

Hello members of Finance / health and human services,

My sister Mary Umphrey and I travelled to Columbus to plead with you to continue to support facilities for the severely disabled. Our brother Jimmy Stukenborg has lived at Brookside in Mason, Ohio for 25 years. He is now 59 years old. He functions as a 5 month old infant and has been low functioning since he was run over by a teenage driver when he was just 2 years old. He was home with us for 35 years and I could tell you many stories of sacrifice. There was no respite care and no special wheelchairs that could hold his broken and paralyzed body. He had so many seizures. When are parents were in their 60's, they could no longer care for him. We searched and searched but who would take Jimmy.

We were so happy to find Brookside. Children and young adults of all ages but all functioning like children were on colorful mats with mobiles and mirrors and music. Brookside became a second family. We like the larger institution. Everybody knows Jimmy and says Hello. Now his care is more Complex with seizures, a tracheostomy, a feeding tube, and a body bent with contractures. He still turns and smiles at the sound of our 86 yr old mothers voice and I believe he benefits from being mobile in his special wheelchair. His care often requires 2-3 people and skilled nursing care.

We were told that Brookside may not be able to stay open and that the residents would be moved to small group homes of about four.

Our concerns are

1. Jimmys care takes at least 2 plus a nurse and a hydrolic lift - how could that happen in a small group home?
2. We are genuinely concerned about increased risk for physical or sexual abuse where only 1 or 2 people are working.
3. We fear the loss of a large 'family'- like the family Jimmy has had at Brookside.

An ' old folks ' home would not be an appropriate alternative as Jimmy has never had mind of an adult.

One more thing, in my career as a Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, I continue to see babies disabled from birth for many reasons. I empathize with the heartache of these families. They cannot see how their little one could be like our Jimmy, now 59, when no one thought he would ever survive. Who will take care of them.

Please do what you can to support these homes.

Thank you,

Rita Kunk ( sister to Jimmy Stukenborg).