



**Benhaven:**

**Building *Brighter*  
Futures**

Improving quality of life for individuals and families living with autism spectrum disorders



## **SINCE ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN 1967 AS A SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM,**

Benhaven has been on a remarkable journey dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with autism and pervasive developmental disorders.

Our founder, Amy Lettick, envisioned a world where everyone, regardless of their unique challenges, could fully participate in community life, exercise control over their own destinies, build meaningful relationships, gain purposeful employment, and ultimately experience personal satisfaction.

Today, Benhaven has evolved into a dynamic, multi-faceted nonprofit agency serving people of all ages with diverse needs. We invite you to explore this brochure to learn more about Benhaven and how you can be a part of our journey. Together we can create a brighter, more inclusive, future for all.





## WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1967 as a school for children with autism, Benhaven has grown into a multi-faceted agency serving people of all ages and with diverse needs.

A private, not-for-profit agency located in south central Connecticut, Benhaven provides a variety of programs to serve individuals and families living with autism spectrum disorders, pervasive developmental disabilities and related impairments. Through a collaborative person-centered approach and a commitment to emerging best practices in the field of autism, Benhaven provides the necessary support for educational, behavioral and personal growth.

## MISSION

Benhaven's mission is to enable people with autism and pervasive developmental disabilities to participate in community life, exercise productive control over their own lives, have meaningful relationships and associations, be gainfully employed, and experience happiness and personal satisfaction.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Providing positive behavioral support, interpreting the functions of problem behaviors by teaching community-acceptable skills.
- Understanding effective environments, we strive to change the features of home, school and community settings to define changes in the behavior of family members, teachers and supporters.
- Providing insight into support plans by incorporating opportunities, rewarding positive behavior, and monitoring improvement, remain relevant and effective.
- Devoting time to improving the quality of life for individuals with autism. Benhaven's experience confirms that this is one of the most powerful methods of "intervention" available.







# OUR SERVICES

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## BENHAVEN ACADEMY

Benhaven Academy provides educational services to students with autism and developmental disabilities. The students' primary needs include social, communication, coping and executive function skills.

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## CAREER & TRANSITION SERVICES

Benhaven is a career and transition provider that focuses on services and supports in the communities where people live, in post-secondary education, developing the interests of the people served, and through meaningful employment to promote productive careers. Programs for individuals are shaped through a continuous collaborative person-centered framework involving parents, school district, outside agencies, staff, and the student.

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## BENHAVEN LEARNING NETWORK

Benhaven Learning Network (BLN) is committed to providing quality behavioral, academic, social and emotional consultation to school districts and their staff. BLN is a consultative group of experienced Board Certified Behavior Analysts who educate students with autism, social/emotional or behavioral disabilities.

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## RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Benhaven currently provides homes with community style living for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities. These homes are located throughout Southern Connecticut neighborhoods, encouraging our residents to become active members of their community.

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## CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

Benhaven's Children's Behavioral Services (CBS) division provides Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for children with autism by improving skills and their family's capacity to support them. Services can be provided in our center based clinic, as well as at home and in the community.

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## INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY SUPPORT

The Individual and Family Support (IFS) division provides in-home and community-based support to help families learn skills to assist individuals in their daily lives. The IFS division helps individuals build long term relationships with peers and the skills to successfully navigate their community using behavioral supports.

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## BENHAVEN SCHOOL

Benhaven School, approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education, provides educational and related services to children and adolescents with autism/intellectual disability and corresponding disabilities aged 5 to 22 years old.

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## SHARED LIVING - COMMUNITY COMPANION HOME (CCH)

The Shared Living Program at Benhaven was developed in the late 1980s. At that time, the Leadership Team envisioned the importance of individuals with intellectual disabilities being afforded the opportunity to experience community life by living with a family.



# OUR IMPACT

## THE PHRASE “POSITIVE APPROACHES” WAS COINED BY HERB LOVETT, THE AUTHOR OF LEARN TO LISTEN, IN 1988.

The idea was that positive approaches seemed too vague a phrase to suggest a technology, but did imply the spirit of exploration, of working with—rather than on—people.

“Positive approaches” presents a way of life that moves from control to collaboration. In the world of positive approaches, we work in collaboration and in a spirit of openness, honesty, and equality. We make decisions by listening to all people involved (not just the person, the family, the professional – but all of them). Within the context of the personalities, needs, preferences, and strengths of those involved, we come to some decisions. This approach contrasts with how many services are organized. We may say we are working for the good of people with disabilities, but what that is, and how it’s to be achieved, is decided for them. In many services, we respond to whoever can force us to respond. Too often, we make compromises that come from resignation rather than from negotiation. Many decisions are made because of policy rather than because they make sense to the people involved.



Positive approaches are about behavioral changes through personal growth and mutual responsiveness. This work starts with each person and each group, and as experiences widen and deepen, some principles emerge, but they emerge from the lives of the people involved, and are not imported mechanically. Positive approaches are about ways to think about people—a way of keeping people present as individuals in our minds and hearts.



## **THE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE SUPPORT AND SERVICES THROUGH BENHAVEN ARE IMPACTED:**

- By leading happy and successful lives
- By having pleasant living situations with interesting and enjoyable things to do
- By having freedom and privileges to make good choices and decisions
- By having opportunities to look forward to
- By having support from skilled people whom they like and trust
- By being successful with both gainful employment and volunteer work
- By continuing to learn new skills
- By acquiring new positive relationships

## **FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ARE IMPACTED:**

- By knowing their loved one is living a purposeful life with meaning
- By continuing to be an important part of their loved one's life
- By experiencing their loved one's growth
- By knowing their loved one is with staff who care and are trustworthy
- By knowing staff are professional, experienced, talented, and knowledgeable.



Visit our website to **UNLOCK** more information about Benhaven.

**benhaven.org**

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