

NEIGHBORS

KENDALL

Parents invited to school's open house

■ **The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism will host an open house Saturday for parents and potential students of its new school.**

BY CRISTINA ANA MERRILL
Special to The Miami Herald

The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism and Alternative Approaches will hold an open house Saturday to introduce its new elementary school, located on the Congregation Bet Breira campus, 8790 SW 94th St.

The open house will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will give interested parents and potential students a chance to see the new facility and meet the faculty and staff.

Parents will also have the opportunity to make an appointment to learn more about the school on a one-on-one basis. Children will also be able to enjoy rides and activities.

The Carrie Brazer Center for Autism is a nonsecular school for children and young adults with autism spectrum

disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, pervasive developmental disorders, Down syndrome, and Asperger's.

The main campus, 7425 SW 42nd St., currently serves students ages 3 to 22. Now with the new school opening, the main campus will primarily serve middle and high school students, as well as young adults up to 22.

The Bet Breira campus school will primarily serve students from ages 3 to 12.

Jason Possman, assistant director of the center, says the open house will also give parents and potential students a chance to learn about the different programs and therapies the new campus has to offer.

He said a major benefit of the new campus is that faculty and staff will have the opportunity to focus on the younger students and provide them with a "comfort zone."

"Each child is an individual," Possman said.

These younger students

TO LEARN MORE

For more information about the Carrie Brazer Center or to schedule an appointment, call 305-262-5999 or go to www.cbc4autism.org. The deadline to apply for school is July 3.

will also have access to a variety of new facilities, including a basketball court, a playground, and an artificial turf, kid-sized soccer field.

The new campus will offer the same therapies as the main one, including music therapy. Possman attributes much of the center's success to the team approach taken by the teachers, therapists, and staff members.

"Our staff is enthusiastic," he said. "We've worked with children of all ages on the spectrum."

The center is not just a school. It also has several different programs to offer,

including six-day programs, Saturday programs, and a summer camp. Applications for the summer camp are still being accepted.

Tuition for the new elementary school will vary on a sliding scale, depending on the program selected. Option 1 offers full-based school, Monday through Friday, from 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and is \$20,200 a year.

Option 2 offers the same amount of schooling plus one hour of cognitive therapy a day. This option is \$23,970.

The Center also has an Early Steps program for children and babies under the age of 5. This program provides two hours a day of one-on-one cognitive therapy five days a week for 40 weeks a year. The tuition rate for this program is \$15,400 a year. For three hours of cognitive therapy a day, tuition is \$22,200.

The Carrie Brazer Center does accept McKay scholarships and helps those who show proof of financial need.

Alessandra Mion is a vet-

eran parent of the center. Mion's son was in the public school system before he came to the center when he was 8.

Before that, her son had gone through seven different schools. He soon found a home at Carrie Brazer.

Mion said the center has been a blessing for her and her son.

"The teachers are very special people," she said. "They do this with love and have so much patience."

She also likes the close knit environment.

"It's a small school," she said. "It's like a family."

Mion's son is now 15, and she has no regrets about sending him to the center. She quickly noticed how the school changed him and helped him do things he was unable to do before, such as sit down patiently and work, wait for people, and make eye contact.

"They have a special program for him and his needs," she said. "It's been the best thing I have ever done."