



NEWS RELEASE

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WITH RIBBON CUTTING, HOLY ANGELS EXPANDS EMPLOYMENT FOR AREA'S DISABLED

AdvoCare and David Toms Foundation help local nonprofit expand its mission

SHREVEPORT, LA – Community and regional leaders will gather at Holy Angels Wednesday morning for the ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening of the David Toms Foundation AngelWorks Gift Shop and the AdvoCare Conservatory. The two facilities provide Holy Angels with a foundation for expanding their innovative social enterprise program, AngelWorks, which offers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the unique opportunity to find fulfillment through meaningful work.

“David Toms and AdvoCare CEO Richard Wright, through their organizations, are making a difference in so many people’s lives by their support of Holy Angels,” said Harold Turner, President of Red River Bank and Holy Angels Board Member. “The AngelWorks program is an important part of the future of Holy Angels and these two projects will give it the jump start it needs.”

AngelWorks, for which Holy Angels received recognition from the Lieutenant Governor’s office, is comprised of four enterprises— Horticulture, Business Services, Culinary Arts and Creative Arts. Through a newly founded day program, Holy Angels has opened its doors to individuals living in the community who otherwise have little chance at gaining employment.

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David Toms, a local philanthropist and PGA golfer who rarely lets his name adorn his projects, remarked that the collaboration with Holy Angels and AdvoCare “will benefit Holy Angels while making a significant impact across the community.” The AngelWorks Gift Shop, which will carry his name, allows visitors and members of the community to purchase a variety of products crafted by AngelWorks participants.

Two such products, natural “vermicompost” and compost tea, will be produced regularly within the AdvoCare Conservatory, packaged by Horticulture enterprise participants and decorated for sale by Creative Arts participants. With assistance from the Northwest Louisiana Master Gardeners and full cast of hungry worms, residents and participants are able to turn shredding

waste from the Business Services enterprise into a product sustainable, both financially and environmentally. Within the year, AngelWorks is set to offer poinsettias, herbs and annuals all cultivated within the conservatory by horticulture participants.

The program is opening new avenues for introducing Holy Angels' mission to the community in new and unique ways according to Holy Angels CEO Laurie Boswell. To her, this grand opening is just one step in the facility's efforts to expand its relationship with the local and regional community.

"We're delighted AdvoCare and the David Toms Foundation have chosen to partner with Holy Angels," Boswell said. "Their shared commitment to serving others has bestowed Holy Angels with improved facilities and an empowering sense that we can achieve our goal of building self-esteem and purpose for peoples in our area with disabilities."

More than 100 residents participate in the AngelWorks program making products that range from compost to jewelry and cookies to oil paintings. Their work provides them with a source of income while also helping to cover a portion of the training costs. Exploring innovative revenue sources has become a pressing matter for the organization, which faces an annual funding gap of over \$1 million between operating costs and Medicaid support from the government.

"AdvoCare is honored to be a part of making a difference in the Shreveport community through the David Toms Foundation and mission of Holy Angels," AdvoCare President and CEO Richard Wright said. "The AdvoCare Conservatory will assist in the continuing efforts of helping Holy Angels' residents live independently. We are proud to be involved with such a cause."

The David Toms Foundation AngelWorks Gift Shop is located at 1012 Overton Brooks Road and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The AdvoCare Conservatory is located on the grounds of Holy Angels Residential facility and will be comprised of the conservatory, a butterfly garden and the horticultural center. The two areas will also serve to greet the community, beautify the campus, and teach both residents and staff to be good stewards of the serene and spiritual setting created by the founders of the organization.

Holy Angels is an independent nonprofit facility with over 300 employees and 180 residents representing 22 states. It has served the needs of the Shreveport-Bossier area for nearly 50 years. The AngelWorks program is just one of the many ways Holy Angels has sought to expand its mission of empowering, educating and caring for individuals with disabilities. For more information or volunteer opportunities, visit holyangelsresidentialfacility.org or contact Hilary Elbersen by phone at 318-629-0566 or by email at helberson@laholyangels.org.

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