



# Magnolia

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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Leading the way for people with  
developmental disabilities

## *Campus Tour Guide*



In 1935, the wife of a local pediatrician gave birth to a child with a developmental disability. Wishing to provide for his son, Dr. Charles Bloom soon discovered that no suitable options for educational opportunities existed. Forming a nonprofit corporation, without capital stock, the initial Board of Governors created the Magnolia School - existing only on private donations and tuition.

In the 1970s, public education reform led to the inclusion of special education programming. Over time, as Magnolia students aged, the organization refined its mission to meet the community need for housing, vocational, recreational, wellness,

and other needs for adults with developmental disabilities in the South Louisiana region. In 2014, the Magnolia School was renamed Magnolia Community Services to reflect our multiple services to the community at large. Today, Magnolia Community Services is a multi-service non-profit providing support for adults with developmental disabilities as they pursue their best life. Clients receive services through a variety of government funded programs, and Magnolia relies on community support to ensure our programs are the highest quality possible.

Whitehall was the ancestral home of the de la Barre family and served as the main house of their plantation. Monsieur de la Barre obtained the property in one of Jefferson Parish's first land sales; at the time, the grounds covered 8,000 acres from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain. Whitehall was used by Union General Morgan during the Civil War. Years later, Whitehall functioned as a riverfront gambling casino followed by the Jesuit retreat house before being repurposed by Dr. Bloom. Whitehall has served several purposes for Magnolia over the years, including classroom space, dormitories, office space, and training space. Today, Whitehall is operated as a special event and wedding venue to generate additional income for Magnolia.







The Nims Center was generously funded by local philanthropist, Mrs. Jeri Nims. It is the central hub for Magnolia's main campus on River Road. Daily, our clients are picked up and dropped off in front of the Nims, and it is our main space for on-campus social activities. Our cafeteria and auditorium, the Nims Center buzzes with activity, especially during the annual Talent Show or Mardi Gras celebration. Additionally, the Nims Center contains our beauty salon/barber shop, janitorial vocational work center, and an industrial kitchen. Surrounding the Nims Center are 16 work centers.

Our Therapy Garden was established as a fundraising effort by a local high school student. It is fully accessible, with herbs, vegetables, and herbs maintained by our clients through our horticulture program. Our greenhouse is home to a number of plants and flowers. Designed with our clients in mind, the garden features wide rows and raised beds of various heights so that our clients with wheelchairs and walkers could maneuver throughout the aisles and tend to the plants. Our clients take great pride in seeing what they have grown!





*Music Garden - Est. 2018*

Our music garden was established in 2018, and is named in memory of Hal Herries, a Magnolia client who faced serious communication and mobility challenges. Music brought Hal great joy and comfort, especially enjoying the piano, tambourine and harmonica. Our music garden features several varieties of magnolia trees, outdoor musical instruments, seating, and an accessible promenade. Clients enjoy the fresh air, the sounds and sights of nature, and the feel of sunshine; in some cases, these activities can be self-soothing and prevent behavioral health crises.

Sport and leisure activities are essential elements of well-rounded lives. This philosophy is also important for people with developmental disabilities. The Wellness Center houses Magnolia's medical and fitness program, and provides preventative wellness resources for our clients. You may find our clients in the gym or fitness room. For medical care, the Wellness Center has our Nurses' Station, a private exam room, and medical triage areas. Our Wellness Center is a crucial component to our commitment for our clients' health.



*Wellness Center - Est. 2016*





Magnolia has twenty three residential group homes throughout Jefferson Parish. Six of these group homes are located here on our main campus. Our newest residential home on campus is Magnolia Bloom, located near the Wellness Center. Joining Magnolia Bloom on campus are Henican, Karen Cottage, Maison Central, River Road, and Schwegmann. Across Central Avenue from our campus are two homes named after James Lamantia, a grateful Magnolia family member whose brother was a student here in the 1950s. Clients who live in one of our group homes receive individualized services in a warm, comfortable, and fully accessible home environment.

## At A Glance

- 250 Clients
- 23 Group Homes
- Over 150 Employees
- Founded in 1935
- Programs:
  - Residential Group Homes
  - Vocational / Day Habilitation
  - Recreational and Wellness
  - Supported Employment



## Contact Us

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[www.mcs-nola.org](http://www.mcs-nola.org)

To donate to Magnolia, visit:  
[www.mcs-nola.org/support](http://www.mcs-nola.org/support)  
Thank you!