

**PARENTS ASSOCIATION  
BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER  
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63137**

PHONE 314-264-9100 BHC Switchboard  
PHONE 314-340-6002 Thrift Shop  
WEBSITE [www.parentsassociationbhc.com](http://www.parentsassociationbhc.com)

**NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2021**



**PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING**

All Parent Association members, friends and staff are invited. Keep up with the latest news about Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. Bring your talents and expertise for our advocacy efforts. With everyone's involvement, the lives of the residents at BHC will be the best possible. All are encouraged to stay informed and take some action. Attend a parents meeting, talk with other families, share your concerns and ideas, write a letter, or make a phone call to help provide a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for the residents of BHC and others. They have no voice but ours, so we must continually speak up for them. Refreshments served.

**THE NOVEMBER 14 PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING HAS  
BEEN CANCELLED**

**PENDING 2022 PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING DATES**  
**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!**

**FEBRUARY 13      MAY 15      AUGUST 14      NOVEMBER 13**

**The switchboard phone number** for Bellefontaine Habilitation Center is 314-264-9100 or 314-264-9101.

**Our Parent Newsletter is online** at [www.ParentsAssociationBHC.com](http://www.ParentsAssociationBHC.com). Pass it along to others.

**Wishes for a return to complete health** to all who have contracted the virus.

**Sincere thanks to all BHC staff** for your dedicated daily work during the COVID pandemic.

**Rules for visiting residents** may change as virus statistics change.

**A third COVID 19 vaccination** will be made available to those eligible.

**Parent Association meetings** may resume in 2022 depending on virus status.

**Remember: families have the right to choose a habilitation center. The 1999 Supreme Court Olmstead decision** that interprets the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act states:

"Nothing in the ADA or its implementing regulations condones termination of institutional settings for persons unable to handle or benefit from community settings...Nor is there any federal requirement that community-based treatment be imposed on patients who do not desire it." *Olmstead*, at 601 – 602

"It would be unreasonable, it would be a tragic event, then, were the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to be interpreted so that States had some incentive, for fear of litigation, to drive those in need of medical care and treatment out of appropriate care and into settings with too little assistance and supervision." *Olmstead*, at 610.



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ALL**



**TRIBUTE FUND**

Celebrate a birthday or anniversary, offer get well wishes or congratulations, remember a loved one by sending in a tribute - support the residents at Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. A few examples of the use of funds are: annual picnic, Christmas gifts and decorations, birthday cakes and presents, holiday decorations, treats and dances, household items, and special programs. The tribute form is on the last page of the newsletter.

**DONOR**

Brian & Jill Beseda  
Jean Brinkmeyer  
Kurt & Cathy Brinkmeyer  
Fred Brueggemann  
Jeanette Craig  
Jeanette Craig  
Karen, Liz, Claire, Kathryn Kearney  
Sandra Cucera  
Jacqueline Kearney  
Mary Anne McNally  
Bill & Vera Norman  
Steve & Mary Vitale  
Steve & Mary Vitale

**RECIPIENT**

Nancy Maddock  
Nancy Maddock  
Barbara Aslin  
BHC Staff  
Thomasine Branneky  
Mickey Slawson  
Jacqueline Kearney  
Nancy Maddock  
  
Nancy Maddock  
  
Thomasine Branneky

**OCCASION**

in memory of Bettie Meyer  
in memory of Bettie Meyer  
in memory of Bettie Meyer  
good care during Covid 19  
in memory of Tim Kidwell  
in memory of Carol Slawson  
in memory of Mary Ann Kearney  
in memory of Bettie Meyer  
in memory of Mary Ann Kearney  
donation  
in memory of Bettie Meyer  
in memory of Bettie Meyer  
in memory of Tim Kidwell

Sincere condolences are expressed for the Branneky/Kidwell family upon the death of Tim Kidwell, beloved brother of board member Thomasine Branneky

The BHC Parents Association expresses our deep sympathy for Department of Mental Health staff and clients who have died from the COVID 19 virus.



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**FUNDS APPROVED BY PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD**



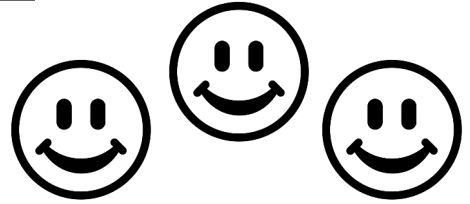
- \$ 900.00 Halloween decorations, parties in homes
- \$1306.00 Birthday cakes for residents for year 2022
- \$1100.00 Birthday gifts for residents for Jan/June 2022
- \$3375.00 Christmas gifts for residents, decorations, parties in the home

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**THE HIDDEN TREASURE THRIFT SHOP HAS BEEN CLOSED DURING THE PANDEMIC.  
LESS FUNDS ARE COMING IN.  
NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO MAKE A DONATION TO**

**THE BHC PARENTS ASSOCIATION**

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**ANNUAL BHC PICNIC, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021, EMOJI THEME**

The BHC Picnic was held on September 16 and what a beautiful day it was!!! The theme was Emoji's.

The day started with the parade as residents watched from their porches. Participants in the parade were:

Bellefontaine Police                  Riverview Police                  Riverview Fire                  Bubble Bus

BHC Departments: Staff Development                  Bill Heuvelmann/Purchasing                  NCI, QE, FDC, OT/PT/ST, Donnell Lockridge, and a memorial float honoring the people who lived at BHC and had passed.

Because of the continuing Covid virus, individual parties were held in each home.

Each home received an Emoji center piece, two bundles of balloons, table cloth, a music CD, and a movie.

Every resident received a backpack that had Emojis on it that could be colored with fabric markers. The backpacks contained Emoji beads, a stress ball, a key chain, stickers, a picture frame with each person's picture in it, a notebook, tattoos, and their candy/snack bag (according to their dietary instructions). Residents also enjoyed picnic day snacks of fruit, ice cream, cotton candy, and water with a flavor pack.

A box of snacks was prepared for first shift staff to enjoy with the residents. The remaining fruit, ice cream and water was taken to the gym for the remainder of the staff on grounds.

MUCH APPRECIATION GOES TO:

PICNIC PLANNING COMMITTEE, BHC PARENTS ASSOCIATION, & ALL BHC STAFF MEMBERS

**BHC RESIDENT ACTIVITIES, SUMMER and FALL**

Due to Covid restrictions, community outings were not planned for the last several months.



**Activities on grounds July through October:**

Preparations are being made for the Halloween season: parties for each home, pumpkin decorating, home decorating, and programming projects.

Programming continues both morning and afternoon. The focus of programming will be changing soon.

Each home has their own program area and within the program room there will be a 30 minute rotating schedule that will focus on six areas. Items have been purchased or are being purchased for each resident that will be used during each of these six areas.

- |                  |                        |               |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Communication | 2. Exercise/Stretching | 3. Art/Craft  |
| 4. Sensory       | 5. Music               | 6. Vocational |

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**DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK**

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week was celebrated on September 12-18. These staff members are the heart of the comprehensive care given to residents at the Bellefontaine Habilitation



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Center. During this week, much appreciation was expressed for this vital daily work. Thank you to BHC Direct Support Professionals.



**CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

It is of great concern that there is a critical shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) across the nation, made even worse by the Covid 19 pandemic and the recovering economy.

Staff diagnosed with Covid 19 go on sick leave and some need time to quarantine.

Many establishments and companies are raising their wages and offering sign-on bonuses for new employees. Hourly pay of \$15.00 and more is becoming common. Private disability organizations are offering even higher wages for DSPs on weekends.

According to a 2019 Staff Stability Survey Report, the national median hourly wage for DSPs was \$12.00.

Reported median hourly wages for 2019 Missouri DSPs was \$11.67. The \$11.67 Missouri DSP hourly wage means that many rely on some form of government assistance.

This same report states that a living wage of 2 working adults with 2 children would be \$14.97.

2019 turnover rate for Missouri was 51.5%. High DSP turnovers means continual recruitment and training which is costly and time consuming. Just as important is that it also results in less continuity in the care given to individuals.

From all respondents to the survey, of the DSPs who left employment in 2019:

- 32.7% had been employed for less than 6 months
- 17.8% had been employed between 6 and 12 months
- 13.8% had been employed between 12 and 24 months
- 6.6% had been employed between 24 and 36 months
- 12.0% had been employed 36 months or more

Staff Stability Report can be found at:  
<https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/staff-stability-survey/>

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**MISSOURI RANKS LOW IN PAY OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

<https://www.newstribune.com/news/news/story/2021/sep/26/missouri-remains-among-worst-for-state-employee-pay/890250/>



Quotes from News Tribune article:

Despite small salary increase efforts over the past few years, the state still holds the dubious distinction of ranking second to last in state pay for public employees, based on data from 2020.

The Missouri General Assembly passed a 2 percent, cost-of-living pay raise for all state government employees, and a 2.5 percent increase for elected officials and its members, set to go into effect next January.

The ranking comes from OpenPayrolls, the largest nationwide public salary database in the United States.

OpenPayrolls ranked the state last for average state government employee pay in 2019, 2018 and 2017. It was ranked second to last in 2016 and 2015, just above West Virginia both years.

**A REMINDER ABOUT THE 2022 MISSOURI BUDGET**

Governor Mike Parson signed Fiscal Year 2022 state operating budget bills on Wednesday, June 30. The Missouri FY22 state budget is approximately \$35.6 billion.

The 2022 FY budget for Missouri will have a record budget surplus - \$1.2 billion.

The huge surplus is due to federal COVID 19 pandemic aid and to tax revenues collection delayed from FY2020 to FY2021.

Adding to the current surplus, more federal funding will be available to states through U.S. Congressional action such as the American Rescue Plan, signed on March 11, 2021.

Appropriations for the Department of Mental Health can be found in House Bill 10 at:

<https://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills211/hlrbillspdf/0010H.06T.pdf>

A complete list of FY2022 appropriations are listed at:

<https://oa.mo.gov/budget-planning/budget-information/2022-budget-information/appropriation-bills-fy-2022>



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**STATE OF MISSOURI SPENDING TOOLKITS FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS**

**<https://governor.mo.gov/press-releases/archive/state-missouri-creates-american-rescue-plan-act-spending-toolkits-local>**

October 8, 2021

The State of Missouri has created and made available spending toolkits to help local governments identify allowable uses for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) local funds.

"We want to assist our local partners in making strategic, responsible investments that will serve Missourians for generations to come," Governor Mike Parson said. "Our first priority is to ensure taxpayer funds are used in the most effective ways possible. These toolkits were developed to help our state and local governments work together towards long-term goals that will move our state forward."

ARPA included fiscal recovery funds for state, local, and tribal governments. These toolkits provide local governments with ideas for allowable uses of these funds and are based on available guidance from the U.S. Treasury. The toolkits are broken down into six different categories:

- Public Health
- Public Safety
- Economic Development
- Water, Wastewater, and Storm Water
- Broadband
- Behavioral Health

The toolkits can be found at: <https://oa2.mo.gov/ARPAtoolkits>

Local governments should check the Treasury's website frequently to stay up to date on current guidance and funding requirements. The U.S. Department of Treasury has specific compliance and reporting requirements associated with the use of ARPA fiscal recovery funds. For more information, please refer directly to the U.S. Department of Treasury's website.

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**DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT**

<https://dmh.mo.gov/node/30181>



Date Tue, 10/12/2021 - 12:00  
City Jefferson City, MO

Today, Director of the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Mark Stringer announced his plans to retire effective January 1, 2022. He leaves after giving more than 34 years of service to the mental health field; with 24 years at DMH including the last seven years as DMH Director.

“The Commission is grateful for Mr. Stringer’s years of service to the Department of Mental Health,” said Teresa Coyan, Chair of the Mental Health Commission. “It has been a privilege to work with such a devoted, respected and innovative mental health advocate.”

Mark Stringer has been a dedicated public servant to thousands of Missourians with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders. He has also had a national presence testifying before the U.S. Congress on various mental health issues; serving as President of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors; and serving in the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. Over the years he has received numerous awards for recovery and treatment innovation and leadership.

During his tenure, Stringer oversaw the building and completion of Fulton State Hospital’s new Nixon Forensic Center. He has provided tireless leadership for DMH through further integration of physical and behavioral health care, the expansion of medication treatment for people with substance use disorders, and development of a new treatment model for individuals with complex mental illness and developmental disabilities. He has been at the helm for critical programming to fight the opioid epidemic, grow recovery support services, enhance employment opportunities for clients to work in the DMH system, and move the department toward being a system of trauma-informed care.

“It has been a true honor and privilege to work with Governor Parson and his staff, the hard working employees of DMH, my leadership team, our community service partners, and the people and families we serve,” Stringer said. “In all my years in the mental health field, this has been my most rewarding professional experience.”

Deputy Director, Valerie Huhn, will serve as Acting Director for DMH beginning in November while Stringer takes leave until his official retirement date at end of the year.

The Missouri Mental Health Commission will begin a search for a new Director on October 15. The search process which will include input from statewide representatives from behavioral health and developmental disabilities stakeholder organizations. The Commission expects to select a new Director to begin in January 2022.

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## AUTISM NEWS

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON SEVERE AUTISM (NCSA) CALLS FOR CATEGORICAL RECOGNITION OF SEVERE AUTISM IN THE DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL (DSM-5)**

NCSA has released a **position statement** calling for a revision to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

There is a need for a unique diagnosis of severe autism to provide better acknowledgement of these individuals and the specialized care required for them.

The current category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is so broad that it includes a person with a low IQ, few daily functional abilities, and extremely dangerous behaviors and also a person with a college degree who has social anxieties and some obsessive compulsive behaviors.

This broad definition undermines the purpose of a diagnostic description which is to guide appropriate interventions, services, and research.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ncsautism.org/blog//dsmrevision>

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## **VOR CURRENT UPDATES ON FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

[www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net)

### **VOR SUPPORTS:**

Two bills in the House to support Vocational Centers and 14(c) Wage Certificates:

**H.R.4761** - A bill to amend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to ensure workplace choice and opportunity for young adults with disabilities.

**H.R.4762** - A Bill to amend the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to clarify the definition of competitive integrated employment.

### **VOR OPPOSES:**

**H.R.4131 & S.2210 - The Better Care Better Jobs Act** - To be clear, we don't oppose this bill. We object to the fact that it excludes the most vulnerable members of the I/DD population.

While the Better Care Better Jobs Act would greatly increase the amount of federal funding for people with I/DD, it only supports those in waiver programs receiving Home and Community Based Services. It unjustly discriminates against those who have chosen Intermediate Care Facilities as the necessary and proper form of residential treatment. By giving a 10% increase in federal matching funds only to HCBS clients, and providing training and increased pay only to direct support professionals working in HCBS facilities, the act deliberately favors one form of treatment over another, one ideology over another, and one set of people with I/DD over another.

**H.R. 603 & S. 53 - The Raise the Wage Act** - These bills are aimed at raising the minimum wage, but they also have provisions to phase out and ultimately eliminate vocational centers and 14 (c) wage certificates over the next six years and to immediately stop the issuing of any new certificates. VOR believes the issue of employment options for individuals with intellectual disabilities should not be buried in a bill for raising the federal minimum wage. Both issues deserve clean, stand-alone bills.

**H.R.1880** - To amend the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 to make permanent the **Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration**.

**H.R. 2383 - The Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act** - this bill purports to assist employers providing employment under special certificates issued under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 in transforming their business and program models to models that support individuals with disabilities through competitive integrated employment, to phase out the use of these special certificates. We feel that, if enacted, tens of thousands of people with I/DD and autism will still be forced out of opportunities they currently, needlessly, and left without viable alternatives to occupy their time or address their needs and their abilities.

## **SUPPORT VOR      MAKE A DIFFERENCE      BECOME A MEMBER**

**VOR** is a national non-profit organization that advocates for high quality care and human rights for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

**VOR** advocates for the full continuum of care and full range of employment options for persons with I/DD

**VOR** supports laws that protect guardianship.

**VOR** is a resource. With your membership, you will receive their weekly email newsletter, quarterly issues of the VOR VOICE, and notifications of Action Alerts for state and national advocacy campaigns.

**JOIN VOR \$45 per year per individual; \$200 per year per family organization; or \$250 per year per provider/professional organization**

**Send completed form with payment to: (checks made out to "VOR")**

VOR

836 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #351

Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

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City: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Or go online: [www.vor.net](http://www.vor.net)

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TRIBUTE FUND FORM (please print)

ENCLOSED CONTRIBUTION \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF \_\_\_\_\_

ON THE OCCASION OF \_\_\_\_\_

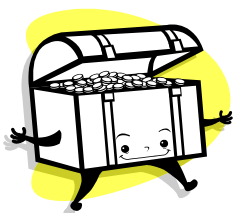
PLEASE SEND TO (name) \_\_\_\_\_

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

FROM (name) \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO "BHC Parents Association"

MAIL TO: PARENTS ASSOCIATION 10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST LOUIS MO 63137



**THE HIDDEN TREASURE SHOP  
BEST THRIFT SHOP PRICES!!  
CLOSED AT THIS TIME!!!**

PARENTS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER  
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD  
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**FORWARDING AND ADDRESS  
CORRECTION REQUESTED**