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Children's Home to Break Ground on A Safer Home for Children and Youth

March 1, 2004 (Urbana, Illinois) — The kids who live at Cunningham Children's Home have a lot of the same problems as other kids their age — fears about friends, self-image, the future. But these special young people also cope with complex histories that include trauma, abuse, neglect, developmental delays, mental retardation and mental illness. These kids need an exceedingly safe environment in which to heal — a special setting where their special needs can be met.

To provide the high level of care that these young people deserve, Cunningham Children's Home announced that it will break ground on a new Residential, Clinical, and Health Services Building on March 17, 2004. At 11:30 a.m. members of the Cunningham Board and Cunningham Foundation Board, together with staff and volunteers from the agency, will gather near the site of the new building to celebrate the new facility.

“During the past several years we've seen declines in funding for social services which has meant that only the most seriously troubled young people are referred for residential care,” explained Sam Banks, CEO of Cunningham Children's Home.

He continued, “In order to help these kids, we have made significant changes to our programs and services. The critical thing we need now is a facility where we can provide the structure, safety and healing environment that will best meet the needs of our kids and staff.”

The new facility will boast improvements such as more secure windows and doors, closer access to nursing and counseling offices, more appropriate arrangement of children's bedrooms and common areas, and a new play therapy room.

The groundbreaking will include brief presentations by members of the Board, Capital Campaign Committee, and CEO Sam Banks; a short video; and ceremonial groundbreaking. About 75-100 people are expected to attend the event.

Cunningham is still raising funds to pay for the project via a capital campaign that will also lead to a new Spiritual Life Center and new and improved school and recreation facilities on the agency's main campus. Explains Banks,



“Although we’re still in the process of fundraising for the new facility, we felt we couldn’t delay construction. The kids need a safer and more therapeutic living environment now, so we’re getting started as soon as possible.”

On an annual basis, Cunningham Children’s Home provides residential treatment services, day treatment education services, and supportive independent living programs for over 250 children and youth with extremely severe behavioral and emotional disorders. Cunningham also provides emergency support services and cash assistance to families in need. 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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