

Hello, my name is Stacy Tattersall and I live in Bristol CT. I am here today on behalf of myself and my son Raymond Tattersall III, a resident of High Meadows in Hamden CT. I am here today to speak to you all not only as an advocate for a cause that I strongly believe in, but also as a parent - a mom. I have 2 wonderful children, and as any parent, like any of you, I want what's best for my kids. Instilling to them values like respect, responsibility, love, honesty, pride and determination to fight for what they believe in. The best way that I know how to do that is by living every one of my days as example to them. I hold great amounts of respect and love for the staff, directors and personnel (or members of my extended family as I like to call them) at High Meadows. I hold a great amount of respect as well for all of you today for the jobs and responsibilities that you all have not just within the legislature but also as parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles. I am here, determined to fight for what I believe in, which is keeping High Meadows open not only for my son but also for other children that currently reside in High Meadows, and for other children and families who may one day have a need for a facility like High Meadows.

Over six years ago, my son had a seizure in my arms. I rushed him to the hospital to find that he had a plum sized brain tumor that was causing the seizures. We were immediately brought to CCMC where he was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Five days later he had a 10 hour operation to remove the tumor. That was the most painful, excruciating, heart-wrenching time of my life. Its still somewhat of a blur to me at how fast Raymond's life was changed forever. The doctors told me that he would never be the same, but like any parent you don't care and don't fully understand what is being said to you. You just want to hold your child in your arms and feel that everything is going to be ok. Then reality sets in. Raymond was in the hospital for 4 months. When he came home, within the first 6 months it was clear to me just what the doctors where trying to tell me. He was left with no left peripheral vision and a condition called Panhypopituitarism. Which means that none of his glands function without medication, he has no idea of real hunger or thirst. His input and output have to be measured. Raymond also has an insatiable urge to eat and obsession with food. To the extreme that he gets physically aggressive when the obsession gets the better of him. He will eat food from a trash can and has left the house in the middle of the night looking for food. He needs a nurse 24/7 to take care of these needs, since I am not able to. I was diagnosed with Cancer 2 years ago and now am left with a lot of severe side effects and damage from the cancer, chemo, radiation and an operation to remove the upper left lobe of my lung, a rib in my back, and some nerves, muscles and tendons in my shoulder. I am no longer physically able to provide Raymond with the care that he needs. Which, when a parent comes to that realization, is just as painful as the thought of loosing your child. I had to put my son in a few different facilities throughout the past 2 years. Raymond even spent 13 months in PA at the Children's Institute to treat his obsession with food and obesity. High Meadows accepted Raymond so that he could be back in CT, closer to me. They are the only facility that is equipped with a 24 nurse in Raymond's cottage, which houses other boys close to Raymond's age. They take care of Raymond medically with the nurse, emotionally and psychologically with the therapists and staff, and educationally with a school on grounds. The staff provides activities and a daily exercise regimen, they

also give Raymond love, support and encouragement when I can't be there. Which is why in the past 8 months that Raymond has been at High Meadows I have come to refer to them as our extended family. They are providing the best care for Raymond since I am not able to do so. Which is exactly what I tell Raymond when he's crying and saying its not fair that this happened to him. We never asked for any of this to happen and like any parent, you never think that things like this could or will happen to you. But it happened to Raymond. It happened to me. I have made a promise to Raymond, my family and myself to fight for him and what is right and best for him. High Meadows and keeping it open is right and best for Raymond.