



PA & MEGAN'S PLACE

An Independent Living Community for Adults with Special Needs @ HIGH PLAINS

Program Description

Independence achieved!

Most youth look forward with great anticipation to the day they achieve independence from family which allows them to search out and pursue their personal goals. In our society it is viewed as a "right of passage" which traditionally begins following graduation from high school. However, for a significant population of individuals, this "right" eludes them for circumstances which they have had little, or no, control.

There exists nationwide a large population of adults with special needs, age 18 and older, who find themselves in a potentially vulnerable position. They live day to day in a mildly developmentally delayed state and struggle with how to best care for themselves. Function is present to maintain their daily hygiene routines, food service preferences, household "chores", conversation levels, work ethic, physical fitness and basic understandings of "right and wrong". They are relatively capable of sustaining themselves with little intervention from outside sources. However, when it pertains to their personal safety, transportation and prudent financial decisions, they are obviously at risk. Ironically, their marginal IQ level has progressed enough to prevent them from being accepted into "institutions", and their "preexisting condition" is not "extreme" enough to meet qualifications for admission. Conversely, if these individuals make arrangements to live by themselves in our communities at large, they become susceptible to all forms of potential abuse... including physical, financial, social and psychological. Unfortunately, the darker side of our society will simply befriend them and take unmerciful advantage of their situation. Therefore, most of these developmentally delayed individuals revert to living at home with their parent(s) until something, normally deteriorating health or death of a parent or care giver, constitutes a change in their daily long-term living arrangements.

Housing resources currently exist in our communities to provide residence for certain levels of these individual, most commonly known as group homes, housing 6-8 individuals. Typically these residents are more challenged than the tenant description mentioned in the above introduction. Group "homes" are typically more regulated and tend to reflect more of an "institutional" environment. Although these solutions are admirable and a much needed service area, there still remains a segment of individuals who are capable of developing their potential in a less structured environment.

So what is the solution and how do we address it?

History:

High Plains Children's Home and Family Services, Inc., was established in Amarillo, Texas, in 1967, as a Christian, Texas licensed, Basic Residential Childcare Facility, and has cared for thousands of boys and girls, ages 2-17 years. Through the years, High Plains has served as home to numerous youth residents in care that meet the above criteria in regards to "life after High Plains", once achieving 18 years of age. The Home's physical plant originally consisted of a 40-acre Campus located just south of Amarillo, containing residential "Cottages" to provide a Home for orphaned, abused, neglected and homeless children. The Home has been blessed in recent years to acquire additional property adjacent to the existing Campus.

Having now expanded the Campus to include 100 acres and a ¼ mile frontage on Western Street, the opportunity presented itself to utilize vacant land for additional ministry related services, without the need for burdensome regulation and licensing. After carefully researching the prospects of possible need areas located within a 200 mile radius of Amarillo, it was determined that an Independent Living Community for adults with special needs was not only attractive in terms of ministry to families, but a tremendous need in our communities.

It was determined that **High Plains** could serve in a Landlord capacity by simply providing a location for individual homes, approximately 1,100 sq. ft. in size, to be constructed with privately donated funds. Capacity would accommodate one or two individuals, living under one roof, as housemates enjoying their own private bed and bath rooms. Resident's would have companionship with others, safety from predators, freedom to come and go within reason, maintain healthy lifestyles, continue their spiritual development and join the workforce as their talents and abilities permit.

In late 2006, funding was secured to construct the first housing unit and partial funding for a community "clubhouse". Our Master Plan includes a total of 20 homes. This community will also include amenities, in addition to the "clubhouse", such as a walking path and well illuminated commons area. Each home contains its own kitchen and dining room with beautiful "state of the art" construction. Residents will have access to the Therapeutic Equestrian program located at **High Plains** and have numerous recreational opportunities available to them when they are not at work. **High Plains** simply serves as Landlord and the resident as tenant, simply paying an affordable monthly rental fee for housing.

"Pa & Megan's Place" @ **High Plains** is designed to serve a specific clientele of our population, that being an Independent Living Community for Adults with special needs, 18 years of age and older. **High Plains Children's Home & Family Services, Inc.** simply serves in the capacity of a Landlord. The emphasis is on resident independence. In order to qualify to live at "Pa & Megan's Place" @ **High Plains**, residents must be able to care for their personal hygiene, such as bathing; feed themselves unassisted and administer their own medications, if any, in an uncontrolled environment. Residents will purchase their food and household items and be responsible for household duties such as mopping and vacuuming, removing the trash, dusting, cleaning the restrooms and maintaining the yard area surrounding their quarters free of debris.

High Plains does not wish to duplicate services which exist in the community and therefore collaborates with **Texas Panhandle Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TPMHMR)**. An applicant is encouraged to apply for their services. TPMHMR is well equipped to initiate the application process including a Determination of Eligibility. This consists of an *intellectual functioning assessment*, (IQ score of **69 or below**), and *adaptive behavior skills assessment*. Once an acceptable level of determination is approved, the individual will be considered as a possible resident. TPMHMR will provide clients with assistance via a personal caseworker who will help direct clients with various needs including personal finance, healthcare recommendations, transportation issues and employment advice. In it's capacity as a Christian ministry and Landlord, **High Plains** will serve as a "safety net" should resident lodging issues arise.

Most residents will qualify for Supplemental Security Income, (SSI). A portion of these funds will be utilized to assist with their lodging costs. Resident's could potentially have employment income that can also be used to help subsidize their standard of living. Family members, friends and church congregations will also be welcome to participate in the advancement of the community regarding physical construction projects and supplementary income for the residents. i.e. new homes, food, clothing, recreation, insurance and transportation. Residents are required and encouraged to attend church services and activities associated with the Church of Christ.

The Homes

Our homes are constructed brand new beginning in 2008. The cost of each appliance furnished unit is \$120,000. The homes are designed with a visual style and content consistent with local premier contractor standards within the community. There are several floor plans to choose from, but most homes are approximately 1,100 sq. ft. They include individual bedrooms, full bathrooms, a spacious living and dining area, generous windows, a fully furnished kitchen including dishwasher, refrigerator, microwave, oven and utility room furnished with washer and dryer.

Ancillary services

Cable is available in each home. (Additional monthly cost based on package.)

TV/Internet/Phone

(All residents are required to have an Internet Filter on any personal computer.)

Telephone jacks are provided in each home. (Additional monthly cost)

Satellite TV can be provided if desired. (Additional cost).

Transportation to and from work, church, doctor's and shopping.

Clubhouse - "Blanton Place for Encouragement" (completion scheduled for fall of 2012)

Equestrian program

Landscaped park and commons area (Work in progress)

RESIDENT'S NEED TO PROVIDE...

Clothing and daily living supplies, twin-size bed, mattress, mattress cover/protector, fitted/top sheets, pillows/pillow cases, bedside table, chest of drawer, clothes hangers, vacuum cleaner, brooms/mops, mop bucket, trash cans, TV's, porch & patio furniture, garden hose, dining table/chairs, sofa, lounge chairs, coffee and end tables, lamps, decorator items such as greenery, pots, framed pictures, mirrors, bath towels, rags, bath mat, toilet lid cover, shower curtain, kitchen pots, pans and serving bowls, flat-ware with divider tray, cooking bowls and various cooking utensils, paper towel holder, towels, dish rags, plates, glasses and laundry hamper.

Garages are limited considering the majority of residents are not eligible to drive. Storage closet space is limited, therefore "excess" is discouraged.

COST RESPONSIBILITY

Residents will execute a monthly rental agreement. Monthly rent is **\$350** per occupant and includes:

Water, Sewer and Garbage

Electricity/Gas

Routine Home and Yard Maintenance

Residents will be responsible for funding their own food, household supplies, clothing, renter's insurance, spending money and additional transportation.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE:

Step 1: Completion and Submission of Enclosed application, release of information form and requested documents to "Pa & Megan's" @ High Plains, including a pre-admission personal tour of HPCH facilities with family members and/or managing conservator;

Step 2: Upon satisfactory review, personal interview, and approval of application by HPCH admission staff and professional advisors, an appointment will be scheduled with TPMHMR for a Determination of Eligibility and Assessment, followed by caseworker assignment, concluded by visitation with a financial coach.

Step 3: Upon acceptance by HPCH staff and a positive recommendation by TPMHMR, the applicant and family will be contacted to begin the transitional move to the community.

PROBATIONARY REVIEW:

Each resident admission will need to successfully experience a one-year probationary period before official residential acceptance is granted. This time-frame will allow the resident, resident's family or guardian, area agencies, and supervisory staff of High Plains and its advisors to have sufficient time to evaluate the resident's transition to Independent Living. Key factors will include daily behavior, social skills, work ethic and ability to work within the program guidelines. A resident may be dismissed from the program at any time during this probationary period if it is determined the placement is not in the best interest and safety of the resident or the organization.

TERMINATION OF RESIDENT PRIVILEGE

Our plan is that residents will take advantage of the wonderful opportunity to live and grow in their own Independent environment while living on the grounds of High Plains. Every effort will be made to ensure that a welcoming, professional and congenial spirit envelopes the community. However, in order for the resident to be truly successful, one must obey the rules and code by which the community is governed. Should the occasion arise where a tenant is unable, or refuses to correct inappropriate behavior towards themselves, housemates, pets, facility, community residents, HPCH staff, TPMHMR staff or HPCH visitors, an encouraging plan will be outlined for corrective action, or an organized dismissal. If behavior results in immediate danger to the tenant, facility or others, law enforcement or emergency officials may be summoned for assistance and the possibility exists for discharge and removal from the premises. Notification to the resident/family and/or managing conservator will accompany any consideration before discharge.

BACKGROUND CHECK

Due to the geographic proximity of a licensed residential child care facility, all prospective residents will be required to have a criminal background clearance. HPCH administrative personnel will perform this background check every 2 years. The paperwork will be completed by perspective residents and notarized by HPCH staff when the Applicant arrives for a tour of the community. Applicants that have lived outside of Texas in the last 5 years will need to submit to a finger print check after the initial background check is cleared.