



All clients served by Mission Road Developmental Center (MRDC) have an intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) diagnosis, which is defined by having an IQ of 70 or below. Intellectual disability is a term used when there are limits to a person’s ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life. Intellectual disability can be caused by a problem that starts any time before a child turns 18 years old—even before birth. It can be caused by injury, disease, or a problem in the brain. Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person’s lifetime. Developmental disabilities begin anytime during the developmental period. Most begin before birth.

IDD includes Down syndrome, Fragile X, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and hundreds of other unique diagnoses. More than 90% of the people MRDC serves have secondary diagnoses and comorbidities that include diagnoses like severe vision impairments, chronic health conditions, autism, seizure disorders, and many others. Additionally, over 60% of the people we serve are non-verbal. The population of people that MRDC cares for require specialized, long-term aid—for the whole of their lifetime. The need that MRDC fills for the San Antonio IDD community is to provide both residential and non-residential programs with reliable, affordable, and high-quality care for people who have been diagnosed with IDD and families caring for loved ones with IDD.

Clifford and Adele Bledsoe opened Mission Road Foundation and School (MRFS) in 1947 with three staff members to serve the needs of their son and two other children. In 1954, the state of Texas chartered MRFS as a non-profit rehabilitation center for children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Foundation grew to include classrooms, a chapel, and a gymnasium. By 1970, enrollment had reached 110 children. In 1976, First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio began sponsorship of MRFS and changed the organization’s name to Mission Road Developmental Center.

Since that time, MRDC has grown to include residential and non-residential care for children and adults. Non-residential care includes day habilitation activities, vocational training, and education for clients whose self-help capabilities preclude them from attending other programs. Today, MRDC owns and operates, debt-free, 20 community homes, and six residential cottages on our 22-acre main campus in south San Antonio. Campus features a programming and recreation center, an open-air covered pavilion and a sports court, a medical clinic, laundry facility, commercial kitchen, and an ADA-adaptive and special needs swimming pool.

In 2001, Unicorn Centers, Inc. merged with the Mission Road Ministries family of agencies. Founded in 1984, Unicorn Centers facilitate jobs and life-skills for people with IDD. When possible, Unicorn Centers places individuals into community employment through partnerships with businesses with strong ties to San Antonio. In 2018, Unicorn Centers officially incorporated into Mission Road Developmental Center allowing for better stewardship of funds and streamlined efficiency across the organization. With the integration of Unicorn Centers, MRDC now serves over 800+ unduplicated children and adults daily. MRDC is one of four non-profit agencies under the board governance of Mission Road Ministries—itsself a non-profit, 501(c)(3) agency.

Unicorn Centers, located on a separate campus in central San Antonio, has three distinct programs specifically designed for adults with IDD. 1) Day Activities Program: These busy adults work on life skills like personal hygiene, cleaning an apartment, riding the bus, and financial skills that help them to live as independently as possible. 2) Life & Job Skills Training: We contract with area businesses so our clients can train and work in our workshop and get paid for



their efforts. Clients learn lessons of employment like specific job tasks, appropriate on-the-job behavior, and anticipating different work scenarios as they progress toward the ultimate goal of working in the community. 3) Community Employment & Job Coaching: Clients are assigned a Job Coach who helps them find, get, and keep a job with a community employer. Included among our 37 current employer partners are H-E-B, DPT Labs, Relief Enterprises, and many more.

MRDC is one of only two nonprofit long-term care facilities in Texas where 100% of children we take in have an IDD-diagnosis AND have been removed from their home due to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment. These kids come to us from very traumatic situations, have special needs, and are sorely underserved. As a result, our resident children tend to be very difficult and are the State's absolute hardest to place. MRDC is a placement of last resort. Failed placement at MRDC means a child will be sent to the State school, so we try very hard to keep kids as long as we can to help them stabilize and gain skills that they'll benefit from going forward. These children have been removed from their family by Child Protective Services and are wards of the State, and as such, have no assets. Most of these particular children require the administration of multiple prescription medications twice daily. Sadly, many children arrive at MRDC with little more than the clothes they are wearing and do not have the self-help skills to perform daily hygiene routines, use the restroom, or calm themselves. For these reasons, most have been through many failed foster care placements. Our patient and devoted direct care staff help these children learn to trust again, along with teaching them daily living skills that help to make a successful future foster home placement or adoption a reality.

The majority of our clients are people with a cognitive disability who require self-help care and cannot ever live entirely independently. We serve the most severely disabled people in the San Antonio community. MRDC serves both children and adults with IDD. Our children's program includes long-term residential care with the capacity for up to 40 children ages 3-19. We get them enrolled in and starting school within three days. They are taken to purchase new clothing, shoes, a back pack, and more. It is very important that our children are provided with exceptional care, hygienic routines, and medical oversight immediately and for as long as they are with us. Not only is this the right thing to do, but it is one of the ways we show our respect and love for the children in our care. We also hold a 9-week summer camp, holiday break, and after school program for our resident children and up to 25 local children with IDD who live at home with their family. This is our S.O.A.R. & MORE program.

Our adult day activities program held at main campus serves 170+ adults each weekday, which promotes their independence, productivity, and inclusion in the community while also enabling their family or caregiver to enjoy respite, attend school, go to work, etc. Clients in this program have disabilities ranging from severe, in which the client is wheelchair bound and a staff member must provide hand-over-hand help for eating, assist with all personal hygiene needs, and other activities, to the most highly functioning adults who are ready for daily exercise, field trips, and community service, but who cannot safely be alone during the day nor can they work full-time in the community for one reason or another. These clients may live in a long-term MRDC residential community home, come only for day activities and live at home with family, live with another community provider, or in an adult Host Home (formerly adult Foster Care). We also have an adult residential program, which is licensed through the State. We own and operate our 20 community homes throughout the San Antonio area and serve our adult clients with 24/7/365 awake staff.