



MUSTARD *seed*

"If you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move and nothing will be impossible to you." —Matthew 17:20

Prior to the Mustard Seed's inception 29 years ago, many families felt they had limited opportunities to care for their mentally challenged loved ones—although they knew these adults had great potential for growth and the right to enjoy life experiences.

The Mustard Seed opened in 1981 and is a Christ-centered organization. It is funded solely through donors and includes two group homes, a swimming pool, a multi-purpose activity center, a ceramics studio, and metal workshop. Its 18-member Bells of Faith hand bell choir ministers to area churches and to groups across the South. Led by trained musicians and music therapists, the bell choir allows the ringers to share their faith, and educate audiences about their capabilities.

The group homes, built in 1986, provide an opportunity for moderately mentally-challenged adults to live as independently as possible on the 7.5-acre campus. Each home has resident house parents to oversee the "Seedsters" and teach them independent living skills such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry. Currently, 14 Seedsters reside in the group

homes, where they thrive on socialization with each other and their community neighbors. "Construction is beginning on a new women's group home," said Executive Director Kit Burkadale. "We are thrilled to be able to house 10 women in the new building and will utilize the current home as a gallery and additional office space." All 41 Seedsters (both day and residential) participate in the Monday through Friday day program.

The Mustard Seed Auxiliary was founded in 1996 to support and promote projects and enhance activities at the Mustard Seed. Volunteers teach residents to paint ceramics, provide sales assistance at trade shows, sponsor special events, and help take care of the property.

"At the Mustard Seed, men and women with developmental disabilities enjoy life to the fullest—exploring the possibilities and growing to fulfill the potential God has created in them," said Burkadale. "This is a magical place where the grace of God and the victory of the human spirit come together. I am so blessed to be a part of this organization."

—J. C. B.



FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Mustard Seed visit www.mustardseedinc.org.