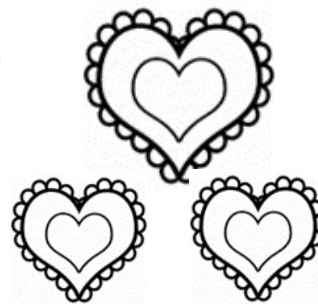


**PARENTS ASSOCIATION
BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER
10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD
ST. LOUIS, MO 63137**

PHONE 314-264-9100 BHC Switchboard
PHONE 314-340-6002 Thrift Shop
WEBSITE www.parentsassociationbhc.com

*HAPPY VALENTINE'S
DAY*



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2024

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.

MEETING DATE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024

MEETING TIME: 2:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

2024 MEETING DATES

FEBRUARY 11 MAY 19 AUGUST 11 NOVEMBER 10

If weather is bad, please call the switchboard before coming to make sure the weather conditions have not changed the meeting plans. 314-264-9101

Road repair is still on the agenda, but there have been difficulties in finding a contractor.

The Hidden Treasure Thrift shop has reopened. Find your treasure from: clothes, shoes, household furnishings, toys, books, DVD's, electronics, glassware, kitchen accessories, baskets, electronics, jewelry, holiday decorations, and much more. Come and visit us on Wednesdays, 10:00-3:00.

The building of a new youth facility on a parcel of land on the BHC campus was announced by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Division of Developmental Disabilities and Department of Social Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS). The youth at the center will be those who have committed crimes. See page 5.

Security for BHC residents, staff and visitors is a major concern as this project progresses.

Missouri habilitation centers are an essential part of a continuum of care for persons with intellectual disabilities and are supported by federal law.

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 federal regulations.

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? Let them know of opportunities with the Missouri Department of Mental Health at 1706 East Elm Street Jefferson City, MO 65101 Phone: 1-573-751-4122 Phone: 1-800-364-9687 <https://dmh.mo.gov/>

Join the organization VOR, our national voice for the rights of our family members. Make a difference on the national level. VOR needs your support. Become a member or donate at www.vor.net.

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

**2024 BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER
PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS**

10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST. LOUIS, MO 63137
314-340-6002 Thrift Shop
314-264-9100 or 9101 BHC Switchboard
www.parentsassociationbhc.com

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Mary Vitale
VICE PRESIDENT Patrick Wells
TREASURER Thomasine Branneky
RECORDING SECRETARY Leslie Terrebonne
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY Patrick Wells

DIRECTORS

Kathleen Berkley
Michael Brophy
Fred Brueggemann
Jeanette Craig
Darlene Desroches

The Parents Association welcomes new board members, Fred Brueggemann and Darlene Desroches. Thank you for serving on the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center Parents Association Board to support the residents.

Members of the Parents Association of the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center enhance the lives of the residents. Examples of resident support by the Parents Association include:

- BIRTHDAY CAKES AND GIFTS
- CHRISTMAS GIFTS
- HOLIDAY PARTIES
- HOLIDAY DECORATIONS
- HOME FURNISHINGS
- SPECIAL PROGRAM FUNDS
- PICNIC FUNDS
- DANCE BANDS
- CAMP FUNDS
- STAFF APPRECIATION

A Parents Association Newsletter is published 4 times a year, and can be accessed on our website, www.parentsassociationbhc.com.

Do you have a relative, friend, or community leader that would be interested in the Parents Association? 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE \$5.00 annually. Pass along the membership form in this newsletter issue.

For questions about the Parents Association, call the switchboard: 314-264-9101.

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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

RECIPIENT

OCCASION

Doug and Diane Bilbruck		in memory of Dennis Coll
Chris Bomze		donation
Patsy Christen		in memory of Patrice Christen
Don and Robin Galanos		in memory of Dennis Coll
Nancy Georgen		in memory of Charles Schwartz
Tom & Ann Ladendecker		in memory of Betty Coll & Dennis Coll
Keith & Kay Marxkors		in memory of Betty Coll & Dennis Coll
Mulvaney family		in memory of Jim Mulvaney
Rick & Sharon Post		in memory of Dennis Coll
Barbara Roberson		in memory of Betty Coll
Barbara Schulz		in memory of Charles Schwartz
Scott & Theresa Siebel		in memory of Betty Coll
Patty Stevens		in memory of Dennis Coll
Gary Taylor		in memory of Dennis Coll
Steve & Mary Vitale		in memory of Mickey Slawson

Our deepest sympathy is sent to the Slawson family upon the death of Mickey Slawson, a long-time board member, and previous President.

Mickey dedicated her life to advocate for the residents of the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. Her advocacy work continually educated legislators on the national, state, and local level.

Mickey also spent many volunteer hours at the Hidden Treasure Thrift Shop to raise funds to benefit the residents.

All of the BHC residents were helped by Mickey’s dedication. Mickey will be greatly missed by all of BHC.



PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR YEAR 2024

Dues are \$5.00 a year. Make checks payable to “**BHC Parents Association**”.

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

NEW MEMBER yes no _____

If you are a new member, please let us know for mailing the newsletter.

Mail to: PARENTS ASSOCIATION 10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD ST. LOUIS, MO 63137



FUNDS APPROVED BY PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD

- \$ 950.00 Birthday gifts for residents, January-June 2024
- \$ 3625.00 Christmas gifts for residents, Christmas trees, decorations for homes
Christmas party for all residents

BHC RESIDENTS ENJOY FALL/WINTER ACTIVITIES

Thanks to staff for helping residents prepare and participate in these Fall and Winter activities:

ON CAMPUS

November



Thanksgiving Fall Dance – Great music encouraged all to get up and dance. Residents enjoyed table top activities and games. Treats served were Sweet Potato Pie and Pistachio Mousse

December



Christmas Dance- Santa arrived at the BHC Christmas Party to take pictures with residents! Music, dancing, games and craft activities made for fun holiday time. Festive food served was Fruit and Cheese Tray, Pasta, Pinwheel Sandwiches, Cupcakes, Cookies, and Cheese Cake.

The sound of bells and carols filled the homes as Santa’s elves delivered gifts to all the residents.

OFF CAMPUS

Shopping

Dollar Tree, Goodwill, Aldi’s, V-Stock, Family Dollar, Walmart

Out to eat

White Castle, Golden Corral, Imo’s, Steak and Shake, Red Lobster, Golden Corral, Chili’s

Community Events

Kiener Plaza, Fox Theater, St. Louis Aquarium, Winter Wonderland, Church Services



BHC residents will be participating in the Missouri Mental Health Foundation 2024 Director’s Creativity Showcase.



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NEW THERAPY CHAIRS

NEW THERAPY CHAIRS FOR RESIDENTS IN HOMES AND PROGRAM AREA

The BHC Therapy Departments have purchased new Chill Out Chairs and Thera Glide Chairs for the residents.

Chill Out Chairs are alternative positioning chairs designed to look like a recliner that you would have in your home. The idea behind the chair is to provide an alternative to a wheelchair or a bed to achieve pressure relief and increased comfort for the user. The chair has a supportive seat design to improve the user’s posture and engagement in activities. The facility has fifteen chairs with five more on the way! This is a new piece of equipment to BHC to use in the homes and programming areas.

Thera Glide Auto Lock Chairs provides seating along with the opportunity for increased movement/exercise during the day. This movement provides a relaxing gliding motion that eases tension and anxiety while its patented automatic-locking system reduces the risk of falls. The chair features a lock-out lever located at the back of the chair that can be turned to disable the glide motion and create a stationary chair. Currently, there are two auto lock gliders located on campus.



PLANS FOR A NEW DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES FACILITY ON THE BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER CAMPUS IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY

December 18 2023 - Jefferson City, MO —

The Department of Mental Health (DMH), Division of Developmental Disabilities announces a partnership with the Department of Social Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS) to build a new youth facility on the campus of the existing Bellefontaine Habilitation Center (BHC).

Operations of the two facilities will be separate, but the use of state land and maintenance facilities will allow DHS to maximize funding for the project. DMH, DHS, and the Office of Administration will work closely throughout the design and building process to ensure the integration of this facility into the campus will cause minimal disruption to existing operations.

BHC currently operates both long-term Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) and short-term crisis stabilization programs on a 138-acre campus. Both the long-term and crisis services are provided in group homes.

DYS is transitioning from its Hogan Street Regional Youth Center for a variety of reasons. The current physical facility presents a number of challenges including more than \$4 million in scheduled maintenance over the course of several years to modernize the facility. A new facility will provide a much better space for staff and treatment of youth. The design and construction of a new DHS facility will be better for the future.

PARENT ASSN. CONCERN

Because the youth at the center will be those who have committed crimes, security for BHC residents, staff and visitors is a major concern as this project progresses.

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LACK OF PLACEMENT OPENINGS AND STAFF STILL A CRISIS OF CARE, HOSPITAL REPS VISIT BHC

Hospitals continue to struggle with caring for people with intellectual disabilities and/or behavior challenges because after treating them medically there is nowhere to send them.

Recently, representatives from a local hospital system toured the BHC campus. The purpose of the visit was to learn how to better care for these individuals on a long-term basis.

Hospitals are not an appropriate living environment for these individuals.

The following excerpts of a recent article highlights the lack of available services. (emphasis added)

“ Truly A Crisis’: Missouri Hospitals House Children in Foster Care with No Place to Go.”

<https://missouriindependent.com/2023/06/20/truly-a-crisis-missouri-hospitals-house-children-in-foster-care-with-no-place-to-go/>

by Rudi Keller, Missouri Independent 20 June, 2023

“On an early June day, five foster children were being housed by SSM Health at hospitals in the St. Louis area not because they were sick, but because there was no other place for them to live. They had each been in the hospital an average of 56 days.

There were 23 adult clients of the Department of Mental Health — people with a developmental disability or behavioral issue — being boarded by SSM. Each had been hospitalized an average of 193 days.

And there were 10 adults over age 65 or considered fragile, also mental health clients, boarded in SSM hospitals for no medical reason, who had been there an average of 403 days each.

... The Department of Mental Health also has difficulty finding residential support providers. It has 704 clients who are developmentally disabled waiting for a residential placement, with the more than three dozen housed in hospitals considered among the most critical for placement.

... Many (providers) are working to regain staff lost during the COVID-19 pandemic or lured away by rising wages in less demanding jobs.

... What we’ve decided to do instead is come together in what is truly a crisis and say, ‘You know, we’re all going to recognize that it is a failed system, that deinstitutionalization is failing right now. And we’re all going to lean in and be committed to doing our part to make it better,’” Schafer said. (Michelle Schafer is regional vice president for behavioral health at SSM.)



TRYING TO FIND SOLUTIONS FOR APPROPRIATE CARE

Led by Missouri state Sen. Elaine Gannon, R-DeSoto, and Michelle Schafer, regional vice president behavioral health at SSM Mercy, SS HB402 was signed into law June 6, 2023. The law states:

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE PERSONS (Section 630.1150)

“The Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Social Services shall oversee and implement a collaborative project to assess the continued hospitalization without medical justification of foster children and DMH clients due to a lack of post-discharge placement options or because they are awaiting screening for appropriateness of residential treatment services, as well as to develop recommendations to ensure these patients receive treatment in the most cost-effective and efficacious settings consistent with federal and state standards for treatment in the least restrictive environment. The departments shall solicit information from specified persons and entities and shall issue interim reports by December 31, 2023, and July 1, 2024, before issuing a final report by January 1, 2025.”

The law formalized a committee that has been meeting since April 2022.

The Children’s Behavioral Health Committee, also referred to as the Children’s Mental Health Collaborative, is the committee formed to assess the problem of a lack of placement options for appropriate long-term care.

The committee is discussing ideas of how to better support foster families, increase mental health resources, and the best use of residential care facilities so that those in need get appropriate services in a timely manner.

Review the law at: <https://documents.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills231/sumpdf/HB0402T.pdf>

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HABILITATION CENTERS ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES

Missouri habilitation centers can be part of the solution to the current crisis of persons lingering in hospitals because of a lack of placement options.

Habilitation centers offer the least restrictive and most integrated environment for some individuals with severe intellectual disabilities who may also have physical impairments and behavior challenges

These centers are residential campuses for persons with intellectual disabilities that are a real part of the surrounding community of neighborhoods, schools, churches, and businesses.

Missouri habilitation centers excel in:

1. availability of medical care, on and off campus
2. accessibility of on campus services such as speech, physical, and occupational therapy
3. variety of programs and work opportunities, on and off campus
4. recreational opportunities, on and off campus

FEDERAL LAW INCLUDES HABILITATION CENTERS

Habilitation centers are part of a full continuum of care for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities included in federal law.

Missouri habilitation centers are called intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID) at the federal level.

The Code of Federal Regulations, 441.302 42 CFR Ch. IV, states:

(d) **Alternatives** —Assurance that when a beneficiary is determined to be likely to require the level of care provided in a hospital, NF, or ICF/IID, the beneficiary or his or her legal representative will be—

- (1) Informed of any feasible alternatives available under the waiver; and
- (2) **Given the choice of either institutional or home and community-based services.**



To review the law go to: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-C/part-441/subpart-G/section-441.302>

Federal law supports the choice of care in Missouri habilitation centers.



SHORTAGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS- ILLINOIS PASSES LAW REQUIRING COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAM

[https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?GA=103&DocTypeID=SB&DocNum=1558&GAID=17&SessionID=112&LegID=146309)

[GA=103&DocTypeID=SB&DocNum=1558&GAID=17&SessionID=112&LegID=146309](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?GA=103&DocTypeID=SB&DocNum=1558&GAID=17&SessionID=112&LegID=146309)

SPRINGFIELD – To address the growing need for direct support professionals, State Senator Laura Murphy passed legislation to provide college students with hands-on training and experience in the field.

“Direct Support Professionals help disabled individuals realize their full potential, that is why it is vital to help remove barriers to entering the workforce,” said Murphy (D-Des Plaines). “The pandemic exacerbated the shortage of disability staff members, and we need to develop programs that help students get the experience they need to enter this workforce.”

Through this legislation, the Illinois Community College Board would be required to create a model program of study for college students to receive class credit that incorporates the training and experience necessary to serve as direct support professionals.

According to a 2022 survey of Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities members, 28% of providers are unable to accept new patients and 72% of providers have delayed service expansion due to staffing shortages.

“Hands-on training will provide college students with the experience they need to feel confident when they enter the workforce,” Murphy said. “Working as a Direct Support Professional is a truly rewarding experience as they allow our disabled population to engage with their community.”

Senate Bill 1558 was approved by Governor Pritzker on June 9, 2023.



TEXAS SENATE BILL 944 ENSURES RIGHT TO INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITIES

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=SB944>

Senate Bill 944 was introduced by Senator Lois Kolkhorst, signed by Governor Abbott on June 13, 2023 and is effective on September 1, 2023. Families supported this bill because they experienced difficulty in procuring admissions to an SSLC through the current process, leaving some individuals without proper placement and services.

It allows families to directly petition the courts for admission to a State Supported Living Center. The petition must fulfill the high standard of proof to receive admission.

A newspaper editorial on Senate Bill 944 follows below

“Families Now Have All Options for Care.”

https://theeagle.com/opinion/letters/families-now-have-all-options-for-care/article_1842a266-3d6a-11ee-ab23-e3185be7c3a7.html

by Rebecca Japko *The Eagle*, 24 August 2023

“Starting Sept. 1, parents and guardians of children and adults who need 24/7 direct supervision and neurobehavioral support will have the opportunity to petition the court directly for a civil commitment order for residential placement in a State Supported Living Center thanks to the passage of SB944.

Federal law states that if a state plan includes the option of Intermediate Care Facilities in its “Medicaid State Plan,” the state must provide that all individuals making an application for medical assistance under the plan shall have the opportunity to do so, and that such assistance shall be furnished with reasonable promptness to all eligible individuals.

Individuals seeking residential care, including their parents and guardians, should be “given the choice of either institutional or home and community-based services.”

The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in 1999’s *Olmstead v L.C.* defined the American with Disabilities Act by requiring all services be administered in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual.

Olmstead established that persons with an intellectual disability vary in how they are situated in the spectrum and recognized that some persons may need “institutional care from time to time” and “for others, no placement outside the institution may ever be appropriate.”

Texas has narrow criteria for admittance to a State Supported Living Center and a civil commitment must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Families now can choose from the full continuum of care offered by the state of Texas and select the one that best meets the needs of their family member.”

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



GRAND REOPENING



**THE HIDDEN TREASURE SHOP
SHOP TILL YOU DROP!! BEST THRIFT SHOP PRICES!!
BLDG #1901 FIRST BUILDING ON THE LEFT AS YOU ENTER BHC CAMPUS.**

WEDNESDAYS, 10:00 A.M. TO 3 P.M. AT BHC

Please leave donated items at the Parents Association shed near the Thrift Shop.

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

**FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED**