



# The Daily

Morning Edition

## [Philanthropy] Community Haven Provides Means to Success

JACOB OGLES, JACOB.OGLES@SRQMEDIAGROUP.COM

**Editor's Note:** *This is the second part in a series on socially-conscious efforts being organized in Southwest Florida. Read further installments all this week.*

Developmental disabilities make it difficult to be successful in the job market, but the Community Haven for Adults and Children with Disabilities. Patrons have disabilities including Down's Syndrome and autism, but with assistance can still become productive members of society. On a 32-acre campus with multiple group homes and work programs, the effort serves more than 500 people.

Brad Jones, director of adult services, said the Community Haven right now is in the process of opening a new group home, which will allow 32 disabled patrons to live on campus full time. Divided into homes of eight residents each, residents are given job coaches to help with interview skills and given shadow jobs to actually work on important tasks within the wider communities. It provides an important transition for many who have grown up dependent on parents and other caregivers to become independent adults.

The organization earns some grants from the state, but relies heavily on donations of money and time, Jones said.

"We work with a staff on instructors in the day program, teachers in our preschool, day managers and people who work in our houses," Jones said. "Once you get into it, you get hooked."

The group this holiday season has worked with a number of community groups to ensure a happy Christmas is had by the children and adults served. The Bradenton Firefighters Association just hosted a barbeque and toy giveaway complete with a visit from Santa Claus.

Providing a direction and moments of joy for clients drives the staff at Community Haven to continue their pursuits. "We're lucky enough to have good people who help us," said Jones.