

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Dawn Roberson](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 4:54:30 PM

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

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 3:21 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 - 15:20

Agency: DEPARTMENT AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES DADS

First Name: Nancy

Last Name: Kircher

Title: Guardian and volunteer

Organization you are affiliated with: Richmond state supported living center

City: Richmond

State: Texas

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

I am opposed to the recommendation to close the state supported living centers. For the following reasons.

1. No accountability how do we know absolutely for sure, if staff are present at the group homes.
2. What type of training is the staff getting to care for individuals with disabilities.
- 3 I am requesting that all direct care at the living centers and state run homes and facilities, receive some training in how to handle stress. I feel if we would teach our Direct Care, and give them a tool box of things to do in times of stress we would cut our rate of abuse.

Where is the documentation on how group homes are monitored , what is the rate of abuse in a group home?

My husband and I have been guardians for 10 years for an individual at Richmond State Supported Living Center.

My loved one is a happy person and enjoys life at the living center. He has multiple disabilities both mental and physical. His days are full, he is independent. He does need help with his personal needs as he only has 1/2 of an arm and no legs. This requires some assistance from the staff as far as personal hygiene, preparing his food changing of clothes. However this man goes to work every day, participates in handbells, choir, rhythm band. He is also in special Olympics for soft ball toss, wheelchair race, and bowling. This man has been in the state system all of his life, without the state supported living center this man and his life would have ceased to exist.

Please reconsider your thoughts on closure of the living center. My love one has lived in state group homes twice in the past years, both times he was moved back to Richmond, in a depressive agitated state, physically not functioning to his full abilities.

Also I have been a volunteer at the Richmond State Supported Living Center for 18 years. In 2008 I received the Dads Vision award in Wellness. For 18 years I have organized and managed the Catholic Prayer Service at the RSSLCL.

I am on the HRC committee and Give welcoming talks to new employees on dignity and respect. I find Richmond to be the least restricted place with the opportunity to live a life with some freedoms and activities for personal growth

in a safe clean environment. Thank you Nancy Kircher

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: None at this time

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree

Monday, June 23, 2014

The Sunset Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the residents that have no voice in this decision. My name is Nancy Kircher, I am a volunteer and delegate from the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Richmond Texas. I have organized and assisted in the Catholic prayer services at the RSSLC for the past 18 years.

My husband William C. Kircher and myself Nancy Kircher have co guardianship for Jimmy O Miller who resides in the community of Richmond State Supported living Center. We have been Jimmy's guardians since August of 2005.

Jimmy is a 56 year old man, who has been a ward of the state since birth. He was born with developmental disability and physical disabilities. He was born with no legs and one shortened arm and 3 fingers on one hand. However this has not stopped Jimmy. He is determined and does not know a stranger. A good day for Jimmy is when he can independently go to work shop, with the assistance of an electric wheelchair. He takes pride in being one of the top producers in whatever job he is doing at the workshop.

After work he attends Hand bells, choir and or Rhythm band. He is also a participant in the Special Olympics program. Every year he participates in the Music Fest. This is a festival in which residents, with musical abilities can compete with the other living centers. Several years ago this event was held in Houston. The Holiday Inn was filled with a happy excited group of residents and staff from the Texas State Supported Centers for 2 ½ days the residents competed in different music events. There was a dinner dance and a banquet awards luncheon. We received many comments from the public, about how wonderful our loved ones were very polite and friendly.

Every Monday he participates in the Catholic Prayer Service, as a valuable participating member of the congregation. He is also a member of the Human Rights Committee.

The community of Richmond State Supported Living Center, offers several acres of safe and secure surroundings. Many of our residents have been on campus since its opening in 1967, this is their home, and this is their community of friends. Anyone who knows anything about people with developmental disabilities, would know that the most disturbing thing in their lives is dramatic change. How you would like it is someone decided that your home was not good for you, so they decided to move you? Away from your family, friends, and familiar surroundings away from what you call home?

Nancy Kircher
William C Kircher

Nancy Kircher

William C. Kircher

The community of Richmond has many things to offer, many of the residents attend a workshop every day. Some of our residents deliver mail around campus, some help at the swimming pool or help out in community relations. For those residents who are unable to work in one of our major workshops, they go to a workshop that helps enhance the quality of their life. Places like Forever Young , a brightly lit area, with the walls painted in brightly colored murals depicting different parts of our world.

We strive to make their life as normal as possible, so everyday almost everyone is transported to a work area across campus and back home for lunch, then back to workshop in the afternoon. This is the pattern of a normal life style.

Choice is important, we encourage our residents to make decision about purchases they make in the country store. As well as helping our residents learn the value of money, and the use of money to buy things shopping at the country store has become a social activity.

Religious freedom is present at the Richmond campus, we have Christian services, Catholic services and Jewish services. I can only speak for the Catholic service, the residents that attend the service or a part of the service, they help set up the area, provide the music by playing the keyboard, and distribute articles that are used in the service. It is very evident that this is their service and they are part of it.

Throughout the year we have several singing groups that come several times in a year, piano concerts, and opera just recently we had a Gospel fest. At Christmas we celebrate with a candy cane ball with Santa Claus, some special party food and dancing.

We have come a long way , in the past years in our care of people with developmental disabilities. We are not perfect, but we are addressing our problems.

Why are we using such anger and untruthful tactics to close the state living centers. It seems as if we are thinking of these people not as human beings, but rather a burden on the state budget. Not all people with developmental disabilities are the same, no more then you and I are alike. Surely there is a better solution than to deprive them of their home and present life style the very least we can do, is to care for them, in a safe and least restricted environment.