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Miriam opens first private high school dedicated to students with learning differences

By Veneta Rizvic
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Building St. Louis Awards 2018—Renovation - Less than \$5 million

In 2016, Miriam: The Learning Disability Experts embarked on a mission to start the first non-sectarian, private high school in St. Louis dedicated to students with learning difficulties.

“These are young adults who can’t always be in a traditional education environment,” said Andy Thorp, executive director of Miriam. “What the academy does is give them a place where they can really learn in an environment with small classrooms and in an environment that they can succeed in.”

Housed inside Parkway United Church of Christ at 2845 N. Ballas Road, the school raised \$2 million from private donors to establish the high school. About \$100,000 was spent on the first phase of the project and \$48,000 on the second phase. The second phase of the project was completed in summer 2017, while phase one was completed in 2016, and 11 teachers and staff members were hired for the new facility.

The school transformed an older space to give students the look and feel of a new high school, including new classrooms, hallways, common areas and lockers. In addition, Miriam added a art room, science lab and coding room during the construction project. After a successful first year, the second floor was renovated to make space for the school’s sophomore class. Today, the school has 36 students.

About the project

Owner/developer: Miriam: The Learning Disability Experts
Contractor: PK Construction
Architect: Bond Architects