

UMFS provides a range of adoption services that recognize that adoption is a lifelong process, creating a relationship between a child and adoptive parents. We pay special attention to the complex circumstances that give rise to the need for adoption and to the stresses and adjustments that ensue for all parties in this process.

Special Needs Adoption

(Achieving Adoption Services Through Collaborative Partnerships)

Children with special needs present particular adoption challenges. Our program is aimed at creating permanent placements for children who are behaviorally, emotionally, or physically challenged. Our target population also includes children eight years of age or older, and sibling groups needing placement together. A grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia gives UMFS the ability to offer special needs adoption services at a minimal cost to adoptive parents.

Parental Placement

UMFS facilitates adoptions arranged directly between adoptive parents and birth parents or legal guardians. We provide services and protections like those that exist under Virginia law when an adoption is arranged by a public social services department or private adoption agency. Our staff conducts a study of the adoptive home and provides counseling and post-placement services.

International Adoptions

Adoption of foreign-born children living in their native countries is an avenue some families consider. UMFS is experienced in the often complex procedures and adjustments involved in international adoptions. We are also experienced in working with organizations that identify children available for adoption in other countries.

Adoptive Family Preservation (AFP)

Even when an adoption is finalized, many families and children need continued counseling, assessment, support, and referral advice. Our Adoptive Family Preservation (AFP) services can be important to preserving the adoptive family in the months or even years that follow an adoption. Services* include case management, counseling, crisis intervention, parent support groups, and children's support/activity groups.

** This free service can be accessed by any adoptive family in Virginia, regardless of the origin of the adoption.*

UMFS Treatment Center

The UMFS Treatment Center offers customized 24-hour intensive treatment with the goal of returning the youth to the community as soon as possible. Each youth receives daily 24-hour on-site staff supervision, intensive therapy (family, group and individual) and medication management services. Each treatment team works closely with the youth's guardian to design targeted treatment and discharge planning toward return to the community setting.

Our relationship- and strengths-based approach teaches youth that, despite their pasts, they can develop healthy, caring relationships with their families of origin, or foster families.

Our multidisciplinary treatment team combines skills in psychiatry, social work, nursing, special education, milieu and recreational therapy in a program designed to prepare the youth to live with a family in the community.

Adolescent females with emotional and behavioral problems

Due to the severe form of trauma many of our girls have experienced from neglect and/or physical, emotional, and sexual abuse by trusted adults in their lives, they often enter our care with mood, anxiety, adjustment, developmental, and other disorders. This program is designed gender-specifically using a holistic, relationship-based treatment model that focuses on girls' unique experiences and provides for the development of healthy relationships in their journey of developing belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Sexually reactive adolescent males

This program addresses the special needs of youth 11-18 years old who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviors, often related to loss, neglect, and physical or sexual abuse. Through the UMFS treatment model, they learn to take responsibility for their harmful behavior and cope with the impact of past traumatic experiences.

Leland House

Leland House provides short-term intervention and stabilization not to exceed 45 days for youth ages 12-17 that are in a behavioral or emotional crisis and unable to remain in their family home or current setting.

Individual, group and family therapy is provided along with educational and recreational opportunities and clinical case management in a structured therapeutic setting with daily 24-hour on-site staff supervision. Our services are based on core strengths-based principles supported by compassionate adults and the most up-to-date evidence-based practices.

Leland House is operated by UMFS in collaboration with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT).

Charterhouse School

Charterhouse School offers year-round comprehensive educational services for students ages 11 to 18 in the UMFS Treatment Center. The school is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and accredited by the Virginia Association of Specialized Education Facilities.

Charterhouse School's curriculum is aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning and offers a broad range of middle and high school courses in language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health and physical education, art, horticulture, computer technology, and service learning. Charterhouse School's career and technical education programs offer students an introduction to the skills they need to be successful in life. The curriculum also allows students to undertake independent study; i.e., GED preparation or online classes for high school credit. Extracurricular activities such as music, book club, and drama are also offered. Staff members at Charterhouse School include highly qualified teachers and trained behavior specialists who work together as a team to provide students and their families with coordinated educational services.

Charterhouse School Day Program

The Charterhouse School Day Program provides specialized education services to youth 11-18 years of age who struggle to function in their current school setting. We accept students with poor motivation, poor impulse control, short attention span and withdrawn behaviors. We also work with youth with emotional disturbances, learning disabilities, perceptual disorders, language disorders, social skill deficits, hyperactive behaviors, and struggles with their primary support systems. Individual and group therapy are available to each student throughout the week. The Day Program operates on a 9½-month (September-June) schedule.

Summer School

Our six-week summer program for extended school year students operates from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday-Wednesday, and from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday (educational field trip day), June-August. The summer program is closed on Fridays. The summer program consists of two remedial classes per day in math and English/reading. Students receive homework remediation, computer technology, art, music, physical education, and daily recreation on our campus, as well as one individual therapy session per week and two psycho-educational groups per week.

After-School Program

Our after-school program operates from 3 to 6 p.m. on all school days, September-June, and provides opportunities to learn and grow in a safe and structured environment. After-school activities include homework remediation, recreation, and a life skills group, all designed to help students develop new skills and develop into responsible adults. Other activities may cover topics such as technology, reading, math, science, and the arts; new experiences, such as community service; or tutoring and mentoring opportunities.

Therapeutic Treatment Services in the Public Schools

UMFS takes its Therapeutic Treatment Services into the public schools. This Medicaid-approved service will be available on a year-round basis to serve students with behavioral and emotional problems that prevent them from functioning with their peers and teachers in a school setting. Our goal is to help students display age-appropriate behavior at home, in the school, in the neighborhood, and in the community at large. As a result, we expect to reduce suspensions, improve school attendance and time on task, resulting in improved grades and test scores.

UMFS Therapeutic Treatment Services in the Public Schools include Positive Behavior Support, Crisis Intervention, Individual Therapy, Family Counseling, Group Therapy, Case Coordination, and Group Counseling. Additional UMFS FamilyCARE and school-based services are available.

Project LIFE — Living Independently, Focusing on Empowerment — is operated by UMFS in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). The goal of the project is to coordinate and enhance the provision of independent living services to foster care youth who are about to transition out of foster care.

Points of focus for Project LIFE include, among others:

- Continued development of the Virginia Youth Advisory Council (V-YAC);
- Provision of technical assistance to the regional ILP coordinators' committees; and
- Initiation of a new regionally based "Educate, Advocate, and Elevate" (EAE) effort.

Project LIFE — through regionally based Independent Living Consultants — will assist localities in building the capacity to serve a greater number of older youth to help localities meet the goals of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act and the Children's Services System Transformation.

Project LIFE is built on the Virginia Practice Model, emphasizing children's rights to permanency, and federal requirements for the provision of opportunities to develop adult living skills. Project LIFE will ensure that older youth and local departments of social services staff are receiving the support, training and technical assistance needed for an integrated approach to youth permanency and preparation for adulthood.

Visit www.vaprojectlife.org or call 1-800-292-0305 for more information.