

give our number to a friend in need of our help," said Linda Crockett Jackson of BRIDGES of Williamson County. "We want everyone to know our phone number because the most powerful thing anyone can provide is a way for someone to help themselves. -That's what BRIDGES is all about."

BRIDGES also welcomes monetary donations and accepts donations of cellular phones.

This November, BRIDGES of Williamson County celebrated the opening of their in-house clinic. The clinic is staffed with a Nurse Practitioner who can assist with acute care needs of BRIDGES residents.

For more information about BRIDGES, call 615-591-7752. The BRIDGES crisis hotline is available 24-hours a day and can be accessed by calling: 615-599-5777.

Center for Living and Learning

The Center for Living and Learning is a group home for persons with severe mental illness. The home was opened

20 years ago by owner and director Fran Clippard and her family in honor of her brother. Currently, the Center for Living and Learning houses eight people in the residence located on a 30-acre farm on Old Hillboro Road in Franklin. Plans are underway to construct a second home on the farm that could house an additional eight people.

Residents of the Center for Living and Learning benefit from a structured environment that is tailored specifically to their needs. Residents have the opportunity to participate in art and music therapy as well as many other activities. Animal therapy is also a part of the success of the Center for Living and Learning as several "retired" horses live on the farm as well as other animals. As part of the center's holistic approach to wellness, residents go on several outings each week and additionally go on week-long vacations to the mountains in the winter and Florida in the summer.

"Our residents really get a great quality of life," said Marcy Gemmill, a Registered

Nurse and manager at the residence. "They learn to live together, which improves their social skills and helps them become a part of the community. The one-on-one attention that our residents receive within a structured environment and the continuity of care, both mental and physical, are what make us a success. Our residents live here as long as they need to; we do not set deadlines for their goals."

An integral part of the Center for Living and Learning is the vocational rehabilitation facility operated on the farm. Residents of the center, as well as anyone with a disability of any kind, are welcome to participate in vocational rehabilitation, which is funded by state grants and the United Way of Williamson County.

"Our goal is to help everyone who comes here to achieve the highest level of function that is possible for them," said Gemmill. "We help them learn valuable skills and can even help place them in jobs. Getting someone a job where they can earn money can make a world of difference in their self-esteem."

The vocational rehabilitation program focuses on organic farming methods. Seeds, many of which are heirloom seeds contributed by local growers, are started in the farm's two greenhouses before planting. Produce from the farm has even won ribbons at the Williamson County Fair. The farm grows flowers and food. Anyone can participate in the farm's co-op by subscribing to get produce from the farm every week or month. The farm also operates a "come pick your own" venue where visitors can help in harvesting their own produce. The produce is sold by weight.

The Center for Living and Learning also operates an art consignment store located behind the Backyard Café in Leiper's Fork. Individual artists have their works on display there, many of which are participants in the Center for Living and Learning's art therapy program.

"We really invite anyone to come out and tour our farm and learn about what we do here," said Gemmill. "The goals that we help people achieve are truly miraculous.

We are dedicated to opening the awareness of what can be done for people."

For information on application into the Center for Living and Learning's vocational rehabilitation program or to tour the facility, call: 615-794-1844. To subscribe to the center's organic farming co-op or to inquire about growing seasons, call: 615-794-1844. To contribute to the 403-B non-profit foundation benefiting the Center for Living and Learning, contact Fran Clippard at: 615-269-9932.

Williamson County 4-H Club

With 2,500 members, Williamson County's 4-H Club is one of the largest in the state. The club also has one of the largest animal projects with beef, sheep and horses.

4-H is dedicated to positive youth development. The organization's goals are to help youth become good citizens and future leaders who care about their community. 4-H also helps youth develop communication and technical skills through various educational

opportunities

In late January, Williamson County's 4-H Club is one of the largest in the state. The club also has one of the largest animal projects with beef, sheep and horses.

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