

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.

September, 2017

Our next meeting will be Sunday, September 17, 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: **9 2 0 6 9 1 9** and then press **#**.
4. Press the **"Mute"** button on your phone so we cannot hear what's going on in your house.

Thank you.

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 –

First of all, I want to tell you that Richmond SSLC is high and dry. Aside from a low spot in the street near the main entrance, everything was well above flood waters. RSSLC continued to function pretty much normally because more than 350 employees voluntarily stayed over to take care of the facility and our family members. The count of those employees is still incomplete.

- ❖ Numerous direct-care employees who volunteered to stay over during the flood were at RSSLC 24-7 for ONE WHOLE WEEK because other employees couldn't get from their homes to work at RSSLC. These employees certainly deserve a huge thank-you from us for keeping our loved ones safe and cared for. They were away from their families, and their own homes may have flooded.
- ❖ Employees were working out in the torrential rain cleaning gutters and making sure that water was draining from the facility.
- ❖ The campus pharmacy was open and operating the entire time.
- ❖ Medical staff was there the entire time.
- ❖ Food service was there the entire time.
- ❖ Residents were kept busy and entertained by Forever Young.
- ❖ Unit directors, Qs, and other supervisors were there day and night, including Director Al Barrera.
- ❖ SIRE, the therapeutic riding organization, took care of the horses.
- ❖ Shannan Stavinhoa, Community Relations Director, was out in the rain moving bales of hay.

Some of the direct-care people were working all 3 shifts, getting a few hours of sleep time here and there – on the floor on air mattresses!

I wish there were some way we could reward these people, but the state rule for employees accepting gifts is very stringent and excludes gift cards and money in any amount and any form. You can't give to one employee without giving to all 1300. I have asked for a list of the people who stayed over so that, at a minimum, we can publish their names and thank them.

FYI: RSSLC has a phone line, **(281) 344-4399**, which gives a recorded status report on the facility.

Our next meeting is in a week. Dr. Carol Heath, dentist at RSSLC, will give us information about dental care at RSSLC and presumably some information about the dental service to be extended to serve some people in the "community" (i.e., not RSSLC). Lack of dental care is something that bedevils special needs people everywhere. Most dentists do not know how and/or do not wish to serve this population. In addition to Dr. Heath, Mr. Barrera indicated before the flood that he would talk to us.

At our last meeting the phone-in capability did not work because the call-in code had been changed.

This is our first newsletter since last March. In May we did not have enough news, and in July we don't have a meeting. I meant to write this a week ago, but it was impossible to concentrate on anything

while water from the lake behind my house was creeping ever higher toward my house. The water rose about ten feet and stopped rising about two vertical feet from my back door. I was so lucky!

On to more news tidbits and observations:

- ❖ We survived last spring's attempt by certain state legislators to close down some SSLCs. The next hurdle is the state budget for 2018 and 2019. They can strangle SSLCs that way.
- ❖ The state hiring freeze has been eliminated for all essential positions in SSLCs.
- ❖ Volunteer Services of RSSLC had a very successful fundraiser gala in August.
- ❖ Serious new speed bumps all over the RSSLC campus make for a bone-jarring ride. Drive very slowly over them and save your car and yourself.
- ❖ There is an Art Exploration Center on campus. Sessions are held three times a week in pottery and painting, and there are three teachers rotating their services.
- ❖ Volunteers are needed for the Special Friends program to befriend RSSLC residents without any family. It is sort of like the old Foster Grandparent program except the individual may be as old as or older than the friend. There are a hundred or so residents with no family contact.
- ❖ Next April will be RSSLC's ***50th anniversary!*** There will be a week of events on campus including a fun run and a family reunion picnic. Invitations to the picnic will be extended to all previous residents and their families. We will be asked to do some work with regard to organization and dealing with food vendors. We hope former residents will have transportation to the big event.
- ❖ Rabbi David Lyon wrote an essay in the Houston Chronicle a few months back appealing to the legislature and the public for the continued existence of the SSLCs as a moral issue.
- ❖ Several important positions are open or are recently filled. Assistant Director Cynthia Fannin retired in June, and the Director of Residential Services has left. Both of those positions are open. The other Assistant Director position has just been filled, and a new admissions person has been hired.
- ❖ The Security Department wants everyone to sign in at the front desk before going to the dorms. Lately they have been giving visitor badges to the families, and those badges have to be returned to the front desk at the end of the visit. (Inconvenient!) It's our understanding that the State of Texas looks at visitor cards to see how many visitors our people are getting, so it's a good idea to sign in every time. They need to know that WE CARE.
- ❖ The Brookwood Community, our luxurious counterpart, is a large fancy residential facility outside of Brookshire, TX, on FM 1489. (The small town of Brookshire is a few miles west of Katy on I-10.) Brookwood is about to build two very large residential buildings and another building of some sort. It's funny how congregate state facilities like RSSLC are looked down upon as being isolated from the "community" but expensive private ones are admired and celebrated, even if they are out in the countryside a long way from the "community."

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

Louise Clay
louise@pcm.net

(281) 346-0346 home
(281) 543-0123 cell

P O Box 966
Fulshear, TX 77441

RSSLC Census Data As Of 5/25/2017

Census: 316				Gender:			
				Male	178	56.3%	
				Female	138	43.7%	
Age:				Years of Residence at			
< = 21	0	0.0%		RSSLC:			
22 – 45	74	23.4%		< = 5 yrs	60	19%	
46 – 65	203	64.2%		6 – 10 yrs	19	6%	
> = 66	36	11.4%		11 – 15 yrs	29	9%	
Age range 21 – 78				16 – 20 yrs	11	3%	
				> = 21 yrs	197	62%	
Race:				Level of			
Asian	6	1.9%		Intellectual			
Black/Afr. Am.	61	19.3%		Mild	(IQ 50-70)	32	10.1%
Multiple	3	0.9%		Moderate	(IQ 35-49)	33	10.4%
White	246	77.8%		Disability:			
				Severe	(IQ 20-34)	59	18.7%
				Profound	(IQ < 20)	192	60.8%

<u>Hearing Impairment</u>			<u>Visual Impairment</u>			<u>Mobility Impairment</u>		
None	223	70.6%	None	173	54.7%	Unimpaired	115	36.4%
Mild	45	14.2%	Mild	65	20.6%	Mild	37	11.7%
Moderate	19	6.0%	Moderate	32	10.1%	Moderate	46	14.6%
Moderate (?)	10	3.2%	Severe	43	13.6%	Mobile/Non-Amb.	41	13.0%
Severe	9	2.8%				Non-Ambulatory	74	23.4%
Profound	7	2.2%						

Note: Some of these numbers don't quite add up. This is State of TX data.

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!! ♥

Ellie Adams
Mr. & Mrs. Jay Dietz
Frankie Glidewell
Ann S. Towle

Thomas Diaz, MD
Linda Falk
Tayde Lara
Mr. & Mrs. John Vinson

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. An acknowledgment will be mailed for all contributions. If you fail to get yours, please call Louise Clay at (281) 346-0346.

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

Minutes from March 19 Meeting

Louise Clay called the meeting to order, asking Reverend Billy to open with prayer. Louise recognized and welcomed Jane and John Fowler, as well as any other new members.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as read. The treasurer's report was read and approved. Louise proposed we purchase additional Rodeo tickets, but Mr. Barrera said the school could use other funds available for this. We should use our funds for other things. They have funds for recreation.

Louise suggested the driveway area at the back of Trinity be cleared of debris as it would be difficult for a fire truck to get in there.

Shannon Stavinhoa and Nikki Bird gave a program on Community Relations and VSC. They offer tours, visits, admission tours, address inquiries about the facility, speak to organizations about RSSLC, with facts about the campus, the services and partnerships. Nikki spoke about the Volunteer Services. They bring in volunteers for the community, start new volunteer programs and provide volunteers for the coffee shop. A Special Olympic Basketball Team is in the works to engage young adults. The minimum age to volunteer is 14 with a background check, volunteer training and orientation with extensive protocol. The VSC began in 1972 to create partnerships with the community.

On April 22, 2017, Special Olympics Horse Show will be at RSSLC from 9am until 3pm.

Michelle Arnold ask about school projects and cost comparison data for a DayHab on campus for non-residents as well as offering dental care.

PART Day at the Capitol was held last week. Ileene Robinson attended and the situation was much better this year than last. Richmond SSLC was represented.

Mr. Barrera gave a campus report stating that RSSLC is the second largest campus with Denton being the first. RSSLC now has 321 residents and 1300 employees. 75% of the current residents are 50 years old and over. The campus is the sixth largest employer in Fort Bend County and has the lowest employee injury rate as well as the time of service. The Department of Justice visits every 9 months currently. The biggest concerns they have at this time are resident-to-resident injuries and falls on campus.

Mr. Fowler moved that we adjourn at 2:50pm. We had nine members sign in and the next meeting will be May 21, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Falk, Secretary

Minutes from May 19 Meeting

President Louise Clay called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM and Chaplain Billy Guerrero gave a Bible reading and a prayer.

Newcomers shared stories of the complicated care their loved ones require in order to be safe and happy.

We met our new Director of Education, Nequilia Earnest.

As part of Texas HB 543 which passed in this legislative session, discussions are underway on how to share our dental services with people in need who do not live on our campus. Community dentists do not want to work on people with intellectual disabilities.

The Houston Chronicle has never had someone who could educate them about Texas' state supported living centers. Such a champion attended today's meeting. One meeting-goer said that other campus family members have had success getting letters to the editor published as well as ads placed about the SSLC capabilities and amenities.

Our art exploration workshop is up and running, though a retired art teacher will be needed in the coming months.

Cynthia will let us know when she gets invitations to public school transition fairs. The mental health authorities have purposely kept information about the SSLCs from parents so the transition fairs are a chance for parents to learn about more options for their children. Social worker Lisa Carmona is acting as our Director of Admissions.

Family members, friends, visitors, and volunteers are reminded to drive slowly on campus. Our citizens have total freedom to ride their bikes and stroll so we must ensure their safety.

On June 12, 2017, the DOJ will be on campus once again. Their inspections have helped make Texas' state supported living centers safe, vibrant communities for our loved ones.

We adjourned at 3:12 PM.

Submitted by Michele Arnold for our secretary



See you on September 17, we hope!