

# **FAVARH HAS A 60-YEAR HISTORY**

**By Scott Masson**

Favarh, known legally as The Arc of the Farmington Valley, was founded in 1958 by families who had children with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. The reason was that their children would be forced to go to state institutions like the Mansfield Training School and the Southbury Training School, and the families wanted something better for them. The first Favarh location was a day school in the basement of the Avon Congregational Church.

Over the years Favarh has been headquartered in three locations, most recently at 225 Commerce Drive, Canton, where it's been since 2001. The other two locations were in Avon Park North and on Tower Lane, both in Avon.

Favarh really started taking shape in its current form with residential, day and employment services in the 1980's. It currently has activities at 15 properties throughout the Farmington Valley, nine of which Favarh owns.

The nonprofit agency currently serves 350 young adults and adults, plus their families. Favarh has 300 employees that work as managers and job coaches for employment, plus residential and day services managers and staff, as well as transportation drivers. Although the majority of the people Favarh serves are over 21, it also serves teenagers in high school, who are learning how to transition to employment opportunities. A program called Project SEARCH offers recent high school graduates internships at UConn Health, teaching them about work. Favarh also has a recreation program for kids 12-17 years old on Saturdays.

Favarh is continuing to grow. It's currently constructing two more housing locations, one in Bloomfield and the other across the street from the Favarh headquarters on Commerce Drive. The new buildings will be two apartment buildings that will provide more housing for people that Favarh supports who want to live independently, as well as for non-disabled people. The Canton apartments will have 10 units for Favarh clients out of 40 apartments, while the Bloomfield apartments will have nine units for Favarh clients out of 38 apartments.

The apartments will mark the 16th and 17th locations for Favarh. That is a lot of properties and Favarh won't stop growing, at least for the time being.

Favarh is celebrating 60 years and I couldn't be more proud of how far it's come since it started, Because of Favarh I have an awesome job and so many friends and a relationship. I wouldn't be where I am without Favarh, chasing my dreams and when the apartments are completed, living independently.