



**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

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2022

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.

THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETINGS HAVE RESUMED!!!!

MEETING DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2022

MEETING TIME: 2:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
FOR 2023 PARENTS ASSOCIATION**

2023 MEETING DATES

FEBRUARY 12 MAY 21 AUGUST 13 NOVEMBER 12

Please call the switchboard before coming to make sure the COVID virus has not changed our meeting plans. 314-264-9101

Masks are required at the General Meeting. (If visiting your family member you will need to be tested.)

Federal Surveyors for Title 19 Medicaid funding were back on campus 9-20 through 9-22 for resident charts review. All charts looked at were approved. These required federal surveys give our family members a high level of services and oversight.

It is important to repeat that there continues to be a strong, persistent effort nationwide to close all congregate care facilities like habilitation centers, despite current federal regulations in support of choice based on need such as:

The 1999 Supreme Court Olmstead decision that interprets the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act states:

"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.

Join the organization VOR, our national voice for the rights of our family members. VOR needs your support. Add your voice to VOR advocacy. Become a member or donate at www.vor.net.

.Keep informed. Take action. Mary A. Vitale, President, Bellefontaine Parents Association

TRIBUTE FUND

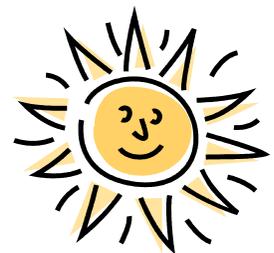
Celebrate a birthday or anniversary, offer get well wishes or congratulations, remember a loved one by sending in a tribute - support the residents at Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. A few examples of the use of funds are: annual picnic, Christmas gifts and decorations, birthday cakes and presents,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

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>RECIPIENT</u>	<u>OCCASION</u>
Paul Bassler	Wells family	in memory Cynthia Wells
Robert & Barbara Brasses	“	“
Mary Bryant	“	“
Dorothy Delorenzo	“	“
Jay & Linda Goldman	“	“
Jerry Hawkins	“	“
Edward & Gail Jacquin	“	“
Greg & Janet Kaemmerer	“	“
Pat & Al Koke	“	“
Don Mercille	“	“
Tom & Pam Merker	“	“
Bob O’Neal	“	“
Tom & Linda Reel	“	“
Kathleen Wicker	“	“
Roseanne & Bud Dickey	Connie & Dave Senften	in memory Sharon Smith
Roseanne & Bud Dickey	Melody & Mitch Miller	in memory Sharon Smith
Roseanne & Bud Dickey	Suzanne Govan	in memory Charles Govan
Jacqueline Endraske		in memory/birthday Kenny Deschu
Kwamina Walker-Williams	Kyla Walker	birthday Kyla Walker
Frederich Brueggemann		donation



FUNDS APPROVED BY PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD

- \$ 300.00 Home 1608 Household decorations
- \$ 1101.38 Birthday cakes for residents
- \$ 950.00 Halloween decorations, activities
- \$ 1000.00 Birthday gifts for residents
- & 750.00 Bob Kramer Marionettes Christmas program
- \$ 2243.00 Christmas gifts for residents, Christmas parties & decorations



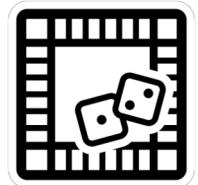
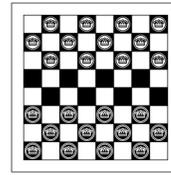
OVER THE YEARS, MOST OF THE FUNDING THAT PAYS FOR THESE EXTENSIVE RESIDENT ACTIVITIES HAS COME FROM THE HIDDEN TREASURE THRIFT SHOP.

THE SHOP HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR 2 YEARS CAUSING A LOSS OF SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS. AT THIS TIME IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW OR WHEN THE THRIFT SHOP MIGHT REOPEN.

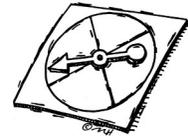
**NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE
BHC PARENTS ASSOCIATION**

MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO “BHC Parents Association”

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



“GAME TIME” ANNUAL BHC PICNIC SEPTEMBER 15, 2022



It was wonderful to have the annual BHC picnic in the gym since 2019!!

Beautiful weather helped celebrate the day, beginning with residents watching the parade of creative department floats driving around the campus amidst the colorful bubbles from the Bubble Bus.

GAME TIME theme decorations and balloons gave the gym a festive atmosphere for the residents to enjoy the activities.

Music, dancing, games, caricature artists, a mime and a balloon clown gave residents a variety of fun activities from which to choose. Treats included fresh fruit, Hawaiian Ice, funnel cakes, cotton candy and ice cream.

GIANT SIZED games to play included Yahtzee, Bowling, TicTacToe, Jenga, Connect 4, and Darts.

Appreciation goes to:

BHC Parent’s Association
Parade Participants
Caricature Artists
Sports Energizers

BHC Picnic Committee
Bubble Bus
City Mime
Terry Hobbs

BHC Staff
Balloon Clown
D&T Funnel Cakes

Thanks to Parade Participants: Memorial float, Bellefontaine Police Dept., Riverview Fire and Police Depts., Joe Lewis, Bill Heuvelmann, Unit floats, Quality Enhancement, Dietary, North County Industries, Business Office, OT/PT/Communication, Bubble Bus

BHC RESIDENTS ENJOY FALL ACTIVITIES

Thanks to staff for helping residents enjoy these Fall activities:



On Campus Activities:

Ongoing evening activities in the gym: Bingo, Wii Game, Movie Night and Dance

September

Celebrated BHC Annual Picnic & Parade

Each home decorated a Program Area with Fall decorations

Each home painted Fall canvas pictures for display case



October

Halloween decorating, party and dance

Pumpkin decorating contest



Off Grounds Activities

Cracker Barrel, Fazoli’s, Imo’s, Flea Market, Walmart and Family Dollar



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DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week was celebrated on September 11-17. These staff members are the heart of the comprehensive care given to residents at the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. Thank you to BHC Direct Support Professionals for your daily work to give residents the best support possible for their safety, health, and overall well-being.

NATIONAL SHORTAGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS AFFECTS MISSOURI

The Direct Support Professional Week is an opportune time to think about the critical nationwide shortage of Direct Support Professionals, the caregivers who assist with the daily needs of the disability and aging communities.

The following article shows how staff shortages, some of whom are Direct Support Professionals, is affecting the care of Missouri citizens with an intellectual disability no matter where they live whether at home, in community residential placements, or residential habilitation center homes.

“Hospitals in ‘crisis’ as staff shortages persist at Missouri mental health facilities”

By Tessa Weinberg | Missouri Independent Sep 15, 2022



https://www.joplinglobe.com/news/four-states/hospitals-in-crisis-as-staff-shortages-persist-at-missouri-mental-health-facilities/article_e9e6045a-3534-11ed-bfb4-97bdf22472f7.html

Hospitals across Missouri are facing a “crisis” caring for patients in acute care settings who can’t find long-term care through the Department of Mental Health due to the agency’s chronic shortage of workers.

Patty Morrow, vice president of behavioral health services for Mercy Health, testified during a legislative hearing Wednesday that “the problem is pervasive and systemic” as residents languish on wait lists for services.

“We are seeing a growing crisis of vulnerable youth and adults being left really at the doorstep of our hospitals without the necessary resources,” Morrow said. “We are not doing well by citizens of our state in terms of serving their needs.”

Between 12 and 20 individuals are housed in Mercy hospital settings each day that are awaiting placement either within the Department of Social Services or the Department of Mental Health, Morrow said. One patient is going on 290 days in Mercy’s care, with a 10-bed unit closed in order to devote resources to him, Morrow said.

“We’re really approaching two Christmases that he will be in our facility,” Morrow said, later adding: “At the end of the day, there’s not a lot of light at the end of the tunnel; we are expecting that he will be with us for a much more protracted period of time.”

To date, Mercy Health has been paid \$21,000 for his care, Morrow said. Overall, the system estimates his care has cost more than \$1 million when also assessing lost revenue, like the 10 beds being offline.

Mercy Health was not alone at Wednesday’s hearing, with representatives for SSM Health, BJC HealthCare and Research Psychiatric Center sharing similar experiences of housing patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the long term.

Justin Alferman, a former lawmaker and director of advocacy for SSM health, said patients’ mental health often declines as they live in a hospital for months on end. Across SSM’s eight hospitals, 25 patients who are awaiting placement have been holding for more than 1,800 days altogether. Last year alone, 106 adults awaited placement for a total of 7,242 days.

“Simply put,” Alferman said, “there is just not enough workforce.”

Staffing vacancies

Rep. Dirk Deaton, R-Noel and chair of the House Subcommittee on Appropriations for Health, Mental Health and Social Services, said delays in placements are extending to hospitals, which in these instances aren’t the appropriate place for long-term care.

“I wonder, 150 years from now, what people will think about us with this sort of a problem,” Deaton said, later adding: “We can and should do better.”

“Hospitals in ‘crisis’ as staff shortages persist at Missouri mental health facilities” (continued)

Over the past year, the Department of Mental Health has continued to grapple with steep vacancies among staff, causing access to care across its state-run mental health facilities to decline as wings are shut down due to a lack of sufficient employees to staff available beds.

There are 210 individuals waiting in jail for admission to a Department of Mental Health psychiatric hospital. An additional 266 people have yet to meet with a forensic examiner to determine if they are competent to stand trial, and it’s estimated about 50% of those individuals will be found incompetent to stand trial and be referred to the Department of Mental Health, Valerie Huhn, the department’s director, told lawmakers Wednesday.

Within the department’s Division of Developmental Disabilities, Huhn said 652 people are on an open referral list for placement with a residential provider.

A graph shared with lawmakers shows that figure is projected to potentially increase to more than 1,400 individuals in fiscal year 2023. There are 20 people who are in a hospital due to a lack of a residential provider, with the average hospital stay while waiting for a provider at 116 days. Currently, 127 people have been waiting for a residential provider for more than a year.

“Our challenge is actually getting individuals into placement,” Huhn said.

Across the Department of Mental Health’s divisions of behavioral health and developmental disabilities, 1,743 full-time positions are vacant. While there has been improvement in turnover, like for support care assistants, vacancy rates for clinical staff range from 26% to 50%.

“It’s very difficult once we get somebody in to get them restored to competency if we don’t have that treatment aspect,” Huhn said.

Contracted staff are being used to maintain operations, with 213 being used across rehabilitation centers and psychiatric hospitals. The bulk of those, Huhn said, are at Fulton State Hospital.

Possible strategies

Huhn said the goal is to move away from contracted staff, who are paid more than their state counterparts.

Rates for certified nursing assistants paid to the staffing company were \$78 an hour for certified nursing assistants and \$195 an hour for behavioral health registered nurses. That’s compared with noncontracted support care staff, who start at \$15.31 an hour, Huhn said.

“It costs us four times as much for contracted people, and if we paid more, we might not need the contracted people,” said Rep. Peter Merideth, D-St. Louis.

In order to deal with staffing shortages, Missouri entered into a no-bid, emergency contract with a Texas-based construction company called SLSCO last year. The Independent previously reported the contract was marked by no-shows and high costs.

The Department of Mental Health is continuing to pay for temporary staff through the contract, said Debra Walker, a spokeswoman for the department.

In fiscal years 2022 and 2023, SLSCO has been paid more than \$73 million, according to the state’s accountability portal.

In a competitive labor market, the department has struggled to remain competitive, despite salary increases lawmakers approved earlier this year, Huhn said. Increasing pay for tenured employees and workers taking evening shifts are strategies Huhn said could help address the problem.

“We’re not going to be asking for additional beds next year. I won’t get them staffed,” Huhn said, later adding: “There’s no history on a labor market like this.”

THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF A WELL TRAINED WORKFORCE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CARE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

Do you know of someone who has a desire to assist people with intellectual disabilities have the best life possible? Let them know of opportunities with the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

STATE AND NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

At the state level, the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities, has developed *Missouri Talent Pathways*. Benefits to participants in this program include: earning a Certified Direct Support Professional certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor, Professional Development education credit with little or no debt, paid on the job training and the opportunity of career advancement. For more information go to <https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/service-providers/talent-pathways>

The Department of Mental Health also continues discussions with the Governor’s office and the Legislature to continue to improve the pay structure to be more competitive with other work opportunities.

At the national level, the U. S. Congress is considering bills in support of Direct Support Professionals. These bills include:

H.R.4779 – Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act

The purpose of H.R.4779 – Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act is “to require the Office of Management and Budget to revise the Standard Occupational Classification system to establish a separate code for direct support professionals, and for other purposes.”

S.1437 – Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act

The purpose of S.1437 – Recognizing the Role of Direct Support Professionals Act is “to require the Office of Management and Budget to revise the Standard Occupational Classification system to establish a separate code for direct support professionals, and for other purposes.”

These 2 bills would establish a “discrete occupational category for direct support professionals” and will:

- “(A) correct an inaccurate representation in the Standard Occupational Classification system;
- (B) recognize these professionals for the critical and often times overlooked work that they perform for the disabled community, which work is different than the work of a home health aide or a personal care aide; and
- (C) better align the Standard Occupational Classification system with related classification systems.”

S.2344 – Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act

The purpose of S.2344 – Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act is “to award grants for the creation, recruitment, training and education, retention, and advancement of the direct care workforce and to award grants to support family caregivers.”

H.R.2999 – Direct CARE Opportunity Act

The purpose of H.R.2999 – Direct CARE Opportunity Act is “to award grants for the recruitment, retention, and advancement of direct care workers.”

Also, on the national level, organizations such as the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals are advocating for these important workers.

According to their website the organization’s mission is “to elevate the status of direct support professionals by improving practice standards, promoting system reform, and advancing their knowledge, skills and values.” Website: <https://nadsp.org>

ALERT: Any advocacy efforts or legislative bills supporting Direct Support Professionals should apply to all settings in which they work, whether home, in the community, or in facilities such as Missouri habilitation center homes.



MISSOURI SENATE BILL 710 – HEALTH CARE FACILITY VISITATION SECTION

https://www.senate.mo.gov/22info/BTS_Web/Summary.aspx?SessionType=R&SummaryID=17002230&BillID=71259734

Governor Parson signed Senate Bill 710 on June 30, 2022. The bill summary states the following:

HEALTH CARE FACILITY VISITATION (Sections 191.1400, 191.2290, and 630.202)

This act establishes the "Compassionate Care Visitation Act". Under this act, a health care facility, defined as a hospital, hospice, or long-term care facility, shall allow a resident, patient, or guardian of such, to permit in-person contact with a compassionate care visitor during visiting hours. A compassionate care visitor may be the patient's or resident's friend, family member, or other person requested by the patient or resident. The compassionate care visitation is a visit necessary to meet the physical or mental needs of the patient or resident, including end-of-life care, assistance with hearing and speaking, emotional support, assistance with eating or drinking, or social support.

A health care facility shall allow a resident to permit at least 2 compassionate care visitors simultaneously to have in-person contact with the resident during visitation hours. Visitation hours shall include evenings, weekends, and holidays, and shall be no less than 6 hours daily. 24-hour visitation may be allowed when reasonably appropriate. Visitors may leave and return during visitor hours. Visitors may be restricted within the facility to the patient or resident's room or common areas and may be restricted entirely for reasons specified in the act.

By January 1, 2023, the Department of Health and Senior Services shall develop informational materials for patients, residents, and their legal guardians regarding the provisions of this act. Health care facilities shall make these informational materials accessible upon admission or registration and on the primary website of the facility.

A compassionate care visitor may report any violation of the Compassionate Care Visitation Act by a health care facility to the Department of Health and Senior Services, as specified in the act. The Department shall investigate any such complaint within thirty-six hours of receipt.

No health care facility shall be held liable for damages in an action involving a liability claim against the facility arising from compliance with the provisions of this act; provided no recklessness or willful misconduct on the part of the facility, employees, or contractors has occurred.

The provisions of this act shall not be terminated, suspended, or waived except by a declaration by the Governor of a state of emergency, in which case the provisions of the "Essential Caregiver Program Act" shall apply.

Additionally, this act establishes the "Essential Caregiver Program Act". During a governor-declared state of emergency, a hospital, long-term care facility, or facility operated, licensed, or certified by the Department of Mental Health shall allow a resident of such facility, or the resident's guardian or legal representative, to designate an essential caregiver for in-person contact with the resident in accordance with the standards and guidelines developed under this act. An "essential caregiver" is defined as a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual selected by a resident, or the guardian or legal representative of the resident. Essential caregivers shall be considered a part of the patient's care team, along with the resident's health care providers and facility staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic severely restricted visitation to long term care facilities in Missouri and across the nation.

This Missouri Senate Bill 710 recognizes the enormous benefits of visitation rights for people in hospitals, hospice programs, or long term care facilities like habilitation centers.

Visitation can support the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of the residents and also of concerned friends and family.

TRIBUTE FUND FORM (please print)

ENCLOSED CONTRIBUTION _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

ON THE OCCASION OF _____

PLEASE SEND TO (name) _____

(address) _____

FROM (name) _____

(address) _____

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
CLOSED AT THIS TIME!!!

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

FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED