

COMMUNITY HAVEN OPENS SCHOOL



The Selby School Director Carolyn Johnson and program coordinator Carolyn Marchbank are eager to welcome students to the school, which features classrooms, a computer lab and a new physical-education area.

EAST COUNTY — Carolyn Marchbank, a longtime employee of Community Haven for Adults and Children with Disabilities, spent exactly 30 days in retirement. On day 31, however, she received an offer she couldn't refuse: to help with Community Haven's Transitions Services program and to help launch The Selby School, a new private McKay Scholarship school for special-needs children in kindergarten and grades nine through 12 on Community Haven's 32-acre campus.

The Transition Services program provides educational and vocational programming for teenagers with disabilities. "I figured I could be at home working on my projects or helping teenagers," Marchbank said. "I chose the teens; I have plenty of time in my life to work on projects."

Date: August 14, 2013

by: Pam Eubanks | Managing Editor

When Manatee and Sarasota County public schools start Aug. 19, Marchbank and the school's director, Carolyn Johnson, will be ready to greet The Selby School's first group of students. "We're really excited about being able to have hands-on experience working with the kids," Johnson said. "The kids are going to be able to learn at their own pace, and, yet, there's this great team atmosphere. We have a special opportunity to serve our (community)." The Selby School is located in a recently renovated 4,000-square-foot building that formerly housed CHAC's Selby Preschool program, which moved two years ago to Community Haven's Administration and Learning Center.

Community Haven received several grants to fund renovations to The Selby School building, including the addition of a computer lab that CHAC's other programs will use, and a volunteer-run home décor retail center, at which students will learn employment skills. High school students, whose ages can range from 14 to 22, will be taught according to Sunshine State Standards. "We're going to more vocational based with the academics," said Marchbank. "It's all tied together."

The Selby School's kindergarten class, which will be integrated into CHAC's Selby Preschool program, will be Montessori-style learning and will use the Creative Curriculum program. For 14 years, Community Haven has offered education services to ninth- through 12th-grade students at public and private schools through its Transition Services program. Community Haven will continue offering those services once its school opens this month. "Parents liked what we were doing," Marchbank said of why CHAC decided to open The Selby School. "They liked the idea of a school, so we applied for private-school status and received it in the spring. We received McKay Scholarship status in (late) July."

Tuition ranges from \$11,000 to \$15,000 annually, and the school generally will follow the Manatee County School District's calendar. No transportation to the school will be provided, but CHAC will provide morning- and after-school care to students who need it. Community Haven eventually hopes to expand The Selby School to include all grade levels, but the need for services for high school-aged students currently is the largest need, Marchbank said.

For more information, visit Communityhaven.org.