Mercy Centre
Where all the people fit.
Mercy Centre is dedicated to help adults, age 18 years and older with developmental disabilities live a meaningful, productive and joyful life. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy and Catholic Charities, Mercy Centre has more than 50 years experience and serves over 100 adults in Central Massachusetts.

Mercy Centre offers four programs:

The Employment Program develops, seeks and enhances employment opportunities.

The Group Supported Employment Program provides a valuable work experience at supervised sites in the community.

The Community Based Day Supports Program assists people to engage in social, recreational or leisure activities when work is not a priority.

The Day Hab Program provides people who have cognitive and developmental disabilities with challenging, supportive and individual driven skills training.

Mercy Centre’s highly qualified, professional staff brings an exceptional array of skills and empathy to their work. Programs at the Centre balance state of the art technology with steadfast human kindness. On any given day you’ll see participants engaged by an iPad and also intent in conversations with each other and staff members in the hallways or cafeteria.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the primary funding agency for our Employment, Group Supported Employment and Community Based Day Supports Programs. In addition, Mercy Centre contracts with local school districts to provide specialized services for young adults age 18 and over. Mass Health provides funding for each person in the Day Habilitation Program.

Mercy Centre’s programs have made life better for hundreds of people and will continue to do so in future years.
Slava’s Story

Slava is a young man with a mischievous smile and effervescent personality; you’d never guess he was once a shy teenager who spoke no English. His previous success at Mercy Centre’s School is a point of pride for the staff and Slava’s parents. By the time he turned 22 and joined Mercy Centre’s Adult Services, Slava was fluent in English, an enthusiastic fan of the Patriots, the Red Sox and the Bruins, and excited at the prospect of being qualified to earn a paycheck.

As a young adult, Slava initially participated in Mercy Centre’s Group Supported Employment Program which teaches job skills and provides onsite job training and supervision at several local businesses including Eaton Corporation’s Worcester facility, Anna Maria College, Calabria Ristorante, St. John’s soup kitchen and various cleaning sites in the community. Participants earn hourly wages as members of cleaning crews. They work in groups on small assembly projects and handle mailings for local businesses and non-profit organizations.

“We provide one-on-one coaching for participants on how to interact with other people. They learn to be a member of a team, follow instructions, complete a job and be responsible,” says Bruce Nelson, Senior Case Manager.

With learned skills, Slava is now in Mercy Centre’s Employment Program. He has been a valued employee at several area businesses for many years. Currently, he does part-time maintenance work at Mercy Centre and is employed by the soup kitchen at St. John’s Church in Worcester.

over
“Hiring Slava was a match made in heaven. He does an awesome job keeping the place clean.”

- Billy Riley, Manager, St. John’s soup kitchen

Billy Riley, Manager of St. John’s soup kitchen on Temple Street, says that hiring Slava “was a match made in heaven. He does an awesome job keeping the place clean.”

Slava and his fellow crew members from Mercy Centre sweep and mop floors, wipe down counters and take out the trash. This behind-the-scenes, but vital work, enables St. John’s to offer clean and safe accommodations to some 400 homeless people who eat there every day. It’s empowering for Mercy Centre participants to see that their work is valued beyond the paychecks they earn.

Mercy Centre participants are currently employed throughout the greater Worcester community in the following areas:

- Light assembly
- Light cleaning
- Kitchen work
- Child care workers
- Mailing & clerical
- Data entry
- Packing
- Shipping
- Baggers
- Retail
Grace’s warm smile lights up when she talks about the friends she’s made at the Community Based Day Supports program. “I love it here,” she says. “I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.” Her mother adds, “going to Mercy Centre programs has been a haven for Grace. It makes her feel a part of the group. She has friends she can relate to, yet she’s doing something on her own.”

- Grace
“Knowing that Grace is safe and happy means everything to me.”

- Grace’s Mom

Grace and others in the Community Based Day Supports program can choose from a variety of activities. There’s a photo club with outings to take pictures with cameras and iPads and a computerized kiosk for editing and printing them. Classes in cooking, baking and computers teach important skills for daily living. Sessions in the Exercise Room equipped with a treadmill, elliptical trainer, stationary bike and Wii Fit program offer therapeutic recreation.

There are outings to Mechanics Hall for the Brown Bag concerts as well as movies, plays, and bowling alleys. Participants go on field trips, nature walks and picnics. Some, like Grace, volunteer in the community. She joins a group who help at St. John’s soup kitchen in Worcester.

Knowing that her daughter is engaged with enriching experiences is a comfort to Grace’s Mom. “Knowing that Grace is safe and happy means everything to me,” she said.
Kristina’s Story

Kristina is a slight young woman with a welcoming smile who has blossomed since joining Mercy Centre’s Day Habilitation Program, or as staff and participants call it, Day Hab. She’s learned to engage with people and make choices on her own. Like most Day Hab participants, Kristina is active at Day Hab, a busy, upbeat place to be! It’s common to see participants and staff greet each other with hugs and high fives as they pass in the hall on their way to their activities.

The Exercise Room hums with sound and movement as participants work out on the treadmill, stationary bicycle and elliptical trainer; the Wii Fit program is another favorite. Social skills and personal hygiene are taught in creative and enjoyable sessions like the weekly Ladies Group where participants get reinforcement on the importance of hand washing and hygiene – while having their nails done.
Communications activities also include sign language. For those who have difficulties with speech, Mercy Centre has a selection of iPads. Many participants delight in being able to send a text or an email to family and friends.

A recreation area is available for lively games of basketball. Several of Mercy Centre’s participants won gold medals in Special Olympics basketball. On some days the gym floor is turned into an obstacle course, other times it’s used for floor hockey.

There are many options for Day Hab participants including group activities that stimulate their senses, provide meaningful recreation and develop their physical abilities. They learn to cook, bake and grocery shop with a list they have developed themselves. During arts and crafts, participants who aren’t able to communicate in other ways often find positive and satisfying means of self-expression. Each Day Habilitation member has a schedule which is goal oriented. Occupational, physical, and speech therapy consultants are utilized on an individual basis if needed. “We cater to all different personality types and diagnoses,” says Teresa Holland, Day Hab Case Manager.

Kristina likes to be up and about and staff members accommodate her need for movement. She enjoys music and has learned to use one of her iPod playlists to calm herself when feeling overwhelmed. Mercy Centre also has both a Sensory Room and a Relaxation Room. These are quiet rooms with low lighting and comfortable seating where participants can go when they need to decompress.

Although Kristina can’t verbalize her experiences, her parents say there’s “a spring in her step” as she leaves the house for her trip to Mercy Centre when the van arrives to pick her up in the morning. Kristina’s Dad notes that although she’s a young woman with a complicated array of physical and emotional challenges, Mercy Centre’s Day Habilitation program provides her and the family with an immense amount of support. “They have helped us understand Kristina and let us know what works for her,” he said.

“They have helped us understand Kristina and let us know what works for her.”

- Kristina’s Dad
Mercy Centre’s mission is to provide quality enhancement of life through meaningful work or volunteerism.

Our commitment is to provide:
• a safe, positive, caring environment
• a professional, knowledgeable and focused staff
• a strong relationship with family members and advocates for our participants
• the assurance that all participants are provided with opportunities for continuous growth.

Our goal is to promote the rights of each person by providing opportunities and encouragement to:
• participate in decision making
• know their rights, responsibilities and be an advocate for themselves.

More Information
To learn more about Mercy Centre or to schedule a tour of our programs, please phone us at 508-852-7165 or e-mail:

Heather MacDonald, Administrator
hmacdonald@ccworc.org
or
Peg Buzzell, Director of Adult Services
pbuzzell@ccworc.org

Mercy Centre
25 West Chester St.
Worcester, MA 01605
T 508-852-7165
F 508-856-9755
www.mercycentre.com