

# Medina County Park District establishing recovery farm called Brown-Trump Homestead



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The Medina County Park District is working with two local nonprofits to establish a recovery farm for men recovering from substance use disorder.

The park district in December entered into a 10-year lease with Cathy's House, a Medina-based nonprofit that provides recovery housing for people with substance use disorder or alcoholism, on the Brown-Trump Homestead.

The property is located at 4092 Medina Road (state Route 18), next to Cleveland Clinic Medina Hospital, and includes three houses, including a Victorian-era home, plus several outbuildings.

The Medina Township property was owned by antique dealers Edson Brown and Ross Trump. In May 2022, the executors of the Brown-Trump estate chose the park district and its nonprofit partner, Friends of Medina County Parks, to become stewards of the property.

The park district said that the land is protected by a restrictive conservation easement, a legal document held by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. Most of the property has to remain open space or be farmed, but it can't host walking trails or be used for any commercial purposes.

The park district said that it was Brown and Trump's wishes that the property be preserved as a working farm for cultural, educational and aesthetic purposes; as a green gateway to the city of Medina and a way to balance encroaching commercial development; as a museum and historical site; and as a community space that inspires future generations.

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The park district said that it and Friends of Medina County Parks created a proposal for Cathy's House to lease the newest home on the property, built in 2001, to house men in recovery.

"This won't be a typical park district site, but our impact on the community here will be immeasurable," Medina County Park District Director Nathan Eppink said in a statement. "I got to see that in real time last October, when Hope Recovery Community and residents of the Cathy's House program helped establish a small orchard on the property. One of the participants said he was grateful to be there, to feel the sunshine that morning, because several months ago, he couldn't feel anything. It was powerful."

The park district said that in place of rent, Cathy's House will be responsible for maintaining the house, which will increase the organization's housing program by nearly 43%.

"We are grateful for this amazing partnership and collaboration with Hope Recovery Community and the Medina County Park District," Cathy's House Executive Director Jon Robinson said in a statement. "Hope Recovery Community had a vision for workforce development and farming early last year, and to be a part of this is incredible."

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The park district said that Hope Recovery Community — another Medina-based nonprofit that organizes recovery-focused advocacy activities, carries out recovery-focused community education and outreach programs and provides peer-based recovery support services — will lead the agricultural programming on the grounds.

Hope Recovery Community also develop several workforce tracts for the residents of the house and local recovery community.

Eventually, the food that's produced on the property will benefit the recovery community as well as Feeding Medina County, a local nonprofit combating food insecurity in Medina County, the park district said.

"This collaboration is profound," Hope Recovery Community Executive Director Stefanie Robinson said in a statement. "Seeing the park district, Cathy's House, Hope Recovery Community and Feeding Medina County working together to bring this farm back to life, support people impacted by addiction, increase housing and workforce opportunities and combat food insecurities...it's beyond anything we have seen anywhere."

The site won't be open daily to the general public. There will be special events and tours in the future, though Eppink said that's likely at least two years away.

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With funds from the Brown-Trump estate, the park district said that it and Friends of Medina County Parks will begin restoring the property's Victorian house, which was built in 1874. Once restored, it's slated to include display space for the Medina County Historical Society, offices for Friends of Medina County Parks and a meeting space for local nonprofits.

"Ultimately, this is about preservation and quality of life in Medina County," Eppink said in a statement. "Our board and our employees are honored and excited to be involved."

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