

## 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, West Side Mentally Retarded Children's  
3 Aid/Austin Special (WSMRCA) is a grassroots, nationally  
4 accredited 501(c)(3) non-profit social service agency which  
5 was established in 1953 by a small group of parents who  
6 sought to educate and train their young, mentally retarded  
7 children rather than institutionalize them; in 1953, the  
8 organization established one of the first private special  
9 education schools, the Austin Special School, where over  
10 1,000 mentally retarded children and adolescents were  
11 educated and trained; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1967, the Board of Directors expanded to open  
13 their Work Center Developmental Training Program and in 1982,  
14 when the wave of deinstitutionalization swept Illinois, the  
15 Board of Directors pioneered and led the way to establish one  
16 of the first residential facilities in the Chicagoland  
17 community, the Supported Living Arrangement (SLA), which  
18 serves nine developmentally disabled adults; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1996, the organization established its  
20 Supported Employment Services; the Supported Employment  
21 Program continues to provide employment and specialized  
22 activities in community-based and integrated settings within  
23 the community; in addition, in 1997 the agency successfully  
24 undertook, for the first time, national accreditation with  
25 the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and  
26 Children, having achieved the maximum number of years as a  
27 nationally accredited agency; in each accreditation cycle,  
28 WSMRCA/Austin Special received the highest award possible,  
29 and in the annual Department of Human Services review has had  
30 no deficiencies and has received a 100% rating for the past  
31 five years; the organization has also been honored twice with  
32 a Proclamation from the City of Chicago for providing  
33 exceptional services for developmentally disabled individuals

1 and their families; and

2 WHEREAS, WSMRCA/Austin Special has grown systematically  
3 and progressively meeting its goals so that today they offer  
4 vocational, educational, speech, counseling, adaptive swim  
5 and gym, residential, supported employment, and  
6 transportation services to 140 developmentally disabled  
7 adults ages 21-75 who currently attend the Austin Special  
8 Work Center, Supported Employment, and Residential Programs;  
9 ninety percent are former long-term residents of Illinois  
10 institutions; these programs offer services to people who are  
11 blind, have hearing loss, seizures, behavior disorders,  
12 cerebral palsy and autism, and who may be non-ambulatory;  
13 some are dually diagnosed, both mentally retarded and  
14 mentally ill; and

15 WHEREAS, The Austin Special Work Center, a current  
16 program of the WSMRCA/Austin Special, and an Illinois  
17 Department of Labor Certified Program, provides a wide range  
18 of services to over 100 developmentally disabled clients, the  
19 majority of whom reside with their parents in the community;  
20 the services which are provided focus on improving the  
21 clients' work skills and behavior while completing actual  
22 work which is subcontracted from Chicago area businesses; and

23 WHEREAS, In the efforts to engage in broad-based  
24 professional advocacy activities on behalf of its  
25 developmentally disabled clients, their guardians, families,  
26 and the communities they serve, the WSMRCA/Austin established  
27 the Human Rights Consortium 15 years ago; today, the  
28 Consortium is composed of WSMRCA, CAU (Chicago Alternatives  
29 Unlimited), New Horizons for the Developmentally Disabled,  
30 H.O.M.E., and North Center for Handicapped; and

31 WHEREAS, WSMRCA/Austin Special will host a celebration on  
32 Sunday, March 9, 2003 in honor of its 50th Anniversary and

1 the outstanding contributions this organization has provided  
2 for the community, and also, to honor all the volunteers who  
3 helped make its success possible; therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
5 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
6 we congratulate all those associated with the West Side  
7 Mentally Retarded Children's Aid/Austin Special on their 50th  
8 Anniversary and applaud their efforts to better the lives of  
9 citizens of this State; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
11 presented to the members of the WSMRCA/Austin Special as an  
12 expression of our respect and esteem.