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**For Immediate Release**

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**Cunningham Children’s Home Principal Retires After 23 Years of Service**

May 24, 2002 (Urbana, Illinois) — Cunningham Children’s Home today announced the retirement of Roger Burrus, Principal of Gerber School located on the grounds of Cunningham’s main campus, after 23 years of service. During his 23 years at Cunningham, Mr. Burrus has helped thousands of troubled children learn.

Burrus, spent his career in the field of special education. He was appointed principal of Cunningham’s residential school in 1979 when the school was housed in small classrooms on the second floor of Spalding Hall on the Cunningham campus. The school employed 5 teachers to teach 20 students. In 1982, when Gerber School was built on the grounds of Cunningham, Mr. Burrus became the school’s first principal. Today, twenty years later, Mr. Burrus has seen Gerber School grow to its current staff of nine teachers and 18 teacher’s assistants for 39 students.

Prior to his work at Cunningham, Burrus received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science degree in education at Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal. He taught for ten years at a children’s home in Normal, Illinois.

Founded in 1985, Cunningham Children’s Home provides residential treatment services and supportive independent living programs for children and youth with severe behavioral and emotional disorders. Cunningham annually serves nearly 300 boys and girls, age 8 to 21, and their families in a variety of programs. These include residential care, community-based group homes, supervised independent living including pregnant and parenting teens, treatment foster care and a day treatment school.

Children and youth at Cunningham Children’s Home suffer from emotional, behavioral and learning problems due to severe abuse and neglect, or birth trauma and health complications. Cunningham provides therapeutic intervention and special education to help open doors for them so they may experience hope and healing, a chance to learn, develop a vocational skill and live a fulfilling life.

Cunningham is a not-for-profit agency that receives contributions from private sources to help bridge the gap between referring agency reimbursements and the actual costs of caring for, educating and treating a child. 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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