

My name is Pam Rambo. My son Patrick lives at Montgomery Developmental Center.

Patrick is 28 years old and severely Autistic. We adopted Patrick at age 3. He had been abused and neglected by his birth mother. The doctors all believe that he just shut down because of the pain of starvation and not being nurtured. He was hospitalized for 2 weeks when taken from his birth mom with staph infections and malnutrition. He was in foster care for 2 years and had been passed from place to place because he was difficult to care for. When we heard about Patrick, he was in a foster home that was not willing to keep him any longer and he had no place to go. He is non verbal and has a hard time communicating his wants and needs. He is a runner and will wonder off or run into the street or other dangerous places because he has no fear and doesn't understand danger. God lead us to him and we promised him that we would never let anyone hurt him again.

He started getting violent at about age 12. Breaking windows out, glass out of our china cabinet, entertainment center, living room tables, school bus windows, school windows and just overall very destructive. As he grew bigger and stronger it was very difficult to keep him safe as well as ourselves. We nailed windows shut, put dead bolts on our doors and always had an 8' fence around the house to keep him from running off yet he still managed to escape on 2 occasions. He would go as long as 38 hours without sleep...often, he had meltdowns without any warning and beat himself in the face and would bang his head on the walls. He punched and kicked many holes in our walls throughout the years. The last 5 years that he was with us he was physical with us. My husband has a chronic illness and could no longer keep Patrick from hurting us. I only tell you all of this so you will understand the extent of his problems and the extent that we were willing to go too, to keep him safe and at home with us for as long as possible.

We kept him home until he was 22 because we couldn't stand to have him move far away and there was no where close to us that was available to him, even though MRDD had considered him too dangerous and tried to get us to allow him to move as far as 4 counties away. He cant tell us if he's being abused or talk to us on the phone and he gets upset if he can't see us often. When he went to MDC it was

truly a dream come true for us. We live 15 minutes away from him and can see him everyday or get there quickly if there is an emergency of any kind. To prepare him for his move I told him everyday for three months that he would be moving into an apartment like his siblings did when they graduated. Patrick continues to have a lot of these same behaviors today and he is 6' tall and weighs about 180 lbs. At times he can be redirected, but when he can't there are other staff that come help with him and keep the other individuals safe until he calms down. Two people cannot always control him when his behaviors get beyond the point of no return. When he has gotten out on occasion at MDC there are eyes everywhere and he is caught before he can get into a dangerous situation. Since being at MDC his behaviors have gotten fewer and farther between until the last 4 weeks, I think he knows what's going on and is scared because for the first time in a long time...instead of decreasing his medicine the doctor had to increase them because his behaviors have escalated so much.

He is Autistic, he can be abusive and destructive. He's an escape artist and runner. He is also very loving, he cares about those closest to him and he has feelings. At MDC he is loved. When the behaviors are gone they are forgotten about by staff immediately and he is always treated like a human being.

He comes home on Saturday or Sunday but refuses to stay all night. He wants to go to his home, to his bed and to his 2nd family. I couldn't stand for my baby to be hours away from me and not know that he was okay or for him to think we had forsaken him. He is too hard to control to be in a group home. As soon as he destroys something or breaks windows or smashes a table, he will either be taken to the hospital where they will hold him in a unit for 72 hours and with the mind of a 4 year old will be scared to death, or possibly even taken to jail. I don't believe he could adapt to being moved away from his "apartment". He doesn't live in an institution, he lives in a community of his peers, in a college dorm type of environment. He has a pool at his disposal, a gymnasium, walking trails, a track and most important to him...(snack machines.)

I don't understand how one man has the power to tell us that he made this decision to close the facilities, and it's a done deal. Eighty

nine human beings in MDC alone are going to be totally uprooted. A lot of the individuals are very fragile and vulnerable, many have no family that are in their lives and the wonderful men and women that serve MDC are their only family. They are happy because they know are with the same people on a regular basis. They can't handle change and are not responsive to strangers. Some have lived there for decades. I plead with you to intervene on our loved ones behalf and do what ever has to be done to keep them from being evicted from their homes. They suffer enough with the disabilities that they have to deal with everyday. Please keep them safe and loved by making it possible for them to remain in their homes.

Thank you & God Bless you.