

For Immediate Release:

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MURRAY CENTER MATTERS TO ILLINOIS

Disabled citizens are entitled by federal law to appropriate and safe levels of care 24/7. Dually diagnosed individuals present the severest challenge to care providers. This is the exact population that Murray Center in Centralia specializes in. Along with mental impairment, residents are also medically fragile, behaviorally challenged or all three. The behaviorally challenged is a particularly hard clientele for community providers to handle safely. It is where over-medication, abuse and a shifting burden to local emergency responders can often be found. Quality of life and quantity of activity actually drops from what Murray Center provides. It is important to keep Murray Center open and funded.

Estimates by community providers indicate that it will take at least \$201,000.00 per person in order for them to provide care to a Murray Center resident. Several estimates were well over \$250,000.00 for the most challenging cases. ICAP scores indicate the levels of services needed for each individual, and Murray residents require more comprehensive services than the disabled living in less supervised settings. HRST scores for many Murray residents indicate the need for 24 hour nursing staff on-site, not simply on call. Factor this staffing into costs for community providers and see how the "math" works out. Reduce the 45% employee turnover of community front line staff via adequate pay and training- see how the "math" works out. Provide appropriate and safe staffing levels for complex Murray Center cases and see how the "math" works out.

Since birth or tragic injury, residents of Murray Center (MC) in downstate Centralia bravely meet daily struggles just to eat, participate, breathe and "do". Nick entered Murray care paralyzed and able to only communicate with his eyes. Attentive staff learned non-verbal cues and engage in frequent communication using on-site therapy and assistive devices. Nick's vocabulary and quality of life have steadily grown. William's goal was to have the valve in his throat closed so that he could participate in more activities. A specific plan of building respiratory strength, monitoring oxygen levels and battling infections reversed a 20 year limitation and brought new freedom. MC is a unique and precious place where folks dealt a really tough hand in life are mended in so many wonderful ways.

Most residents function at the age equivalent of infant or young child. Children in fully grown bodies with medical and behavioral complexities equal great challenge. Murray staff is dedicated and trained to habilitate and not to only provide custodial care. MC minimizes and monitors the use of powerful drugs, actually improving the quality and clarity of life for Tony and his friends with serious behavioral issues. Devoted caregivers

focus on Tony's coping skills, confident that they are opening new opportunities for his young life. Licensed nurses dispense all medications, backed by an on-site medical team and skills appropriate for the fragile. Staff depth enables MC to provide individualized attention when conflicting needs arise, including nights, weekends and holidays. For those with self-injury, PICA, aggression, mental illness and flight tendencies, most communities are ill-prepared to host the Tony's of our state as well as Murray does.

Practiced care is extended around-the-clock to the physically disabled with torso re-positioning, keeping lungs and stomachs functioning while avoiding skin sores. Wheel chairs are customized and adjusted. Small perceptive changes avoid fractures and discomfort, giving a better quality of life to Candy, Laurie and so many others. Hundreds of individualized dietary meals are prepared, dispensed and monitored daily with experience and quality. Since her arrival, Carol has shed over 100 unhealthy pounds and now walks the single level campus rather than use a wheelchair. She sings in a choir, attends church and is happy at MC.

Murray's level of staffing, their training and the purposeful consistency of routines has added years to our children's lives. No price can be placed on what MC has done for Tammy, the second longest survivor of Rett Syndrome in America. Along with Tammy, Luis and over 200 other human beings deserve better than displacement and eviction from their real home- not an institution. A home that brings love, safety, trust and happiness into so many precious lives is something we can all be proud of. Social times, outings, dances and programs with long-time friends and staff have value. Murray Center does matter and should continue to serve the people of Illinois.

For more information, please contact

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Murray Parents Association is also on Facebook