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## **The Stouffer Report: *Helping Some Great Folks in Rural Missouri***

In such a tight budget year, it is good to know we can always depend on those living in rural Missouri to help those in need.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, I had the pleasure of again co-hosting — along with my friend, Rep. Mike McGhee — an annual golf tournament to benefit Missouri's habilitation centers. We were able to raise \$10,000 for the Marshall and Higginsville Habilitation Centers.

The funds from the tournament help pay for birthday parties for the habilitation patients and outings for those utilizing these centers. Parents are in constant fear of these types of facilities closing due to the loss of resources used to assist folks with disabilities. Habilitation center workers also share in the shock and fear of these closures and how they will affect the patients. Some of the patients are able to work and do some small tasks, such as manufacturing and packaging for local companies. Our district has wonderful folks who work tirelessly to help the developmentally disabled throughout our area work and become productive citizens.

As you well know, our state's economy has been down for a little over a year. Our budget dollars are being stretched thin. Habilitation centers on the list of many organizations in our state that have felt the brunt of the economic downfall. Unfortunately, they are undergoing the same difficult cuts that had to be made to many other state-provided services for FY 2011 in order to balance our state's budget.

-  Home
-  Recent Topics
-  Local News
-  Visit the Capitol
-  My Legislation
-  About Me
-  Podcasts

This golf tournament helps pay for some of the things the centers could not afford otherwise. The Marshall facility employs around 700 people. Higginsville employs just under 500 citizens. These are huge employers that are located in the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Senatorial District.



Folks at these centers care for the state's adults who are severely developmentally disabled and cannot function alone in society. They care for adults on campus and also in group homes off-site. Historically, the state's schools and hospitals took care of the developmentally disabled. Due to the funding crunch our state is facing, some of these centers are being privatized. Some are being closed. Keeping the centers in Marshall and Higginsville is crucial to rural Missouri, and I am glad we can do our part to keep these places operating.

This is the fourth year for our golf tournament. I appreciate the hard work the folks who work for these centers do. I also thank everybody who helped to put together this golf tournament — especially everybody at Indian Foothills Golf Course in Marshall — and all the folks who came out to play a few holes for a good cause. I cannot say enough about the folks at the Higginsville and Marshall Habilitation Centers. They do great work and should be commended for all the things they do.

*Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.*

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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