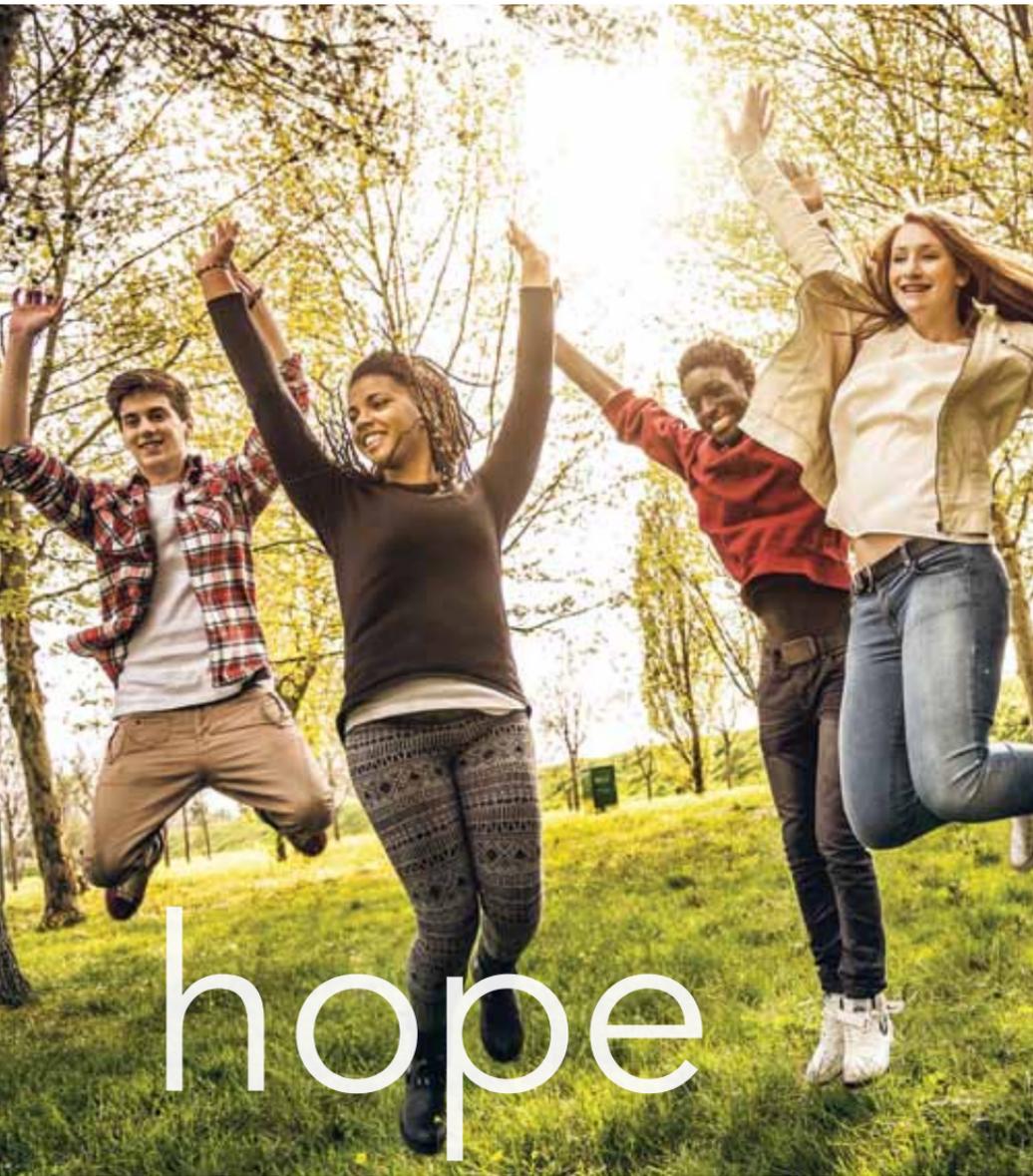


Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015



hope



Cunningham
Children's Home
hope begins here.

Dear Friends:

Because of you, our donors and friends, the healing and hope provided to the youth and families who are served by Cunningham Children's Home has remained steady against an unsure backdrop. As I write this letter, leaders in the state of Illinois continue to wrangle over a budget. As a result, many social service agencies have had to eliminate programs for those who need them most, but your commitment to our work has made it possible for us to stand strong.

At the same time, the Department of Children and Family Services and other referring agencies have begun to look at more comprehensive ways to serve the growing needs of youth and families in our state. We believe the new direction will be positive for the young people we serve and our staff are doing a remarkable job of anticipating the way Cunningham might offer our expertise in the new environment. There are many moving parts and uncertainties in the year ahead.

But for 120 years, our faith has carried us. We believe in an abundant life for all, especially our youth who have suffered because of circumstances beyond their control. We are steadfast in our efforts to give our best to the youth and families we serve.

Based on our strategic goals, the agency has continued focusing on trauma-informed care by providing additional training to staff and implementing new ways of assessing and treating our youth. As you read the stories on the following pages, you'll see how individualized treatment for Jarrod and Ellie is helping to move them towards success.

We are also finding new opportunities to involve families in the healing process. So many of the issues we address in youth are the result of adults in their lives who do not have the skills, knowledge, or





resources that they need to help. With our strategic focus on treating the family, we are creating a healthier environment for living and laying the footing for successful futures. As you read Kayla's story, you will learn how we help the whole family while providing hope for two generations.

Looking forward to 2017, we plan to break ground on the Education and Recreation Center (ERC), which provides much-needed spaces – special education classrooms, a gym, and dining facility – for our students. Special education plays a critical role in the work that we do. With the help of school staff, we have redesigned the original plans for the ERC, but all of the essential learning areas remain. The ERC is a big project with a price tag of \$14 million, but we are confident in the need and the ability to pay for it. Cunningham is committed to getting our kids the academic and behavioral skills necessary for them to have a stable future and play a positive role in the community.

While we step out in faith, we are grateful for our friends – donors, staff, United Methodist Women, churches, and many more – who come along side us to support our kids and staff. We could not do this work without the \$36 a day in benevolent aid that is offered by you to cover the non-reimbursed costs of care.

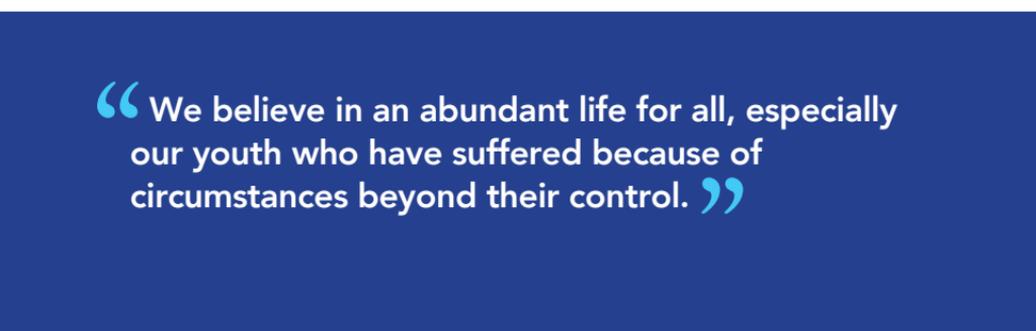
You are hope builders. You encourage us to remain focused on the important work that's ahead of us. And because of that, we regularly see that hope begins here.

With gratitude,



Marlin Livingston, LCSW

President /CEO Cunningham Children's Home



“ We believe in an abundant life for all, especially our youth who have suffered because of circumstances beyond their control. ”



a place to call home...

Kayla, a twenty something mother of two, holds her 2-year-old daughter in her lap, rocking her rhythmically as they play together under the expert guidance of a certified Theraplay Counselor from Cunningham Children's Home. This everyday moment is transforming Kayla and her family.

While pregnant with her second child, Gabriel, Kayla allowed her life-long depression to go untreated. The symptoms – overwhelming sadness, feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in everything – damaged her bond with her daughter, Skarlett, affecting her early development. When a pediatrician noted Skarlett's failure to thrive, both children were removed from Kayla's home and placed in foster care with their godparents.

hope begins here.

Prior to beginning Theraplay, Kayla confided in her Cunningham Counselor, Carrie, that she was afraid that the parent/child bond with Skarlett had been permanently damaged. Without the encouragement and support of Cunningham staff, Kayla may have lost hope and forfeited her parental rights, feeling powerless to repair the connection with her daughter. But during sessions, Carrie taught Kayla and Skarlett simple techniques to improve their bond.

The Theraplay techniques are similar to those that new parents use to interact with their infants: rhythmic rocking or bouncing, body contact, holding, and massage. These strategies helped Skarlett to re-attach to her mother and to recognize her as someone special beyond her other caregivers.

Success in Theraplay restored Kayla's hope for a loving relationship with her daughter, empowering her to do the work needed to get her kids back.

The goal of Cunningham's foster care staff is to restore families. Our program guided Kayla, but she did the hard work of managing her depression, getting the therapy she needed, and expanding her circle of support with healthy relationships.

Recently reunited, Kayla, Skarlett, and Gabriel are celebrating along with the entire Cunningham Foster Care team!

Foster Care supports youth and families in both Specialized and Traditional Foster Care programs

60 children placed in **loving** foster family homes.



Transitional and Independent Living provide **ongoing support** to our kids as they transition to adulthood.

57 youth worked towards independence in a **safe** and **supportive** environment.



a safe community...



Residential Treatment provides therapeutic, trauma-informed care delivered by established treatment teams including counselors, case managers, therapists, and staff.

92

children received 24 – 7 **unconditional** support, healing, and growth.



hope begins here.



Sixteen-year-old Jarrod began writing furiously, requiring two separate pieces of paper to express his thoughts. His emotions which centered on his relationship with his mother, and the abuse he endured, flowed feverishly onto the paper:

"You cried when I left you, but you didn't do anything to prove that you cared..."

You never listened...You went to prison, you got out, and you started again...

You beat me when I was little. Now I put holes in the wall because I wish you could have stopped, but you never tried."

Jarrod's freshly penned emotions were shared as part of a music therapy class provided to youth in Cunningham Children's Home's Residential Treatment Program. In this particular session, Jarrod was asked to write lyrics that would artistically represent his expressions of anger. Something clicked within Jarrod. This exercise provided a safe environment for him to open up and be vulnerable with his feelings for the first time. Cunningham music therapist, Kyle, worked with Jarrod to process his emotions about his mother and his traumatic past.

At Cunningham, music is one of the incredibly powerful treatment tools used to help youth like Jarrod respond to the abuse and trauma they have experienced. By writing out his thoughts and feelings in this creative challenge, Jarrod is taking the first of many steps on the road to healing.

**All stories are real, however names are changed and photos selected to protect the privacy of our youth.*

a good education...

Ellie works quietly and intently tying knots. In Ms. Wilson's Social Skills class at Cunningham Children's Home's Gerber School, students are making fleece blankets for a local homeless shelter. One of many projects in a new emphasis on service learning this year, this effort is teaching Ellie much more than how to craft.

"It makes me mindful that other people out there need help," she shares.

Her statement speaks volumes about the benefits of Cunningham's therapeutic environment, where educational curriculum can be tailored to support the healing and emotional growth of our kids. So many have spent their childhoods focused inward in order to survive abuse and neglect. Her disconnection from her peers often led to teasing and bullying. When Ellie arrived at Cunningham she was using self-harming behaviors to cope with her pain.

Research has demonstrated that giving improves health and well-being in powerful ways. Here at Cunningham, service learning projects are opportunities for our youth to focus externally and support the community that does so much to support them. These projects are helping our youth experience the joy and self-worth that comes from giving.

Like Ellie, they are learning that something as simple as knots of fleece can give hope.

hope begins here.



Three **special education schools** provided **202** youth with compassionate individualized programming.

34 young adults received **vocational certifications** preparing them for a self-sufficient and independent future.

10 teens received their high school **diploma.**



building hope...

“The young people at Cunningham need and deserve our love and support. This project is about the futures of these children, that’s why it is important to Mary and me. Please join us and show these kids their lives matter. If we don’t, who will? ”

Lou Henson

Cunningham Children’s Home is moving forward with plans to build a new school, dining facility, and gym for our students. In 2017, the agency will break ground on the Education and Recreation Center (ERC) which will serve up to 130 students who need intensive special education services as well as therapeutic treatment for their social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

The ERC will consolidate six education sites under one roof which allows us to provide a trauma-sensitive setting in which academic achievement and behavioral success can flourish. Through our programs and services, these youth will experience life changing opportunities which help them develop the learning and coping skills they need to complete high school and become successful in our communities. In turn, this helps all of us build a stronger community and breaks the cycle of dependency created when people must rely on social programs for support.

Former Illini coach, Lou Henson, and his wife, Mary, have supported the ERC project from the beginning. When asked why they believe in the project, Coach Henson said, “The young people at Cunningham need and deserve our love and support. This project is about the futures of these children, that’s why it is important to Mary and me. Please join us and show these kids their lives matter. If we don’t, who will?”

hope begins here.



The completed Education and Recreation Center will be home to our:

- Therapeutic Day School, equipped with the latest educational technologies
- Residential School, designed to maximize the individual learning experience
- Lou and Mary Henson Gymnasium, home to special therapies programming which will enhance physical health and emotional well-being
- Cafeteria, a welcoming and comfortable space

The ERC is a big project with a price tag of \$14 million, but we are confident in the need and the ability to pay for it. We are currently talking to friends and donors about the project and the role they may play in helping us raise funds. We need everyone working together, giving together to make this dream a reality for our students. Cunningham staff will be sharing more information at gatherings across the state. If you are interested in giving or helping to connect us with those who might give, please call our Director of Advancement, Sharla Jolly, at 217.337.9073 or email sjolly@cunninghamhome.org.

a spiritual journey...



hope begins here.

"I'd like to preach a sermon sometime," said Grant during a chapel leaders meeting.

This group helps with Cunningham's weekly chapel service, setting up the audio visual equipment, taking attendance, reading scripture, selecting candle lighters, assisting with communion, and offering opening prayers.

Grant, a gifted 16 year old, was ready for a new challenge.

Chaplain Gay King Crede worked with Grant for weeks on his message and presentation. He chose to focus his message on concerns he had about the stereotypes and judgment faced by many of his peers. Grant chose the story of Zacchaeus as his Biblical text. He learned the technical aspects of preparing a sermon, researching the topic, finding lighthearted jokes to draw in his audience, selecting songs to fit the theme, and developing the PowerPoint slides for the service. He even engaged some of the other youth in a dramatization of the story.

What he thought initially would be a simple project, turned out to involve more details than Grant anticipated. But he was enthusiastic about each part of the process. By the end he had a new appreciation for preparing a worship service, and said, "There's a lot more to this than I realized."

Recently, Grant delivered his second homily after weeks of reading his daily devotion book searching for inspiration. The theme of his second sermon? Endurance and not giving up.

Through these experiences, Grant has developed self confidence and public speaking skills, but most of all he has learned that the best sermons are those that speak to the preacher's heart.

60 youth participate in 10 hours of **spiritual growth opportunities** offered each week.



the heart of giving...



The Guardian Parent Giving Program continues to bless the lives of youth in our care. We are grateful to special friends of Cunningham Children's Home who make a commitment of support through their recurring gifts.

Marilyn Smith has been a Guardian Parent since the program's inception. Formerly of Chatham, Illinois, Marilyn became involved at Cunningham in 1980 as a District Officer with the United Methodist Women. She and her husband, Don, moved to Florida in 2003 but her commitment hasn't wavered.

"Cunningham gives kids a second chance – to develop themselves, learn new skills, and understand ways to connect to people. It's a wonderful place that makes it possible for these youth to do well when it's time for them to move on," Marilyn says about her ongoing investment.

Making her contribution each month via an automated bank withdrawal, Marilyn joins hundreds of other Guardian Parents who help Cunningham cover the growing financial gap between reimbursements for our youths' care and the actual cost. In appreciation of their partnership, a complete list of these individuals, families, groups, and congregations is shared at cunninghamhome.org.

Join Marilyn in supporting the exemplary care our Guardian Parents make possible for Cunningham youth. Program information and sign-up forms can be found at cunningham.org/giving.

Hope begins with your legacy gift.

The Director of Advancement, Sharla Jolly, is happy to help you explore options for designating a bequest to Cunningham Children's Home. As you consider a planned gift you should consult your own legal and tax advisors. The Advancement team is happy to speak with your advisors as well. Contact Sharla at 217.337.9073 or at sjolly@cunninghamhome.org.

Memorial and Honor gifts may be seen at cunninghamhome.org.

hope begins here.

the art of quilting...

Cunningham Children's Home's Festival of Quilts joins the Boneyard Arts Festival this spring as one of more than 90 galleries showcasing the arts in Central Illinois. The Boneyard is a four-day event which brings together area businesses, organizations, and artists while promoting the cultural vibrancy of our community.

During the Festival, Cunningham is excited to present a collection of show quilts that creatively blur the lines between conventional quilt making and fine art.

On Saturday, April 9 **Erick Wolfmeyer**, this year's guest speaker, will share a collection of his fine art quilts, and the stories which brought him to quilting as a creative outlet. Erick's work has been featured in numerous books and periodicals and has been exhibited through the US and China. To read more about Erick's work and experiences as an artist visit our website, cunninghamhome.org.



12th Annual Festival of Quilts
Friday and Saturday, April 8 & 9
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Join Erick Wolfmeyer as he shares how his quilt-making has evolved into a pathway to mend early losses and discover beauty and meaning on Saturday, April 9 at 10:30 and 2:30.

Learn how you can participate in the Festival by visiting us online at cunninghamhome.org.



1 in 5

**Children Would Not
Receive Services
Without You**

Responsible Stewardship Provides the Foundation
for Brighter Futures

Every child at Cunningham Children's Home is positively impacted by your support. Your investment provides high-quality, therapeutic care for our youth by addressing the trauma they have experienced and offering a personalized path to healing.

In order to offer exemplary programs and services, which we believe are critical for the youth we serve, Cunningham supplements the cost of care provided by referring agencies with support from donors like you. In fiscal year 2015, benevolent support helped us to fill the gap by covering \$36 per day per child. Cunningham provided 69,791 days of care to our youth which required a little more than \$2.5 million in charitable support to cover the funding shortfall. Your support is a valuable part of hope and healing for our kids.

Your generosity coupled with the agency's strategic management of expenses has allowed Cunningham to remain financially stable despite reimbursement rates that have not matched the actual costs of care. Given the current economic climate, it's unlikely that reimbursement rates will rise, only increasing our need to scrutinize every expense and rely on private support to help meet the needs of the young people in our care.

hope begins here.

Number of Clients Served by Cunningham Children's Home Fiscal Year 2015

Total Un-Duplicated Clients Served: 307

Program Name	Clients Served	Days of Care/ Enrollment Days
CIRCLE Academy Day School	110	14,070
Winfred Gerber Residential School	76	9,091
Residential Treatment-Main Campus	64	14,110
Residential Treatment- Group Homes	28	5,536
Independent & Transitional Living	57	11,668
Specialized and Traditional Foster Care	60	15,316

Note: There is some overlap between programs, for instance when a client moves from the residential program into Transitional Living or a foster home, or when a foster child attends CIRCLE Academy. 100% of Gerber School students are also Residential Treatment Program clients. 15 youth received services in two or more programs.

Fiscal Year 2015 Financial Summary



- 22%** Charitable Support
- 48%** IL Department of Children and Family Services
- 29%** Education Related Programs
- 1%** IL Department of Human Services and Juvenile Justice

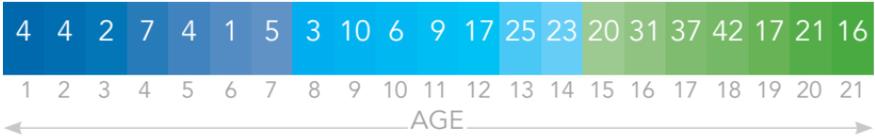


- 83%** Programs
- 12%** Administrative and Non-Program
- 5%** Fundraising and PR

Fiscal year 2015 covers July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. Administrative and non-program expenses include accounting, human resources, staff training, computer technology, phone service, professional accreditation and memberships, clerical support, and other costs associated with efficiently supporting agency programs and services.

About Our Clients

Number of Clients by Age



Percentage of Clients by Gender



Number of Clients by Race



Number of Clients by Home Region



Cunningham Children's Home is a mission and ministry of the United Methodist Women of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. As a National Mission Institution, Cunningham has a covenant relationship with the United Methodist Women, Inc. National Office.

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Bianca Green, *Secretary*
Cheryl Van Ness, *President-Elect*
Ron Hoyne, *Treasurer-Elect*

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Rev. Dr. Rose Booker-Jones

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Anita Anderson, *Spoon River*
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Members At Large

Carl Hudson

Ex Officio

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Marlin Livingston, *President/CEO, Cunningham Children's Home*
Carol Rankin, *Illinois Great Rivers Conference Committee on Health and Welfare*
Sally Smith, *Jurisdiction Core Planning Team Committee on Nominations*

Agency Leadership

Marlin Livingston, *President/CEO*
Pat Ege, *Vice President of Program Services*
Dan Holmer, *Vice President of Finance and Operations*
Jeni Carmazino, *Director of Human Resources*
Sharla Jolly, *Director of Advancement*

Memberships and Affiliations

American Association of Children's Residential Centers
Association of Fundraising Professionals, East Central Illinois Chapter
Central Illinois Human Resources Group
Champaign County Human Services Council
The Child Care Association of Illinois
Community Behavioral Health Association
Illinois Association of Private Special Education Centers
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Illinois Great Rivers Alliance
Illinois Inter-Agency Athletic Association
Society for Human Resource Management
Voices for Illinois Children—Foster Kids are Our Kids Campaign
United Methodist Association (UMA)
United Way of Champaign County

Accreditations, Licensure, Approval

AdvancedED North Central Association
Commission on Schools
Council on Accreditation of Services for Family and Children, Inc.
Department of Human Services
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Illinois State Board of Education
UMA EAGLE Accreditation Project

Cunningham Children's Home
1301 North Cunningham Ave.
Urbana, IL 61802
P.O. Box 878
Urbana, IL 61803-0878
T 217.367.3728
F 217.367.2896
Email: cch@cunninghamhome.org



Join us for the 12th Annual Festival of Quilts
Friday, April 8 and Saturday, April 9 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Spiritual Life Center at Cunningham Children's Home
cunninghamhome.org



1301 N Cunningham Avenue
Urbana, Illinois 61802

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