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## Partlow officially closes in Tuscaloosa

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TUSCALOOSA, AL (WBRC) - After 88 years of serving people with intellectual disabilities, the W.D. Partlow Development Center in Tuscaloosa has officially closed, announced the Alabama Department of Mental Health on Wednesday, Dec. 28.



Since March of this year, approximately 150 residents were relocated from Partlow to other facilities. The last resident was relocated to another home today.



The closing of Partlow is part of Alabama's goal to close all residential institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. The ADMH is encouraging residents to utilize community services instead.

"We have been working for years to encourage the state to close its institutions," Jeff Ridgeway, president of advocacy organization People First of Alabama, said in a release.

"This is a great day for people with intellectual disabilities because it makes the statement loud and clear that we are people with abilities and we want to be integrated into society rather than segregated into an institution," Ridgeway said.

George Neal, one of the directors for the ADMH Division of Developmental Disabilities, has visited more than 50 percent of former Partlow residents in their new homes and says they are happy.

"My peers have been so excited to have their own room, their own TV and their own bathroom. Some cannot communicate with words but I have seen their smiles when I asked them how they liked their new home," Neal said.

An ADMH closure team will attend to the final administrative and physical plant closing procures at Partlow over the next few weeks.

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