

## **PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LUDEMAN CENTER**

**MARCH 23, 2013**

Dear Parents and Friends Member,

Last year, we wrote to inform you that it might soon be necessary to move forward with a federal lawsuit against the State of Illinois and to ask for your support. Regrettably, that time is here and once again we will need your help.

On February 19, 2013 the suit was filed in U.S Northern District Court. Parents and Friends of Ludeman Center (PFLC) joined with the seven other State Operated Developmental Centers (SODCs) and the Illinois League of Advocates for the Developmentally Disabled (IL-ADD) in filing this suit.

Our course of action became clear over the past several months. The State of Illinois closed Jacksonville Developmental Center effective November 27, 2012 displacing its 180 residents, moving many into unsafe and insufficient community placements without appropriate parental and guardian consent.

Currently, the State of Illinois is actively in the process of closing Murray Developmental Center in Centralia, IL and displacing its 276 residents. Despite the fervent protests of parents and guardians, the state has promised that Murray will be closed by the end of May. The state's plan doesn't stop there and Ludeman Center could well be next. Many believe that the state's ultimate objective is to close all seven remaining SODCs.

The suit we filed is asking for an injunction to immediately stop the Murray Center closing and to protect the other SODC's on the grounds that the State of Illinois is capriciously eliminating a whole level of necessary and appropriate services to the profoundly developmentally disabled and in doing so is not honoring state and federally mandated citizen and guardian rights.

As we're sure you know, lawsuits of this type are long and difficult to wage, but the single biggest challenge for us is handling the expense. The good news is that there is strength in numbers and along with IL-ADD, all of the SODC parent groups are onboard and sharing the financial burden. Yes, even the Jacksonville Parents Group, despite the fact their facility is now shuttered, is donating all its remaining funds to the lawsuit.

The other piece of good news is that we have you. People who again and again have shown their commitment to the well-being of their loved ones and in turn all the residents at Ludeman Center. Last year, through your generosity we raised over \$3,000 in this campaign and that money helped launch this lawsuit. Today as we move forward there is an urgent need to raise much more.

As an organization, PFLC must continue to be the voice of your loved one and to advocate for them, even in Federal Court. It's for these reasons that we turn once again to all of you and ask that you give just as generously as you possibly can to the "PFLC - Protect Our Residents Fund". Every dollar raised will go directly toward this legal action fund.

The push is on to solve the state's fiscal problems in a way that threatens its most fragile and voiceless population, the developmentally disabled. Thank you in advance for your generosity and for doing your part and more to keep this from happening.

Truly,

The Board of Parents and Friends of Ludeman Center