

# The Resource



**Newsletter from  
Families of  
Richmond  
State Supported  
Living Center**

We are a charity devoted to enhancing the quality of life for our loved ones at Richmond State Supported Living Center and keeping our members informed about the facility and its services.

*March, 2017*

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***Our next meeting will be Sunday, March 19, 1:30 – 3:00 pm***

in the Forever Young building by the chapel. Meetings are scheduled on Sundays so that you can visit your family member AND attend our informative meetings. For those who can't attend, a conference line has been set up. To use it, please follow the instructions below. **PLEASE:**

1. Turn off your television set, radio, and any other background noise.
2. Dial **877-226-9790**.
3. Enter the Access Code: **7 0 3 8 4 6 6** and then press **#**.
4. Press the **"Mute"** button on your phone so we cannot hear what's going on in your house.

Thank you.

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Our mailing address: P O Box 1671, Richmond, TX 77406

*(This mailing address is for the FAMILY association, not Richmond SSLC or Volunteer Services.)*

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## From President Louise Clay

Greetings to family members, guardians, and friends –

It appears that our two days of winter have come and gone. Let's hope we have a long and cool spring.

Well, what's been going on? The Texas Legislature is in session now, and the continued existence of Richmond SSLC (and all the other twelve SSLCs) is at risk. Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa from McAllen has introduced a bill (Senate Bill 206) calling for the closure of 5 of the 13 SSLCs. There will be several references to this later in this newsletter along with suggestions as to what we can do. Sen. Hinojosa has aligned himself with the ARC, which wants the SSLCs closed down so that the money can go to other people. Sen. Hinojosa tried to do this during the last session in 2015 and almost succeeded. There are others in the Senate who are just about as big a threat; the House members are a bit better. It certainly gets tiresome having to go through this struggle every two years.

On a slightly happier note, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo has begun its run of three weeks, and the RSSLC residents who are able to go really enjoy it. Almost 200 tickets were donated. It would seem that most of the residents would be able to go, but those 200 tickets have to cover caregivers accompanying our loved ones. Every year fewer tickets get donated.

Two new amenities have been added to our campus. One is a gazebo in the cottage area, which the residents in that area really enjoy. The other is an outdoor basketball area with two goals and a perimeter fence to keep the ball nearby. This is a big hit. The goals can be raised and lowered so that everyone can use the facility, including people in wheelchairs.

Some weeks ago a state-wide hiring freeze was instituted for every state agency because of budget considerations. Very recently Richmond and the other SSLCs were exempted from this freeze with regard to direct care and medical personnel. This is a very good thing so that the people who do day-to-day care of our loved ones can be replaced if they leave. This exemption does not apply to non-essential or administrative positions.

At the November meeting we had an attorney who made some good suggestions about turning over guardianship information to our successor guardians when we are no longer able to serve. These suggestions will be listed later in this newsletter. Many of these items are taken care of at RSSLC by the front office people and social workers. But a successor guardian should know the resident and be given as much information about him or her as possible in order to be a good guardian.

Officers were elected in January. We have very few people willing and able to serve. I am still the president. The office of vice president, whose job it is to plan programs for our meetings, is being shared by three people. I'm still treasurer, too. Our secretary is Linda Falk.

Well, that's all for now. Hope to see you at the next meeting.

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## **The Legislature and What You Can Do**

The following link has been provided by VOR, the national organization devoted to preserving choice of living arrangements for our loved ones. Within this link is a letter which you can send to Texas legislators asking them to please vote against Senate Bill 602, which would close down 5 of the 13 State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs).

[http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50829/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=21104](http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/50829/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=21104)

It is always helpful to call, email, or write your state senator and representative. A suggestion for a letter is to tell about your person with IDD, what Richmond SSLC provides for him/her, and how much you appreciate having the facility. And this time, please mention your opposition to Senate Bill 602!

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## **PART Day at the Capitol**

Well, it's that time again. Every two years when the legislature is in session we meet in Austin and make ourselves known and heard. As you know, PART is a Texas organization devoted to preserving the SSLCs. The following was sent by Susan Payne, PART president:

Please join us for our PART meeting and PART Day at the Capitol on March 14 and 15. Both events will be held at the Capitol this session. Our PART meeting will be a legislative and business meeting. We will have a guest speaker that you will want to meet at our meeting.

PART Meeting:      March 14, 2017  
                                 2:30 - 4:30 pm  
                                 Room: E2.1002 (Members Lounge)

PART Day at the Capitol:

We will be in the Capitol Grill beginning at 8:00 am to distribute our 100+ Support SSLC's pins and name tags. At around 9:30 we will head to the House of Representatives to be honored by our Resolution. After we finish in the House, we go straight to the Senate for recognition there.

It is very important that we have a large crowd of supporters this session. Please try to attend PART Day if you are able.

Thank you,  
Susan Payne - PART

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## **Transition Planning for Older People with Disabilities**

(Necessary Information to Prepare and Give to Your Successor)

The following is information provided by an attorney who spoke at our November meeting. Fortunately for us, most of this stuff is handled by RSSLC.

1. Richmond SSLC Basics – behavior analyst, case manager, social worker
2. Medical Information

- ❖ Complete and current diagnosis and prognosis
- ❖ Doctors, dentists, therapists
- ❖ List of all medications
- ❖ List of all needed/recommended therapies

### 3. Government Benefits

- ❖ All available benefits
- ❖ Who at Richmond SSLC handles the benefits
- ❖ What if there's a special medical need not covered

### 4. Funeral Arrangements

- ❖ Have they been made? Paid for? Must be irrevocable.
- ❖ Where?
- ❖ Special considerations and/or requests

### 5. Will and Supplemental (Special) Needs Trust (Non-payback trust?)

- ❖ Do you have these documents? Where are they located?
- ❖ Is your child the beneficiary of a trust? Confirm it is current and TX compliant
- ❖ Your attorney's name and contact information

### 6. Guardianship

- ❖ Where is all the guardianship paperwork? (Letters of Guardianship)
- ❖ Designation of Guardian in Event of My Incapacity or Death
  - Do you have this on file with the court?
  - Procedure for appointment of Successor Guardian

### 7. Spending Time at Richmond

- ❖ Make an appointment with your Successor to meet staff at Richmond SSLC and visit your child's home.

### 8. Letter of Intent

- ❖ Include all of the above
- ❖ What are your child's likes/dislikes? Special foods/colors/fabrics? Preferred activities?
- ❖ Other particulars about your child

We are grateful to attorney Michele Goldberg for these suggestions.

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## **Minutes from November 20 meeting**

Deacon Billy opened with a prayer for our community and for the upcoming holidays at 1:34 PM.

Jay gave an update on the school transition project - there are Texas children aged 18 who graduate from public school with severe and profound disabilities and their parents have not been given all the options for what happens post-graduation. Jay and his group are working on that. Channelview ISD was very open to all the benefits of living at RSSLC and have taken our brochure to share with its parents. We are ready to give a campus tour to Channelview ISD leaders when they are ready. A Katy ISD connection is in the works. We need people to help with Lamar, Harris, Cy-Fair, and Fort Bend ISD. Call Louise Clay if you can help: (281) 346-0346

Michele has an article to share about how privatization of traditionally public services has failed. Data like this could be a compelling attachment to your letters to your Texas state representative and senator. Darcy shared the following app for following bills about RSSLC and directly communicating with your rep and senator: <http://votespotter.com/>

You can obtain the latest Texas floor calendars and agendas, committee meeting notices, committee membership, member information, and bill status information via a mobile version of the Texas Legislature Online website (TLO). Enter <http://www.txlegis.com> in your mobile device browser. In addition, some mobile devices may also access live chamber proceedings and mobile versions of Who Represents Me and DistrictViewer.

Ileene Robinson shared that bills are already making their way into the Legislative process in Austin. All agreed that writing now is better than waiting until January. Logic: babies are being born every day in Texas with severe and profound intellectual and developmental disabilities. They will need safe places to live with no profit-motive attached. Let the census of the 13 state supported living centers rise to meet the demand and it will be cost effective for Texas taxpayers.

For those following the illogical conversations regarding Austin SSLC, where DADS has said the campus must close because the low-paid direct care positions cannot be fulfilled in pricey Austin, there are business models that fix that problem: bus in workers from nearby less pricey neighborhoods. Workers are paid for their transit time, grateful for their jobs, and the SSLC residents get the caring, non-profit staff they need.

Ileene attended an important Baylor Clinic event related to people with IDD and our brochure with campus benefits and amenities was included in attendees' packets. Our partner, SIRE, was also in attendance, reinforcing our strong on-campus equine therapy program.

A Nominating Committee volunteered to present a slate of officers for the membership's consideration at our next meeting: Darcy Eaves, Louise Alexander and Michele Arnold.

Attorney Michele Goldberg gave generously of her time educating us on the importance of transition planning for people with disabilities. Those who did not attend or listen in by telephone missed a wealth of information.

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## **Minutes from January 15 meeting**

Louise Clay called the meeting to order at 1:30pm. Chaplin Billy opened with the Prayer of St. Francis.

Louise Alexander announced a slate of officers for the coming year. They are as follows:

President - Louise Clay  
Vice Pres - Kathleen Boyce/Darcy Eaves  
Secretary - Linda Falk  
Treasurer - Louise Clay

All listed members were agreeable and the officers were elected as presented.

New member Raylynn Teal was introduced. She is a member of Joe Don Teal's family and the daughter of our longtime member Jean Wilcox, who died a few months ago.

The Treasurer's report was given.

Kathleen Boyce reported on the current state legislature at this time, which is currently trying to change the definition of neglect (to avoid following thru with the program plans). This will help the group homes and is presented by the Senate Finance Committee and Senator Schwertner.

Family member Gwen North reported on her son's recent annual planning meeting at Richmond SSLC. In November, she was encouraged to place her son into a group home.

Cynthia Fannin was asked to give a report of the Campus. First, she stated that RSSLC is not a holding facility as Gwen North was told in the above staffing (annual planning meeting).

Continuing with Cynthia Fannin's report: the campus has a new Disability Rights Officer, Jennifer Wright. A new basketball court has been constructed in the area between Sabine and Lavaca dorms at a cost of \$6,000.00. This area is for the use of the entire campus and many residents have been observed playing on the court. The area was built with donated funds. The Three Rivers Gazebo is complete with the exception of the landscaping. There will be a ribbon cutting when all is complete.

Cynthia Fannin also reported that Austin SSLC will be reopening a few homes and will be contacting family members to offer the spaces. She also wanted us to know the camera tapes are available at any time. Rounds by staff do take place on a regular basis. There is a Campus Coordinator present at all times, with an Executive Officer on call on a three month rotation. To reach the Campus Coordinator on duty, call (281) 344-4439.

Linda Falk gave a brief report on the recent visits to the campus by the pets from Faithful Paws. All the residents who came to visit the pets were very happy to see, pet and visit with the dogs. These dogs are very well trained and happy to see the residents of RSSLC as well.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm. The next meeting will be March 19, 2017, at 1:30 pm in the Forever Young Center. We look forward to seeing all there!

Linda Falk  
Secretary

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## **Families of RSSLC Donations**

**The Resource** is published to provide communications among families and friends of Richmond State Supported Living Center residents. Costs are covered by tax deductible gifts from individuals. Please make checks payable to **Families of RSSLC** and send to PO Box 1671, Richmond, TX 77406. Thanks!

♥ **Our recent donors: Thank you!!** ♥

**Thomas Diaz, MD**  
**Dorothy Specks**

**Frankie Glidewell**  
**Ann S. Towle**

**Edna Hager**  
**Hans and Margie Vanbrackle**

We are a 501(c)(3) organization named "Richmond State School Families and Friends, Inc.", which is a non-profit incorporated in Texas. Our operating name is "Families of Richmond State Supported Living Center", which is an assumed name registered with the state. If you look us up on the internet, be sure to enter the entire organization name as underlined above.

And thank you, **Louise Alexander**, for bringing refreshments to our meetings!



*See you on March 19, we hope!*