Building a Mom’s Dream

Kristen Malfara, founder and executive director of The M.O.R.G.A.N. Project has seen her share of marvels and miracles since the birth of her son Morgan, who was diagnosed with a rare form of leukodystrophy.

She began the nonprofit The M.O.R.G.A.N. Project as an organization that provides support to parents/caregivers of special needs children and acts as a reference source for information, financial resources, used equipment exchanges, rescheduled and clinical studies, support groups and more. The “tools” that parents need to make their job easier are not readily available. These are essential items that not only assist the parents in properly and safely caring for their special needs child, but enhance their quality of life.

Morgan’s Place, the home of the organization, is the current quality of life support programs for children with disabilities relocated to a building off US Highway 1 after quickly outgrowing the previous space. The new location offers nearly three times the space and allows the organization to offer even more expanded programs. These programs include the services of a state-of-the-art Sensoryium, designed to promote intellectual activity, heighten awareness and encourage relaxation. The Technology Zone has been expanded as well and offers plenty of room for adapted multi-player Wii-play and an Augmentative Communication Center with iPads and switch activated toys.

The idea for the center originated from the fact that there are lots of “places” for typically developing children to play but there was never a place for a special needs child.

Morgan’s Place has been designed to provide a safe environment for parents to bring their children with special health care needs and physical disabilities for hands-on therapeutic play, as well as creative and fun activities.

When Kristen began settling into the new location, she saw nothing but potential. When she started reaching out to local businesses and community supporters for help, she was blown away by their generosity.

LifeStyle Homes was one of the first local businesses to step in. The LifeStyle team spent an afternoon working to build a “Garden Sensoryium”—a multi-sensory playground of sorts. After building the sensory stations in one day, the team wanted to do more. Kristen’s dream included a pavilion area as an alternative to outdoor inaccessible playgrounds, like play groups or Chuck E. Cheese play areas that are not appropriate for children with disabilities.

So the team got to work, removing a disheveled trailer on the property to make room for a brand-new pavilion. The goal of the pavilion is to help protect children from the elements, while giving them the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors. The pavilion includes sensory apparatuses that will be installed inside, making it a place to catch the senses. It’s large enough to accommodate field trips and group sessions.

For more information, visit TheMorganProject.org or call 221-508-2707.