



Speaking out for people
with intellectual disabilities

www.vor.net



Feedback or question? info@vor.net

Aaron's Story and VOR

A family's choice and advocacy for Aaron

Dear {FIRST_NAME|VOR Member},

I'd like you to meet Aaron. Aaron, was born 8 weeks prematurely in December, 1979. While he survived the birth, the life long effects from subarachnoid and pulmonary hemorrhages are devastating. A large portion of his brain was destroyed with the subarachnoid hemorrhage. Aaron is profoundly neurologically impaired; his functional abilities are in the 2-3 month range.

It was his parents' intention to provide Aaron's care forever. Physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion finally forced them to make what turned out to be the best decision for Aaron. In August 1983, Kevin and Rebecca Underwood requested that Central Wisconsin Center (CWC), a specialized and federally-licensed facility (ICF/MR), become Aaron's new home.

They will never deny it was a difficult decision arrived at only after many prayers and tears. They sought extended care for Aaron at CWC because of their love for him and they wanted to give him the best shot possible at a quality life. It was not simply the only choice – **it was the best choice.**

They visited frequently and initially didn't feel that anyone could do a better job than them. They acknowledge now that they were wrong. Then, as now, Aaron has access to the very best therapies and medical care available – all under one roof.

When Aaron was very young, Kevin and Rebecca worried only for his care. Once Aaron began receiving such good care at CWC, they began to look beyond their family situation and came to realize there were many families facing similar challenges at CWC and beyond. As they began connecting with these other families, they met George and Ruby O'Donnell. They helped the Underwoods realize that their advocacy went beyond Aaron, CWC and even Wisconsin. George mentored them and, as a result, they are better advocates. George introduced Kevin and Rebecca to **VOR, the only national advocacy organization that has supported residential choice for 27 years.** The Underwoods feel strongly that without VOR in the 80's and without VOR now, Aaron would not call CWC and its life sustaining supports home.

Like ICFs/MR around the country, CWC residents are most assuredly not "hidden away" nor forgotten. Families visit often. An active recreation program brings a variety of volunteers and diversified programs into CWC and also takes residents off campus to a variety of integration experiences when health permits for each resident.

"Least restrictive environment" and "most integrated setting" are meaningless terms for Aaron and his peers at CWC. He will always function at an infant level despite the best therapies which he has



been provided with all these years. This is reality. Aaron's right to "live in the world" is not being denied. He is in a "community" that is appropriate for him. The Underwoods are grateful to VOR for being his voice; for being our voice. "It's truly scary to think where we would be today, in 2011, if VOR had not been around in 1983 and since then," says Rebecca.

Please take a moment to become a VOR member (if you are not) or provide a membership to a family member or consider an honor or memory gift!!

If you are a VOR member consider a donation, remember VOR receives no government funding!! Your support allows us to continue to assist families by allowing CHOICE and allowing you to determine what is best for your loved one!!

Sincerely,

Julie Huso

VOR Executive Director

jhuso@vor.net

**Join or Donate
to VOR Today!**

Tel: (605) 399-1624
Toll Free: (877) 399-4867
Fax: (605) 399-1631
Email: info@vor.net

[JOIN VOR. DONATE TO VOR. MAKE A DIFFERENCE](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

[Click here](#) to forward this email to a friend

VOR
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd.
#351
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

