



The Daily

Morning Edition



[Nonprofit] **Marla Doss, Community Haven**

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Community Haven has been assisting children with disabilities for decades and now, was just recognized by The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce for passing a milestone of 60 years of service. We spoke with Marla Doss, president and CEO, about the Haven's history and its future.

What sets apart nonprofits like Community Haven from other businesses?

Nonprofits are in the human being business. Haven helps the little ones. The reason we have been around so long and done such great things is because we started out grassroots. Parents with disabled children rallied and our organization was founded. People were pretty innovative in the '50s. They didn't let life get them down. They banded together with a mutual mission of improving the lives of children with cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome and other ailments.

What has changed since that time?

Now so many students are substance exposed which impacts social and behavioral conditions.

What is your biggest challenge for the future?

My biggest concern, yet it is also an opportunity, is figuring out what the future holds for more housing on our campus. We are seeing right now the first generation of clients with us who are outliving their parents, and when that happens they still need services. We had one group home where we lost six of eight parents. When our clients are forced to transition into a nursing home or facilities that offer more intense services, we have found they are usually deceased in six months. We need to provide housing and vocational space for these people. It's now a whole different ball game.