

To whom it may concern,

I just wanted to write a note of thanks for writing the article on the closing of Saint Agnes Adult Day Care and the future closure of all other day cares in Fresno. I want to share my personal feelings on the closing of this institution. I and others have been proud employees of Saint Agnes Adult Day Care for 3 years, 5 years, 10 years, 19 years, and 22 years. I have loved wearing the badge and have felt comfort in what it represents. Every morning I have gone to work excited for what God has planned for me to offer my clients, and every afternoon I am thankful for the day full of laughter and life, and the ability to treat my clients with the grace and dignity they deserve. I, and the other employees, have completely enjoyed the gift of giving to others, that which we as a society take for granted daily.

How many people can say that they have been with a job for that length of time, and not had one single day of regret? The people, the stories, the daily experiences of opening the windows to the minds of people I have come to know and love. What a gift it has been to see the amazing and truly miraculous results of Music Therapy bringing serenity to our mental health clients; to see a stroke patient roll into a room full of music and watch their disabilities disappear; to see a client “our age” struggling to move or say a word, and to see them have renewed life, one step at a time, one word at a time. This is all because there is a staff person there to hold them up when they are weak, to hang on their words, and listen to the pearls of wisdom paralyzed in their minds, and to do all this with a smile, looking “At” them, not “Through” them. I have been blessed to be part of such a team.

My family has been blessed to be part of this also. My daughter has grown up here. She has painted, done puzzles, and shared laughter with people she has come to think of as her friends and adoptive Grandparents. You see, she is missing one set of Grandparents because they died long before she was born.

I want to pray for all my clients, that they will never be neglected, never be talked over, and never be surrounded with people that feel they have nothing to offer. These clients are the World War II veterans, the Rosie the Riveters, and the farm workers that raised kids and sent them to college. They are the women that lost sons and husbands to war; the men that grew up in the depression and struggled to help feed the family instead of having a childhood. Their faces and hands are worn, and if given the chance, they have a story, an opinion worth listening to.

My wish for the politicians and for our government in general is this: that they do not overlook this group of people because they believe they are a “silent voice” that doesn’t vote, and have lost their value in our society. That they hear the Cerebral Palsy’s voice that shouts from within, “I am NOT silent, you are just not LISTENING”, or the WW2 vets voice saying, “I fought for your freedom, and this is how you repay me?”, or the stoic grandmother who raised a generation of politicians, lawyers, doctors, preachers, and laymen, shouting “YOU are only a few years away from being me!” May God have mercy on us if we fail to listen to the population we are becoming.

Thank you for letting me voice my opinion.

Jill Hanson, Assistant Social Worker, Saint Agnes Medical Center Adult Day Health Center