these medical care needs cannot be delivered.

In the final analysis, the proposed two or four bed community care model can effectively serve slightly to moderate developmentally disabled persons; however, their proposed model is an inadequate system for the many residents in SODCs with heavy health/medical care needs.

Sincerely,

Gerry Haar - On behalf of Brian Haar - Resident of the Murray Center

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: MURRAY CENTER

It has been very upsetting for me to learn that Murray center is being considered for closure. I have a nephew who needs this kind of care desperately. His mother is 88 years of age and no longer able to care for him. He is over 6 feet with the mentality of an 18 month old. What will become of him?

Betty Gazzini
3713 Charleston Lane
Birmingham, AL 35216

Honorable Judge Aspen,

My name is Wade Larson and I am the Executive Vice President of the Illinois Federation of Public Employees (IFPE), Local 4408, which is part of the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). I also work for the Illinois Department of Human Services at Elgin Mental Health Center and have for over eighteen years. I am writing to oppose the closure of Murray center.

In my position with the IFPE, Local 4408 I represent the Security Officers at Murray center along with Security Officers at all the other DHS facilities. Naturally you would expect someone with my position to oppose the closure of a state run facility, but let me tell you why I am really writing. I have had the opportunity to visit state facilities across Illinois and have a little different perspective being a state employee myself.

The thing that makes Murray center different than any other state facility that I have ever been to is its employees. From the time you walk in you can feel the difference. The employees care not only about each other; they are passionate about the work that they do. The AFT just concluded a campaign entitle "I Make a Difference". The staff of Murray Center makes a difference in their patient's lives every day they come to work. Our current campaign is "Work That Matters" and I cannot think of work that matters more than the work being performed here at Murray Center. They service of of the most challenging populations that the State of Illinois has; people with developmental disabilities. They do it with a caring attitude that is rarely seen in state government. As a father myself, if one of my children had been born with a developmental disability I would want them at a place like Murray center.

I know that the main concern isn't about the people who work at a facility, or even the economic impact that closure would have on a community like Centralia. The main concern is the impact that closure would have on the people that we are serving. As I have seen over and over with DHS, most of their plans never seem to work out the way that they had anticipated.

Part of my job is to take DHS patients to visit community placement facilities. The mass storage of people at these facilities is certainly less that desirable. We have had several of our consumers even refuse placement at some of these facilities. When the Ligas v. Maram lawsuit settlement was announced, I knew that some facilities would be

slated to close. The truth is the State of Illinois is not equipped to provide or monitor residential living arrangements for all the patients that DHS currently serves. This was made evident by recent news where the state monitors watching a troubled facility in the Chicago area were kicked out of it. A facility where there have been patient on patient assaults, rape, and even deaths. The oversight is currently not in place to adequately monitor all these locations. To place our most vulnerable citizens at one of these facilities is inexcusable. We all know that if we mandate this closure, someone will build a facility to house the displaced patients, but the question we have to ask ourselves "Is this the type of place we want to put somebody?" Until there are oversights in place to protect the citizens that we serve then I say the answer is "No". Citizens need a place not only to live in, but to thrive in. A place like Murray Center has shown us all that it is. We shouldn't even be discussing closing Murray Center; we should be talking about how to fund it. It's hard to imagine what Murray Center would be like today if we had fully funded it all along. I'm not sure how the employees could have done a better job, but I'm also sure that they do, because striving to provide the best service is what they are all about.

In closing I'd like to say that if we close Murray Center, those we serve will certainly be worse off, but so will we all.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wade Larson,
Executive Vice President,
IFPE Local 4408

July 19, 2013

I have worked as a registered dietitian at Murray Center since 1997. Since my first day here, I have been impressed by the quality of care and compassion that the direct care staff and professional staff provide to the residents at Murray. I have often heard staff refer to a loved resident as their "son" or "daughter".

The majority of residents that live here have medical or behavioral concern that cannot be adequately addressed in the community. At Murray, there is 24 hour, 7 day a week nursing care provided with a physician on staff. The ancillary services such as nutrition, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and activity therapy are all available with immediate referral to these on-duty staff. CILA homes, group homes, or nursing homes often only offer these services by contract so they are limited in the number of hours these services are available.

As a dietitian available at Murray full time, I am notified by concerned staff quickly when any resident has issues such as poor appetite, weight loss, medical problems affecting diet, food intolerances, or food preferences. I am able to assess problems shortly after I am notified and dedicate as much time as needed to correct these problems and follow up as often as needed. At facilities where services are provided by contract, the problem may not be addressed by the appropriate professional until it is that professional's scheduled day of the week or month to visit the facility. They are also limited to the amount of time they can bill for their services, even if the issue requires more time. Since the other professional staff at Murray are readily available, I can consult with them as needed to address problems that require more than one area of expertise.

As the population at Murray ages, they have more health concerns that require special dietary concerns as well as other services. Many of residents have medical concerns such as diabetes, hypertension, renal disease, constipation, osteoporosis, hypothyroidism, autism, AIDS, heart disease, dysphagia, gastroesophageal reflux disease, and congestive heart failure. Due to these and other health issues or effects of medication, many residents have problems with inappropriate weight gain or loss which requires assistance to prevent or correct.

Many types of special diets are provided for residents to ensure their safety and best health. We provide four different types of diet consistency to allow residents to have the safest consistency for them to chew and swallow. Many residents are unable to safely swallow thin liquids without the danger of aspiration pneumonia, so we provide liquids that are thickened to three different consistencies based on what is safest for that person.

(over)

We also provide high-calorie, reduced calorie, low-fat, bland, diabetic, low sodium diets, small frequent meals, low cholesterol, low phosphorus, low calcium, high fiber, various allergies, and renal diets. With each type of diet provided, food preferences and intake are closely monitored. Tube feedings are provided for the residents that are unable to safely eat.

As the dietitian, I do a full assessment on each resident annually with a follow up assessment quarterly. As needed, I follow-up with residents' intake, weights or other concerns on a monthly, weekly or daily basis as needed.

My main concern about the threatened closure of Murray Center is the safety and well being of the 240 people who live here and call this their home. This has been home to many of them for over forty years. It has been heartbreaking to work with residents that ask me if their home is really going to be closed and share with me their fear of where will they have to go or who will take care of them if Murray isn't here.

If Murray closed, 550 employees would lose their jobs, and it would be difficult for them to find new jobs in an area that already has high unemployment. The effects of these lay-offs would be felt in many of the surrounding counties, since the money that these people spend in the community would be gone. Many small businesses may be unable to remain open do to the loss of business.

Please consider what is in the best interest of the people who live at Murray Center.

Submitted by:

Tracy Kiselewski, Registered Dietitian
2781 N. Spruce Lane
Waltonville, IL 62894

**brenda rowcliff** < browcliff889@att.net>
Reply-To: brenda rowcliff <browcliff889@att.net>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Sat, Jul 20, 2013 at 8:26 PM

Dear Judge Aspen

I would like to express my concern involving the proposed closure of Murray Center. The residents there are our communities weakest and most vulnerable citizens . I fear for their health and safety, if this should take place. It is their home and the only home some of them have ever known. These individuals depend on the staff, who they know as their friends, for their total care. I believe the stress put on them would be to much for them to handle. There have been some individuals already moved away from their home and have passed away. I also fear that some of them may become homeless. I can't see this as being fair to anyone, especially to our very own handicapped Illinois residents.

I also don't believe that the decision to close Murray Center was made with careful consideration. Murray Center has one of the newer buildings and is in good, clean, operable condition. Murray is among the top rated facilities in Illinois. Murray has never been on the list for decertification. There have been no deaths nor major accidents at Murray. There are other facilities that the same can't be said for. I feel that closing Murray Center is a totally wrong decision.

Then there is the condition that this closure would leave our community and all surrounding communities in. It would be a devastating effect on the economy to all southern Illinois. I can't see anything positive in this plan and hope you decide to KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN. In behalf of myself and the residence who live at Murray,, We Thank You Sincerely Brenda Rowcliff

Gmail by Google

# Murray Center

**Juanita Fox** <foxy535@frontier.com> Sat, Jul 20, 2013 at 10:05 AM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com

I am a 78 year old woman who has lived in the state of Illinois all her life. Recently I had the opportunkity to visit Murray Center with a friend who has a son in his 40's that has lived there most of his life. Basically this is the only home he has known. He has to be lifted from bed into his wheelchair and back to bed at night. He can not speak and when his mother spoke to him he cooed like a baby. On my visit I several other patients similar to Kevin's condition. They were all being given loving care, the patients were clean and looked well cared for. After visiting Murray Center with my friend I learned that I have a friend that lives in Olney and her 45 year old daughter has also lived at Murray Center all her life from age 5. This is the only home these children and I call them that because that is what they are even though they are over 40 years old would die of fear and neglect if they were to be moved into a regular nursing home. I have visited many nursing homes in my area and even though they are fine facilities they are not prepared for this type of patient ! ! !

From what I have learned Murray Center is financially sound, so what is Gov. Quinn's reason for closing this facility other than insuring his own pay check ! ! !

Juanita Fox

# e-mail for Honorable Judge Aspen

**Anita R. Becherer** <arbpfb@msn.com> Sat, Jul 20, 2013 at 4:47 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

To Honorable Judge Aspen

I am the 89 year old Mother, on a walker, of a multi handicapped 54 year old son. Gregg is the youngest of our four children. My husband is deceased.

Gregg entered Lincoln SODC at the insistence of his medical team at age 4 in 1963 and at age 7 Gregg was transferred to the W G Murray Center in Centralia. Centralia is only a 100 mile round trip from our home, which I have made weekly and many times much more, ever since.

Gregg has cerebral palsy - spastic diplegia- visually impaired - cannot walk - has no receptive and expressive language and short attention span.

Gregg uses his wheelchair to ambulate - has some transferability - needs staff to assist him for bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating. Gregg has limited socialization skills - prefers to manipulate a ball of wooden spools that he has tied together with shoestrings.

After Kevin Caseys visit to Murray and the MPA meeting at which he stressed over and over again that the Murray Center would be closed no matter what we did and that our residents would be placed in a two or four bed facility in the community, in which I do not think Gregg could survive, I was offered a placement in a 100 bed ICFDD in my home town of Swansea. This Specialized Living Center was one of six built at the time I was on the State Board of the ARC. I was instrumental in having it built here. The SLC Board made the offer in appreciation of the many years it took to get it up and running. I met with my children and we finally all agreed since it was only five minutes from my home we would accept their generous offer.

The placement did not work out - even with Murray and KWI workshop making many visits endeavoring to help in any way they could.

By the time Gregg failed - the CRA had moved into Murray, and no one could return, nor any new placements made. I, by the grace of the Good Lord, was then offered an opening at Bryan Manor, another 100 bed ICFDD in Centralia where he is currently residing, and Gregg could then return to his old workshop KWI - where he has been a happy client since 1987.

I have dedicated my life to the betterment of these residents but my days are numbered also. I firmly believe "ONE SETTING DOES NOT FIT ALL" I have been at Murray since its first administrator and know well - Murray has come a long way.!!!! . We, the MPA, which I was also instrumental in its inception, are fighting desperately to keep Murray open and operating. Murray is needed in Southern Illinois as a residential center and a resource center for all the community settings.

Murray, highly accredited, newest in the state, with its seven 100 bed homes and beautiful 133 acre setting, could not be in a better community than Centralia. Without a doubt, the residents are members of the community. Centralia is Murray and Murray is Centralia!!!!!

I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT MURRAY REMAIN OPEN!!!!

To Rita Winkler

Judy Sherwin, Attorney at Law
Shefsky and Froelich
111 E. Wacker
Chicago, Illinois 60601

July 20, 2013

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am writing to seek your attention to the matter of keeping Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois open and operational for the care of large numbers of severely disabled persons desperately in need for loving, humanitarian care presently being provided by trained, competent, compassionate staff at this facility.

I am a retired physician very familiar with the physical and emotional needs of persons with developmental disabilities, as well as the needs of their families. In addition, having grown up in a family with two severe developmentally disabled children, a sister born with "Littles " Disease, the most severe form of cerebral palsy, and a brother born with profound mental retardation, I have first-hand knowledge of the life-time agonies, frustrations, guilt, anger, desperate love and the profound emotional, physical and social impact on these families.

The initial upheaval of families no longer able to adequately care for their loved ones requiring transfer to Murray Center, for example, is in itself, catastrophic. Disruption of the stability of those residents, as well as their loved ones, in moving the residents from Murray Center has proven to rekindle unacceptable agonies and real questions about quality of care for families and their loved ones.

We have observed these agonies in our community since the decision was made to close Murray Center. It is my fond hope and my plea to return this issue to some sanity, continue the superior care at Murray Center in Centralia, Illinois, fulfill our obligations to humanity and continue to serve our people of Illinois the best way possible.

KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN FOR THE PEOPLE!

Dee C. Boswell, M. D.

This is copy of letter I sent to Judy Sherwin after I spoke with her —

Dee

# MURRAY CENTER NEEDS TO STAY OPEN

1 message

**Toni Conrad** < toniconrad@live.com> Fri, Jul 19, 2013 at 12:02 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Honorable Judge Aspen:

I am a resident of Clinton County and our family in past years have had personal experiences with Murray Center. Our mentally disabled nephew (now deceased) several years ago attended activities provided by Murray Center and was also a resident at Murray Center while his parents were away. It was our experience that Murray Center provided the health care needs of our nephew and also provided a comfort to his parents knowing that while they were away and unable to be with their son, that he was being properly cared for by capable and friendly staff.

The residents at Murray Center need this facility to remain open. Not only is Murray Center home to its residents but for some it provides a bonding experience between residents and gives the residents a place of purpose and being part of a community. In addition, Murray Center provides the residents' families comfort in knowing that their loved ones are being cared for with the utmost dignity and quality possible.

For the sake of the residents and their families - PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP MURRAY CENTER!!!!! This facility is the lifeline for the residents and their families. If you look at photos of residents at Murray Center - their smiles speak volumes!!!!!

Thank you for your time.

Toni Conrad

P.O. Box 371

Phone 618-526-8178
Fax 618-526-2118

WHITNEY H. KAMPWERTH
*Attorney at Law*

Law Office of Marsha D. Holzhauer
276 North Main St.
Breese, Illinois 62230-0371

July 19, 2013

RE: Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen:

As a lifelong resident of Clinton County, I always knew of Murray Center, and I had a picture in my head of what it was like on the inside. I pictured a building similar to a hospital, a quiet place, with not much joy or excitement.

Just this year, I had the pleasure of visiting Murray Center and meeting some of the residents. My employer's son, Darby, is a resident on Apple Cottage. One Sunday, she took me with her when she went to pick him up to take him to Dairy Queen.

Boy, was that picture in my head wrong. As soon as I walked in I was greeted by a resident who showed me his radio, another resident talked to me about his girlfriend who lives down the hall. I was shown their drawings, introduced to their friends. A few steps down the hall was a church service, with live music! The whole place was full of outgoing residents, activities and caring staff. I was almost overwhelmed with all of the smiles! I didn't want to leave, but Darby was ready for his ice cream!

I think it is easy to assume Murray Center is just an "institution," but it is the furthest from it. If anything can be called a community, it's Murray Center.

Sincerely,

Whitney H. Kampwerth
Attorney at Law

**Leon Luber** <leonluber54@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 19, 2013 at 4:30 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Rita,

Please ad this letter to those objecting to the closing of Murray Center. I was the Principal of Aviston Elementary District 21 and a member of the Board of the Kaskaskia Special Education District at the time when the state decided that the local school district should educate the residents of Murray Center, I learned then and am still aware that there are many residents of the Center who cannot survive away from there even with 24-7 care because of their special needs, the change in their environment and lack of routine that they are used to.

I am a registered senior citizen voter. I had 40 years of experience working with elementary and high school students, plus teaching young farmer and adult classes in vocational agriculture. My address is: Leon E. Luber, #5 Trout Drive, Highland, Ill. 62249.

Sincerely,

Leon E. Luber

**Leon Luber**

leonluber54@gmail.com

(618)654-2148 Home

(618)616-8073 Mobile

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

## Murray Center

1 message

**Wayne Hahn** < hahnway@yahoo.com> Fri, Jul 19, 2013 at 12:59 PM
Reply-To: Wayne Hahn <hahnway@yahoo.com>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

Dear Judge Aspen,
Please do NOT allow the Murray Center to be closed. Over the years it has become a huge part of the community and has helped so many Residents and their families. The care that the Residents receive is most certainly necessary. The Residents are there because they require specialized care. The Murray Center has been providing this specialized care for many, many years and have became family to the Residents. This is the only home that many of these Residents know and need to survive. The Murray Center also provides employment for many dedicated people that the community needs. So for the Residents and the community, please see it within your heart to do everything within your power to see that the Murray Center remains open.

Thank you very much for help!

Sincerely,

Wayne Hahn

Dear Judge,

I am the guardian of Loren B. who resides at Murray Center. Loren has been in other facilities for short times but has spent most of 40 years at Murray Center. It has been the ONLY facility that has always been consistent with loving genuine care both physically and mentally for our loved one. It has truly become his HOME even though we take him out every week he always says it is time to go "home". In all the years that I have been going into the Center I have never once encountered the facility or the staff to be anything but top notch. This entire community will be crushed if this wonderful place is closed. The staff at Murray has put their hearts and souls into these disabled innocent people. Please please please leave these people in their safe and happy home.

Sincerely,

~Mary Jane Hardy~

Honorably Judge Aspen, 7.18.13

I am writing this letter in opposition to the closure of Murray Center in Centralia. I am the sister of a resident who lives at Murray Center. My little brother Sam is 22 years old and requires consistent care and supervision that he is currently provided with at Murray. He is capable of having behavioral outbursts that require multiple staff to keep him and other residents safe. I am a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and have worked in smaller group CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangement) homes in the past. If my brother was capable of living in a smaller group home then that is something my family would have pursed. Because of Sammy's behaviors it is clear to me that he would be a danger to himself, the staff, and other residents in a CILA setting. If he were to have a behavioral problem when there was only one or two staff on duty, which is a typical amount of staff for an 8 bed CILA home, they would not have the capability to keep him safe. At Murray Center when there is a behavioral problem there are many staff who are able to come and assist as well as enough staff to stay and supervise the other residents. I fear that in a group him he may seriously injure himself or others and may end up in jail. My little brother deserves better treatment than that and he is currently well adjusted and happy at Murray. He has lasting relationships with staff and other residents who are his friends that he sees on a regular basis. Many of the staff members that work with my brother have remained the same since he went to live there in 2004 and they have formed long term relationships with Sam. The staff at Murray understands his individual needs, they are familiar with his behavior, and know how to interact with him.

My brother is frequently provided with opportunities to go into the community and participate in recreation activities and community events. He is not secluded and I do not view Murray as an "institution". I would say that he is as much a part of the community at Murray Center as he would be in a CILA group home. He lives on a cottage with 14 residents on a nice campus. He has a place on campus where he can go and work everyday. In the community I fear there would be no where he could safely go work and he would remain at the home all day. There is an inground pool on the Murray grounds where he can swim in the summertime. He

would never be able to go to a community pool due to his poor interpretation of social cues. There is a garden he can help grow and a large gymnasium where he can play basketball. Murray also provides a house on the edge of the campus that my family has utilized to visit with him when we were not able to bring him to my mother's home. It provides a home like setting for families while providing the safety of staff close by. There are a team of health professionals at Murray that supervise his care. I have seen how some CILA homes operate and the supervision is often inadequate and staff turnover rates are high. While I know some CILA homes are well supervised I am aware of some that are not. I feel that as families we have the right to choose what setting is appropriate for our loved ones. While CILA's are an option for some individuals they are not suitable for all individuals such as those with behavioral and complicated medical issues. My mother sold our childhood home in Carterville and moved to Centralia in order to be near her son. She is able to bring him to her home a couple times a week and occasionally keeps him for an overnight visit on the weekends. She was fortunate enough to get a job at Murray Center. If Murray Center were to close I feel that my family and the families of many others would seriously suffer. Please do anything in your power to keep Murray open. I feel that the plan to close Murray was misguided, did not involve the people they are serving, unethical, unsafe, and motivated by ill misgided intentions. Thank you for all your help uncovering the truth and protecting my brother and other individuals with disabilites.

Sincerely,
Jessica Conyers, CTRS

2316 Parks Edge Pl

Columbia MO 65202

(618) 967-5776

I am a parent voicing their concern about the Murray Center closure in Centralia. This facility is known statewide for its safety and ability to take in "any" kind of behavioral case ever asked of them. Community failures are brought here! Cases from our hospital and from homes have been brought here and have had great success. **Please know** we are here for the most disabled, not the least disabled. We have people here that need 24/7 nursing care, tracheostomy care, feeding tubes, specialized molded wheelchairs for the chronic scoliosis and cerebral palsy, which we make here ourselves. Many, many of our people who live here have seizures, some so acute, they have had Vegas nerve stimulator placements to control them, when medication fails. We have colostomy's to be cared for, indwelling catheters, high volumes of medication distribution by g-tubes and j-tubes. This is not for someone who is not a Registered Nurse. We have several services available, all on Murray Center campus. We have a dentist, several doctors, nurses, our own pharmacy (this constitutes enormous savings), security for transportation, a beautician/barber, speech and hearing therapists, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist and physical therapist aides, a dietician, an x-ray department and a laboratory for blood work ups. We hold several clinics on our campus: neurology, urology, gynecology, eye clinics, and tele-health clinics. We also have the ability to provide molded wheelchair seating for our residents.
*Please ask yourself: Why take all this away from our loved ones??*
Our continuum of care has been state mandated for 40 years. Our success rate has never faltered in all these years. Putting our individuals into a lesser structured setting is advocating failure and deaths.

**WE ARE THE SAFETY NET FOR ALL OUTSIDE SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH COMMUNITY CARE!!!**

Once this is gone, where will our loved ones go???

Billie Miller

Mother of Cellena Campbell who has resided at Murray for 25 yrs.

Honorable Judge
Aspen:
July 13, 2013

We are writing concerning the closure of Murray Center.
We have a daughter Willa Wright who is 51 years of age. She has been in Murray Center for 41years. This is the only home she has known. She is severely physically and mentally impaired and is on a feeding tube. The staff and Medical personal at Murray has given her the best of care. To take her out of Murray center would be a death sentence. She would not last 6 months. A CILA home would not have the medical staff and knowledge that is needed to care for her.
We are pleading and praying that you please see fit in your heart to make the decision to keep Murray open.

Sincerely

Willa Wright's Parents and Guardian

Bill and Mary Lou Wright
902 E South Av
Olney, Il. 62450

Dear Friends For Murray Center Inc, The Parents Association, and Rita Winkeler

Murray Center needs to stay open because it is home for some individuals there and for others Murray Center is a stepping stone to be ready for the community!

However, Our Governor, who to my knowledge, has NEVER stepped foot into the facility; is interrupting this by doing the following FACTS... And I've only been an employee there less than 6 months!

Quinn is....
Sending people to lie to these people and get their hopes up for something that is Not true, causing the individuals to obsess over the lies the " group home evaluations visits" tell them causing behaviors or back stepping.

Quinn has...
Neglected Murray Center in numerous ways, causing the cost to run Murray Center be costly so he can show cause... But the truth is if ou were to ask the employees... They have to work overtime due to vacancies because Quinn puts a freeze on hiring, when staff are temporarily reassigned, it takes a long time for them to return to their cottage to work because there is not an OIG on site causing other employees to work overtime.

I could sit and write forever... This closure subject: I'm telling you...EVERY TIME THERE IS MENTION of it, or an individual has a interview, and when one of these people walk in a room to observe....no matter what level the individual is...USUALLY IF NOT ALWAYS .... There is a change in behavior. And it's not good.

Lastly, these group home people Quinn has sent to move these individuals to the community...

CAUSED POLICE TO RESPOND TO HIS MISTAKE INSTEAD OF MAYBE A GASTION ROBBERY FOR EXAMPLE....WHEN THEY COULD HAVE BEEN IN THEIR HOME WHERE THEY WANTED TO BE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

AND SADLY ONE OF THE STAFF WAS ASKED TO HELP THE GROUP HOME PEOPLE HELP THEM GET AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE VEHICLE AS THEY SIGNED THE INDIVIDUALS FAVORITE THREE THINGS..." Hamburger, bus ride, and baby" because that was that individuals favorite staff AT MURRAY.

So my question to Quinn... Are these your examples of group home ready individuals and just cause for shutting the doors to Murray Center?

Jill M

Sent from my iPad

To Whom it may Concern,

I am an advocate and voice for the residents who call Murray Center home. To forcefully remove them from their home seems like an unfair punishement. It will be hard for them to understand why they have to leave their home. I have been employed At Murray Center for a short time but long enough to know that the people here love their home and us care givers become family with their best interest in mind. With that being considered the thought of people who live here at Murray Center being removed from their home weighs heavy on my heart, A lot of these puple of this population will be vunerable in conditions that are not equiped to meet their needs, and i feel like they will not have the attention they need from properly trained staff. Their well being is at stake here, their home, their live need considered. To keep their home open, means for their best quality of life, which is most important in making this decision.

Sincerely, Brandi Miller MHT

Judge Aspen

I feel Murray Center needs to stay open because they (residents) get the best care are loved by there family + staff that live and work here.

Patty Wiebler

July 26 13

To the Honorable Judge Aspen:

I am submitting this request to please keep WCMDC Open. It has been in Centralia since 1964 and some of our individuals have been here since that date.

We provide love and needed care for these people and they are like family. Smaller homes cannot offer the medical and physical needs they require. They cannot voice "their" "choice" - as we as staff can. - Please make the right choice.

Thank You!

Ann Breen MHT2

July 26th
2013

Dear

Judge Aspin,

I think murray center should stay open. The clints here have been here most of there life and this is the only place they feel at home. And most of these clints have needs that out side of here that people now how do care for them. Some of the clints in the cottage's have foster Grandparent that come and spend time with them. I think that if close us that the clint's would not make it. Hear at ad murray center we love each clint and care for them as if they was are family. we have people that come in and [redacted] volunter's and it makes a smile on the clints face. murray center clinds and staff are all like family and we love are clints and take care of them.

July 25, 2013

The Honorable Marvin E. Aspen
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Eastern Division
Re: Case # 13 C 01300
Dear Judge Aspen:

I am a family member of a severely autistic resident of Murray Center. Eric Schutzenhofer has lived at Murray Center since June 1999. He was in a community-based residence for four years but was moved to Murray Center because there was not sufficient day programming for him in the Metro East.

Eric stopped talking around 30 months of age. Eric can feed and clothe himself, but needs support with basic hygiene. He cannot use a knife or tie his shoes. Eric cannot count to 5. He is 6'5" and weighs 250 pounds; Eric is a toddler in a linebacker's body. He has a limited use of signed speech and uses gestures to communicate. He needs around the clock care to ensure his well being, including access to nursing care, which community group homes do not provide.

Eric can be loving to family and friends, but has the potential to become easily frustrated with outbursts of aggression; this is characteristic of autism. Like the other residents of Murray Center, he needs close supervision and around the clock nursing care that a community group home cannot provide.

It is politically expedient, but morally wrong, to balance the budget woes of Illinois on the backs of the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. They are without voices of their own and must depend on friends and family to advocate for them. If there were sufficient community-based resources for the developmentally disabled, many Murray residents would be using them. The medically fragile residents need intensive nursing care 24/7. The ambulatory residents, like Eric, need more than a once a week visit from a nurse in a group home.

Keep Murray Center open for Eric and the other severely disabled residents who need 24/7 care.

Sincerely,

Madge Schutzenhofer

23 Sarah Drive

Merrimack, NH 03054

Jann Cline
416 Flagstone Drive
Belleville, Illinois 62221
(618) 234-3190
janncline@att,net

August 1, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

The **Murray Developmental Center** in Centralia, Illinois, is where you would *run* to, so that your loved one with severe, mental and physical handicaps can live and enjoy life to their max. It's because of the knowledge, expertise and care given by the nurses and staff to each resident that we as parents and loved ones want each client to reach their highest capability and continue to improve more and more.

Most clients cannot verbally communicate; so they can't let people know when help of any kind is needed. Only here at the **Murray Developmental Center** can each person enjoy and live their life to the fullest.

The **Murray Developmental Center** is being referred to as an institution. That term automatically makes a person think of a barbaric and inhumane place to be. CILA is wonderful type of living. They are very good for mild and moderately challenged persons.

**Murray Developmental Center** is where our loved ones receive the best and fullest life possible.

Sincerely,

Jann Cline

July 28, 2013

Dear Honorable Judge Aspen,

I am currently an employee at W.G. Murray Center. I have worked here for 13 years with 11 of those on the same building. The individuals who reside at Murray are more than a job to me they are more like family. They have watched my children grow up and alot of the individuals know their names and inquire about their well being.

While employed at W.G.M.D.C. I have seen many individuals transitioned out to C.I.L.A.'S, Group Homes, & etc. only to fail and have to be returned to Murray. They just didn't receive the type of care that they required in order to grow as an individual. At Murray they receive 24/7 nursing, dietary diets are followed, psychologist behavior analyst, + etc are all on grounds.

I remember as a child & teen seeing Murray individuals out and about in the community. That is still true to this day. They attend

movies, go bowling, out to the lake, the County fairs, Carnivals, restaurants, and etc. The list is just too long to mention everything with all this said it is my request that you rule in favor of keeping the home of these very special and unique Individuals" ~~#~~ open. For many this is the only home and family they know. Thank you for your time.

Truly,
Kimberly Starr
704 Nevada Ave
Sandoval Ill
62882

July 26, 2013

To Honorable Judge Asper,

Warren G Murray Developmental Center needs to remain open because the individuals deserve to continue to get the great care that is provided daily here. They have become like family to the Staff here.

Most individuals cannot express their needs. They have spent most of their lives here - and this is all they know.

If they are removed, their care and well being would be unknown. It might even go down.

The Staff here are all concerned about their future well-being. We want them to be taken ~~Good~~ Care of.

Thank you for your help on this Matter

Debby Middendorf
Mental Health Technician II

Gmail by Google

Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>

## Murray Center

1 message

**MICHAEL KELLY** < mlikelly@bellsouth.net> Thu, Jul 25, 2013 at 8:19 AM
Reply-To: MICHAEL KELLY <mlikelly@bellsouth.net>
To: "ritawreads@gmail.com" <ritawreads@gmail.com>

July 24, 2013

The Honorable Marvin E. Aspen
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Eastern Division
Re: Case # 13 C 01300
Dear Judge Aspen:

I am a friend of the family/family member of a severely autistic resident of Murray Center. Eric Schutzenhofer has lived at Murray Center since June 1999. He was in a community-based residence for four years but was moved to Murray Center because there was not sufficient day programming for him in the Metro East.

Eric stopped talking around 30 months of age. Eric can feed and clothe himself, but needs support with basic hygiene. He cannot use a knife or tie his shoes. Eric cannot count to 5. He is 6'5" and weighs 250 pounds; Eric is a toddler in a linebacker's body. He has a limited use of signed speech and uses gestures to communicate. He needs around the clock care to ensure his well being, including access to nursing care, which community group homes do not provide.

Eric can be loving to family and friends, but has the potential to become easily frustrated with outbursts of aggression; this is characteristic of autism. Like the other residents of Murray Center, he needs close supervision and around the clock nursing care that a community group home cannot provide.

It is politically expedient, but morally wrong, to balance the budget woes of Illinois on the backs of the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. They are without voices of their own and must depend on friends and family to advocate for them. If there were sufficient community-based resources for the developmentally disabled, many Murray residents would be using them. The medically fragile residents need intensive nursing care 24/7. The ambulatory residents, like Eric, need more than a once a week visit from a nurse in a group home.

Keep Murray Center open for Eric and the other severely disabled residents who need 24/7 care.

Sincerely,

Michael Kelly

Dear Judge Aspen,

On behalf of the individuals of Murray Center. I feel this would be very devastating to these individuals to have to leave their home, and for alot of them the only family they know. as a staff of Murray Center I hate became very close to these individuals. They may have some metal disabilities but they do have a heart. They are just like You and I. They need a loving home and people who care, and thats what you will find at Murray Center. So on behalf of these loving individuals. Plase dont close Murray Center.

Thank you,

Brenda Morton
556 Dietary
Grape Cottage

2/25/13

To whom it may Concern,

I would like to express my concerns in the governors trying to close Murray Center in Centralia.

This is a home to a couple hundred individuals who call this home. Some have been here most of their lives, some as long as when they were children. They know no ~~one~~ other home. They are familiar with staff who love them and care about them as their own family members. For some we are the only family they have. Moving these individuals would not be beneficial or in their best interest. Some are totally dependent on staff for their every need. They would not receive the proper medical care, because some have very serious medical problems in which only skilled nurses & doctors can attend to.

also the CILA homes are not staffed per individuals and are unable to deal with the behavior problems some of our individuals have dealt with for years with trained staff to help them along.

So please consider it in our individuals best interest to continue care at Muray Center. It is their home.

Sincerely,
Debra Jolliff

7-26-13

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the individuals I care for at Murray Center, And the benefits to the Community that our individuals and I call home. Murray Center in December this year will be a part of this Community for 50 years. I have been a part of the Murray Center family for 10 years now. I believe Murray Center's doors should stay open because, I know our individuals will not receive the proper care or medical attention they so need, out in a group home, or Anywhere else but here.

Many of our individuals have lived here for most of their lives, this is there home. They are very much apart of the Community here. As you may see them out shopping, seeing a movie, out to dinner, or sitting next to you in Church on Sunday. Murray Center has events planned where people that live in Centralia, Come to the center for car shows, motor cycle shows, Christmas programs, dances, and out door events, Spending time with our individuals. Making

our individuals very much a part of there lives too.

Murray Center provides excellent care of your individuals showing love, compassion, and respect for all who we care for. Whether it be a disaster in there lives, a behavior, or happiness in receiving a new pair of shoes we are there to share in there joys or heart ache because we care.

Thank you!

Andrea M Campbell

To Whom It May Concern

I have worked at Murray Center off and on for 35 years. I have worked with many of the residents that live here. these people all have their own personalities - they laugh, cry, talk. They are all family. these residents consider Murray Center their home. they know the staff. They know what is going on in the staff's lives as well as what is going on in everyone's lives. the residents are involved in the community as well as part of the community. They have lived there most of their lives.

Mom

How scary would it be to move from your home and family and community after 35 years??

Bonnie Grapperhaus

I have worked at Murray Center for over 11 years. I feel that we provide excellent care. These residents are loved and well taken care. They keep saying these residents stare at walls all day. This is such a false statement. These residents go out in the Commute all the time. They go shopping out to eat and to the movies. The list goes on and on. They also can make there own decision's.
~~Murray Center has~~
we also have Rn's Dr's Omrp's Dilation's Physical thearpy and speech and hearing. ~~Grou~~ on grounds. these group of people work with residents on a daily bases. They ~~cont~~ keep saying that these people have choices. But how are you giving people choice's when you are pulling them out of there home. Several of the resident's that I have worked with. Have been placed in Group homes several times. But come back due to medical are behavior reason's.

This is A wonderful place to have as A home. It should not be on the closure list

Nick Borden SSW

July 26, 2013

To Judge Aspen:

I am a employee of the Warren G. Murray Development Center in Illinois, for many years. I have seen alot of changes good & bad. Now we are in great jeopardy of closure: I am asking to please consider what they are trying to do to this facility; the most vulverable & lovable individuals. These individuals deserve to continue getting the care that is provided here, with a group effort to address each & everyones needs. W. G. M. D. C. has all along transitioned individuals out into the community or a less restricted environment. Now some unknown groups can come in take a look & read alittle literature and make a permanent decision for these individuals. How unfair!

Its sad to say that these guardians have to make a decision at a elderly age about their loved ones, when they thought there home would always be here.

God Bless

Karen Hubble

Honorable Judge Aspen—

Please consider Murray Center and our Community. It has been a safe home for our son for 42 yrs. We moved here from Chicago to place him at Murray and so we could be near him and keep our small family together

Jeff is 47 yrs old, mental capacity of a 3yr old, has bi lateral hearing loss (he understands some signs but does not sign to us.) he has lost the sight in his left eye and may in time lose sight in his right eye too / takes medication for seizures he is autistic and has behavior issues mostly because of obsessive compulsive disorder that can be quite overwhelming at times.

The staff are a wonderful group of people - Very caring and compassionate, they take their work to heart.. They know my son, his wants and needs. We got to know many workers thru the years very personly. I had a beauty shop in my home for 25 yrs and had many employees as clients, some go to St. Marys Church and our kids went to St. Marys' school together.

many staff have passed on. Now the years but their children became employees and now their grandchildren are taking care of our Mom. Our small family became a very big family of loving people!

The staff try hard to make Murray a warm pleasant home. The unit is always decorated for every holiday - New yrs - Valentine Day, St. Pats, Easter, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas.

The community has a lot to offer too! 4th of July fireworks we have a awesome balloon fest for 3 days you see balloons flying over twice a day. 45 balloonists have come for the past 20 yrs - They always make a point of coming to Murray so the residents can see them. Especially the ones that can't make the fest in town. The A.B.A.T.E. motorcycle team make a run thru the kids just love it. We have a big Halloween parade. Murray has their own parking spot so our kids could have front row access. Centralia is a big basket ball town and some residents enjoy going to the games.

We have a wonderful Christmas party where the community volunteers and participate with a resident and some families have this for 25 yrs or longer.

And we can't forget a visit from Elvis — He came as a young man and has come back for yrs and yrs! The kids absolutely love him — And of course we have our parties — Popcorn parties — ice cream parties, Pizza parties Birthday Parties etc —

Our campus is just beautiful — over and acres of land with plenty of trees and green grass, miles of side walks and paved driveway for golf carts to take residents for rides — for parents to go for bike rides with their children. We have volunteer Grandparents who take residents for walks in their wheel chairs. We have a swimming pool with a covered patio surrounding the whole pool.

There's a Bistro on campus for coffee-hot chocolate - soda - cookies and cup cakes etc. For yrs the residents have helped plant vegetable gardens and flower gardens

I can't say enough about the care Jeff gets — especially this yr. He almost lost his good eye from glucoma. He had to have one to one care for over 4 mo. Today he only needs one to one certain times a day. Jeff was very familiar with his surroundings and that helped him from being apprehensive.

It helped us a great deal because we knew he was well cared for. I could call out there day or nite to see how he was doing.

The men in the boiler room even got involved & they fix up a pair of goggles for him to wear to protect his eyes. We all were very surprised he kept them on. (He hates anything on his face or head) Today he wears a pair of safety glasses

We're just so grateful because the staff knew Jeff and his ways they knew something was wrong and he got immediate care. He had no way of telling anyone of a problem.

It's beyond me how someone can say our Childrens home is dismal and forlorn —

Jeff shares a bed room with a room mate, has a large day room with couches and chairs for comfort with a large flat screen T.V., a nice family style dining room. They also have a very large T.V for movies. There is plenty of space to move around. If they want privacy they can go to their bedroom and watch T.V, listen to tapes or radio. We have a lot sports fans — Cardinals - Cubs - Centralia basket ball St. Louis blues etc.

Jeff is in the profound range and needs helps showering - tooth brushing - shaving, his bathroom skill are not the best if he messes himself he doesn't know to wipe himself. He needs help sometimes with eating. If its something he likes he'll over eat.

I hope and prayer Murray Center will continue for years to come. Our residents deserve to continue to live in comfort, good care and wonderful folks who really care what happens to them.

They say it takes a Village to raise a child. In our case "it really does"!
Warren L. Murray is very important to us. It is very unique and so are all the people that make up the complex.
Our children deserve the best from life!

Thank you for listening
Otis and Dorothy Bostick
Guardian of Jeff - Apple Cottage

THE HONORable Judge Aspen:

Please save Murray Center! They are moving our residents out and into the most horrible places. Why would someone move a precious disabled person into a worse-by-far facility and say it is for their betterment? Our residents are very fragile with multiple severe medical issues. These are NOT high functioning individuals - they are profoundly disabled in every way! They are NOT ambulatory, are wheelchair bound, don't talk, have very fragile bones that break easily, etc... They could never survive in a Cila or one of these horrible 200 yr old facilities!

Our facility is very nice, clean. and we have loads of room for expansion, our grounds are beautiful! These people are being moved against their will, they have no say whatsoever. They are Jerking them OUT with NO notice and taking them into places that nobody knows or loves them. They are scared and traumatized and totally helpless to prevent it. The OSG Guardian IS NOT even going to any of these places before moving them to see if it is good or in their best interest! She doesn't care at all because she does not love them. She moved some people here without notice into a broken down CILA with mold and holes in the floor with the ground below exposed! It is a travesty that a few

politicians think they are God and they can do anything they want to disabled people. Don't forget, these are the same evil people who put these precious souls up for sale on Craigslist like they were less than human!

Murray is a wonderful place, with great staff. Our residents have so many activities. We go to movies, ballgames, dances, have parties, church services, van rides — you name it! We have cook-outs on the patio, we have a swimming pool! Our resident far outlive their life expectancy here sometimes by 40-50 years! Because we Love them and they love us! Let Governor Quinn and Kevin Casey close down those facilities that are 200 yrs old!

I have been a Registered Nurse here so 17 yrs now. I love it. Never have I seen any people better cared for, or loved so much. We are a family. Please save their home, save our family and save our jobs.

Respectfully Yours
Ron Bowerman RN
(Elm cottage)

Honorable Judge Aspen,

As long as I can remember my family has worked at Murray Center. My parents, Grandparents, and multiple cousins have all been employed there. I myself am hoping to follow in those footsteps. My whole life I have been familiar with Murray Center and have always noticed how well cared for the residents were. It is true that some immature people make fun of people with mental disabilities, this is NOT the case with the employees at Murray. I have always observed the staff to treat their residents with patience, respect, and love. Most of the staff there love their job and the chance to make a difference in these residents lives. Please do all that is in your power to keep this facility open. Thank you.

Nick Bowerman

Honorable Judge Aspen:

I ask you to please save Murray Center! It is a wonderful place to live and work! The buildings are very nice, all one level, the grounds are beautiful - especially in springtime. We have a lot of room to expand - we should be the "premier" facility in Illinois - NOT a closed one. Our staff are highly trained and very dedicated. The residents and staff are truly family.

We offer 24 hr care, our residents get the best medical care money can buy - our Doctors on staff are great and the rest are only a phone call away. Our local hospital gives superb care, we have specialists of every kind available.

Our residents have birthday parties, go for car rides, go to the movies, bowling, dances, picnics, ballgames (of course, mostly "Cardinal" fans....) We have a swimming pool, they ride on Golf Carts, etc... This is their home. Some have been here 40-50 yrs! The reason is not only Great Care - but they are LOVED! We love them!!!

It is a cruel and horrible thing

that a group of politicians who do not love or care about our residents can move them to horrible places without their consent, away from everything they have ever known or loved! What if that was your child or grandchild and they took him away from you - put them with strangers and you were utterly helpless to get them back?

As Christians, we are charged to love one another. Isaiah 1:17 says we are to defend the orphans, feed the poor, care for the widows. We are not to dump them in horrible places where nobody loves them - or put them up on Craigslist like some inanimate object. That's just what these people did - twice!!!

Murray Center is also a staple in our community. It provides much needed jobs in an area that is very rural with a very high unemployment rate. We are 2 hrs from any major city - we can't just drive somewhere and get another job.

Our residents need Murray Center. We need to be here for them. We need Murray Center to stay open. Please Help Us!

May God Richly Bless You

Vicki Bowerman RN

ELM Cottage

TO HONORABLE Judge ASPEN

HERE IS A SHORT STORY ABOUT OUR DAUGHTER MANDIE. WHEN MANDIE WAS BORN SHE WAS OUR FIRST CHILD, AND SHE SEEMED TO BE A HAPPY NORMAL BABY. AT ABOUT SIX MONTHS OUR DOCTOR TOLD US HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME TESTS RAN. MANDIE WENT THROUGH A SERIES of TESTS for A WEEK AT BARNES CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, AND THEY TOLD US THAT SHE HAS CELEBRAL PALSY. FROM THAT DAY WE STARTED OUR JOURNEY WITH OUR ONLY DAUGHTER hoping, AND PRAYING THAT IT would NOT BE TO SEVERE, AND MANDIE Could HAVE A NORMAL LIFE. AS TIME WENT by WE BEGAN TO REALIZE OUR DAUGHTER WAS NOT TO BE THAT LUCKY. MANDIE NEVER DEVELOPED THE SKILLS TO CRAWL, SITUP, WALK, OR TALK. MANDIE WAS TOTALY DEPENDENT ON US TO TAKE CARE of HER. VICKIE, HER MOTHER did A EXCELLENT JOB for TEN YEARS, but AT THAT TIME BETWEEN THE AMOUNT of CARE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS ALL THE LOVE, AND CARE HER MOTHER GAVE WAS NOT ENOUGH. AFTER A LOT of SLEEPLESS nights, AND WORRY WE WERE ABLE TO find A PLACE for MANDIE AT MURRAY CENTER. NOT KNOWING ABOUT THIS PLACE WE HAD A VERY HARD DECISION TO MAKE. WE WERE INVITED TO COME, AND TAKE A TOUR. OUT of ALL THE THINGS THAT HAD HAPPEN IN OUR LIFES, WE REALIZED THAT THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO IS IN MORE

NEED THAN you. THAT is WHEN you START TO STOP FEELING SORRY for YOURSELF.

SO IN 1985 WHEN MANDIE WENT TO LIVE AT MURRAY CENTER is WHEN A NEW, AND different LIFE STATED for MANDIE, AND OURSELFS. WE SAY TO OURSELFS how BLESSED WE ARE TO HAVE A PLACE LIKE MURRAY CENTER SO CLOSE TO WERE WE LIVE. By LIVING SO CLOSE HER MOTHER CAN SEE MANDIE ALMOST EVERY DAY, AND do ALL THE SPECIAL THINGS THAT MOM's AND DAUGHTER's LIKE To do. AS HER FATHER I go EVERY SUNDAY AND SPEND THE AFTERNOON with MANDIE. OVER THE PAST 28 YEARS MANDIE HAS GROWN, AND HER HEALTH HAS IMPROVED, but SHE is STILL dependent ON ALL HER DAY TO DAY NEEDS. I don't KNOW if I Could TRUTHFULLY SAY THAT MANDIE would STILL BE ALIVE if SHE had NOT gone TO LIVE AT MURRAY CENTER I BELIEVE BECAUSE of ALL THE LOVING AND 24 hour MEDICAL CARE MANDIE is doing VERY WELL. WE will bring HER home for THE DAY, but SHE is ALWAYS READY TO go BACK. SHE THINKS WE ARE A LITTLE boring COMPARED TO ALL THAT goes ON THERE, but THATS OK.

WE hope This gives you SOME INSIGHT why WE NEED TO KEEP MURRAY CENTER OPEN for ALL THE PEOPLE who DEPEND ON IT.

THANK YOU

RAY, VICKIE & MANDIE VEST

To: The Honorable Judge Aspen

From: Lorna Dempster, Guardian

4452 State Line Road, Kansas City, KS 66103 913-562-4197 hear.andnow@yahoo.com

Date: July 19, 2013

Re: Murray Center Closure

With deep respect, I ask you to consider the following points of contention in regards to closing this developmental center:

**THE REALITY OF CARE -**

The Illinois Department of Human Services says it more concisely than I can:

"State Operated Developmental Centers provide intensive services that presently cannot be provided in family homes or in community-based residential programs for people with developmental disabilities…"

http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=59537

They know they are not ready, and they are doing it anyway. For what reason?

**THE CONSTITUTION –**

"We are all entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But you and I know that with rights come responsibility, and the most fundamental fact is that you have to be able comprehend what this means, in order to carry any of it out. This is not possible for a majority of Murray's citizens.

My brother was forced to transition from Jacksonville Developmental Center. The State's recommendation for Billy was that he would move back to his hometown, live in an apartment with a male student from a local college, and receive food stamps and home health care. He would attend a day program, where they would teach him a trade, and he would get a job. He would also be expected to contribute to community through volunteerism to earn his inalienable rights.

At the Center and Day Program, the staff had spent the last two years trying (unsuccessfully) to train Billy to put his sippy cup down on a tray after his meals, and to stop tearing and ingesting the plastic from his damp Depends. He has the IQ of an 11 month year old.

**HISTORICAL PRECEDENCE -**

Not so long ago, Lincoln Developmental Center had been shuttered in Central Illinois. Within six months of its closure, 15% of those transitioned were dead. They died in accidents. They died in nursing homes ill-equipped to meet the challenges of caring for them. They died in Jails because they didn't behave "properly" in communities. Some died of abuse. Some died of loneliness in other SODC's because they were estranged from their families. FIFTEEN PERCENT.

http://www.idhd.org/downloads/Lincoln%20Brief%204%2018%2012.pdf

Over ten years later, one of the first questions they (representatives of the State) answered at a public hearing to discuss closing Jacksonville Developmental Center (JDC) was that **"Yes, a certain percentage of deaths can be anticipated."**

The numbers are still out on JDC, but there is still no commitment from IDHS that they can and will transition residents without death being an expected result. In the minds of guardians, this is tantamount to committing voluntary manslaughter. None of us are willing to "volunteer" our loved ones to become a part of their "acceptable death allowance."

**COST OF CARE**

In several hearings, I was told the State could provide my brother with the same level of support for half the expense of keeping him at JDC. His cost of care at JDC was estimated at $110k, but by the time they completed assessments, they determined it would take $99,000; hardly 50%. Please do not trust their figures.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Despite how it appears, you are not being asked to save a facility. You are being asked to cut services: 24/7 nursing care; dieticians; trauma support; qualified professional staff skilled at meeting client needs, secure settings designed to protect citizens from hostile environments, and one another, and themselves. You are being asked to separate children from their families (the loving parents without power, AKA staff) who have tended to their needs for decades.

**CONCLUSION**

If for no other reason than they are not ready, please do not support this closure. You can be remembered for saving lives, or money. It's all about common decency and respect for our most vulnerable citizens. **God be with you.**

Honorable Judge Aspen

I am the mother of Willa Wright who's home is Murray Center in Centralia, Il. She is 51 and has made Murray Center home (the only home she has known) for 41 years. She is severely mentally and physically handicapped. Hardly knows us and is incontinent wearing diapers 24/7 and on a feeding tube. Unable to walk or talk to tell any one of her wants and needs. The caregivers and medical staff on Elm Cottage at Murray Center has given her the best of care and she is happy there. This is her family which shows her love and compassion. She would not get the same care in a CILA home in fact she would be gone in 6 months time if she was placed in one.
Judge Aspen we are asking and pleading for you to make the decision to keep Murray Center open.

Thanking you in advance

Willa Wright's Mom

Mary Lou Wright
902 E South Av
Olney, Il. 62450

Mary Lou

I am writing with a request to keep the much needed Murray Center open.
I have a daughter Willa Wright that lives in Elm Cottage at Murray Center. She is 51 and has lived there 41 years. She is severely physically and mentally challenged unable to walk or talk and cannot communicate her needs, feelings or wants. She is incontinent and on a feeding tube and needs 24/7 around the clock care.
Murray caregivers, staff and Medical team has provided the best of care for her. This is her home and the caregivers show love, understanding and compassion for her and she is happy there. This is her family. To uproot her and send her to a CILA would be a death sentence for her. They would not know her and would not have the knowledge or the medical staff to care for her needs.
I am hoping and praying you will make the decision to keep Murray Center open.

Thank you
A caring Dad of a Murray Center resident.

Willa Wright's Dad

Bill Wright
902 E South Av.
Olney Il. 62450

July 18, 2013

Dear Judge Aspen:

As an expert psychiatric nurse with a background in health policy, I oppose the closure of Murray Center: the proposed closure is **bad public policy and bad health policy.**

A study from the U of I, commissioned by DHS, estimates a loss of 826 jobs in the community, $52 million in income, $63 million in production, and about a $1million in state and local taxes. This is a public policy that would devastate a community that is already suffering from severe economic stress.

Deciding to close Murray Center, determining that all residents should be placed in 2-4 bed community group homes, and then assessing the needs of individual residents is the equivalent of "fire, ready, aim." It is a backwards, dangerous approach to health policy.

As an expert psychiatric nurse, with decades of experience, I am appalled that the state is attempting to balance its budget on the backs of disabled persons who cannot speak for themselves. This is dangerous health policy. The mass closure of mental health facilities that began in the late 1960s was also dangerous health policy, creating a permanent class of the homeless chronically mentally ill in America.

My son is severely impaired by autism and is a resident of Murray Center. Eric Schutzenhofer has lived in Apple Cottage at Murray Center since June 1999. He lived in a community-based residence for four years but it was not able to provide him with the programming he needs because of the severity of his disability. The state of Illinois sent him to Murray Center because there was not sufficient day programming for my son in the Metro East. There are still not appropriate residential opportunities for him in the Metro-East.

Eric stopped talking around 30 months of age. Eric can feed and clothe himself, but needs help with basic hygiene: bathing, tooth-brushing, and toileting. He cannot use a knife or tie his shoes. Eric cannot count to 3. He is 6'5" and weighs 250 pounds, a toddler in a linebacker's body. Eric is able to communicate with a limited vocabulary in signed speech and gestures. His IQ measures around 38-40. He needs around the clock care to ensure his well being, including access to nursing care, which community group homes do not provide.

Eric went into residential care a few months before his eighteenth birthday in 1991. We began to look for residential care shortly after he turned 16. The school district helped with the process of finding appropriate residential placement. Applications went out to 80 agencies. Two responded: one in Texas that was caught up in an abuse scandal and the Hope School in Springfield IL. Eric spent four years at Hope School; we began the process of finding his next placement at age 21, a year before he "aged out" of Hope School. About 30 applications were sent out; only one agency indicated interest in him. Southern Illinois Living Center, the parent company of Clinton Manor Living Center, offered possible placement. This was his community-based residence for four years, until his placement failed and he moved to Murray Center because no other agency in or near the Metro-East would consider my son.

Not long after he came to Murray Center, Eric had a bowel obstruction. He could not tell anyone he was in pain, but Eric took the hand of the nurse who gave him his morning medicines and put it on his abdomen. The nurse noted it was hard and that he was warm to the touch, assessed Eric, notified his physician, and sent him to the local hospital where he had surgery a few hour later once he was stable. If a nurse had not been present, he could have suffered a rupture of the bowel with massive

infection (sepsis) that could have been fatal. He takes medication that require frequent nursing assessments for adverse effects. Group homes do not have 24/7 nursing care.

Eric can be loving to family and friends, but has the potential to become easily frustrated with outbursts of aggression; this is characteristic of autism. Eric can erupt into tantrums (autism meltdowns), like a toddler since that is his developmental level. Because of his size, he can easily injure another person, especially with inadequate numbers of staff to supervise him.

I worked with a case manager from DHS a few years ago to determine if there was appropriate community-based care for Eric that met his unique needs. After a year or more, the case manager indicated that appropriate services did not exist in the Metro-East. Like the other residents of Murray Center, Eric needs close supervision and nursing care. He currently is checked at night every 15 minutes. No CILA can offer that kind of supervision with one employee at night. Last spring Eric's stepdad and I recently met with the director of the only agency in the Metro-East that provides community-based services for adults with autism. The agency cannot provide the structured environment and nursing assessment that Eric requires.

Eric's stepdad and I visit with Eric in Centralia every 2 to 3 weeks, taking him out for lunch or dinner, shopping, and other social experiences. Every 4 to 6 weeks, we bring him home to O'Fallon for a weekend visit where we try to engage him in family activities in the St. Louis community. I will not allow the state to move my son away from his family in the Metro-East; for him, Murray Center is an appropriate and least-restrictive environment.

I am Eric's mother, a registered nurse with over 40 years of experience, and an expert in psychiatric nurse and health policy. I currently serve as president of the American Nurses Association-Illinois. I challenge the state and its agents to prove to me that Murray Center is not the most appropriate placement for Eric. He is happy and safe, well cared for, and part of a supportive community.

What will happen to Eric if he is placed in a community-based facility that cannot meet his needs and there is no Murray Center for him? What will happen if the state of Illinois fails to pay a community-based organization and the home discharges him? What if the lack of a 24/7 presence of nurses results in another life-threatening health problem?

This is my son, Eric.

(Dr.) Karen Kelly

1034 Nottinghill Drive, O'Fallon IL 62269

618-910-8223

kkellys@aol.com

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing to please ask you to keep Murray Center open. My daughter has lived there since she was 4 and she is now 43.

They have always taken such good care of her. I could go to bed at night and sleep because I knew that she was being well cared for. She is totally dependent on someone for all Lher needs. She has the mentality of a 3 month old.

There is no way that she could get this kind of care anywhere else.

SO PLEASE, PLEASE do the right things for our kids and don't let the state close the center.

Sincerely,

Pamela J, Phillippe
Flat Rock, IL 64277

Dear Judge Aspen,

I am writing this email regarding the closing of the center. My mother is an employee & values her job its not a job it's her lively hood. She lives& cares for the residents. It would be a tragedy to see this place leave Centralia. It would literally effect everyone in some way in the surrounding area. Consider losing a piece of your life or a portion of your family, because if the center was to close this is what it would be like to so many. Thank you for your time& God be with you!

Michael Thomas 217-381-8553

July 17, 2013

To the attention of the Honorable Judge Aspen

Dear Judge Aspen:

I have been reading with intense interest the Illinois Legislature's attempts to close facilities that care for our most vulnerable citizens. My nephew, who is profoundly mentally and physically disabled, is currently housed at the Murray Center. He is but one of hundreds of individuals being humanely treated at such facilities. Murray Center, among other centers in the State of Illinois, is a facility that is slated for closure. All one has to do is look at the history of such closings. Not too many years ago, it was thought that closing mental health care facilities was for the good of the patients and their communities. Good for whom?? The result of that nonsensical thinking was mentally ill individuals unable to care for themselves or find employment, ultimately ended up homeless. Their lives were far worse after such closings. I am employed at a local homeless shelter as a case manager for the chronically homeless. Aside for the fact that some of my clients are physically disabled, most have some form of mental illness.

I am fairly confident that the Illinois Legislature would like us to believe that some type of security system/ over-site would be put in place. Again, all one has to do is look at the understaffed Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and nursing homes to realize it would be virtually impossible to provide enough inspectors to guarantee the safety and humane treatment of patients moved to small private settings. In my humble opinion, it is far more reasonable and realistic to observe the care of helpless patients in larger secure settings, as opposed to hundreds of small home based situations.

I implore the Illinois lawmakers to rethink their decision to close such facilities as Murray. If history is to be our guide, the State of Illinois needs to resolve these issues in favor of those who do not have a voice.

Thank you Judge Aspen for your time and thoughtful consideration of my letter in support of the profoundly disabled.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. Roberta Stengler
1103 S. 4th Street
St Charles, IL 60174
630/ 584-0710

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

# : letters to Honorable Judge Aspen for the Federal suit

**Anita R. Becherer** < arbpfb@msn.com> Thu, Jul 25, 2013 at 4:28 PM
To: Rita Winkeler <ritawreads@gmail.com>
Cc: JILL LOUV <Jilllouv@gmail.com>

**From:** Jill Louv
**Sent:** Thursday, July 25, 2013 4:42 AM
**To:** Anita R. Becherer
**Subject:** Re: : letters to Honorable Judge Aspen for the Federal suit

To the Honorable Judge Aspen:

My brother became a resident of Murray Center when he was 10 years old. That was 48 years ago . During that time he has been lovingly and expertly cared for by the staff, some as long as 30 years. Murray Center is his home and the staff is his second family.

My brother is severely retarded. He has the IQ of a six month old. He cannot walk, talk, feed himself, or learn to go to the bathroom. Murray Center provides the medical care and support that has allowed him to live a long life. (When he was born the doctor predicted that he would not reach his 3rd birthday). Obviuosly, with the kind of care my brother requires, a group living situation is not a viable option for him. In fact, any move will be traumatic for him and possibly life threatening.

From the time my brother moved to Murray Center, my family has been very involved with him and the staff. Initially we would bring him home every weekend. Then as he became more integrated into the Murray family he would visit us every Sunday. My parents held various positions within the Murray Parents Association and every year my grandmother baked Christmas cookies for the residents. Now that I am his legal guardian, I stay in close touch with his caregivers and visit often. I was involved with the fundraiser to save Murray Center. Without Murray Center my family's life would have been much different. My brother received the medical care he needed and allowed him to remain a member of our family and become a member of the Murray family. This institution and its loving, dedicated staff changed our lives.

I understand that group living homes can be a wonderful opportunity for some retarded citizens. However, my brother is not one of those. He has cerebral palsy, grand mal seizures, and a feeding tube. Group living homes are not equipped to care for him. He is not going to go for walks or shoot hoops with the other residents. He needs the loving and supportive environment that is provided at Murray Center. Please allow my brother to remain at Murray center with his loving family.

Sincerely,

Jill Louv, guardian and sister of John Stumpe, Fir Cottage

On Friday, July 19, 2013, Anita R. Becherer wrote:

> **From:** Rita Winkeler
> **Sent:** Thursday, July 18, 2013 11:00 PM
> **To:** Paul F Becherer

Gmail by Google

**Rita Winkeler < ritawreads@gmail.com>**

# Fw: Here is your letter. thought you would want to edit it and maybe add to it

1 message

**Barbara Conyers** < barbaraconyers@att.net> Tue, Jul 23, 2013 at 7:22 PM
To: ritawreads@gmail.com
Cc: barbaraconyers@att.net

--- On **Sun, 7/21/13, Jessica Conyers** <*jessicakaye2@gmail.com*> wrote:

> From: Jessica Conyers <jessicakaye2@gmail.com>
> Subject: Here is your letter. thought you would want to edit it and maybe add to it
> To: "Barbara Conyers" <barbaraconyers@att.net>
> Date: Sunday, July 21, 2013, 9:56 PM
>
> Honorable Judge Aspen,
>
> I am writing to oppose the closing of the Murray Center, in Centralia,Il. My son, Sam ,age 22, has lived at Murray Center since 2004. If he was able to live in a less restrictive setting, he would already be doing so. He is at times physically aggressive and can hurt himself or others. He requires consistent staff and
> structure. The staff at Murray Center are trained to manage maladaptive behaviors. He has friendships with his peers and staff. I bring Sam home 1-2 times a week for a short visit. He saw the Save Murray Center sign that i have in my front yard. He asked me if i was selling our house. I didn't have the heart to
> tell him, that they were trying to close his home. This would be devastating to him. When Sam was admitted to Murray, I moved to Centralia, bought a home, and was fortunate to get a job at Murray Center. I know the care the people who live here receive. I could not work there or sleep at night, if I had any doubts about his care. I have also worked in a CILA, where on many occasions, I was the only
> staff person to cook,bath,toilet,do laundry,pass medications, and clean. It was not a safe environment, when there was a behavioral or medical issue. This is not the kind of home,that my son could live in, nor would I want him too. There is no, or very little supervision of staff, and very high tumover of staff. Sam requires a safe,consistent, home. He lives on a unit with about 14 other individuals. He has a certain number of staff that interacts with him daily. My son is comfortable at Murray Center and this is his home. Please do not disrupt his life or his home.
>
> Thank You,
> Barbara Conyers
> 4 Redwood Dr.
> Centralia Il
> 62801

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410-757-1867 Voice/Fax
Larryinnis@aol.com

July 25, 2013

The Honorable Marvin E. Aspen

U.S. District Court Northern District of Illinois

Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604

**Re: Support for Murray Developmental Center**

Dear Judge Aspen,

I represent VOR, a national organization advocating for high quality care and human rights for all persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The Illinois League of Advocates for the Developmentally Disabled (IL-ADD) and the Murray Parents Association (MPA) are organizational affiliates of VOR, and several individual named plaintiffs in IL-ADD et al. v. Illinois Department of Human Services et al. (Case No. 13 C 01300) are individual VOR members.

On their behalf, VOR offers our support for the need for Murray Developmental Center, and the remaining State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) in Illinois, as part of the array of service options for Illinois' citizens with I/DD. As federally-licensed Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs/IID), Murray and SODCs provide a standard of care and access to specialized supports that are not routinely available in smaller settings.

VOR appreciates this opportunity to offer our perspective with regard to the need for an array of long-term services and supports that are responsive to the needs of *all* people with disabilities. VOR recognizes that "equitable" does not mean identical when dealing with human needs. While we support the need for expanded quality community-based options, we object strongly to the notion that eliminating quality homes like Murray Developmental Center will somehow "rebalance" the service system. In our view, equitable does not mean identical. Too often the

quest for "rebalancing" neglects person-centered supports in an unreasonable, and potentially dangerous, quest for "sameness." The human condition is not that convenient. Service options must necessarily vary and be responsive to varying needs.

Most importantly, VOR trusts that families (often court-appointed legal guardians) know their loved ones best. No one would question the right of parents of minor children to make health care and support decisions, yet time and again, the decisions and input of family members of adults with profound I/DD – some of whom have the cognitive ability of infants and toddlers – are ignored and trumped by state officials, federal lawyers, and other advocacy organizations who have never even met all affected Murray residents.

Families have reason to be concerned. There are well-documented tragedies in small settings serving disabled individuals in Illinois and around the country due to poorly trained staff and lack of access to specialized care and lack of oversight.

> "I write to you today to request that you undertake an immediate investigation into the alarming number of deaths and cases of abuse of developmentally disabled individuals in group homes. In particular, I would like you to focus on the prevalence of preventable deaths at privately run group homes across this nation and the widespread privatization of our delivery system." (U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, Letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Inspector General (March 4, 2013)) (*see also*, Widespread Abuse, Neglect and Death in Small Settings Serving People with Intellectual Disabilities, 2013).

"If this were your family member, what would you do?"

VOR members have asked this question of public officials around the country. The question puts the debate in a human context which transcends ideology and alleged cost savings. Murray Developmental Center is a Medicaid licensed option. No one is suggesting that it is providing bad care. The allegations range from it costs too much to a claim that its residents will more "integrated" in smaller settings. True "integration" is debatable and costs will not be saved if all necessary supports are provided in the community.[1]

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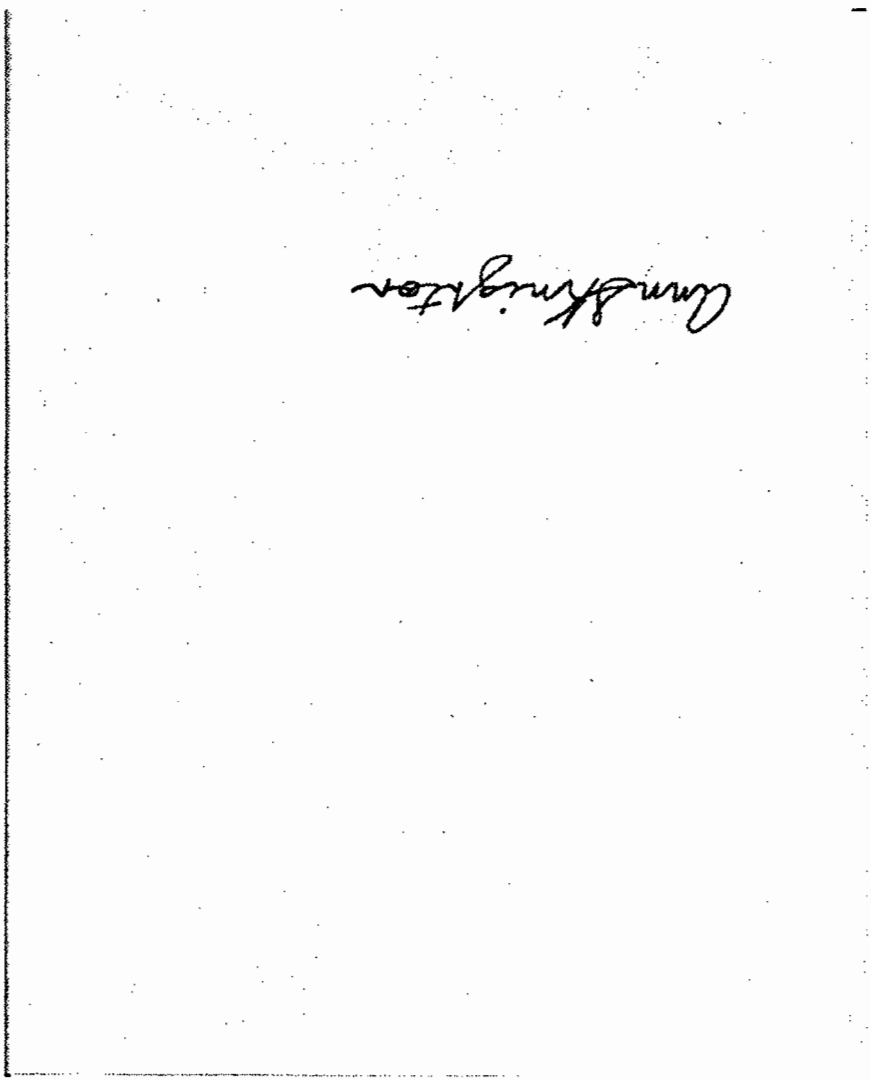
[1] Walsh, Kevin K., et al., "Cost Comparisons of Community and Institutional Residential Settings: Historical Review of Selected Research," Mental Retardation, Volume 41, Number 2: 103-122, April 2003) ("Findings do not support the unqualified position that community settings are less expensive than are institutions and suggest that staffing issues play a major role in any cost differences that are identified") (see also, Illinois League of Advocates, "Can The Community Provide HIGH NEEDS INDIVIDUALS Essential Services Comparable to SODC Services At Significantly Reduced Cost: BRB Case Study," October 17, 2011, http://www.vor.net/images/ILADDCostComparson.pdf)

For additional background I've attached testimony that VOR submitted to the Illinois Legislature in 2011. This testimony covers the people, the law, quality and costs. At the end of the day, however, we view the insights and input of families as paramount.

You have heard from families who view Murray as a treasure which provides their profoundly disabled loved ones with life-sustaining, highly skilled and compassionate care – all while enjoying "inclusion" in their surrounding community. They are the experts. Thank you for trusting them.

Sincerely,



7/22/13

Honorable Judge Aspen:

Provider Magazine (a leading long term care industry/trade magazine) published an article entitled "Large ICFs/MR Being Phased Out" by Meg LaPorte. This eight page featured article focused on when the State of Virginia was transitioning to a Home Community Based Services (HCBS) care delivery system for the developmentally disabled.

Why is the State of Illinois experiencing problems with their current transition plan? What is the State of Illinois doing or not doing that is causing this negative response to their transition plan? The probably answers are:

> The first reason is because the State of Illinois made a decision to close state operated developmental centers to reduce state expenditures. They decided to forget about their moral responsibility to their most vulnerable citizens. It was a pure economic decision not an informed governance decision.
>
> The second reason is because most of the residents residing in State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) have varied and complex medical/health care needs. They have aged in place over the years and in addition to their severe and profound mental age/functional level they have acquired additional medical/health care needs. SODCs currently meets these needs.

Virginia was faced with this same problem in 1996. They determined that "almost half (residents) have two or more additional conditions and nearly all need help walking, toileting, and eating."

The pertinent question is – how did these two states approach this same issue/problem?

The State of Virginia recognized this medical/health care problem and included a component in their transition plan. They established Regional Community Services Centers (RCSCs). The article states:

1. "Started in 1996, the RCSDs provides specialized medical, behavioral, dental, and respite services to individuals living in the community who have complex medical and behavioral needs."
2. "the Virginia's Department of Mental Retardation, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services considers RCSDs to be a key player in the transition of clients to the community as the centers downsize."
3. "In Virginia, there are services available to people in institutions that are not available to people in the community". "The RCSCs will help bridge this gap".

The Illinois Department of Human Service's (DHS) has totally ignored these medical/health care needs in their transition plan. The current plan does not provide services for these medical needs. There is no formal care delivery infrastructure in place to address these medical/health care needs. The plan appears to just "dump" the residents into the community setting without adequate support services.

Why isn't the State of Illinois being held accountable for a responsible transition plan? If their intent is to close SODCs they need to ensure their community model can need all *current* resident's care needs.

Gerald Haar - On Behalf of Brian Haar - Resident of the Murray Center

Dear Judge Aspen

Thank you for looking into this Case. I believe murray Center Should Stay open for many reasons, One being the people that live there are being Cared for and loved.

Thank you
Rita Brookman

Dear Judge Aspen,

I thank you for looking into this case. I believe Murray Center should stay open for so many reasons but I'm going to just give you a few for now. The first reason being the people that live there are so greatly taken care of and loved. You should be able to come to a loving home that's what we have here at Murray Center. Second reason being: we are scared of there well beings at group home for many of the people will not make it due to the lack of care. There have already been several incidents that have proven that. Please don't have these people have to give up there home for that is all they have. So please keep Murray open

Thank you,
Mindy Williams

Dear Judge Asep,

Murray Center is a valuable place. We care for the people who live here twenty-four hours a day. We have trained technicians and nursing staff around the clock. We also have a ratio of staff to individuals to property care for their needs.

Our fear is if a person with behaviors issues are moved to a CILA that they will be medicated instead of properly dealt with and redirected. Our medical staff has been able to decrease their medications because we provide consistancy. They were told ~~t~~ by ACCT and IDHS that they have rights. being ripped from their home and everything they know in order to meet deadline is not right. The people from Jacksonville were treated like cattle. They were loaded up & taken away in the busses that transport inmates to meet a deadline. Please don't let that happen here. Murray Center has a team that has and will make transitions. But only when the person is absolutely ready and not before.

Concerned staff

To whom it may Concern,

WBMDC needs to remain open due to these other group homes, Cilas, and State Facilities will not know what these individual need. I've been here 13 yrs and I learn something new everyday. Their are a lot of individuals here that you cannot say certain words to or it could cause distress, or which tears means they hurt, or want their family, or even want us, some places Sign language is even differ than ours, We have individuals that come here knowing even a totally differ sign Language than we were taught. Their are Individuals here that we are their family and their face lights up when they see us come in. People think this is just a job and at some points it is like needing the money and benefits, but love & caring goes with it. We have Individuals that have been here their whole and would die and die of depression over being moved. I have one special Individual to me that has no family to visit and he could be moved out at anytime and he would never make it in a group home, and really

Can't speak to much, but says my ~~name~~ everyday and says I love you to me, other people would get hurt when he has a behavior. And we have others that came here instead of jail, if they're not here they would end up in jail. And I am a mother of 2 and grandmother of 1, I would be living off of welfare, medical cards and link if this place closes, and prob lose my home, I cannot up and transfer to another place. This Town and other surrounding Towns would lose their businesses because they would be losing people to shop. Please stop them from shutting us down. Thank You

Concerned
care giver and employee
Mother and grandmother

7-25-13

Dear Federal Judge:

Please keep Murray Center open so the people can keep having good (great) care. And the parents don't have to worry about ~~your~~ their love ones. Thank for your time.

Mary Vottkamp
1203 S. Brookside
Centralia, IL 62801
618-533-1694

Dear Judge Aspen,

On behalf of the medically & physically fragile residents that live at Murray Center, I beg you to allow the center to stay open... Without the proper nutrition for all of their dietary needs, physical and occupational therapy, medicines and direct care issues, these people will die. For fifty years this is the only home these people have known....

Put yourself in their shoes and try to understand what an awful situation this is. Knowing your entire life is about to be disrupted and possibly destroyed all because of politics. These are living, breathing human beings not a commodity. Please do the right thing and save Murray Center.

Thank You,

Patty Hall
SSW-H'KEEPING
Grape Cottage

Dear Judge Aspen,

on behalf of the physically and mentally fragile individuals that reside at Murray Center, please have mercy on them. My name is Misty Baum, & work in support service / Housekeeping Grape Cottage.

These fragile human beings deserve just what they are getting at Murray Center. We provide: love, attention, medical treatment, a diet that works for each unique person, a clean environment, dignity & respect. We also provide x-ray on grounds and dental on grounds. These people get to go out in the community and be involved with all different kinds of activities. They are happy here at Murray Center, this is so unfair for them to be going through this. It wouldn't be fair for them to be yanked from their home and for some they don't know anything else but Murray Center. These are people like you & I, please, please, help them. Save their Home

Thank you
Misty Baum
SSW II Housekeeping/Grape