

Washington County: Opens new residential treatment center for teens

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West Bend, WI - In an effort to bring comprehensive, evidenced-based and trauma-informed treatment services to Washington County youth, the County has partnered with Norris Inc., to open River Bend Place, formerly known as the Washington County Youth Treatment Center.

“One of the main responsibilities of county government is to provide Access to Basic Needs and perhaps nothing is more important than getting this done for our youth,” said County Executive Josh Schoemann, “That’s why the County invested more in this programming in 2019 than ever before. This updated facility and trauma-focused programming with Norris is just one of the ways that we are advancing this topic as innovative leaders and I am personally grateful to offer our youth positive opportunities to change their future while still holding them accountable for how their actions affected our community.”

River Bend Place is a combination program that provides both short-term residential treatment services and a short-term shelter care program to both male and female youth, aged 12 to 17, with mental health or behavioral needs who are involved in the Child Welfare or Youth Justice Systems.

Washington County has provided shelter services to youth since 1987, and added residential treatment services at the current site when it was built in 1996 due to the increased number of youth being placed outside the county for treatment services. Norris was chosen as the new contract provider after a competitive bid

process that focused on reducing the amount of time that youth are placed outside the home for treatment services, which has increased 60% since 2015.

“Washington County is excited to partner with Norris to bring their services to youth in our community”, said Julie Driscoll, Director of Washington County Health and Human Services. “Norris’s track record of positive outcomes for youth and focus on data to analyze program effectiveness will help us continue to determine the best use of resources to ensure youth are getting the right treatment.”

Norris has been serving youth since 1917 at their main campus in Mukwonago, focusing on their mission of strengthening families through a circle of care, and providing a continuum of education, support, and treatment services. Youth at Norris receive services related to any combination of needs for which outpatient services may not be intensive enough. Needs may include mental health, emotional behavioral disorders, sexualized behaviors and sexual abuse, AODA, and trauma, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Therapeutic services offered by Norris include Trauma Informed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) at the individual, family, and group levels. All Treatment and Program Plans are personalized to meet the youth’s needs based on an initial assessment. “The goal is to teach youth self-regulation strategies, independent living skills, and positive problem solving,” said Denise Pilz, Executive Director of Norris.

The goal of programming at River Bend Place is to promote healing through a trauma-informed approach, improving family stability by providing services that are strength-based, solution focused, family-friendly, culturally sensitive with the goal of reintegration back into the community and to lessen the risk for further instability and recidivism.