

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Dawn Roberson](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 4:43:46 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]

Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 10:15 AM

To: Sunset Advisory Commission

Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Wednesday, June 25, 2014 - 10:15

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Rebecca

Last Name: Cannon-Torres

Title:

Organization you are affiliated with:

City: Abilene

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

My name is Rebecca Cannon-Torres, and my younger brother, Jay, is a client of Abilene State Supported Living Center. Jay has been diagnosed with a variety of disabilities, and while no one can ever tell us exactly what is wrong with him, he falls into the autism spectrum and is also schizophrenic.

Jay lived with my family until his early teens when my parents were forced to seek placement outside the home due to violence, increasing physical demands, and unpredictable outbursts. He has run the gamut in terms of placement, including stints at mental hospitals, several group homes, and ultimately Abilene SSLC.

While group homes are a good option for many families, they were not right for Jay. There were incidents of abuse, questionable practices (including taking Jay to a strip club at an impressionable age), and an overreaching inability to handle him. I could not tell you just how many times my frail (due to polio and arthritis) mother was called to get Jay under control because the big, burly staff members did not have the finesse. There seemed to be a lack of oversight, and this is very scary when you are dealing with a young man who isn't always able to report exactly what has happened.

Abilene SSLC was a choice of last resort, but it was necessary when it came to handling my brother. At the SSLC, Jay has tried, tested, and challenged just about everyone with whom he comes into contact, but they have numerous systems in place to make sure that he is kept safe and well cared for. We like to say that Jay is just smart enough; every few months, my parents receive reports of how Jay has reported some staff member for abuse, and it is always thoroughly investigated -- even after he admits that he reported the person because he was in a bad mood.

Again, group homes are the right solution for lots of people, but not everyone. To close these agencies will be devastating to many families who see them as their salvation after a lifetime of struggling to find

something that works.

Please do not close the Abilene SSLC. We need it and value it to a degree that most people will never understand.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: Keep the Abilene SSLC open.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree