

LINDA JOHNSON

I am Linda Johnson, legal guardian of Gayla Paulette Regian , who has lived and thrived for 55 years at the AUSSLC. This is her home & her "community", (not an institution)

where she has been happy, well cared for, active and productive to her ability in a safe, protected environment on the Campus, along with her friends. These ladies are "family" to each other, relationships developed over the years, as well as with the trusted staff (some 20-30 yrs.), who have been dedicated to their care. IF only the staff could share with you....but that's not allowed, and they ARE REQUIRED to go along with these recent decisions. No input!

I sincerely ask each of you to come visit, and observe these special individuals in their daily routine. Paulette loves going to workshop on campus, all the activities there, and, looks forward to payday. . "Continuity of care" that is so important to these special ones.

She doesn't know the difference in a \$1.00 bill, or any other. . She loves dollars, M&Ms, and Diet Coke (monitored). She is at her ideal weight, by the way.

When I come to take her for an outing, she has to hug EVERY one, with a "see you later",

I'll be back". Our mother tried keeping her home years ago, for 3 months. (I lived out of state at the time). Paulette wouldn't eat, got sicker & sicker. Mother told her she had to take her back to "school". On the drive from Troy back to Austin, she said Gayla Paulette started singing, and was so happy. She had been grieving, missing her friends and her "home".

My sister has the mind of a child, crippled on her right side, wears a brace, must have a gait belt outside the home, (when with me, we hold onto each other, as she's become more fearful of falling) Risks are: falling, due to altered gait and decreased balance, fractures due to osteoporosis, choking on food (must be chopped), and must be observed. Seizures, that are kept nder control by carefully measured meds, administered by qualified, professional staff.

She receives around the clock care. When she or any resident from the AUSSLC has to go to the hospital, there is ALWAYS a staff member who remains with them the entire time! In the group homes, they are "dropped off" and left alone at the ER!!!! Imagine that!

My sister never meets a stranger, approaches everyone, wants to hug them and would walk off with any stranger or into a street to greet a "new friend".

Even with her handicap, she has managed to take a baby right from the arms of a parent on 2 occasions over the years, within a few feet of me! She just wants to love on them and does not understand that's not acceptable behavior! Think of possible consequences!

She's precious, brings joy everywhere with her big friendly smile, but she is fragile & vulnerable, and must continue to be protected! She doesn't know there are sexual predators, and bad People who do evil things, "opportunists" roaming our streets in the "communities"

We all see it on the news, every day. I shutter at what would happen!! Let's look at abuse, neglect and exploitation!!! That's what is recommended, to expose these precious souls to life outside their safe community at AUSSLC!!!!

We all, as guardians, are appalled and shocked at the sudden decision by DADS to proceed with closing some of the homes on campus immediately and forcing 70-75 helpless individuals

Out of their homes, to the protest and cries of their elderly & disabled guardians! This decision is NOT in the best interest of these residents! It's wrong, unjust, and there are going to be

Horrible consequences! We know many have died, 2 within 2 months of being moved! Without the legislature overseeing what's going on, following up with all who've been moved out, there will be devastating consequences!!! These "group homes" in the "community" cropping up everywhere, should be scrutinized the same as SSLC's!!!! Actually more so! It's shameful and unacceptable what's happening to these most vulnerable people!!! How many deaths is it going to take to really bring attention to what's behind all this? There are those who stand to gain Financially, and those who most definitely are losing!

There is security on the campus of the AUSSLC, where they can ride their bikes, get the care they need, by professionals.....not somebody off the street, hired at minimum wage by these "providers" of these "group homes" who, themselves, are not qualified! HORROR stories! Too many to tell here! Oh, the cost in money and lives!!!!!! The SHAME!!!

It makes much more sense to update ("modernize") the AUSSLC, " get it right", make it cost effective, a center where others who need these specialized treatments can come to this "centrally located" facility for treatment. Have College Grads who want to pursue careers in these specialized fields, come as interns for "hands on" experience. Maybe set up "portables" on campus for temporary housing as part of their compensation, since cost of living in Austin seems to be a big problem. Rotate them, get the medical universities involved. Make the AUSSLC something all Texans can be proud of in our Capitol city, and show how we care for our mentally and physically handicapped, most of whom are children of our VETERANS!

As Gov. Rick Perry said, in 2009, "We are obligated to care for these, our most vulnerable, with love and compassion...basic human dignity!"

Let's do "the right thing". Then we can all sleep at night!

Linda Johnson, guardian and sister