



Elm Hill Center

The Blanchard Means Foundation



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Rehabilitative Resources Inc. Takes Over Operation of Elm Hill Center

RRI Will Assume Control of Blanchard Means Foundation, Which Owns Historic Farm

Rehabilitative Resources Inc. (RRI), one of Central Massachusetts' leading care providers for people living with developmental disabilities, recently acquired control of the Blanchard Means Foundation, a charitable entity which oversees operations of Brookfield's historic Elm Hill Center.

RRI, of Sturbridge, was selected by the Foundation's board because of its long-standing position in the community, and its vast experience in integrating those living with disabilities into the community at large.

"We chose RRI because it will keep the historical and culture importance of the site," said Karlyn Stevens, the chairman of the Foundation. "We want Elm Hill Center and the farm preserved for the whole community, and RRI has a track record of interactivity."

Bonnie Keefe-Layden, the Chief Executive Officer of RRI, said she is excited to work with the Foundation to help rebuild the farm into a community jewel that will eventually offer horseback riding and a petting zoo

"The Foundation's mission matched our mission," Keefe-Layden said. "The excitement is twofold. First, with the animals, we can offer a different stimulus for treatment most other facilities don't offer. Second, there is the opportunity to explore alternative methods to fund ourselves and add services."

The Elm Hill Farm was built in the 1700s, and at its peak it was one of the largest working farms in the region with 1,300 acres, eight houses, apple orchards, horse stables and a purebred cattle operation. One of its cows was "Elsie the Cow," the face of the Borden Company and one of the most recognizable product symbols in America in the middle of the 20th century.

The farm was the property of the family of the late Blanchard Means, whose wife Louise, passed away earlier this month. Following the 1973 death of her husband, Mrs. Means became concerned about the future of the family farm, and envisioned it as a preservation place where the public and developmentally disabled individuals, like her daughter, would enjoy its natural beauty. Her daughter, Louise, still lives at Elm Hill, as do several other adults living with developmental disabilities.

"Mrs. Means had a vision for this property, and we are going to ensure that it is realized," Keefe-Layden said. "It is treasured property in our region, and we intend to make sure that it is a place that can be enjoyed by everybody, regardless of age or disability."

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