

March 27, 2007

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Dear Janet:

I have read the letters that The Arc Michigan, the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition and Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service have written about Mt Pleasant Regional Center. Each made different points, with which we agree.

But the true issue, at its most basic, is that it is wrong to continue the existence of Mt. Pleasant and to force people to live there. It is wrong because we know without question, as we have known for decades, that it was never an effective way or the right way to provide services to people with developmental disabilities. All the evidence without exception shows that institutions like Mt. Pleasant are dangerous and do not produce positive outcomes for the people who live there. Conversely, reams of evidence show clearly that people with developmental disabilities flourish in small homes in their communities. Based on this evidence, as you know, several states have closed all their institutions. There is no reason Michigan could not do the same: each person residing in Mt. Pleasant has a functional twin – a person with the same disability characteristics - living in the community, a twin whose life is better and freer than his or her counterpart in Mt. Pleasant.

In the face of all of this - research proving institutions don't work; a murder highlighting that they are terribly dangerous, and state systems and functional twins demonstrating that better alternatives are possible – I can only conclude that the refusal to even plan to close Mt. Pleasant is based on reasons other than doing the best we can for the poor people who have to live there. And that's wrong too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Linda Potter'.

Linda Potter, J.D.
Executive Director

cc: Patrick Barrie,
Cynthia Kelly,
Dohn Hoyle,
Norm DeLisle,
Elmer Cerano,