

newsrelease

RELEASED BY:

Welcome House, Inc.
20575 Center Ridge Rd.
Suite 200
Rocky River, OH 44116
440-356-2330
440-356-9421 Fax

CONTACT:

Tony Thomas, LISW
Executive Director

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Michael T. George Center to serve as a model facility for services to those aging with MRDD

ROCKY RIVER, OH—It is no secret that the fastest growing segment of American society is the Boomer generation, but one part of this population needs a specific kind of attention: individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. There is a shortage of homes where they can get the kind of support and service they need.

There are more than 2,000 adults in Cuyahoga County with MRDD who are approaching the age of 50. As a result of the tremendous advances made in healthcare, the life expectancy of these individuals continues to increase, while they typically experience premature aging and challenging health-related issues. This problem is compounded by the fact their parents have passed away or are no longer able to care for them.

Welcome House is responding to that need by expanding the scope of its services to the MRDD community. Its new campus, the Michael T. George Center for Community Living in North Olmsted, is centered around a new, 7,000-square-foot, single-level facility. It has services and floor plans designed to meet the unique needs of the aging MRDD population, according to says Jeff Stenzel of designer Fogle/Stenzel Architects. In addition, the project includes renovating two existing homes on the four-acre site, as well as a garden and a recreational area. General contractor for the project is Whitehouse Construction

The total project costs are estimated at \$2.5 million. Completion of the new facility will be done in early 2008, with renovations of the two existing homes to begin in mid-2008. When completed, the new facility will offer organizations a blueprint for meeting the needs of the aging MRDD population.

“These new homes will allow us to expand our support for this important segment of our community,” says Tony Thomas, executive director of Welcome House. “It’s a two-way street,” he adds. “We realize that these people have mental and physical challenges to cope with. But deep down, they exude genuine love and respect, and these facilities can build on that by offering them a certain level of independence.” Welcome House was founded in 1981 and is partially funded by the West Haven Foundation, which was established in 1972. Primary operating funds come from other government and private sources. Welcome House has a staff of 200 dedicated caregivers that provide services for more than 120 individuals with MRDD living in group homes or supported living sites in Cuyahoga and Lorain counties and to many others who live in family homes. Welcome House is located at 20575 Center Ridge Rd., Suite 200, in Rocky River, OH. Visit Welcome House on the web at www.welcomehouseinc.org

