

To new surroundings



STEPHANIE MCREYNOLDS (LEFT) AND Heartland Services' Jama Loveday fill a Christmas bag Thursday at the organization's facility on Home Avenue. Providing holiday gifts through an angel tree is just one way the adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities engage with the community.

SCOTT KELLER | THE DAILY TIMES

Heartland Services seeking new home in Maryville

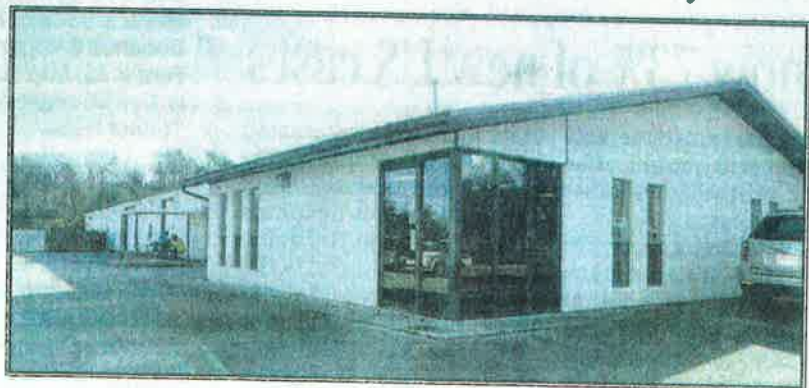
BY AMY BETH MILLER
amy.miller@thedailytimes.com

Heartland Services is selling its current location on Home Avenue to the city of Maryville and looking for a new location to serve adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The private nonprofit has been providing services in Blount County for 40 years, under the Douglas Cooperative Inc. name until 2018. Currently Heartland serves five counties, with day centers in Blount, Sevier and Cocke counties.

The center at 416 Home Ave., Maryville, currently serves about 30 adults. "We would serve more if we could hire folks," said Joyce Hughes, executive director of Heartland Services.

She notes that across the state Tennessee has an estimated 6,000



THE HEARTLAND SERVICES BUILDING at 416 Home Ave. will be purchased by the City of Maryville and used as a warehouse. The private nonprofit is looking for a better location to serve as a day center for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

SCOTT KELLER | THE DAILY TIMES

people with intellectual and development disabilities on a waiting list for services.

In past decades as part of teaching

work skills the Maryville site had an industrial license and the adults

SEE HEARTLAND, 5A

HEARTLAND: Property to be used as warehouse

FROM 1A

performed furniture stripping and refinishing as well as contract work for DENSO, Hughes said.

"This building is so huge, and we utilize such a tiny part of it now," Hughes said. "We can't afford to pay for space that we're not using.

The Maryville City Council voted this month to approve the purchase of the property, which includes 1.09 acres, a 12,052-square foot building and a 1,360-square foot shed, for \$525,000. Once environmental testing is complete and Heartland finds a new location, the purchase will allow the city to expand its Operation Center, using the space as a warehouse for equipment and materials.

The sale will allow the nonprofit to pay off the note on the existing building and purchase another, Hughes said.

At the Maryville day center staff still teach some job skills, but Hughes estimates the average age this location serves is 50 or older, and they have more medical needs than in the past, such as using walkers and wheelchairs.

Many live in Honey Alexander Group Home or supported living homes, she explained.

Every adult has an individual support plan with goals that may include motor skills, daily living skills or employment skills. They go into the community for lunch or to the library, participate in the Kiwanis-supported Aktion Club and have other activities.

They create artwork and visit nursing homes, for example. This time of year they also fill wishes from an angel tree.

In a new location Hughes hopes to have room to accommodate 50-75 adults, space for a large bathroom and adult changing tables, and other amenities that would provide more choices for the skills each person can work on.

Among the activities she'd like to continue are gardening and cooking. "We've done some container gardening," she said, and a nutritionist showed the adults how to cook with the produce.

"That may be some of the only fresh foods some of these individuals might see," Hughes said.

She has worked for the nonprofit since 1996 and been executive director since 2018. "I still get excited about what we do," she said.



SCOTT KELLER | THE DAILY TIMES

HEARTLAND SERVICES' RANDY BUCHANAN (left) and John Martin fill a gift bag Thursday afternoon. Providing holiday gifts through an angel tree is just one way the adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities engage with the community.



SCOTT KELLER | THE DAILY TIMES

BILL O'NEAL (left) and Heartland Services' Jama Loveday select items to fill a gift bag on Thursday. Providing holiday gifts through an angel tree is just one way the adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities engage with the community while at the day center.