

9-30 -21

Dear Mrs. Karels.

I just heard from my sister, Carol Tate, who recently visited our sister Kay, at what a good job you are doing with Kay. Carol said Kay looks better than she ever has. We're all so grateful to you and your staff for caring for Kay. None of us would be able to

It was hard on our mother to have to place Kay in care. She, too, would be relieved to hear how well Kay is doing under your care.

Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,

Rita Auer

Ms. Rita Auer  
871 E Holbrook St  
Gilbert, AZ 85298



10-1-2021

Dear Stacy,

Hi! I would like to tell you how blessed we feel to have our family member Lyle at a home like Monarch Heights. As the older sister I remember when he went there to live at 21 years old and been his home for 38 years! Monarch Heights has cared for, challenged and supported <sup>Lyle</sup> to be as independent as he can <sup>be</sup> with his disability, given him jobs to feel good about himself and a sense of purpose while being part of a family there.

~~Our~~ Family feels thankful for Monarch Heights and all the care, support and opportunities they have given Lyle over the years. May this home be able to be there for all the residents with continued opportunities for a long time.  
Sincerely, June Golden Dahlgren

# **GWEN ZIMMERMAN**

5999 CEDAR ROAD  
OAK PARK, MN 56357  
763-443-6121 | gwen.j.zimmerman@gmail.com

October 6, 2021

To whom it may concern:

My older sister was never institutionalized, and my parents strived to give her the same life experiences they gave ALL their children. Her personal care was different but truly nothing else. She shared a room with me, she fought with her siblings and loved unconditionally as she was raised in a loving and caring family home.

She was baptized, attended church, went to school and at 18 she moved out. She moved two blocks over into Monarch Heights. Just like any college freshman, she moved into her room with new bedding, new decorations and began her new adventure. She attended school, church, sporting events, movies, and went shopping with her friends and roommates. When she ran into family, she would introduce her family to her friends/housemates and staff as all were important to her.

She did all this with grace, compassion, and dignity without any knowledge she was a trail blazer. She was "main-stream" before it was conceptualized and most certainly accepted at large. This all happened in the late 60's through the early 80's.

She has a way of humbling everyone she meets as she makes it look easy to stop sweating the small stuff, to practice gratitude, and show appreciation toward others regardless of their thoughts, words, or deeds. However, we all know today's society could use more of this and it is anything but easy to do. These values and morals were nurtured in our family and I completely credit our parents and extended family. But it's been 38 years since she moved into Monarch Heights.

However, she has not changed in the past 38 years. These values and morals are now nurtured by her new family and I completely credit the staff at Monarch Heights. They have turned a building into a "home" and created an environment where housemates are "family". She wakes up each day to go to work, has chores to do around the house, has errands for personal care and needs, eats her meals with her "family" and shares special events/holidays with her new family. Most of society would think her life has not changed at all ... same house, same job, same ... same ... same. On the other hand, I'm jealous because she has the "American Dream". She has built a life, has the liberty to be herself and she has found happiness at Monarch Heights, with their staff and her housemates.

For being a people person, Jeanie has few words (including any language card), but she has a voice and will let you know what she thinks, feels, wants, and needs. She understands the tasks she is told and with prompts will navigate through her daily routine. We just need to learn her language so that communication is affected and have patience with her "moods" this can only be

accomplished with time and exposure to Jeanie. She is an individual and like everyone else does not fit into a cookie cutter so what works for others might now work for her and vice versa.

The staff at Monarch Heights takes the time to know my sister and perfect communication with her. They have patience with her "moods" while challenging her to be more creativity, to use her learned skills, to express her emotions in a socially acceptable manor using positive rewards and negative consequences. The later has always evolved and adapted with social norms. However, the disruption the pandemic is having on social norms could have been devastating. It would have been the perfect excuse for regression in Jeanie's behaviors and her mental health could have been devastated. However the staff at Monarch Heights faced this pandemic with creativity, ingenuity, and compassion for their residents (not the job).

Jeanie has the cognitive ability of a two-year-old. I don't know many (if any) two-year-old's with their own phone let alone a social media or zoom account. They use their parents or caregivers. The Monarch Heights staff always maintained Jeanie's privacy, but they have taken to social media to give me families/friends updates. Such a normal interaction with family and friends and so out of the ordinary for her and her housemates. With a little coordination the Monarch Heights staff has even accommodated my request for phone calls and video calls for birthdays and holidays. I provide my information and they work the magic. I know this is not easy, but they meet it with enthusiasm to surprise Jeanie and bring joy to her day.

Monarch Heights now has a store so Jeanie and her friends can still go shopping. But it's not a play store. It's a real store. They must earn the "currency" based on guidance the staff created. Jeanie purchases the items, which have been donated through drives the staff has coordinated. The store has set hours but must be staffed when open. This is all extra-duty, creative and even tedious but has brought such joy to Jeanie.

She has crafts to decorate her home for the holidays or a costume party. Parties which need games, prizes, food, costumes, entertainment and so much more. The Staff reaches out through Social Media for the needs to supplement these events and they are creative with coordination to maximize their resources (within the confines of the law of course). This is all takes extra-effort and a level of coordination to bring personal touch to the lives of Jeanie and her housemates.

They have a new outside area which allows them to wave and greet neighbors passing by from afar to provide the community interactions the pandemic had all but eliminated. They have encouraged our family coordinate a mail delivery weekly to Jeanie so she will continue to have "things" to share with her new family at Monarch Heights and provide an additional means to have personal interactions and maintain distant relationships. This is above and beyond the job of an essential worker.

*Gwen Zimmerman*

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Jeanie's personal care assistant is an extension of Jeanie to our family. They have always stepped in for us in her daily life but through the pandemic they have also stepped up. They are now seeking the funding for resources not just meet the growing needs of the residents as they age, or to meet the challenges of the pandemic and that of inflation, but to continue providing a loving and caring home to my sister, Jeanie, and her new family (housemates). Please continue to allow my sister to have her slice of the "American Dream" and this staff to continue being the "angels amongst us".

Respectfully,



Gwen Zimmerman,

Sister & Co-Guardian of Jeanie Anderson

*Gwen Zimmerman*

763-443-6121

[gwen.i.zimmerman@gmail.com](mailto:gwen.i.zimmerman@gmail.com)

Oct. 3, 2021

Dear Stacey,

It was wonderful to see you again and have time to spend with Kay-Kay.

I want to express my gratitude for all you and your wonderful staff do for Lady Bag.

My family has felt for years that this has been the best home for Kay-Kay. I can tell from the way she interacts with you and staff how much you have meant to her well being.

It's my understanding that the Monarchy Heights is in great need of

an increase of funding  
I am here to state to  
whom ever your representa  
tive is that you are  
truly worthy of an  
increase. I'm so happy  
you are there to plead  
the case on behalf of  
your residents. It  
is a wonderful home.

As always, thanks  
for what you do.

With love and respect,

Carol M. Toto

Kay's sister

Dear Stacy & Staff,

I am Kay Schumachers sister, # 7 of 9, Kay being # 9.

I've seen K.K. in several living arrangements in her 63 years. I have to say that Monarch has been the best. Since you, Stacy, have taken over as director, I've seen so much improvement in Kay's overall health and well being.

As per your suggestion, her siblings have been writing to Kay on a regular basis. We are hearing from Staff how she responds to them. In fact, she seems to respond so much more these days, showing emotion, caring and feelings we didn't realize were even there. I believe she's finally being understood for who she is for the first time in her life.

My husband and I were here 2 years ago. We both had a very good feeling about you, Stacy. We also spent time



With K-K and Jackson, who gave her the utmost care and devoted attention for her every need.

I can't get there to visit as often as I'd like but I do hear all good things from Carol (sister) who keeps in close contact on behalf of our family.

Thank you for caring so much. Thank you all for what you do for Kay and all the residents on a daily basis.

You are all very much appreciated by Kay, me, and our entire family.

Thank you,  
Thank you,  
Thank you,

Patty Webster

God Bless you!



Ken Breeding, Ph.D., 4314 Stanford Street, Carlsbad, CA 92008  
(760) 434-2423 voicemail • (760) 434-9482 phone/fax

**EDUCATORS**  
*for*  
**SOCIAL**  
**RESPONSIBILITY**

October 3, 2021

Stacey Karels, Director  
Monarch Heights Group Home  
501 Burdick Avenue  
Ortonville, MN 56278

Dear Ms. Karels,

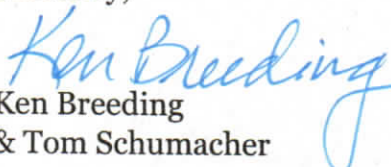
My sister-in-law, Carol Tate, asked me to send you this letter in support of possible expansion of financial support from the state. My other sister-in-law, Kay Schumacher has been a resident there for some time. From the information and feedback we receive, you have truly done wonders in providing the care and support she needs.

There have been vast improvements in her level of comfort and functioning during your leadership. Appropriately caring for someone with such intensive needs takes a great deal of skill and understanding of all staff involved. This can not be achieved consistently without adequate funding.

There is a moral and ethical responsibility to provide the needed care for individuals like Kay. My fervent hope is that there will be improvements in the funding you receive to adequately do your job. It sounds like you have been somewhat successful in hobbling together grants and other unstable sources of funding on your own from a variety of sources. I'm sure this pressure has divided the attention and efforts you can directly provide to those you serve.

I would be glad to speak to anyone in support of your efforts.

Sincerely,

  
Ken Breeding  
& Tom Schumacher

Lawrence Dieringer  
Executive Director

National Advisory Board

Sheldon Berman  
Superintendent of Schools,  
Hudson, Massachusetts

Gene Carter  
Executive Director, Association for Supervision  
and Curriculum Development

James Comer  
Associate Dean and Maurice Falk Professor of  
Child Psychiatry at Yale University School of  
Medicine's Child Study Center

Marian Wright Edelman  
President, Children's Defense Fund

Roger Fisher  
Professor Emeritus, Harvard Law School;  
Director of Harvard Negotiation Project

Daniel Goleman  
Author of *Emotional Intelligence*

Maxine Greene  
Professor Emeritus, Teachers College,  
Columbia University

Eileen Rockefeller Growald  
Founder, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and  
Emotional Learning

Michael Hartoonian  
Professor, College of Education & Human  
Development, University of Minnesota

Mary Harwood-Futrell  
Former President, National Education  
Association; Dean, Graduate School of Education  
and Human Development, George Washington  
University

Fr. Theodore Hesburgh  
President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame

Jonathan Kozol  
Author of *Savage Inequalities* and *Amazing Grace*

Deborah Meier  
Principal, Mission Hill School, Boston Public  
Schools; Author of *The Power of Their Ideas*

Gabriella Morris  
President, The Prudential Foundation

Sonia Nieto  
Professor, School of Education,  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Vito Perrone  
Theodore R. Sizer Senior Lecturer on Education,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Robert Peterkin  
Director, Urban Superintendents Program,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Deborah Prothrow-Stith  
Associate Dean of Faculty Development; Director  
and Professor of the Division of Public Health  
Practice, Harvard School of Public Health

TheodoreSizer  
Chair Emeritus and Founder of Coalition of  
Essential Schools

Charles Slater  
Director, Education Programs,  
University of the Incarnate Word

9. 29-21

Dear Stacey & care workers,  
I am writing to let  
you all know how  
much you are appreciated  
You go over and above  
caring for my sister,  
Kay. She is so happy  
at Monarch Heights  
and loves you all.

You are all such  
beautiful souls!

God Bless you!

Jo Lyon

October 4, 2021

My statement regarding Jeanette's residence at Monarch Heights Group Home:

My daughter, Jeanette, is the oldest of three children. She left home in the same time frame as someone leaving home to start their own life away from parents. She has a home life, a work world, and social events. All is orchestrated by the Monarch Heights staff. These are all pieces in the structure of an adult life.

The fellow residents are her family on a daily basis. Her blood relatives are her connection to her original family. She has our love and support, but she has her life. This is important to me because she needed to learn how to live without me in her everyday life. Monarch Heights provides everything necessary to live a complete and happy life. I am extremely satisfied with her current home at Monarch Heights Group Home. She loves her home.

Of course, there are several different personalities, ages, and handicaps living in one home. Monarch Heights plans events and activities that each resident can take part in according to their level of function. No simple task. The residents are given the responsibility of completing their assigned chores and at the end of the week, they can shop at their in-house store which was established during the pandemic lock-down to ensure their protection from outside contacts, but keeping some kind of normalcy. This also gave the opportunity to teach money value and use. It takes talent, understanding and financial support. I feel Monarch Heights Group Home is focused on providing a smooth and safe running facility to give the residents an opportunity to live their best life.

My Sincere Expressions

Gayle Anderson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gayle Anderson".

(Mother of resident)



Stacey:

Monarch Heights has been Lyle's home for almost 40 years. It's where he can enjoy things: go places and do things, that I could not do for him. He has friends and he has his work, which is very important to him, as handicapped as he is, his work seems to be all that more important to him. He always seems glad to see his family but always wants to be with his Monarch family. He seems to be attached to some



of the Workers. I never  
Worry about Lyle getting the  
best care. He's happy, content  
and that's, says all for me.

Lyle's Mom  
Inez Golden

Dear Stacey,

We received the letter you sent a few days ago to us as parents alerting us of the need at monarch for the per diem increase. We want to make sure our local representative and our legislature knows of the real need for these very special people, one of them being our daughter, Leah, to receive a per diem increase to ensure her continuing care at monarch.

In all honesty, monarch heights does a supreme job in caring for this special population of Vulnerable Adults. (And Stacey, as director there, is the wheel that keeps everything turning in the right direction.) Thus the integrity of her directorship and the great care by the staff she hires and leads, are known and felt by all who live there and work there.

Our daughter, Leah, is autistic and severely mentally handicapped. She deals w/ sensory issues, anxiety, bruxism, rhynd syndrome and scoliosis which have developed a problem w/ one leg being longer than the other and she requires a bracing to keep her feet and leg going in the right direction.

Leah used to have very difficult behaviors and sleep issues. Due to the calm environment and loving care that she gets on a regular

basis, she is doing so well. I wouldn't want to see anything change in her care plan. Monarch Heights does an awesome job of meeting Leah's daily needs. She is happy, healthy & loved at Monarch Heights.

As parents, we ask that a per diem rate increase happen for each client, including our daughter, Leah. How sad that they would need to operate at a loss each year, and be in danger of pulling back in ~~any~~ way. We understand that alternative options have had to be used to keep Monarch Heights from going under. We sincerely ask our representative to fight for these consumers and for others who have high needs cares in other group homes. These special people deserve the best of care.

Sincerely,  
Wendy  
Mark Schutte



**Jonsons**

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**From:** "Jonsons" <jonson@arvig.net>  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 5, 2021 8:41 PM  
**To:** <peggy.jonson@tax.hrblock.com>  
**Subject:** letter

Dear Stacie

Kelley has been at Monarch Heights for over 20 yrs and it has been the best decision we have ever made. We wanted to find a group home that was away from the big cities. At the time, we were living in Maple Grove, MN which was not the area we were interested in for her.

I would like to thank you and your staff for everything you have done and to make our daughter, Kelley's life easier.

Our main concern was that Kelley would have a permanent home if something happened to us. Kelley has 2 brothers but we

wanted Kelley taken care so her brothers would not have to make any decisions concerning her care.

I visited Monarch Heights and was very impressed with the location and staff. There was no openings at the time but our

daughter's name was on the list when there was an opening.

Im so glad that you took the job Stacie, you are so good with our daughter and the other clients. You are always available when I

have a question or a concern. It is amazing that you can get everything done on the budget you are allotted for the clients. I

never worry about Kelley, I know that if she has a seizure you are always at the ER when the ambulance bring her in. ou always

keep us informed about what is going on and how we can help. It is quite a job having staff on hand in case a client gets sick an

has to come home. It is very hard for find the right kind of person who is willing to work at Monarch with the different hours and

pay. There are so many rules and regulations concerning the running of a group home. You go beyond the jobs requirements you

consider these clients family and you are very good at sharing your family with the clients.

Our son, Robert and his wife visited his sister, they s impressed with the facility and the staff. They were so glad that Kelley was there

and so well take care of fro

I know it is quite an expense running Monarch Heights, I know from our own expenses how much they have go up quite a bit. I hope

that this legislation will understand that Monarch Heights is a home for these clients and not an institution.

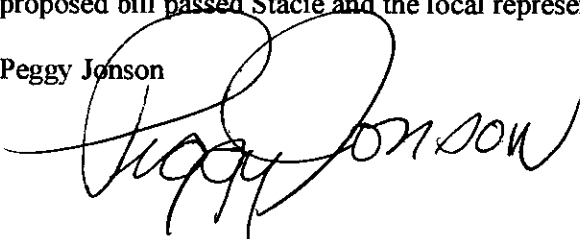
This per-diem is needed

to help Monarch Heights stay out of the red. I do not want to see our daughter or the other clients have to suffer if there is not

enough money. Please remember that this their home and it is the only place they know. Thank you for trying to get this

proposed bill passed Stacie and the local representative.

Peggy Jonson



10/5/2021

October 5, 2021

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my sister, Jeanie Anderson. She is a resident of Monarch Heights, and perhaps is the longest tenured resident of the home! She moved in during its inaugural year and has resided there ever since. This has been her entire adult life.

Monarch Heights has been integral in helping Jeanie become the person she is today. Our gratitude and respect can scarcely be expressed in words. Her daily physical needs are obviously met. Her social-emotional life encompasses her and her co-residents to create a community within a community. She is nurtured and loved by staff and friends.

I remember a time in her first year when we picked her up for holidays she would be emotional and even cry when it was time to bring her back to Monarch. She missed our house as her home and her family. The very next holiday, she stomped her feet and crossed her arms when we went to pick her up, and refused to come with us at first, for fear we were taking her from her new home! As hard as this was for us as a family, it was also so reassuring that she was fully acclimated, and that this is her new home. This experience speaks volumes about the nurturing environment sustained by Monarch Heights. It is now a part of her soul.

Monarch Heights continues to help Jeanie become her best self. I support any and all additional funding sources available to this residence and its staff. Lives are changed here.

Sincerely,

Cory Anderson- brother to Jeannette Anderson  
*Educator*

October 10, 2021

Stacey Karols  
Monarch Height  
501 Burdick Avenue  
Ortonville, MN 56278

Re: Kathryn (K-K) Schumacher

Dear Stacey,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for all that you do for my sister K-K. Since you suggested that we all write more often to her I have noticed significant improvement in her demeanor. She appears to be so much happier than I have noticed in past years. Your attention to her needs has made a great impact on K-K and our family is truly grateful for you. It is amazing how one person can make such an impact by just taking the time to get to know what makes her thrive.

My siblings and I all feel better knowing that you are taking the time with our baby sister to make her place of residence better.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

  
Judy McDarby  
K-K's sister