

# Lauren's House serves special-needs children in Coatesville area

Licensed medical day health center opened Sept. 14

By DANIELLE LYNCH  
Staff Writer

VALLEY — Lauren's House, a day care center for special-needs children, recently opened in the Coatesville area.

Lauren's House is for children newborn to age 8 who have a skilled medical need, according to Administrator Caroline McCardell, a registered nurse. Five children are enrolled in the facility.

The enrolled children "are medically fragile," said McCardell.

Lauren's House has two other facilities in Boothwyn and Northern Philadelphia. The Coatesville Center opened Sept. 14 and is named for Lauren Sarah Jennings, who died at age 10 from leukemia.

At 795 Fox Chase Road in the Highlands Corporate Center in Valley, the Coatesville Center has a treatment room, large play/therapy area, bathrooms, kitchen, small therapy rooms and nap areas. The enrolled children are reassessed monthly to determine if they still need care at the facility. McCardell said her staff work with a team of pediatricians, therapists and parents on a plan individualized for each child.

Lauren's House is a medical day health center licensed by the state

as a prescribed pediatric extended care center.

McCardell lost her own daughter, Theresa, in 2006. Theresa, a special-needs child, had cerebral folate deficiency and other multiple disabilities.

When Theresa was growing up, McCardell said she had to change her work schedule to the night shift so she could care for her daughter during the day. She said a facility like Lauren's House would have been beneficial to Theresa's care.

"As a nurse and parent, this would have been a godsend," she said. "What a wonderful concept. It's all inclusive."

"It's an amazing facility," said Kelsey Stevenson, a registered nurse. "I wish more people knew about it."

"I love working with the kids and seeing them progress," said Sue Dunlap, a play activities coordinator.

Licensed practical nurse Teri Giovanetti said she previously worked in geriatrics and enjoys now working with children. She said she likes how the children at Lauren's House are treated like typical children.

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Susan Dunlap, left, and Teri Giovanetti work with children, from left, Ajani Allen, Bless Upshur and Hassan Grove at Lauren's House, 795 Fox Chase Road, Highlands Corporate Center, Valley.

Staff photo by Larry McDevit