

My name is Marie Kenny-Matava guardian of a client at Southbury Training School.

My first recommendation would be for S.T.S to stay open.

S.T.S has been my cousin's home for 49 years. She is safe there and we don't have to worry about her getting lost, becoming a victim or wandering off without supervision. I think sometimes we have to put ourselves into their place and realize how they feel. These clients do have bonds with each other and the staff that have cared for them through the years. Yes, they are also at home at S.T.S. This is a place that many of them only know as home. If we had decided to move her it would be closer to family, we would have had to find her a new job, yet another change for her. This would make her mental wellbeing worse because it is hard for her to form bonds and trust. It also changes her behaviors where she becomes more aggressive and uneasy. We need to think about the clients and not about what is best for the current politicians. Sometimes it goes past money. It is a matter of being human to other humans, who need us. I have also looked at other group homes. The worry of many guardians is that if we have move our loved ones out of S.T.S and it doesn't work out or the new group home also closes. Then where do we all go with no support from the state who stepped into the lives of many of these families and told them they had to place their children all those years go.

My second recommendation would be to change the name. This would help with the stigma that goes with the name and what the outside world thinks of S.T.S

My third recommendation would be to open up admissions. Or at the least some respite care for those many parents of children and young adults. Some of these parents feel so lost. So do the many kids who have nothing to do after the age of 21. Even the parents of young children need that break and knowing that they are in the hands of staff that knows what they are doing, instead of college or high school students that work with them in the many summer camps. Not that that is a bad thing but many parents are afraid to send their kids thinking that the staff doesn't know I work with children with special needs and listen to what the parents of these kids say. The S.T.S campus is a beautiful setting with everything needed to help. So many opportunities are available on the S.T.S. campus for these kids. Buildings that could house weekend getaways, a pool for them to swim, so many educational opportunities, a pond for science, wild life to chart, and hiking on the beautiful grounds to get physical exercise. Those are just a few examples of the many good things that could happen there. Sometimes you just have to be out of the box and into trenches to know what is needed and what should be offered to this very special population.

Thank you,  
  
Marie Kenny-Matava

Guardian

43 Taylor St  
Torrington, CT 06790  
860-489-2642