

A Proud History of St. Joseph's School for the Blind

Since its humble beginnings in a rented house in Jersey City, St. Joseph's School for the Blind has answered the call of those who have had nowhere else to turn. Founded in 1891 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, the School responded to the growing need to provide critical services to individuals who are blind in New Jersey. Today, St. Joseph's continues as the only school for the blind in the State and has emerged as the pre-eminent provider of programs for blind, visually impaired and multiply-disabled individuals from birth through adulthood. St. Joseph's unparalleled resources are dedicated to helping this underserved population live their lives as independently and productively as possible.

1891 - St. Joseph's Home for the Blind opens in a rented house in Jersey City, New Jersey by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

1921 - The Home is split into St. Joseph's School for the Blind to accommodate the growing number of children enrolled in the program, while the Home continues to only serve adults.

1929- The School moves to 253 Baldwin Avenue, Jersey City to meet the increased enrollment and expand their programs.

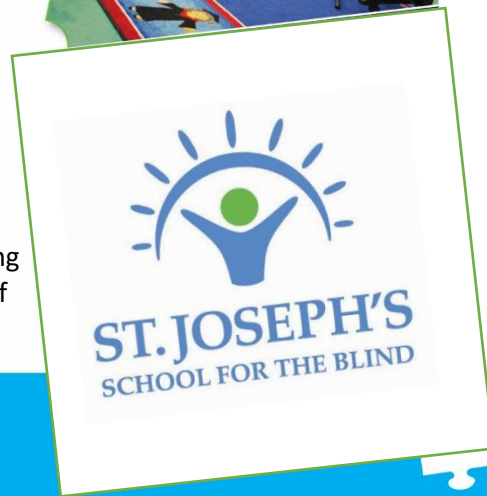
1960 - St. Joseph's School for the Blind begins accepting students who are blind/visually impaired with multiple disabilities as a result of increased need for services not provided by any other agency in New Jersey at that time.

1990 – St. Joseph's implements its Early Intervention Program which provides special educators to teach infants and toddlers who are blind/visually impaired and their families in natural settings.

1996 – In response to increased need, Concordia House, opens for students to further develop their independent living skills in a residential setting.

2007 - St. Joseph's School for the Blind moves to its new 75,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility at 761 Summit Avenue, Jersey City.

2012 – St. Joseph's opens a self-directed Adult Services program serving individuals with visual impairments and multiple disabilities 21 years of age and over.



St. Joseph's School for the Blind is a Jersey City-based nonprofit, non-sectarian agency accepting children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities of every race, creed and national origin. It has the approval of the New Jersey State Department of Education, and is licensed by Medicaid and the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities. The School's state-of-the-art facility is LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified by the United States Building Council.

St. Joseph's currently employs 103 teachers, specialists and administrators and serves a combined 255 children and adults in the School's programs for those with special needs.

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Since 1990, St. Joseph's teams of specialists have been providing critical instruction to infants and toddlers, birth to three years of age, who are blind/visually impaired and have additional disabilities and their families in natural settings.

Each child receives individualized instruction in the areas of vision stimulation, sensory integration and self-help skills. The goal of the EIP is to assist each child in reaching their fullest potential by attaining social and emotional developmental milestones. Through active learning and floor play techniques, infants and toddlers learn to use all of their senses to understand the world around them.

St. Joseph's EIP currently serves in 10 counties across New Jersey.

St. Joseph's School for the Blind

The School provides a full-day academic program to students ten months per year, with an extended school year program from July through August. The program serves students, ages 3 to 21 with the pragmatic skills of personal independence and academics needed to live and work in the community as well as the opportunity to make the very best of their unique abilities.

The education program follows the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) with enhanced instruction in daily living skills, pre-vocational skills, communication, sensory motor skills, orientation and mobility and personal-social skills. Art, music and community integration activities are also an integral part of the total educational program of the School.

Adult Services

St. Joseph's Adult Services is a self-directed day program that supports the acquisition and practice of life skills in a safe and encouraging environment.

Under the direction of an experienced staff and housed on the St. Joseph's campus, adults receive instruction in the areas of personal care, social skills, vocational training, meal preparation, personal finances, home management, community participation and more.

In-District Services

St. Joseph's has also met the increased demand to provide specialized training to students with visual impairments attending public schools in their home-school district.

St. Joseph's Teachers of the Blind & Visually Impaired serve students in 12 school districts across New Jersey. On-site instruction in these districts includes vision, braille and orientation and mobility services.



For more than 125 years, St. Joseph's School for the Blind has continued to provide specialized services for individuals with visual impairments throughout the State. Our stated mission is:

St. Joseph's School for the Blind is committed to the educational, psychological, social, and physical development of persons who are blind, visually impaired and have additional disabilities while maintaining an environment of caring, acceptance and respect for each individual's rights and dignity.

As the only school for those who are blind/visually impaired and multiply disabled in New Jersey, it is our responsibility to ensure we continue to fulfill our mission of providing the critical programs these individuals require to develop to their greatest potential. Although our programs are subsidized through grants and private donors like you, the costs surpass donations we receive. Our full-time education program, in particular, is free of charge to students and their families including tuition and transportation. **While education costs for the full-time day program are subsidized by the student's local school district, the costs of our services far exceed the reimbursement.**

Knowing firsthand the legacy of our work and commitment to those with special needs, we invite you to consider making a charitable investment that will help sustain our services for coming generations. Your gift will provide hope to families who rely on St. Joseph's School for the Blind to care for their children, from birth through adulthood, and offer them the opportunity to reach their full potential in life.

A Light in the Dark...

Parent Kaleena Berryman's son Jharid, born at 24 weeks, battled early complications in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and today, is enrolled in an appropriate preschool program. He received critical care through St. Joseph's Early Intervention Program. Throughout it all, Kaleena kept her faith, expressing her emotions through poetry. Her book of poems was written to help and inspire other parents of preemies and keep them connected. She said, "My son being born prematurely toppled me over; I felt so many emotions. I had to let other parents know that different emotions are normal. I had to change the challenge into empowerment because if it remains a challenge, it breaks you down."

The road for children with disabilities isn't easy. From birth through adulthood, specialists at St. Joseph's School for the Blind help pave the way for growth and development by delivering vital services individuals with special needs require to reach their full potential. For parents like Kaleena, there is no greater comfort. While enrolled in our Early Intervention Program, Kaleena explained, "St. Joseph's means so much to me because they helped my son see physically but also to see beyond his limitations. My vision for his vision is brighter because his sight is improving."



ST. JOSEPH'S
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Make Your Donation Count

Each program and service offered to our children, adults, and their families is an opportunity for benefactors to realize their tangible and significant impact on our School. Donations in the amount of \$1,000, \$2,500, \$5,000 or \$10,000 ensure that children and adults with disabilities will continue to receive the critical programs and services they require to live as productively and independently as possible.

As we move forward in our mission, we are grateful to all who came before us, to those who stand with us today, and to those who will support St. Joseph's School for the Blind as we enter the next chapter in our history.

Please consider a donation to underwrite the following services:

Speech Language Therapy

Speech language therapists assist students with learning effective ways to communicate verbally as well as with augmentative and alternative communication systems. In addition, they work with students in the areas of oral-motor development, social language, concentration, memory and information processing.

Physical Therapy

Physical therapists work with students to promote independent functioning and to diminish the impact of physical disabilities on a student's ability to participate in the educational process. Their services focus on a student's functional use of his/her body for mobility, postural alignment, and maintaining/improving endurance.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists work with students to promote their ability to perform tasks in their daily living and school environments. Services include addressing sensory motor challenges, functional limitations, and/or perceptual problems.

Orientation and Mobility

Highly skilled instructors teach students with visual impairments how to travel safely and independently through their environment and increase awareness of their surroundings.

Health and Medical Services

The School's full-time nurse provides medical, first aide, emergency care and additional nursing services to St. Joseph's students as determined by the student's individualized plan.

Braille Instruction

Students who are blind or visually impaired undergo literacy instruction which includes braille training. The School is currently seeking funds to enhance the program with the addition of the new Perkins SMART Brailier which incorporates technology into the classic system.

Music Program

St. Joseph's music program addresses students' cognitive, physical, emotional and social needs. Individual and group instrumental and voice instruction is provided to meet students' interest and ability. Classroom sessions promote music appreciation as well as assist students in enhancing their memory, communication skills, expression of feelings and ability to manage stress.

Social Services/Counseling & Advocacy

St. Joseph's social workers offer an array of services to families and students including counseling, advocacy, resource information and training. In addition, social workers serve as liaisons between St. Joseph's and the student's local school district.

For further information or to schedule a tour contact David Feinhals at (201) 876-5432 ext. 1244 or by email at dfeinhals@schoolfortheblind.org.