

Jan Vargo
Huber Heights City Council Member
6131 Taylorsville Road
Huber Heights OH 45424
Tel: (937) 236-5385

Good afternoon/evening Honorable Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Manning and Ranking Member Cafaro. I am Jan Vargo, City Council member from Huber Heights.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am here to plead with you to reconsider closing the Montgomery Developmental Center in Huber Heights. If you check, I believe you will find that the Huber Heights facility is not only one of the newest (built in 1981) but according to Superintendent Doug Jackson, the most cost effective of the 10 Development Centers currently operated in Ohio.

Even though the primary reason to remain open is certainly to maintain the safe and stable environment the residents now enjoy, I am going to address the devastating effect the closure of this facility will have on the City of Huber Heights and its residents. I understand this is one of the criteria used in making the decision which facility to close. Of the approximate \$17 million budget for this Center, \$12 million is for salaries - for which the City collects a sizable sum of income tax from approximate 190 employees who work there. For the employees, some who are already one pay check away from losing their home, losing their job would be disastrous. We are a blue collar community very slowly coming out of a recession that hit our city pretty hard. This loss of income would force us to reduce services.

It is my understanding that community involvement is something

you want to achieve by making these planned changes. I am here to assure you the residents of the Developmental Center in Huber Heights already have a great deal of community involvement. St. Peter Catholic Church sponsors an annual fish fry at their Church with all proceeds going to the Center. The ones that can, also attend church. Pastor Griffith of the United Methodist Church conducts services on the premises for any resident who wishes to attend. They also have other planned activities for them. The Knights of Columbus have adopted them in the past using their "Measure Up Campaign" funds to support the facility. Others take residents on outings to the bowling alley, swimming pool, Dragon's games (professional baseball team in Dayton) and theatre. So you can see, community has indeed accepted them and they are in the community as much as possible, but still able to return to a safe environment at the end of the day.

This facility certainly would not be categorized as an "institution." Some of the residents are able to work at various locations and earn money. This gives them a sense of accomplishment as well as spending money. If you could see the residents coming off the bus at the end of the day, you would wonder what kind of work can they possibly do. Some are in wheelchairs, severely handicapped, cannot speak, etc. but have been taught to do SOME kind of work in spite of their handicap.

I respectfully request you reconsider closing this well run, well maintained facility.

Thank you for your time.