

CENTER TIMELINE

1957 – The Junior Service League of Victoria began a project to address the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This organization was responsible for the Hope Developmental School and later, the Victoria Project for Handicapped Children, which evolved into the Gulf Bend Center for Children and Youth.

1965 – On April 5, 1965, Gulf Bend Center for Children and Youth opened with Dr. Eva Seger, clinical director, Richard Hungerford, executive director and an active and attentive board of trustees. This facility was designed to provide diagnosis and rehabilitation of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities or an emotional disturbance.

1965 – Also in 1965, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3, the Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act. Local research had indicated the need for expanded mental health care and intellectual & developmental disability services in the counties that made up Gulf Bend Center's service area.

1969 – After an in-depth study by a planning board, a proposal was made in September, 1969 to establish Gulf Bend Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center.

1970 – An application was filed with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to plan and provide for the future of mental health and intellectual and developmental disability services in Victoria and surrounding counties. On January 12, 1970, under the leadership of John Richards, Executive Director, Gulf Bend Center opened its doors to the people of Calhoun, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Refugio and Victoria Counties. At this time the Center was located at 2006 North Navarro Street in Victoria. Judge Frank Crain served as Chairman of the Center's Board of Trustees.

John Richards becomes Executive Director of Gulf Bend Center (January 1970).

Gulf Bend Center moves its clinical operations to 2105 Port Lavaca Drive, Victoria.

1970 – Thomas G. Kelliher Jr. becomes the Executive Director of Gulf Bend Center (1970 – 1986).

1974 – Lavaca County joined Gulf Bend Center's service area.

1984 – Gulf Bend Center moves to 1404 Village Drive, Victoria.

1986 – Bill Dillard becomes the Executive Director of Gulf Bend Center (1986 - 1998).

1994 – Gulf Bend Center moves to 1502 East Airline, Victoria.

1998 – Don Polzin becomes the Executive Director of Gulf Bend Center (1998 - 2015).

2008 – The Center expanded to its current location at the Gulf Bend Regional Plaza, 6502 Nursery Drive, Victoria.

2010 – The Center announces the opening of Place4, a new counseling facility. CrossRoads Youth & Family Services becomes a division of the Center.

2011 – The Center pilots the first Mental Health First Aid program in the region. The Center opens the Basic Center (runaway & homeless shelter).

2012 – The Center develops a partnership with VISD, providing case managers & counselors in schools as needed.

2013 – The Center begins work on the Wellness Community—Capital Campaign begins. The Center expands counseling services by opening a second Place4 Counseling Center in Port Lavaca.

2014 – The Center & Citizens Medical Center partner to streamline the delivery of health care services with the implementation of the 6 person outpatient Extended Observation Unit (EOU).

2015 – Jeffrey Tunnell becomes the Executive Director of Gulf Bend Center (2015 – Present). The Center announces the opening of the Wellness Community.