

## For Immediate Release

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## Cunningham Children's Home Wins Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award

“If I can do my duty as a Christian ought, If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought,  
If I can spread the messages as the master taught, Then my living will not be in vain.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 17, 2003 (Urbana, IL) – This is the inscription on the Martin Luther King, Jr. 2003 Outstanding Achievement award presented to Cunningham Children's Home by the City of Urbana, Illinois and the Urbana Human Relations Commission. Cunningham President/CEO Sam Banks accepted the award on January 17 at the 2003 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration.

Cunningham was recognized for providing outstanding continuous care and nurture to over 5,500 dependent and neglected children and youth in an atmosphere of Christian love and caring without regard to race, religion or culture throughout its 107-year history.

As Cunningham President/CEO Sam Banks explains, “We work with youth who have the most severe emotional and behavioral problems. Many of these young people come out of situations where they have been abused, neglected and abandoned and they have been removed from that situation and need a place where, most importantly, they are safe, cared for and provided for on a regular basis.”

Cunningham, as a major employer of over 200 people, was also recognized for maintaining a high level of ethnic diversity among staff members. The diversity of Cunningham staff members is actually greater than the diversity of the population of Champaign-Urbana.

During the most recent accreditation process, the EAGLE (Evaluation, Assessment and Guidelines Leading toward Excellence) program of the United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries, commended Cunningham for its staff ethnic composition. “The agency has worked diligently to increase the number of minority staff so that the staff reflects the makeup of its residents which results in increased identification of residents with staff members,” the review team noted.

On an annual basis, Cunningham Children's Home provides residential treatment services and supportive independent living programs for over 200 children and youth with extremely severe behavioral and emotional disorders. Cunningham Children's Home is a mission and ministry of the United Methodist Women of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference in partnership with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

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