

Safe Haven Farms

A community of choice for adults with autism

Established in Southwest Ohio in 2009



Mission

Safe Haven Farms is a non-profit organization offering residential, day and community services for individuals on the autism spectrum. It provides a variety of meaningful living, working, learning and leisure activities in a safe and accepting farm environment, where every individual is respected as a valued and contributing community member.

History

Safe Haven Farms, Inc. was founded by a group of local parents with young adult children with autism in response to the lack of residential and vocational services for persons with autism.

They visited the few existing farmsteads in other parts of the country to gain first-hand experience and advice from groups who have been successful with the farming model. Safe Haven Farms is working to create a model program for adults with autism in rural southwest Ohio.

Service Model

Located on 60 acres in rural Butler County, about 35 miles north of Cincinnati, Safe Haven Farms offers an integrated day vocational and residential setting where each individual is part of a close-knit supportive farm family. Their participation in the therapeutic cycle of farm life fosters self-sufficiency, independence, and a sense of achievement.

Twenty-four adults with autism will live and work on the farm. Residents will be served by staff extensively trained in autism. Safe Haven Farms offers residents significant opportunities to learn new skills and develop friendships with their housemates, staff and neighbors. Safe Haven Farms has partnered with RMS Spectrum Services to provide around-the-clock support for residential and day programs. RMS Spectrum Services will hire and train direct care staff and provide on-site management oversight.

Construction began on October 19, 2009 and are being completed in two phases. In phase one, four homes, serving four residents each, are being built along with buildings for day services. Phase one homes are scheduled for completion in spring 2010, with completion of the day services building planned for fall 2010. During phase two, an additional two homes will be completed for the final eight residents. Phase two is expected to be completed by late 2011. Homes are designed to address special needs of adults with autism, with ample community and private space. They are universally accessible and energy efficient.

Benefits of Safe Haven Farms extend far beyond the 24 residents and 8-10 day program participants. As children with autism today grow to adulthood, the number of adults with autism will triple over the next 20 years. Safe Haven will serve as a center for training future professionals and direct care staff about autism and how to care for adults with autism.

Community Interaction

Farm residents will participate in community events and volunteer opportunities. The community will be invited to attend special events on the farm and to volunteer their farming expertise, interacting with and teaching residents.

Beyond the immediate project goals, the organization plans to educate and train future professionals and direct care staff about autism. Toward that end, local universities have been contacted to promote opportunities for students with an interest in autism seeking a meaningful work/study experience.

To address a critical community need, training programs and seminars will periodically be held at Safe Haven Farms to teach direct care staff, professionals and parents from throughout the area about autism and how to help and care for individuals with autism. These goals constitute ways of giving back and reaching beyond the farm to make lives better for individuals and families living with autism.

Residential Programs

In the home environment, staff will work with residents to develop their skills and independence in the areas of:

- Personal care – grooming, toileting, dressing
- Homemaker skills – cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, home landscaping
- Socialization skills – communication, social rules, cooperative behavior in a group setting

Day Programs

In addition to the on-site residents, an additional eight to ten individuals who live off-site will also be served in the day programs. Resident and day participants can enjoy:

- Craft center – for fun and enjoyment
- Learning center – for lifelong learning
- Life skills center – cooking and independence skill building
- Sensory room – a calming place
- Gardens – raising vegetables, fruits, flowers
- Greenhouses – extended growing season
- Animal care – feeding, exercising, grooming, cleaning of pets and farm animals
- Landscaping – taking care of the property

Therapeutic Riding Program

Several horses will be maintained on site to provide therapeutic riding for individuals with autism of all ages living in the surrounding community. A trainer certified by NARHA will lead riding sessions in the indoor and outdoor arenas. Daily care of the horses will be provided by on-site residents and staff.

Recreation/Leisure Opportunities

- Softball, basketball, volleyball
- Fitness center
- Aquatic center
- Swings
- Walking paths

Community Programs

Residents, to the extent they are willing and able, can also access the surrounding community with staff:

- Social and sports events at nearby Miami U.
- Zoo, Circus, Kings Island, Reds in Cincinnati
- Local dances, movies, roller skating, parks
- Grocery and personal shopping, restaurants
- Church, medical appointments, visits with friends

Staff will ...

- Be extensively trained in autism
- Use structured teaching methods like TEACCH and PECS
- Utilize a Gentle Teaching model of mutual respect and interdependence between staff and residents
- Provide on-site management support for training, coaching, problem solving and program development
- Collaborate closely with parents and the county Board of DD to develop individualized service plans leading to enhanced quality of life for each participant

Residents and Day Participants

- Will come mainly from Southwest Ohio, but all Ohio residents will be considered
- Must be at least 18 years old and out of school
- Must have an autism spectrum diagnosis
- Must have an Ohio Medicaid Individual Options waiver with funding sufficient to pay for staffing needs (*or ability to private pay*)
- Must have sufficient funds to pay living expenses
- Will be selected by the service provider using an evaluation process

Our Needs

Donations are needed to help to fund the therapeutic riding program and the aquatic center. Funds are also needed to build greenhouses to extend the growing season, equip the day programs, provide farm equipment and reduce construction debt.

Volunteers are needed to help with many projects, to assist in the therapeutic programs, and to plan and participate in social events on the farm. We welcome volunteers who can provide leadership for key programs and those who can give only a smaller amount of time.

Please contact us to see how you can help!

Safe Haven Farms, Inc. - a 501(c)(3) corporation

Visit our web site at: www.safehavenfarms.org

For more information, contact
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