



**You might be sports wise, cooking wise or maybe even a wise guy at times. But, are you watershed wise?**

## What is a watershed?

Everyone knows the San Antonio River runs through the heart of our community. But, you may not realize that the land areas and creeks that drain to the river are known as watersheds. Simply put, we all live and work in a watershed.

## How can we help protect our watersheds?

When it rains, all the stuff that's in our yards can wash into the streets and storm drains, then into the creeks that drain directly into the San Antonio River. Pieces of trash, grass clippings and leaves, plant fertilizer, automotive fluids and even pet waste can pollute our watersheds, which can impact water quality and harm our river environment.

Keeping our yards and streets clean keeps our rivers and creeks clean. That's how to be watershed wise.

To find out which watershed you live in and to get even more watershed wise, please visit the San Antonio River Authority's website at [www.sara-tx.org](http://www.sara-tx.org) or call 227-1373.



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Kate Edwards, spokeswoman for Mission Road Ministries, says the nonprofit hopes to soon extend its services for children beyond its walls.

## Nonprofit expanding services for disabled kids and adults

BY TAMARIND PHINISEE

Mission Road Ministries plans to launch an after-school program either this fall or in the spring of next year.

The program, MRM officials say, will allow the nonprofit to advance its goal of serving children with developmental disabilities who do not currently live at its South Side campus at 8706 Mission Road.

In April, the local nonprofit announced plans to launch a summer program for 10 kids with developmental disabilities not living at MRM.

Kate Edwards, development and public relations associate for MRM, says the after-school program will be modeled after the new SOAR, Summer Outreach and Recreation program and needs identified in the community during the summer months.

"This has just been a dream of ours for a while, to expand our own children's program to serve children from the community," Edwards says, adding that the planned after-school program will be the first of its kind solely for children with developmental disabilities who live at home with their families on the city's South Side.

Edwards says MRM would look to provide these children with educational and recreational activities from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The activities will be held at the recently unveiled 12,200-square-foot multipurpose center on the MRM campus called the Oppenheimer Center — which has seven classrooms, an indoor basketball court, a kitchen and outdoor seating and staff offices.

The summer program, which is expected to serve about 10 kids, will be used as a guide for the development of the after-school program.

"The big one is the summer program. We're really putting much of our focus on that right now, working to fill up those 10 spots and see how this summer goes," Edwards explains. "... The plan is to assess how the summer program goes and work to implement the after-school portion in the near future."

The cost for participants in the summer program — which will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, from June 14 to Aug. 13 — is \$50 a day. But families may be eligible to qualify for funding through the Bexar MRA (Mental

Retardation Authority).

Details regarding the cost for the after-school program and the number of children to be served will come at a later date.

### More homes

In related news, MRM also plans to open two new group homes for its adult patients. MRM declines to reveal the purchase price of the two properties. Edwards says one of the homes is located on the city's Northeast Side near Nacogdoches and O'Connor roads, and the other in the Colonies North subdivision off of Interstate Highway 10 and Wurzbach Road.

The home near Nacogdoches and O'Connor, she says, will be operated as an all-male home. The occupancy make-up of the second home will be determined by need, Edwards adds. Each home will accommodate four adults and will be staffed around the clock.

"Growth in all our departments is a direct result of demand," she says.

MRM CEO Toby Summers says demand for the nonprofit's group-home living services has increased due to changes in federal funding mandates. As people with disabilities come up on the waiting list, they receive funding for services that includes funding for life in group homes.

"The (Texas) Legislature has been reducing the waiting list by 10 percent the last several sessions and it is incumbent on providers to respond to the demand the 10 percent reductions create," Summers says.

Including the two new locations, MRM operates 12 group homes throughout the city.

MRM's mission is to provide services and vocational programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities. In addition to the 48 children living currently at its South Side campus, MRM also serves almost 600 adults with developmental disabilities on a daily basis.

MRM's current annual operating budget is \$13.7 million. Some 82 percent of its funding comes from the government, with the balance coming from private donations.

The nonprofit's anticipated budget for the new fiscal year beginning July 1 is \$15 million.