

The Resource



September, 2019

Newsletter from

Families of Richmond State Supported Living Center

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.

Our next regular meeting will be Sunday, Sept. 15, 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.)

Please check out our website now at gofamilies.org.

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From President Louise Clay

Hello, everyone –

It's been a while since we put out a full-blown newsletter. We were waiting to see what the Texas Legislature was going to do, for one thing. The 2019 session lasted from January 1 until May 31. As it turned out, the SSLCs really had no serious challenges for a change. Not only were there no serious bills having to do with SSLC closures, but the SSLCs have been fully funded! Yea to our state legislators! This has been the first legislative session in my memory that the SSLCs' existence has not been threatened. That does not mean, however, that we should not keep our eyes and ears open and take action when needed. There are lots of well-funded groups that have us in their cross-hairs. And quite a few of our friends in the legislature have decided not to run for office again.

Since the last newsletter we have lost two active members. Ileene Robinson died in May. She was very active with legislators and performed a very vital function. Her lengthy obituary is on our website on the "FYI" page. And Graham Johnston died in July. Graham led a very interesting life. He was a competitive swimmer, going to the Olympics and many other competitions over many decades. He and his wife Janis are parents of Kevin, one of the riders at the horse arena. Here is a link to a very long article about Graham in the Houston Chronicle. <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Legendary-Houston-swimmer-Graham-Johnston-dead-at-14190708.php>

This will be a long newsletter. There is news from Volunteer Services; we have had our Staff Appreciation Day; there are reports on the last two meetings; and the September recreation calendar will be included.

That's all for now. Hope to see you at the meeting on September 15.

Louise Clay
louise@pcm.net

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

P O Box 966
Fulshear, TX 77441

Staff Appreciation Day

Staff Appreciation Day has historically been a function of just this organization or its predecessor (Richmond State School Parent Association) by itself. We now lack the manpower to conduct this event, so it has become a joint effort. We pay for the food and supplies, and Richmond SSLC supplies most of the labor. A few weeks ago we emailed a request for contributions. Several of you responded with enthusiasm, funding the entire event. It was held in the gym on Monday, August 19, for all shifts.

The powers that be -- RSSLC Director Erin Knight and Assistant Directors Cynthia Fannin and Samuel Lynn – were serving hotdogs and trimmings to employees at all levels. Community Relations Director Melissa Johnson and her staff plus Recreation Department people were working as well. And there was a group of 7 or 8 of our family members who mixed and mingled and greeted everyone who walked in the door. We told the employees how much we appreciated them and that we hoped they would be around for a very long time. They really seemed to be pleased at being recognized and valued by us. The direct care people have a particularly hard job, and it is really important that they stay at RSSLC.

There was only one hitch in the day: the state inspectors showed up unannounced, as they should, but it put a lot of pressure on the top people, who were serving at Staff Appreciation and then conducting an awards ceremony afterward for employee years of service. All in all, though, it was a very good day. The inspectors were all over RSSLC for four days, as usual. They do this once or twice a year. This was certainly an inconvenience on that Monday of our event, but it is also just one more reason to appreciate RSSLC. Group homes don't get this kind of scrutiny. The more eyes, the better.

Volunteer Services and Community Relations

The Volunteer Services Council of RSSLC had its annual major fundraiser on Saturday, August 3. It is called "Vegas Texas Style" and features blackjack tables and other gambling games. Money is raised from silent and live auctions of donated items, as well as sales of tables of 10 tickets and individual tickets. Each ticket gives the attendee a lovely dinner, one or more drinks, and a certain amount of "gambling money" (you can buy more if you run out). This really fun event has been held in the last few years in Sugar Land at the Fluor Daniel building, which is an absolutely lovely venue provided **free of charge!** Yea, Fluor Daniel!

We understand that the event was very successful, and income exceeded last year's.

While the Volunteer Services Council (VSC of RSSLC or just "VSC") is its own independent organization with its own board of directors, the Community Relations group (Director Melissa Johnson, Volunteer Coordinator Brenda Rangel, and Administrative Assistant Paige Delao) is closely intertwined with the VSC, serving as liaison with the State of Texas. Many, many years ago there was a very nice newsletter called "Down By the Brazos" which was published regularly, but it was allowed to lapse 10 or 15 years ago. There will be an effort to bring it back. Director Melissa Johnson is currently on maternity leave, and hopefully the newsletter will get resurrected when she comes back.

Emergency Numbers

There is a cell phone for facility electrical outages and a separate Family Landline for facility emergency situations and in the event of an evacuation. A recorded message will be on the Family Landline should there be an emergency and or need to leave the facility. RSSLC will update the pre-recorded message with an up-to-date message.

Cell phone (located at the switchboard):	(832) 945-7321
Family Landline (for facility emergencies):	(281) 344-4399

Families of RSSLC Donations

The Resource is published to provide communications among families and friends of Richmond State Supported Living Center residents. Printing and mailing 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.

♥ Our recent donors: Thank you!! ♥

Daniel Feely	Graham & Janis Johnston	Dorothy Specks
Delois Obermiller	Wendy & Patrick McDowell	Luisa Kluger (2)
Jerry & Lindsey Lampp	Barbara Lee Teas	Kathleen Cavanna
Bill & Nancy Kircher	Gerald & Peggy Dew	Albert Ramirez
Frankie Glidewell Trust (2)	Joe & Joann Girdner	Sandra Reeves

We are a 501(c)(3) organization named "Richmond State School Families and Friends, Inc.", 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.

September Leisure Recreation Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 & 9:30 Sunday Service-CH 1:00 to 3:00 Gym 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00-7:30 Open Gym	2 Labor Day Activities 9:30am 11:30 Gym, Swimming, Light Rock and Coffee Shop 2:30 to 4:30 Dance Gym Labor Day Holiday	3 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 4:30 Dance Practice w Susie- GYM 6:15 to 7:15 Gym 6:30 Quad Act Neches Dining RM. 6:30 Pool Time – LEON and TRN <i>. 6:30 Special Edition Dance Fitness w/ Randi – Gym</i>	4 1:00 Catholic Service CH 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 6:00 Residents Rights Meeting – Light Rock w/ Fernand 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 7, 8, 9 6:30 Open Swim SAN	5 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:30 Quad Activities in Neches DR 6:15 Coffee Shop Sabine and Pecos 6:30 Open Swim SAN 6:30 Quad Activities in Neches DR	6 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop GUA & LVA 6:30 Open Swim 3 & 4 Rivers	7 1:00 - 3:00 Open Gym 2:00 to 4:00 Splash Pad 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM TSO Area Swim Meet Don Cook Natatorium
8 9:00 & 9:30 Sunday Service-CH 1:00 to 3:00 Gym 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00-7:30 Open Gym	9 1:00 Catholic Service CH 2:15 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 4:15 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 4:30 Dance Practice w/ Susie- GYM 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 5&6	10 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:00 Open Swim at the Pool 4:15 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:15 to 7:15 Gym 6:30 Quad's Only Root Beer Float Party - NDR 6:30 Pool Time – LEON and TRN	11 1:00 Catholic Service CH 3:00 Patriots Day Remembrance – Light Rock Cafe 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 4:00 Open Swim at the Pool 4:15 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 7, 8, 9 6:30 Open Swim SAN Patriot Day	12 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:00 Open Swim at the Pool 4:15 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 to 8:00 Summer Dance w/ DJ Jesse – Gym	13 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert & Fran 4:00 Open Swim at the Pool 4:15 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop GUA & LVA 6:30 Open Swim 3 & 4 Rivers Men's Wolf Pack Riders to Camp Aranzazu - Leave	14 1:00 - 3:00 Open Gym 2:00 to 4:00 Splash Pad 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM Men's Wolf Pack Riders to Camp Aranzazu

<p>15 9:00 & 9:30 Sunday Service- CH 1:00 to 3:00 Gym 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00-7:30 Open Gym</p> <p>Men's Wolf Pack Riders to Camp Aranzazu - Return</p>	<p>16 1:00 Catholic Service CH 2:15 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 4:30 Dance Practice w/ Susie- GYM 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 5&6</p>	<p>17 4:30 Dance Practice w Susie- GYM 6:15 to 7:15 Gym 6:30 Quad Act Neches Dining RM 6:30 Pool Time - LEON and TRN 6:30 Special Edition Dance Fitness w/ Randi - Gym</p>	<p>18 1:00 Catholic Service CH 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Residents Rights Meeting - Light Rock w/ Fernand 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 7, 8, 9 6:30 Open Swim SAN</p>	<p>19 3:00 Open Swim 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM 6:15 Coffee Shop Sabine and Pecos 6:30 Open Swim SAN 6:30 Quad Activities in Neches DR</p>	<p>20 10:30 Sabbath Service - CH 3:00 Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop GUA & LVA 6:30 Open Swim 3 & 4 Rivers</p>	<p>21 2:00 to 4:00pm Monthly Birthday Party - GYM 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM</p>
<p>22 9:00 & 9:30 Sunday Service- CH 1:00 to 3:00 Gym 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00-7:30 Open Gym</p>	<p>23 1:00 Catholic Service CH Opera to Go 2:30 Quads 3:30 Rivers 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 4:30 Dance Practice w/ Susie- GYM 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 5&6</p> <p>First Day of Autumn</p>	<p>24 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 4:30 Dance Practice w Susie GYM 6:00 Gym 6:30 Quad Act Neches Dining RM 6:30 Pool Time - LEON and TRN</p>	<p>25 1:00 Catholic Service CH 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Open Gym 6:15 Coffee Shop TJ 7, 8, 9 6:30 Open Swim SAN</p>	<p>26 3:00 Open Swim 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio Class 4:14 Coffee Shop/Computer Lab 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM</p> <p>6:00 to 8:00 Summer Dance - w/ DJ Jesse - Gym</p>	<p>27 10:30 Sabbath Service - CH 8:00am to 12:00pm Fort Bend County Fair Parade at Oak Bend Hospital 1:30 to 4:30 Regular Programming After Lunch - Day Programming , FYP and Workshop</p>	<p>28 1:00 - 3:00 Open Gym 2:00 to 4:00 Splash Pad 3:00 Church Service 3:15 to 4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00 Basketball Practice - GYM</p>
<p>29 9&9:30 Sun Ch Sv 1 to 3 Gym 3:00 ChSv 3:00 Fful Paws Gym 3:15-4:00 Coffee Shop 6:00-7:30 Open Gym Rosh Hashanah Begins at sundown</p>	<p>30 1:00 Catholic Service CH 2:15 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran 3:00 "Take A Break at Light Rock 3:30 Art Studio w/ Albert &Fran Special Needs Night at the Fair 5:00pm to 9:00PM</p>			<p>Evening Coffee Shop by Schedule Only 6:15 to 7:15pm</p>		

“Sire” and the Horse Arena -

35 Year History of Help through Horsemanship a Part of RSSLC



Mini horses (above) Scarlett and Miss Independence were backstage celebrities when SIRE was featured on KPRC-TV's Houston Life in conjunction with the Reliant Gives campaign.

Purple glove rider (right). For beauty, patience and friendship, Santana is a favorite horse among Fort Bend riders.

Rescue horse Ernie (left) - SIRE Fort Bend facility's Site Manager Helen Evans is with Ernie, a horse she and her team rescued during Hurricane Harvey's aftermath floods.

Inspired to improve the lives of people with special needs, SIRE Therapeutic Horsemanship started its work using specially trained horses at borrowed facilities to help a few riders in 1983. Commemorating 35 years of community service, SIRE has changed the lives of thousands of people with cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome, multiple sclerosis, attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder and traumatic brain and spinal cord injury and other health challenges.

The organization has grown to train nearly 300 riders each week at its three Houston-area facilities—in Fort Bend, Hockley and Spring—where the nonprofit also owns and maintains more than 30 therapy horses.

SIRE's Fort Bend facility operates at the Richmond State Supported Living Center, where skilled and compassionate staff and volunteers are gearing up for the fall session to work with 90 riders. This location serves both Richmond State Supported Living Center riders as well as riders from around the community. Based on approximately 40 acres, the Fort Bend riding facility contains a fully covered, all-weather arena; a 12-horse stall barn; trail riding routes and a sensory course.

Through equine-assisted programs—harnessing the power of the psychological and emotional connection to the horse and the horse's movement that simulates that same rhythm of walking—SIRE riders have experienced miracles in their lives. Riders have achieved first steps and first words; bolstered confidence and enriched social interactions; and improved strength, balance and coordination.

Riders and their families report that their training courses are making an impact: 98 percent said riding has facilitated physical improvements; 97 percent felt better emotionally or psychologically; 96 percent experienced improvement in their socialization skills.

Along with accredited instructors and professional staff, SIRE excels thanks to volunteers, who donate 30,000 hours of time each year to pair with instructors in helping lead and walk with the horses during each therapeutic session.

One seasoned rider's mom summed up her son's passion for training at SIRE: "Just being on the horse each week gives his body and his mind stimulation that brings healing."

For more information about therapeutic riding and SIRE's Fort Bend location, please contact Fort Bend Site Manager Helen Evans at helen@sire-htec.org or 281-344-4308 or 281-344-4332. If you are interested in riding at SIRE, please contact Rider Relations Manager Kelly Henderson at kelly@sire-htec.org or 281-356-7588.

The March 17 meeting

We had two guests: 1) Rep. Dennis Bonnen, who is Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, and 2) Scott Schalchlin, Associate Commissioner of TX Health and Human Services who is over all the Texas SSLCs. Rep. Bonnen called in on the conference line and spoke to us for about 15 minutes about things in the state legislature. He seemed to be very supportive of the SSLCs. And then Mr. Schalchlin talked to us and answered questions for most of the remainder of the meeting. He was in the process of visiting all the 13 SSLCs around Texas. He is a really good speaker and very affable. We had a reception with snacks and drinks. It was a good day.

Minutes from May 19 Meeting

The meeting started at 1:32 with Chaplain Billy Guerrero giving an opening prayer of healing from the book of healing. We acknowledged Ileene Robinson's passing.

Michele Arnold read the minutes from the last meeting. Louise Clay gave the treasurer's report.

We have a new website: gofamilies.org. [Actually, this new one points directly to our existing website "familiesofrsslc.org", which has too many letters and is hard to type correctly. (Louise Clay)]

Tom Diaz gave an update on Legislation that is currently in both the Texas State and US Congress that would affect guardianship for our loved ones. State Bill 1783 would challenge our guardianship rights. It is still in committee and does not look like it will make it to the floor for a vote. SB117 Disability Integration Act is currently getting co-sponsors to get it to the House floor for a vote. Newcomer Lizzie Fletcher, who has never visited RSSLC, is a co-sponsor. They are short as of right now and claiming this is a civil rights issue. We hope for a hearing where we can provide testimony. For now, it is very important to contact our members of the House of Representatives to express our views.

Candiance Maize of the Behavior Service Department gave a short talk on her background. She talked about the ongoing training for staff of all shifts. She is the one charged with the behavior of new, high-functioning residents. She reaches all three shifts with training. She was challenged on her use of food as a reinforcer.

Cheryl Rhodes, Director of Residential Services talked about the current needs for staff. She also talked about training unit directors and campus coordinators and retention of staff. Louise asked what we could do for Staff Appreciation.

We learned that Wharton Junior College sends nurses to our campus for training and that food trucks are on campus during weather events. Twenty places are available to people who need the special services RSSLC offers on campus. Call 281-344-4312.

The meeting ended at 3:00 pm.

Submitted by Pat Lodder, secretary.

Last But Not Least

by Michele Arnold

A few words from very active guardian Michele Arnold:

If you are not in contact with your U.S. representative and senator, there is no way he or she can know what's going on at RSSLC or any other Texas SSLC. You can be sure, however, that protection and advocacy groups such as Disability Rights Texas and ARC have their **paid people** buzzing in the ears of your public servants about why institutions such as Richmond SSLC must all be closed down.

For the last couple of months, on Tuesday evenings, I've been part of a conference call with family members in Texas and other states who belong to VOR [<https://www.vor.net>]. This group seeks to help campuses like ours all over the country, just as PART [<http://www.ourparttexas.com>] seeks to protect all 13 Texas campuses. Our fight to protect the lives of our loved ones is two-fold:

1. Be vocal at the state and national level on legislation affecting us, and
2. Inform parents who have been kept from knowing about the existence of Richmond State Supported Living Center about all the services the SSLCs provide. Refer them to our web page gofamilies.org/literature, which contains documents with a great deal of information.

Please do not hesitate to act. It is up to ALL of us to keep our loved ones safe and where we want them to be!

Afterthoughts (Louise Clay)

Richmond SSLC has one of the few active family associations in the 13 Texas SSLCs. Brenham and Austin SSLCs have very active ones; Lufkin is restarting theirs; some SSLCs don't have one; and some are troubled or barely exist. We have a strong core of people who use their talents and proclivities to benefit our loved ones, our association, and RSSLC. Dr. Tom Diaz, a semi-retired physician, now does great work with legislators; legislators will pay attention to an M.D., and that is very important. Peggy Osborne, our vice president, always arranges good programs for our meetings; she has been volunteering at RSSLC since she was a young child and came with her parents to visit her sister who has lived at RSSLC forever. Peggy knows and understands everything about RSSLC. Michele Arnold, guardian of Larry Wright, is always helpful, advising and assisting me directly with many things; she still has a demanding fulltime job. Most of the computer stuff and writing falls on me; my background was computer software development starting in 1965 at TI. I also did a lot of technical writing. Retired teacher Louise Alexander is a past president, RSSLC parent, and cookie baker extraordinaire; she brings refreshments to our meetings and shares her long experience. Jay Dietz and Kathleen Boyce are very active and are still in the fulltime working world. I could go on and on about our active people and will from time to time. We do need new blood. Most of us are "older", really old, or really **really OLD**. So please be thinking about what you might do to keep our organization going as we "age out".

Thank you and bye for now – again.



See you on September 15, we hope!

Chaplain Billy, thank you for always being in Forever Young first to open that beautiful space for our meetings and putting the chairs back in place.