

VISTA MARIA

PARENT HANDBOOK



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VISTA
MARIA

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WELCOME TO VISTA MARIA

Thank you for being part of Vista Maria's innovative and unique residential and community-based treatment programs specially designed for you and your youth. Vista Maria has multiple buildings on campus and each program focusses on a different level of care.

Vista Maria's Programs are geared towards strengthening the existing family system by focusing on individual and family needs. The programs focus on your family unit as the major support/strength in your youth's life. In addition, the programs are structured in a way that your youth will gain more opportunity for growth and choices as they navigate through the program. They will have the opportunity to work cooperatively with other peers who have been through similar difficulties and can offer support to build relationships. Your youth will also learn how their everyday choices were and are affected by negative influences.

The overall goal of Vista Maria Program is to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment in which the youths in our care may gain insight into their past experiences, discover their strengths, develop a greater sense of self sufficiency, and increase their confidence so that they can reach their full potential and have a successful transition back into the community.

Vista Maria's philosophy of care is that we believe that our core values unite us to be the best and drives quality treatment, care, and support for all our youth, families and of each other. We also believe that through a learning community, education creates opportunities, build partnerships, and empowers all to seek ongoing knowledge and achievement. We unconditionally accept

and believe in the unity and power of all youth, families, and communities. Healing and empowerment come from the collective actions and efforts of us caring for each other and those in our care.

In addressing your youth's needs, you will play a critical role in the development of their treatment. Vista Maria staff acknowledges you as the expert concerning your youth. As such, you are an integral part of the team. The team will, therefore, rely on you for insight and input into your youth, as well as your participation in the program components to assist in creating a successful transition. The team is composed of you, your youth, Vista Maria staff as well as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).



VISTA MARIA

WELCOME 3

PROGRAMS

FAITH PROGRAM

Vista Maria's Faith Program is in Beata Hall. The Faith Program is an intensive residential treatment program designed to address youth ages 11-17 that are experiencing severe emotional and behavioral instability due to a variety of psychological, psychiatric, and cognitive impairment issues. The program is staff supervised and structured to meet your youth's individualized needs. Once your youth is stable, they will move on to the next phase of their treatment which may include home, a community program or one of Vista Maria's other programs on campus.

SPECIAL CARE UNIT (SCU)

Vista Maria's Special Care Unit is in Beata Hall. The Special Care Unit is an intensive residential treatment program designed to address youth ages 11-17 that are experiencing severe emotional and behavioral instability due to a variety of psychological and psychiatric issues. The program is staff supervised and structured to meet your youth's individualized needs. Once your youth is stable, they will move on to the next phase of their treatment which may include home, a community program or one of Vista Maria's other programs on campus.

BRIDGES PROGRAM

Vista Maria's Bridges Program is in DeRoy Hall. The Bridges Program is an intensive residential treatment program designed to address youth ages 11-17 that are experiencing severe emotional and behavioral instability due to a variety of psychological and psychiatric issues. The program is staff supervised and structured to meet your youth's individualized needs. Once your youth is stable, they will move on to the next phase of their treatment which may include home, a community program or one of Vista Maria's other programs on campus.



PROGRAMS



UNITY PROGRAM

Vista Maria's Unity Program is in Freedom Center. The Unity Program is an intensive residential treatment program designed to address youth ages 11-17 that are experiencing severe emotional and behavioral instability due to a variety of psychological and psychiatric issues. The program is staff supervised and structured to meet your youth's individualized needs. Once your youth is stable, they will move on to the next phase of their treatment which may include home, a community program or one of Vista Maria's other programs on campus.

WINGS PROGRAM

Vista Maria's Wings Stabilization Program is in Freedom Center and the Wings Reintegration Program is in DeRoy. The Wings Program is an intensive residential treatment program designed to address youth ages 11-17 that are experiencing severe emotional and behavioral instability due to a variety of psychological and psychiatric issues. The program is staff supervised and structured to meet your youth's individualized needs. Once your youth is stable, they will move on to the next phase of their treatment which may include home, a community program or one of Vista Maria's other programs on campus.

TRANSITIONS PROGRAM

Vista Maria's Transition Program is in Myriam Hall. The Transitions Program is a Supervised Independent Living program that operates in a group home setting on campus. Transitions serves adolescents between the ages of 16-19 with the goal to live independently; with little or no functioning support system outside of the child welfare, or juvenile justice system and in circumstances when returning home or family reunification is not an option.

The program staff is available on a 24/7 basis with a ratio that is commensurate with the program needs. Once the youth has completed the program they will be placed in an unsupervised independent community.

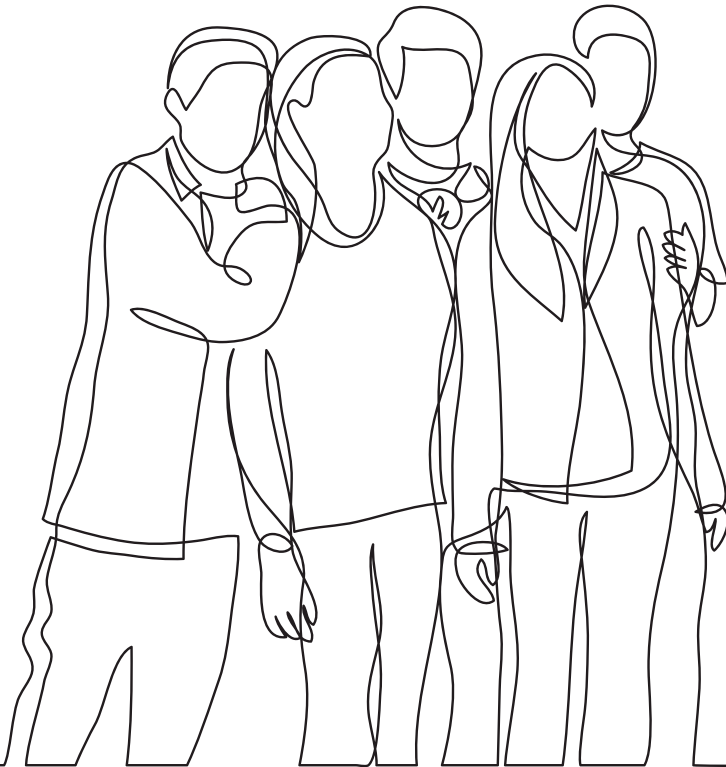


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

To achieve the goals of Vista Maria's Programs, a variety of treatment components have been developed to assist each youth. Central to those components are families. We believe that families are the cornerstone of our society and that they need to be an important part of each youth's treatment program at Vista Maria. All families have positive attributes and strengths, and we look forward to drawing on those strengths as we work with you and your youth and build on their circle of support.

As each youth works through their program, it is our hope that when they leave Vista Maria, they will:

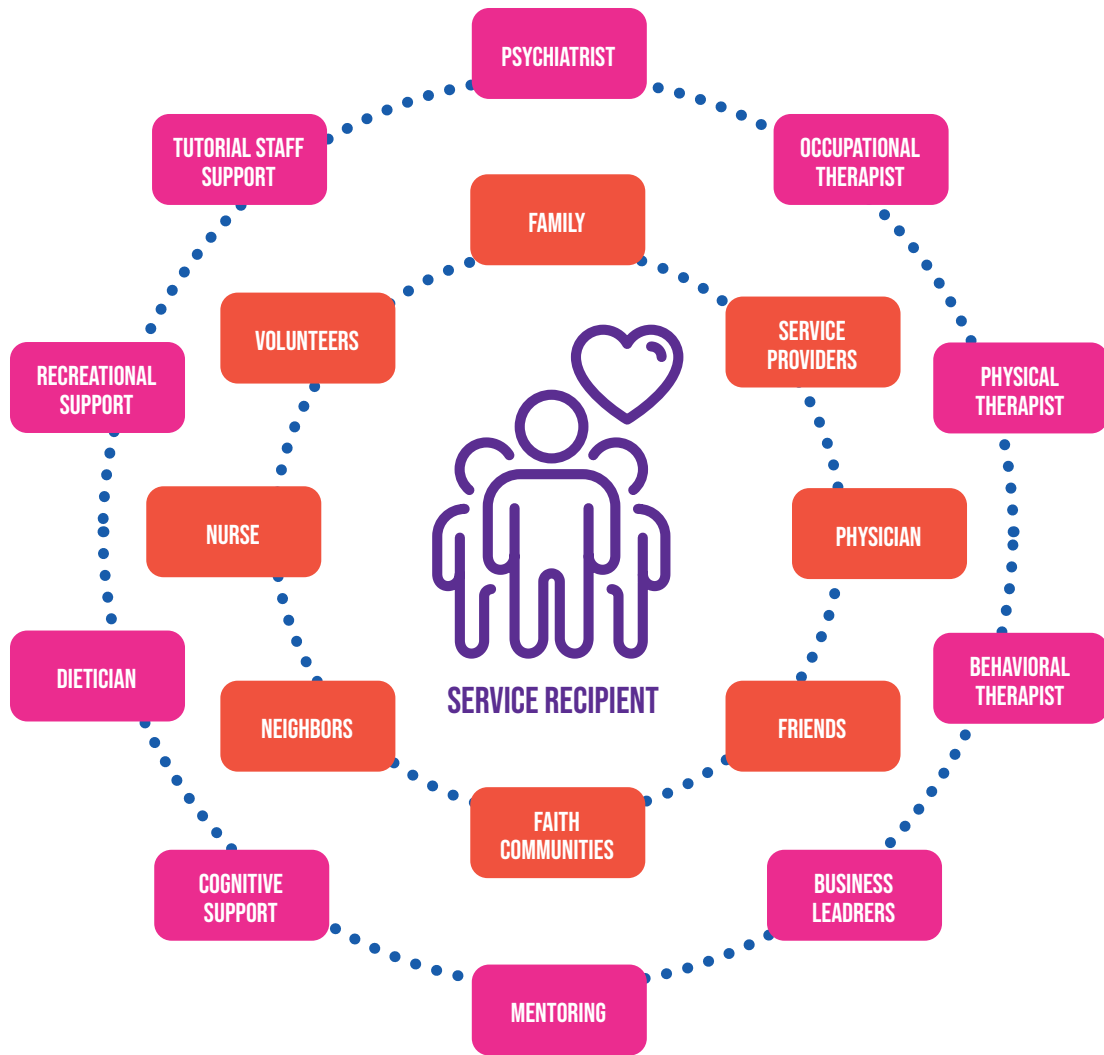
- 1) Have a better understanding of healthy and appropriate relationships with their peers, family members, and authority figures.*
- 2) Have developed an understanding of a healthy lifestyle and have taken steps to achieve this.*
- 3) Have developed skills in identifying and examining their life issues and concerns and how they have affected their choices.*
- 4) Have achieved their academic ability and identified future academic or vocational goals, where appropriate.*
- 5) Know and understand the physical and emotional effects of the abusive use of alcohol and other drugs.*
- 6) Have developed skills and supports to reconnect with their community.*



*“I come here to find myself;
it is so easy to get lost in
the world.”*

—John Burroughs

CIRCLE OF SUPPORT



TREATMENT TEAM

The Treatment Team is here to help you and your youth to achieve your goals. The Treatment Team consists of:

PSYCHIATRIST:

The psychiatrist monitors each youth's progress ongoing and on an as needed basis, evaluating all aspects of treatment. They will discuss with you, your youth's diagnosis, living with the diagnosis and the importance of taking medications if needed.

THERAPISTS:

Coordinates your youth's treatment. The therapist makes sure your youth as an individual is in the appropriate therapies, provides individual therapy, group therapy and family therapy as indicated. The therapist also coordinates therapeutic home passes and assists the family in discharge planning.

YOUTH AND FAMILY SPECIALISTS:

Responsible for assisting with assessments, post placement, discharge planning, aftercare case management services, and facilitation of permanency planning at intake for your youth. They will help coordinate your youth's treatment, prepare your youth to be as successful as possible during placement, prepare your youth for discharge, and help transition your youth into a healthy adulthood.



RECREATIONAL/EXPRESSIVE THERAPY:

Your youth will be provided recreational and expressive therapy options, which are designed to assist your youth in learning productive ways to plan and spend free time, acquire coping skills for stressful situations, and encourage positive communication and problem solving. They will also help your youth to learn to develop safe and trusting relationships with others.

NURSES:

The nurse coordinates your youth's medical treatment with the other members of the treatment team. The nurse is responsible for overseeing medication administration and caring for any of your youth's health needs.

YOUTH COACHES:

Coaches are positive role models and ensure the therapeutic environment is safe. They are of support 24 hours a day.

YOUTH COUNSELORS:

Your youth will be assigned a primary Youth Counselor as a part of their treatment team that will help guide them through their treatment plan. They will meet with your youth ongoing to assist them in processing their thoughts and feelings.

YOUTH AMBASSADORS:

Youth Ambassadors will work in close collaboration with Therapists, Youth and Family Specialists, and Educational Specialists. Youth Ambassadors have solid experience supporting youth, with chronic mental health/substance abuse concerns and cognitive impairments.

In addition, Youth Ambassadors have a firm understanding of basic practices of counseling and family engagement techniques and provide frequent individual counseling to support youth to prevent crisis episodes.

CLARA B FORD STAFF:

Teachers and school staff will work closely with your youth to ensure their academic experience is carried out in a therapeutic environment.

EDUCATION SPECIALISTS:

Education Specialists are responsible for the facilitation of educational planning, providing and/or arranging appropriate structured educational and vocational activities for youth. Education Specialists work with youth who may experience academic challenges i.e., tested below grade level, require credit recovery, or are suspended or expelled from school. Specialists coordinate with the assigned youth's family and prepare a plan for the youth to be successful academically.

MENTORS:

A mentor will help your youth as their mentee to boost their confidence while providing guidance and encouragement. Mentoring allows your youth the opportunity to explore new ideas in confidence. It is a chance for them to look more closely at themselves, their past experiences, opportunities and what they want in life. Mentoring is about your youth becoming more self-aware, taking responsibility for their life, and directing their life in the direction they decide.

TREATMENT PLANNING



While participating in the programs, your youth will have individualized treatment goals that address their emotional and behavioral needs. Your youth's individual treatment goals are developed within the first thirty days of placement at Vista Maria. The referring worker, as well as parents and guardians are invited to participate in this meeting. As parents, you play a very important role and function in this meeting. You will be able to provide information regarding your youth, give a better picture of your youth's past behavior, discuss what behaviors you want to see your youth change, help us to identify their strengths, and focus on their abilities to help guide them towards a healthy future.

In summary, you are a tremendous help to our staff and are an important member of the treatment team. Your feedback is critical in treatment planning, and progress in the program including Family Therapy and regular visits. While your youth is in treatment, the staff will utilize "Risking Connections".



THERAPY



Risking Connection© and the Restorative Approach®

Here are a few definitions to help you:

INTOLERABLE FEELINGS:

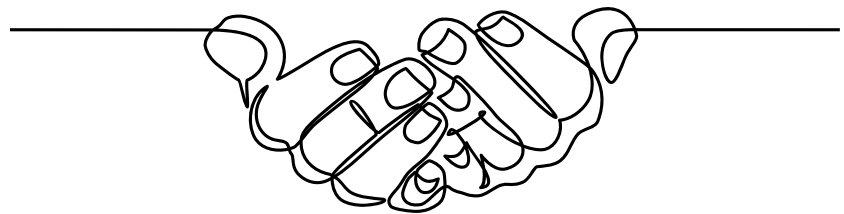
Feelings that may cause you to act out in a way that is less than positive. This often occurs impulsively and can cause broken relationships with others.

THE 3 SELF CAPACITIES:

- 1. Inner Connection to Others:** the ability to form connections with positive others and hold on to that connection when they are not around and use it to soothe your intolerable feelings.
- 2. Feeling Worthy of Life:** the ability to see yourself as deserving and worthwhile in order to self-soothe.
- 3. Managing Feelings:** the ability to soothe yourself when feeling intolerable feelings.



We will work together to develop a plan of action for managing feelings and behaviors.



THERAPY

THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

While participating in the programs at Vista Maria, your youth will receive a variety of therapeutic services. These services include but are not limited to individual as well as daily group, expressive, and recreational therapy sessions. Another very critical counseling component is Family Therapy. The following are brief explanations of the various therapeutic services.

INDIVIDUAL THERAPY

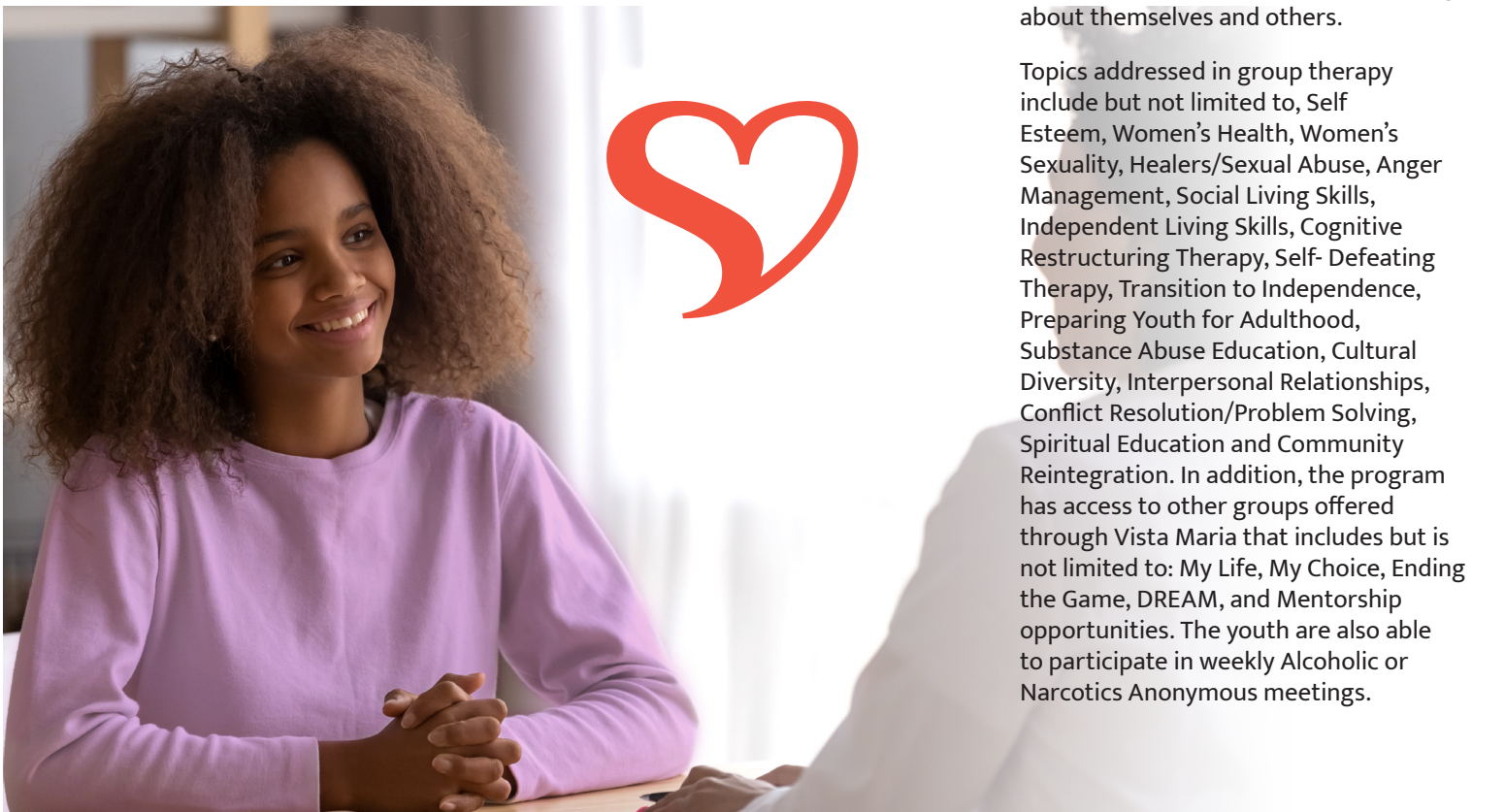
The Therapist provides Individual Therapy to your youth. In Individual Therapy, your youth will have the opportunity to work privately on their personal needs and goals. Therapy sessions may focus on issues such as coping with trauma, increasing positive decision-making skills, reducing self-defeating behaviors, improving self-esteem, identifying hopes and goals for the future, developing coping mechanisms to deal with past, present, and future problems, and improve ways of interacting with others. Individual Therapy will be flexible and creative to meet the needs of each youth.

GROUP THERAPY

Group Therapy sessions are also important components for your youth's treatment program. Due to the brief nature of the residential component—Group Therapy work is vital, and teamwork will be a prevalent theme.

Group Therapy programs offer youth an opportunity to increase their recovery from trauma through a variety of topics facilitated by Bachelor and Master level team members. In each session, we encourage group members to challenge themselves to learn and grow. Through this process, we hope each youth will have the opportunity to modify/increase their inner beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about themselves and others.

Topics addressed in group therapy include but not limited to, Self Esteem, Women's Health, Women's Sexuality, Healers/Sexual Abuse, Anger Management, Social Living Skills, Independent Living Skills, Cognitive Restructuring Therapy, Self-Defeating Therapy, Transition to Independence, Preparing Youth for Adulthood, Substance Abuse Education, Cultural Diversity, Interpersonal Relationships, Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving, Spiritual Education and Community Reintegration. In addition, the program has access to other groups offered through Vista Maria that includes but is not limited to: My Life, My Choice, Ending the Game, DREAM, and Mentorship opportunities. The youth are also able to participate in weekly Alcoholic or Narcotics Anonymous meetings.



FAMILY THERAPY

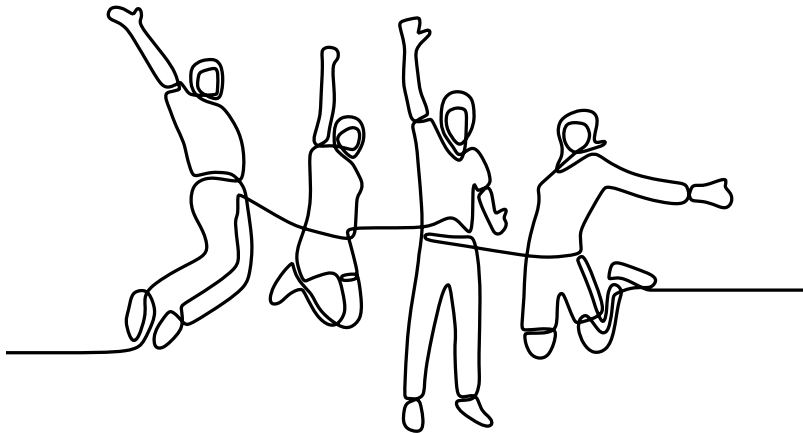
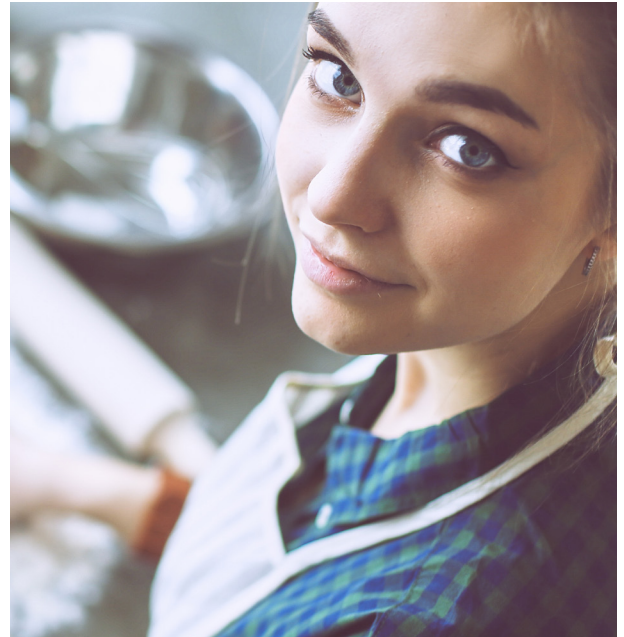
Family Therapy is another crucial part of the therapeutic program. The assigned Therapist will conduct Family Therapy. These therapy sessions will be a cornerstone in your youth's treatment program. As stated previously, each youth is a member of a very important unit, their family. To address the individual youth's issues, we must also direct some attention to the family. Your participation is critical. Family Therapy sessions will allow your family the opportunity to sort through past issues or concerns—finding ways that the family's problems can be addressed and resolved, explore family dynamics to find ways to increase positive communication and interactions; formulate effective coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills; and address individual and familial needs.

Family Therapy is your family's time to explore methods that can strengthen your family toward a happier, more fulfilling lifestyle. You help set the goals and priorities of therapy. Vista Maria staff relies heavily on families and their input. Your family comprises the most important people in your youth's life. We want to make sure you are recognized, valued, and involved as such. To assist and support you in this regard, transportation and other accommodations are available as deemed appropriate.



RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Recreational Program is designed to provide an opportunity for your youth to participate in activities, which will assist in identifying their strengths and abilities. These activities will also help in developing a healthy self-esteem, discovering new alternatives for resolving conflicts and use of their leisure time. Some examples of activities that may be provided are team building games, team sports (volleyball, basketball, swimming...), arts & crafts (cooking, baking, painting...), as well as off-campus opportunities (bowling, visits to museums, the zoo, and sporting events).



JOURNEY TO SUCCESS (JTS)



Journey to Success program is to inspire our youth to foster ownership of their individual futures, while connecting and supporting them as they learn and grow in their minds, bodies, and spirits. We offer after school programming and expressive therapies with the goal of providing a safe and supportive environment needed to promote healing, grow confidence, social skills, and life-long relationships, along with improve academic performance. Journey To Success will provide you and your youth with opportunities to engage in various activities throughout their treatment.

Our Journey to Success Program and Family Engagement Team, seeks to improve the relationships between families. As a standard we will host monthly family

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM



Your youth will be attending classes at Clara B. Ford Academy located on the Vista Maria campus. Clara B. Ford Academy is a fully accredited charter school. The classes are small, allowing teachers the opportunity to give each student the necessary academic material and structure needed for learning and proper classroom behavior. Depending on the amount of credit earned, credits can be recorded as part of their official middle or high school transcript and bring them that much closer to earning their high school diploma or certificate of completion. The school courses are like the courses your youth would receive in their school district, such as English, Health, Art, and/or other electives.

While attending Clara B. Ford Academy, your youth will be given standard educational testing to determine their grade level ability as well as their vocational interest. Periodic progress reports will be given to your youth. Progress reports discuss educational progress, suggest new goals and list current grades for each of their classes.

Ideally, your youth will be able to have a pleasant, positive learning experience, perhaps in contrast to some of the previous negative experiences they may have been exposed to in other school settings. Students will also be provided school counseling services as needed. Special Educational Services are also available if appropriate. Your input into your youth's educational program and progress at Vista Maria is valuable.



SERVICES

SPIRITUAL SERVICES

Vista Maria offers religious services to your youth. The religious services include the voluntary options of participation in inter-denominational or Catholic worship, electives in Christian studies and reflection days and times. If your youth and family are members of a different religion, accommodations can be made to fit your preference. Your input on their needs in this area are welcome.

HEALTH CARE

While your youth is a resident of Vista Maria, they will receive health services from Vista Maria's medical personnel, or other authorized personnel. These services include medical, dental, eye, and psychiatric care.

FOOD SERVICE

Food services are provided by Chartwells, a foodservice management company. A registered dietician approves the menus, and our kitchen and cafeteria receive regular inspections from the Michigan Department of Health. The majority of their meals are consumed in the cafeteria. They are offered three meals per day, as well as daily snacks. Snacks are always available in the unit.

Vista Maria accommodates all special medical or religious food requirements and restrictions.



VISITATION GUIDELINES

Visits from family members are especially important to your youth during their placement in their program. We encourage frequent visits but must ask for your cooperation in ensuring maximum benefit for all involved. In general, we try to schedule most of the visits on the weekend so that we do not exclude your youth from school, therapy, or program activities. However, different time frames will be accommodated through your communication with the therapist and Supervisors/Team Leaders. Upon arriving to Vista Maria, you must provide the security guard with valid picture identification to be granted access onto the campus.

All those wishing to visit are asked to contact the Supervisor/Team Leaders at extension 321 for Beatta Hall, extension 193 for DeRoy Hall, and extension 430 for Freedom Center to schedule a visiting time. All visits are to be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance if possible. Vista Maria, the referring worker, and a legal guardian must authorize all visitors. Any unauthorized visitor under 18 years old must be accompanied by an authorized adult.

While your youth is a participant in the programs, there will also be family engagement events. Staff will organize these special visits. All authorized family or support members will be invited to attend and will be notified of the date and time of these visits. All youth and family members or supportive adults will be included in structured events and activities designed to promote family reunification and bonding in a relaxed atmosphere.

While visiting with your youth in the programs, we ask that the following guidelines are recognized and respected:

- 1) *No gum or unauthorized food or drink will be brought to or consumed during the visit. Small snacks are allowed, for example, pop, chips, candy bars, however, all snacks must be consumed during the visit, any leftover food will be sent home with the visitor.*
- 2) *No smoking is allowed, as we offer a smoke-free environment for our youth.*
- 3) *Purses, cell phones, briefcases, book bags, wallets, pagers, etc. should be left in your vehicle. Please have proper ID with you before entering the unit. Your youth is prohibited from using your cell phone during any visits.*
- 4) *Staff must check in all items brought in for the youth to the visit for approval and proper documentation.*
- 5) *On your youth's birthday, a store purchased cake may be brought and shared amongst family members. No home cooked food is allowed in the unit.*

6) *For the safety of all the youth the following items but not limited to, are prohibited*

- *Cameras*
- *cigarettes*
- *matches/lighters*
- *sewing needles*
- *scissors*
- *safety pins*
- *fingernail polish or remover*
- *all glass to include picture frames, bottles, etc....*
- *alcohol*
- *q-tips*
- *aerosol cans*
- *knives or any other weapons*
- *money (can be given to staff to approve or put in secure safe until client has earned the appropriate privilege)*

* You may refer to the staff to find out your youth's current privilege level and what may be brought into the unit for them to have (ex. TV, fast food, money, etc....)



VISTA MARIA IS A NON-SMOKING CAMPUS. SMOKING IS NOT ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON CAMPUS OR DURING VISITATIONS.

VISTA MARIA

TIME AT HOME



As your youth progresses through the programs, they will be able to participate in home time. The treatment team will determine the length of the visits. The individual participating in the pass with the youth will receive a contract outlining what is permissible and restricted during visits. This is to help guide not only the family member but also the youth as they have become accustomed to day-to-day living at Vista Maria. A home pass allows your youth to implement and practice the skills and coping mechanisms they have been developing, within the family unit and community



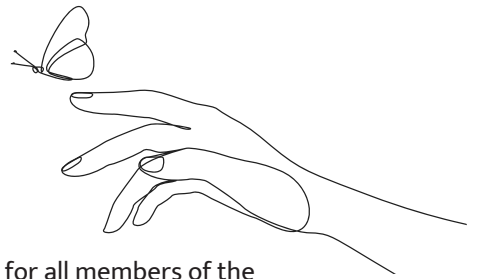
AUTHORIZED GIFTS

Vista Maria staff members are responsible for the health and wellbeing of your youth and many other youths during their placement on the campus. We attempt to ensure everyone's safety whenever possible. You as a parent can help by adhering to our policy regarding appropriate gifts. There may be occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, when a gift would be appreciated by your youth. In such an event, please feel free to bring any of the following gifts: clothes, stationary, stuffed animals, jewelry, make-up, books, and games. Please note that state health regulations prohibit gifts of a consumable nature including meals, tobacco products, and gum. We ask that you do not bring your youth any potentially dangerous items including matches, lighters, drugs, or scissors.

Please remember your youth can satisfy all their material needs within the program. Toiletries, hygiene products, recreational accessories, school supplies, etc., are provided for your youth within the program. Any gift that is brought for your youth should be given to the Supervisor or Team Leader, before presenting them to your youth. If you are in doubt about the appropriateness of a gift, please call their Program Therapist.



MOVING ON



The return home and reunification of your family can be an anxious and stressful time for all members of the family, as you and your youth apply and utilize skills and coping mechanisms that were developed through Vista Maria programs. The successful reunification of your family and the growth and development of a strong family system is our highest priority.

The aftercare program is a 6-month program that provides support to you and your youth during the transition from a residential treatment setting into the community. The aftercare worker will provide phone contact as well as in person visits to support the child and the family during the Aftercare Program.

Your Youth and Family Specialist will work closely with your family to develop an aftercare plan specific to your family. The plan will identify goals that you and your family will complete while in the program. The Aftercare worker will focus on recreational activities available in the community, supporting the educational goals of the youth and activities to strengthen the family unit.



CONCLUSION

We hope this handbook has been informative and useful to you. Your youth is now living within a structured treatment program designed to help them develop positive and beneficial behaviors. Your support and understanding can be a valuable tool in effecting their positive progress. As a parent, you play a vital role in assisting us to help your youth.

If you have any questions pertaining to this material or your youth's progress, please feel free to contact their therapist.

Main Phone Number:

(313) 271-3050

Mailing Address:

Vista Maria
20651 W. Warren Avenue
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127

Directions to Vista Maria:

- From East: West on I-94
Addison/Ford Road Exit
North on Addison to Ford Road
West on Ford Road to Evergreen Road
North on Evergreen Road to West Warren Avenue
West on West Warren Avenue to Vista Maria
- From South: North on I-75 to Southfield Freeway
North on Southfield Freeway to West Warren Avenue
West on West Warren Avenue to Vista Maria
- From North: South of Southfield Freeway to West Warren Avenue
West on West Warren Avenue to Vista Maria
- From West: East on I-96 to Telegraph Road South
East on West Warren Avenue to Vista Maria

