

Green Chimneys

www.greenchimneys.org

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Founded in 1947, Green Chimneys is the nationally renowned, non-profit organization recognized as the leader in restoring possibilities and creating futures for children with emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Recognized as the worldwide leader in animal-assisted therapy, Green Chimneys operates residential treatment for children and a special education school. Green Chimneys offers specialized treatment and educational and recreational services. Each year, Green Chimneys' restoration system gives hundreds of children and their families the tools that enable them to positively experience their youth, regain a sense of self-worth and create hope for the future as independent, positive and productive adults.

History

Green Chimneys was founded in 1947 by the Ross Family, who purchased a 75-acre farm from the widow of NY State Senator Ward Tolbert of Pelham Manor, NY. The farm, in the Town of Patterson, Putnam County, NY, was to house a private school where children could interact with farm animals.

In June 1948, Green Chimneys Farm for Little Folk opened its doors with 11 students. The property has since expanded to more than 166 acres and Green Chimneys School has nearly 200 students: 100 in the residential program, and more than 70 in the day school.

What We Do

Green Chimneys provides innovative and caring services for children, families and animals and targets its services at restoring and strengthening the emotional health and well-being of children and families, and fostering optimal functioning and independence. We strive to develop a harmonious relationship between people, animals, plants, nature and the environment through an array of educational, recreational, vocational and mental health services. We are a voluntary, non-sectarian, multi-service agency.

Today, the agency serves children and adults with handicapping conditions and regular children and adults from New York City, the mid-Hudson region, Westchester and Putnam counties, and the counties of western Connecticut. To date, the agency is considered the strongest and most diverse of its kind involving farm, animal, plant and wildlife assisted activities.

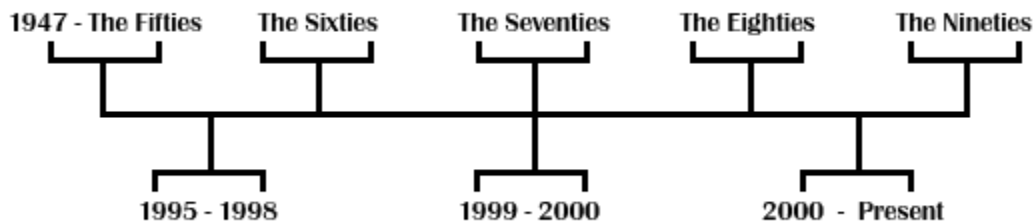
Green Chimneys School for Little Folk, the original corporation, is an educational corporation, and Green Chimneys Children's Services is a social service, mental health and mental retardation corporation. They are separate corporations. Both are organized as not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) corporations. The board is identical and the administrative staff for both is the same. The school corporation was founded in 1947, and social services in 1974. In 1996, The Friends of Green Chimneys, a third not-for-profit corporation was organized in order to support the work of the agency and school.

The Green Chimney's Name

When the Ross Family purchased Green Chimneys Farm in 1947, it was already sporting the green chimneys and cupolas. The farm, known as the Dell-Howe Farm, was owned by Col. Henry Breckenridge, who hired an itinerant minister to perform odd jobs around the farm, one of which was to paint the chimneys. Apparently, the minister found some green paint and not only painted all the chimneys, but the barn cupolas as well. This became the "talk of the town," because painting one's chimneys anything but red, white or black was unheard of in those days!

Almost immediately, locals began to give directions to the Dell-Howe Farm by saying, "...and you go down the road...it's the one with the green chimneys!" (and politely giggled). Well, Col. Breckenridge, being a rather unique man, decided that the green chimneys made his farm easy to find, and that his business improved because of this novelty. He decided to keep the color, and let people talk about his farm as much as they pleased. His farm quickly became known as Green Chimneys, which was certainly more "fun" than Dell-Howe Farm. The Ross Family loved this story and the special people behind it, and has upheld the tradition. To this day, all chimneys and cupolas on the 166-acre farm are painted that same shade of green!

Timeline of Program Development



1947 - THE FIFTIES

Green Chimneys Farm for Little Folk

With the financial backing of S. Bernard Ross, M.D., a 75-acre dairy farm in the Town of Patterson, Putnam County, New York, was purchased on October 27, 1947 and operated as a boarding and day school and summer camp for children between the ages of 3-6. The farm was designed to be a place where children and animals could grow up together.

After extensive retrofitting of the original buildings, the program was opened to children on June 15, 1948. There were 11 children enrolled the first summer. The name Green Chimneys Farm for Little Folk was subsequently changed to Green Chimneys School for Little Folk to better describe the program.

THE SIXTIES

Green Chimneys School

The program grew in numbers and a year round school program was developed to include children from pre-school through eighth grade from United States, Canada, Central and South America and other countries. The population shifted over time to children who needed a more specialized program. Green Chimneys School offered a continuous learning cycle, which provided 223 classroom days for children as compared to the traditional 180 days offered in all schools. The school operated a 24 hour-a-day program for 365 days, with no separate camp program.

THE SEVENTIES

Green Chimneys Children's Services

Green Chimneys sought and obtained a license from the New York State Department of Social Services in 1974 to help "at risk" children, shifting focus to an around-the-clock treatment center with comprehensive education and mental health services limited to children from New York State. The residential program was classified as a Residential Treatment Center (RTC) serving emotionally disturbed and learning disabled youth referred by social service departments and public school districts and was approved for 88 beds. An emphasis was placed on the integration of the children with farm animals, nature and the environment. The school program was now totally special education and continued under Green Chimneys School.

Hillside Outdoor Education Center

Green Chimneys went public with its farm program offering educational programs for the tri-state community in the early '70s, and on 50 acres, less than a mile from the main campus, added Hillside Outdoor Education Center. Hillside offered both day and resident year-round camping and environmental programs.

THE EIGHTIES

Community Based Programs

Green Chimneys assumed responsibility for three group homes in Westchester County, which were formerly operated by another agency and began operation of a 25-bed residence in Manhattan. This residence specializes in services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning adolescents. The program included Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) apartments in New York City. This added to Green Chimneys' array of service providing intensive and less intensive services for male children and adolescents.

Under the auspices of the New York State Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH), the agency developed a 14-bed adolescent Residential Treatment Facility and obtained accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) in 1989. A Residential Treatment Facility provides the highest level of care other than in-patient psychiatric hospitalization. Referrals come from all over New York State. This facility is located on the main campus in Brewster and has its own school building.

Wildlife Conservation Center

The farm was expanded to include a wildlife conservation program. The Center houses a large collection of permanently disabled birds of prey and assorted wildlife. A licensed rehabilitation and rescue service is in continuous operation and animal activities remain an integral part of all programs.

As the new programs were offered, the school and agency experienced four years of deficits, the result of program expenses and delay in funding for new programs. A lesson learned was that it is difficult to add new programs without start-up money and reserves.

THE NINETIES

The program expanded in Danbury with supervised living for developmentally challenged adults and three supervised work crews: a lawn maintenance service, a restaurant and a bottle redemption program under contract with the Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation (CTMR). Also, the Good Friend mentoring program entered the fold, helping children from single parent families who needed an adult role model and friend in their lives. Good Friend provides parent training, recreation and learning opportunities for youth and their families in the Danbury, CT area.

1995 - 1998

The school program began to receive requests for day students. During the 1995-1996 year, 35 special education day students from New York and Connecticut were enrolled. The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) made possible the construction of a \$12M school building to replace current classrooms.

- The group home program added an additional home in the Village of Brewster.
- RAP/Talk It Out, the agency runaway and counseling service for youth increased its offering with a Teen Line, which offers adolescents a resource, and Arbor House, which provides housing for runaway and homeless youth.
- A staff training program was developed and was offered to public schools and other agencies. Focused on behavioral management techniques, the goal was to help teachers improve the climate and culture in schools.
- The Farm and Wildlife Conservation Center opened a rescue sub-station on the grounds of the group home in the Town of Bedford.
- Additional supervised apartments were opened, including one for young women.
- Green Chimneys continued to receive national and international recognition for its work in animal assisted therapy/animal assisted activities with visibility at universities and in the media in France, Italy, Japan, Belgium and Australia, Spain and Israel.
- Green Chimneys developed an organic garden certified by the Northeast Organic Farmers Association.
- A rescue program for Premarin™ foals about to be slaughtered was instituted. 6 foals were purchased the first year and trained by our residents for future use.
- Our students become trainers of assistance dogs for physically challenged people through the East Coast Assistance Dogs on campus.
- Danbury G.O.A.L.S. (Getting Our Adolescents Linked to Services), a second runaway and homeless program, opened in Danbury, CT.
- A liaison was developed with ASPCA, Center for Animal Care and Control (NYC), and Wildlife Conservancy Society.
- Farm on the Moo-ve reached thousands of children through mobile educational farm program
- Farm animals were supplied to: Tisch Children's Zoo in Central Park (NYC), Hole in the Wall Gang Camps (CT & NY), Fieldston School (NYC), Convent of the Sacred Heart (CT), Ameri-Kids (CT & NY).
- A cooperative relationship with Mercy College of Dobbs Ferry, NY provided courses in animal assisted therapy, large animal veterinary care, special education, graduate and undergraduate courses on grounds.

1999-2000

In June of 1999, ground was broken for the new \$12M school building on the main campus and renovation of the indoor pool and gymnasium was begun. Japanese Immersion Seminar Program is established. NYC Programs expand and new offices are opened in the Sugar Hill section of Harlem in Manhattan. June 2000, gym and pool renovations are complete.

2000-present

In 2000, Green Chimneys opened its new multi-million dollar day school, providing state-of-the-art classroom facilities to both its residential students and day students. Today, Green Chimneys continues to serve children with emotional or behavioral problems as well as children from the community. Hillside Day Camp includes a traditional public day camp, an inclusion program for special education groups, and an Ability Camp for developmentally and physically challenged children. Nature's Nursery, a pre-school program for the local community children provides before school and after school programs, bringing the children in-residence into closer contact with the children from the community. This strengthens our community connection. Each year, thousands of children make use of the farm and outdoor education center and take advantage of the many programs offered by Green Chimneys.

Programs

Green Chimneys offers a wide array of programs to meet the needs of children, adolescents and families in the New York Metropolitan Area as well as in Fairfield County, CT.

Programs range from shelter care, to day school and nursery school care, residential treatment, adult services and group homes, among others. Please take some time to read about what we can offer you and your family.

New York

Programs include Residential Treatment Center, Residential Treatment Facility, Special Education Day School, Farm & Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Children & Youth Services of Putnam, Group Homes, Horticulture Therapy, Hillside Outdoor Education Center, East Coast Assistance Dogs and more...

New York City

Programs focus on the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth and their families. Services include a group residence, alternative secondary school, specialized training for professionals, counseling, transitional living and mentoring programs, and more...

Connecticut

Programs include Adult Services for Developmentally Disabled, Good Friend Mentoring Program, and more...

Programs For The Public

Include Day Camp, Farm on the Moo-ve, Farm Tours, Swimming, High and Low Ropes Courses, Outdoor Education, Country Store, Upcoming Events, Nature's Nursery Preschool, Therapeutic Horseback Riding, The Greenery Cafe and more...

Want to learn more about some of our programs? Click on the links below to download an information card for the program you are interested in.

New York City Programs

- Agency Operated Boarding Home
- Audre Lorde School
- Gramercy Residence at Ungar House
- Transitional Independent Living and Transitional Living Program
- Supervised Independent Living

Children and Youth Services

- Arbor House
- Community Outreach Center
- Mandated Services
- PINS Prevention
- Timeline

Good Friend Mentoring

Farm, Wildlife and Horticulture Program

- Farm and Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
- Children's Garden
- Organic Farm
- Therapeutic Riding
- Adopt-an-Animal Program

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