

# PARENTS ASSOCIATION, INC. SLSSH BELLEFONTAINE HABILITATION CENTER

10695 BELLEFONTAINE ROAD  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63137

PHONE 314-340-6002

WEBSITE [www.ParentsAssociationBHC.com](http://www.ParentsAssociationBHC.com)

## NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2012



### PARENTS ASSOCIATION MEETING

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2012 2:00 p.m.**

GYM IN THE MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING, BHC

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, email a message, 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.

### 2012 PARENT ASSOCIATION MEETING DATES – Mark your calendars

AUGUST 12

NOVEMBER 11

**An open house** for the completed 4 new group homes was held on June 24, 2012. Families, staff, mental health department officials, and legislators were excited about the state of the art equipment, the overall beauty, and the feeling of "home" of the new buildings.

**Senator Tim Green and former Representative Gina Walsh** were presented with plaques of appreciation by Bernard Simons (Director of Developmental Disabilities) for their compassionate, consistent, hardworking efforts to maintain a full continuum of care options for persons diagnosed with severe intellectual disabilities, including habilitation centers.

**Staff training** for the new homes included equipment, systems, and new processes

**Residents have begun to move** into the new homes, and are very happy.

**Renovations continue** for existing group homes, and the Donnelly building- which will be the new administration building upon completion.

**Thanks to all staff** for their care during the construction disruption, and during the moves of the residents. Superintendent Becky Post and Asst. Superintendent Marcy Hargis have done a terrific job of watching over all the details to ensure the best outcome for residents.

**The annual VOR convention** was attended by Mary and Steve Vitale on June 9-12, 2012.

**Waitlist for services of as 7-1-2012:** 254 residential 4,296 in home 4,550 TOTAL

**The no new long term admissions to habilitation centers policy** by the Department of Mental Health is denying choice for families and will lead to an increase of neglect and abuse as required services are diminished and oversight is less comprehensive.

**What action will you take** to ensure habilitation centers remain a safe, healthy, supportive home for our most severely intellectually disabled citizens?

**Keep informed. Take action. Together we can make a difference.**

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.

**FUNDS APPROVED BY PARENTS ASSOCIATION BOARD**

Picnic funds	\$9000.00
Household goods for homes	\$ 750.00
Birthday gifts for residents	\$ 690.00
BHC Morale Committee	\$ 300.00

**\$31,643** was the total funds raised by the Hidden Treasure Thrift Shop for 2011. All funds are used for the benefit of BHC residents. The volunteers at the BHC Hidden Thrift Shop deserve a **huge thanks** for their dedicated work. Shop at the Hidden Treasure Thrift Shop and find some summer bargains.

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**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION LUNCHEON**

The theme of "Oldies But Goodies" set the tone for fun, food, relaxation, and appreciation at the Employee Recognition Luncheon held on July 26, 2012 at the Catering to You Banquet Center. Staff members with 5,10,15,20, and 20+ years of service with the Department of Mental Health were each given recognition for their many years of work of providing appropriate services for those who need so much assistance. 75 of the employees have worked for the Department for 20-34 years!! Thanks to the Employee Recognition Committee for the time and effort spent to organize this fun event of staff appreciation.

**ANNUAL PICNIC FOR BHC RESIDENTS**

The Bellefontaine Habilitation Center Annual Picnic sponsored by the Parents Association will be held Wednesday September 12 for Unit 3 and Thursday September 13 for Unit 1, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. The picnic is limited to parents, guardians, residents and current staff members. This is always such a fun time for residents.

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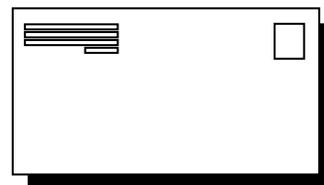
**A special thanks** to Senator Tim Green for his many years of looking out for our family members who reside at the Bellefontaine Habilitation Center. Because of term limits, Senator Green will be leaving the Missouri legislature. We are most grateful for his unwavering support over the years. We will miss his leadership. We wish him well in all his new endeavors.

**And special thanks** to Gina Walsh, former state representative for BHC and strong supporter of the new buildings and renovations. She will be running for Senator of the 13<sup>th</sup> district. Go to [ginawalsh.com](http://ginawalsh.com) for more information.

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**Governor Jay Nixon's support** is greatly appreciated. He has stated previously that he will not support closing the habilitation centers. "Wiping that out completely is, I think, very dangerous for folks who need that 24-hour care."(KANSAS CITY nbcactionnews.com posted 02/15/11)

LETTERS TO U.S. CONGRESS and DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
SUPPORTING HABILITATION CENTERS



LETTER SENT TO HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR & PENSIONS COMMITTEE (excerpts)

27 June 2012

Re: Olmstead Enforcement: Using the ADA to Promote Community Integration  
Senate Committee Hearing – Thursday, June 21, 2012  
COMMENTS FOR THE RECORD

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

Thank you for your attention to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 1999 Olmstead decision by the Supreme Court.

Community living is appropriate for some individuals with intellectual disabilities, and they should have the help and support they need to thrive. But forced closings of intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded (ICFs/MR) should not be a part of our national plan of care for persons with intellectual disabilities.

The June 1999 Olmstead decision by the Supreme Court states: “This Court emphasizes that 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.”

Families across the country are gravely concerned about the misguided enforcement of the ADA using the Olmstead decision. We are gravely concerned because the Olmstead decision is being used to aggressively move toward total deinstitutionalization for all persons with intellectual disabilities.

Misusing the Olmstead decision, ICFs/MR are being targeted for closure across the United States. From the quote of the Olmstead decision above, it can clearly be seen that this is a grossly inaccurate use of the Olmstead decision-“nothing in the ADA or its implementing regulations condones termination of institutional settings”.

These ICF/MR homes provide specialized programs for severe and profound intellectually disabled persons.

As the Olmstead decision states, some persons are “unable to handle or benefit from community settings”.

Closing ICFs/MR has led to an increase in abuse, neglect, and death because of forced moves to an ill prepared community to care for persons with extreme mental, physical, behavioral, and medical needs.

Our national policy for the health, safety, and care of persons with intellectual disabilities must include a range of opportunities including home and community based waiver programs and institutional settings.

Respectfully,

Mary A. Vitale  
President, Parents Association of Bellefontaine Habilitation Center (an ICF/MR)  
Missouri State Coordinator, VOR (vor.net)

VIRGINIA REPRESENTATIVES JAMES P. MORAN AND ROBERT W. GOODLATTE LETTER TO  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (excerpts) CONCERNING VIRGINIA DOJ SETTLEMENT TO CLOSE MOST OF  
VIRGINIA ICFs/MR  
March 27, 2012

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We write today to object to the January 26, 2012 Department of Justice's proposed legal settlement with the Commonwealth of Virginia concerning the residential placement of people with intellectual disabilities. **The agreement, if approved by the court, will place more than 1,000 Virginians with profound intellectual disabilities at grave risk of abuse, neglect and even death.**

We urge you to reconsider and withdraw the agreement until the Administration and the Congress have time to review the ongoing evidence of massive abuse and neglect leading to the deaths of people with profound intellectual disabilities (ID) in communities unprepared to take care of them and devise safeguards to prevent a repetition of such outrages...

Given the potential for enormous human tragedy and the disregard for individual and family decision-making and choice, we urge you to – (1) Withdraw the Settlement Agreement, (2) Suspend all Department of Justice activities aimed at displacing fragile Americans from licensed ICFs/MR, and (3) Investigate the causes for the unspeakable number of deaths in New York and elsewhere and make recommendations for changes in policy to prevent further such deaths.

**WIDESPREAD ABUSE IN GROUP HOMES ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

**New York Times, May 8, 2012**

**Monitoring Care for the Disabled**

The stories of abuse, suffering and unexplained deaths among those sent to homes for the disabled in New York State are horrifying. A worker sits on an autistic boy and crushes him to death. Another worker sexually abuses a 54-year-old disabled woman. A quadriplegic drowns as an aide leaves him in a tub of water. As reported in *The Times* over the last year, there have been numerous cases of abuse and at least 1,200 deaths attributed to unnatural or unknown causes in publicly financed homes for the disabled in the last decade. Many cases have barely been investigated, with incompetent workers often being moved to a different facility, without being prosecuted.

**Illinois**

**Bellefonte News-Democrat, June 27, 2012**

**Hidden suffering, hidden death: State agency won't investigate after 53 deaths of those in its care**

The state agency created to prevent neglect and abuse of disabled adults who live at home rejects hundreds of hotline calls for help each year and doesn't investigate when people die after severe mistreatment. The Office of the Inspector General for the Illinois Department of Human Services received broad powers through legislation in 2000 that expanded its responsibility for protecting physically and mentally disabled people who live outside community facilities and state institutions. The OIG, which operates independently, investigates neglect and abuse complaints made to a statewide hotline operated by the agency. But when the subject of a hotline call is hospitalized and dies soon after, the OIG closes the case without investigating the circumstances surrounding the death because of the agency's interpretation of state law. According to OIG documents, the agency is prohibited from investigating the moment a death occurs. The OIG considers such an investigation a "service," and the dead are "ineligible for services" under the agency's interpretation of Rule 51 -- a legislative directive that governs the Adults with Disabilities Abuse Project, the OIG documents state. 53 cases since May 2003 that fit this pattern: Neglect or abuse of a critically ill, disabled adult in their home, followed by an ambulance ride to an emergency room and death, usually within a few days or weeks. In some cases, disabled, often critically ill people were starved, left to suffer in pain, denied medication or forced to lie for days in their own feces and urine. Some who died were unable to move when ambulance attendants found them.

**Louisiana Advocacy Center, March 20, 2012**

**Investigation Reveals Serious Neglect at Group Homes Across State**

The Advocacy Center has released the results of a three year investigation into conditions at group homes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state. The report, "When A House Is Not A Home: An investigation into conditions, care, and treatment in select group homes for people with intellectual disabilities in Louisiana," reveals that residents in the surveyed group homes live in dismal, unsanitary surroundings, they learn very little and have limited exposure to the community. These residents experience problems with receiving appropriate and timely health care, they face poor transportation opportunities, are provided with unhealthy and unappetizing meals and generally lead a life filled with meaningless daytime activities and no chance of employment. According to Lois Simpson, Advocacy Center Executive Director, "Thirty years ago, when group homes for people with disabilities, were first conceptualized, they were supposed to be family-like, comfortable environments where people with disabilities could live and be a part of the greater community. Instead, many of these homes exist as isolated, poorly maintained, inadequately staffed, and unsafe environments where people merely exist."

This above last sentence is a statement worth repeating because it captures the reality of our national state of care for persons with intellectual disabilities.

"Thirty years ago, when group homes for people with disabilities, were first conceptualized, they were supposed to be family-like, comfortable environments where people with disabilities could live and be a part of the greater community. Instead, many of these homes exist as isolated, poorly maintained, inadequately staffed, and unsafe environments where people merely exist."

**Abuse reports in group homes for the intellectually disabled from across the United States should cause policymakers to recognize that a wide range of needs requires a wide range of services and living environments.**

**Lawmakers should support the right of current and future residents (including individuals on the waiting list) to receive and benefit from specialized habilitation center care. Habilitation centers are critically necessary and are life sustaining homes for Missouri's most fragile citizens.**



**VOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE- WASHINGTON, D.C. (vor.net)**

Mary and Steve Vitale attended the annual VOR conference in Washington, D.C. on June 9-12, 2012.

The national VOR organization advocates for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families, supporting a complete range of services from home, community living, and habilitation centers.

**H.R. 2032** was the focus of congressional visits by VOR conference participants. **H.R. 2032** would protect the interests of each resident in federally-funded class action lawsuits involving ICFs/MR (habilitation centers in Missouri).

**H.R. 2032 Summary** (from vor.net)

To protect the interests of each resident of intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded (ICFs/MR) in class action lawsuits by federally-funded entities on behalf of such resident and in Department of Justice actions that could result in an agreement to move such a resident from that resident’s facility.

**H.R. 2032 Purpose** (from vor.net)

1. To effectuate the Congressional intent of the DD Act to permit individuals with developmental disabilities and their parents to choose where to live among a full continuum of options by prohibiting class action lawsuits by federally-funded entities involving the residents of ICFs/MR unless they are first given notice of the proposed action and a time limited opportunity to choose not to participate in the suit.
2. To effectuate the Congressional intent of the ADA and the Supreme Court’s interpretation of it in the *Olmstead* decision by requiring the Department of Justice (DOJ) to consult with the individual residents of ICFs/MR and their family members and legal representatives in any investigative process and to provide for a right of intervention in any DOJ action involving an ICF/MR.

Steve and Mary Vitale visited each Missouri U.S. Representative and Senator office to discuss **H.R. 2032** which would give residents of ICFs/MR and their legal guardians the right to opt out of federally financed class action lawsuits against Medicaid certified ICFs/MR. Currently, **these important rights do not exist in current law**, resulting in many residents being swept up into the suit, despite strong opposition by affected residents and their families

There are always many agencies lobbying U.S. Congress members to close all habilitation centers (ICFs/MR), and to limit guardian authority. Let your voice be heard that you support HR 2032. Call or email your U.S. representative now.

United States Capitol Switchboard: 1-202-224-3121 (you can ask to be directed to your senator or representative)

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) (to find your U.S. representative)

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) (to find your U.S. senator)

**PHONE or EMAIL with this message:** Earlier this summer, Steve and Mary Vitale discussed information about H.R. 2032 with you. “Please COSPONSOR H.R. 2032, a bill to protect the rights of residents of Medicaid facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities, and their families, by giving them the opportunity to opt out of federally funded class action lawsuits against intermediate care facilities (habilitation centers in Missouri). **Right now we do not have this right in current law. Wouldn’t Rep. \_\_\_\_\_ want that same right?**

- Todd Akin (IS A COSPONSOR) (Call or email to thank him.)
- Russ Carnahan (IS A COSPONSOR) (Call or email to thank him.)
- Lacy Clay
- Emanuel Cleaver
- JoAnn Emerson
- Sam Graves (IS A COSPONSOR) (Call or email to thank him.)
- Vicky Hartzler
- Billy Long
- Blaine Luetkemeyer (IS A COSPONSOR) (Call or email to thank him.)

The personal benefit of attending the VOR national conference is meeting all the other families across the U.S. that have family members thriving in habilitation centers, what is happening legislatively in other states, and how families are contributing to the efforts to retain habilitation centers as long-term care centers.

Think about attending next year's conference.

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**CHANGE IN ORGANIZATION OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS)**

**Parent Association Comment:**

The Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities are being combined into a single agency called The Administration for Community Living.

A concern is that the unique needs of each group may be blurred.

Also the title of the department – the Administration for Community Living – and its mission - increasing access to community supports and achieving full community participation for people with disabilities and seniors – seems to ignore the choice of habilitation centers.

The following press release came from Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

**News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 16, 2012

Contact: HHS Press Office  
[\(202\) 690-6343](tel:2026906343)

**A Statement from Secretary Sebelius on the Administration for Community Living**

All Americans – including people with disabilities and seniors – should be able to live at home with the supports they need, participating in communities that value their contributions – rather than in nursing homes or other institutions.

The Obama administration and my department have long been committed to promoting community living and finding new mechanisms to help ensure that the supports people with disabilities and seniors need to live in the community are accessible.

Today, with the creation of the new Administration for Community Living (ACL), we are reinforcing this commitment by bringing together key HHS organizations and offices dedicated to improving the lives of those with functional needs into one coordinated, focused and stronger entity.

The Administration for Community Living will bring together the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities into a single agency that supports both cross-cutting initiatives and efforts focused on the unique needs of individual groups, such as children with developmental disabilities or seniors with dementia. This new agency will work on increasing access to community supports and achieving full community participation for people with disabilities and seniors.

The Administration on Community Living will seek to enhance and improve the broad range of supports that individuals may need to live with respect and dignity as full members of their communities. These support needs go well beyond health care and include the availability of appropriate housing, employment, education, meaningful relationships and social participation.

Building on President Obama's Year of Community Living, the ACL will pursue improved opportunities for older Americans and people with disabilities to enjoy the fullest inclusion in the life of our nation.

For more information, please visit <http://hhs.gov/acl>

**COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES FAVORED BY BALANCING INCENTIVE PAYMENTS PROGRAM (BIPP) FROM CENTER FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS) OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (DHHS)**

The BIPP funding from CMS provides a strong financial incentive for greater access to non-institutionally based long-term services and supports (LTSS). Missouri's application for the BIPP program was approved by CMS June 13, 2012. The BIPP program begins July 1, 2012 and extends through September 30, 2015. Through BIPP, Missouri is eligible for an enhanced federal match rate of 2% for all non-institutional long term supports and services. This CMS grant unfairly shows preference for "community-based" services. BIPP unfairly gives preference for one needed program (home and community based waiver services) to the exclusion of another needed program (Medicaid-certified facilities). Both are needed. CMS should encourage a continuum of care to meet the realities of those with disabilities and their families. For more information go to:

Balancing-Incentive-Program@cms.hhs.gov.

**PARENT ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR YEAR 2012**

Dues are \$5.00 a year. Make checks payable to Parents Association, Inc.

Mail to: JOHN AHLQUIST  
7711 Bonhomme  
Ste 850  
Clayton Mo 63105

**RAM DUES FOR 2012**

The Mental Retardation Association of Missouri (RAM) requests your support for RAM's efforts on behalf of all state habilitation centers in Missouri. Annual dues are \$5.00. Please make checks payable to RAM and mail

to: Norma Lingle  
1010 DuBerry Lane  
St. Louis, MO 63138

**VOR (vor.net)**

**To join or contribute:**

**\$40 per year per individual;**

**\$200 per year per family organization; or**

**\$250 per year per provider/professional organization**

Thank you for joining or renewing!

**Send completed form with payment to:**

VOR  
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #351  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family/Professional Organization Affiliation (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_  
Location your loved one calls home: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts to VOR are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law, as no goods or services are provided in consideration of a gift.**

**YOUR SUPPORT OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS WILL BENEFIT THE LIVES OF PERSONS DIAGNOSED WITH PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.**

**TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

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 "PARENTS ASSOCIATION, INC."**

**MAIL TO: ROSEANNE DICKEY #6 HOBBS MILL ST. CHARLES, MO 63303**

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



**HOT SUMMER BARGAINS!!**  
**WEDNESDAYS, 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M. AT BHC**  
Please leave donated items at the Parents Association shed near the Thrift Shop.



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FORWARDING AND ADDRESS  
CORRECTION REQUESTED