

Dear Friends,

In this era of divisive politics, Misericordia is truly thankful to the Governor and all the leaders and members of both the Illinois House of Representatives and the Senate. With the exception of four negative votes in the House, we received total support from both bodies of government. And then, the Governor signed the bill that recognizes a new license for Misericordia. We now have a license called "The Continuum of Care" license. For this we are eternally grateful, and we are overwhelmed with God's goodness to us through so many good and caring friends.



At this point in time, we are uncertain what changes this license could/would bring to the operation of our "home." What this does do, is recognize Misericordia, Heart of Mercy Center as a legitimate way to serve persons with developmental disabilities, and some physically challenged as well.

Our families and other friends work very hard to request their legislators, on both the federal and state levels, to tour Misericordia. The purpose is for the legislators to know personally the "quality of life" our children and adults enjoy. They will also come to fully understand why our families are so grateful. This played a major role in making our efforts successful because there were many challenges.

As mentioned in my last newsletter, although a lawyer from an agency who has never visited Misericordia spoke negatively about Misericordia at the Senate hearing, there are other agencies funded by the government to serve all people with developmental disabilities that have the same attitude towards Misericordia. They believe Misericordia is bad because we are big. These advocates have been the only voice the policy-making bureaucrats have heard over many long years. They feel there is only one way and it is their way. Everyone belongs in isolated houses in the neighborhood. Misericordia holds that the above attitude denies families the right to choice. Who would know better than a family member about what residential service is most appropriate for their most vulnerable child/adult?

Within our continuum of care, we have 10 CILA homes in various neighborhoods. The higher functioning adults who live in these homes love them. This is so because they have our Campus to complement their lives. They return to the Campus for many of their social, work, educational, medical and nursing needs. How blessed we are to have these resources to offer! This is only true because thousands of Misericordia's friends believe enough to be involved.

If you were among the 15,000 guests who attended our 2016 September Family Festival, I feel certain you were impressed. Although we had to pay for the tents and children's rides, the entire event happened because of our most competent staff and dedicated volunteers. All the food was donated by loyal companies, and some of our volunteers took weeks off prior to the event to set up the physical structure under the direction of our great staff. We thank everyone who helped and who attended. It was a "day to remember" for "God's Love in action" was very obvious.

And yes, we are on to our next and last important celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Misericordia North – Heart of Mercy Center. Our Misericordia Women's Board, which was founded in 1921 and continues today as one of our most vibrant and loyal groups, will host their annual Heart of Mercy Ball on November 12, 2016, at the Hilton Hotel. The 2016 honorees are Jim and Cheri Rafferty (Heart of Mercy Award), Steve and Peg Lombardo (Sister Rosemary Connelly Service Medallion), and AT&T (Pillars of Community Award).

As many of you have heard, we began Misericordia Home North in 1976 with 39 children and 35 staff on an abandoned campus. We renovated two of the large institutional buildings into two dormitories and a learning center for the children. This was all we could afford! Today, when I drive around the Campus – knowing that we also have 10 homes in the neighborhoods – I am in awe of what has happened! Presently, 600 children and adults guided by 1,000 staff are enjoying good lives and are happy people. Families are so grateful, and we continue to include those who have no families or come from extreme poverty.

Since it is the 40th Anniversary of Misericordia North, we have invited all of our past honorees to come "home" and be recognized at the Heart of Mercy Ball. All those who have been honored over these years, along with thousands of long-time and new friends, have played a major role in making the Misericordia of today a place where God's Presence is known and God's Work is being done. Thus, I believe we have much to celebrate and would love to have you join us on November 12th – black tie is optional!

God's blessings on you and yours. Thank you for believing in Misericordia.

Lovingly,

Sister Rosemary
Executive Director