

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018

In February of 2014, the management team and an ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors for Cunningham Children's Home began a journey to update the agency strategic plan. The impetus for the review of the existing plan was the rapidly changing child welfare climate. The updated strategic priorities were developed based on the revised vision, mission, and core values.

During Cunningham's 120 year history, our programs, and services have evolved to address our top priority—the needs of kids, especially those who are most vulnerable. That's why our vision is straightforward. We want to see every child thrive. And our mission builds on that idea by stating that we want to nourish hope through effective solutions so children thrive and families flourish.

Our vision and mission statements may have a new look, but they remain aligned with the purpose and vision that motivated Mary and Judge Joseph Cunningham to entrust their home to today's United Methodist Women.

Cunningham's seven strategic goals address how we will grow to meet the current and future needs of children and their families. The core values that we have articulated will ground our work and bind us together. These values allow us to navigate the most challenging of situations by defining those parts of our collective character which are not negotiable.

Please review this document with the knowledge that strategic planning is an evergreen process which requires continual review, evaluation, and revision.

VISION

To see every child thrive

MISSION

To nourish hope through effective solutions so children thrive and families flourish

CORE VALUES

Spirituality: Respecting the belief that a greater power guides us

Teamwork: Achieving excellence by doing our part to support one another

Integrity: Being ethical, accountable, and transparent

Respect: Valuing and honoring all people with an open mind and heart

STRATEGIC GOALS



We will establish strategies to ensure that staff, facilities, programs, and fiscal management promote excellence and long-term viability of the organization.

As Cunningham moves forward, and programs and services evolve, it is imperative that we temper new initiatives by considering how we might enrich and sustain what we are currently doing. Human service organizations are facing the most challenging environment in decades. Flat levels of state funding, Medicaid reform, efforts to develop alternative community-based programs, the Affordable Care Act, and managed care initiatives will continue to place incredible demands on our agency. In order to remain viable, we must keep our focus on recruiting and retaining talented staff, maintaining and improving facilities, assuring that programs provide excellent outcomes, and responsibly stewarding finances.



We will develop advanced competencies in the area of trauma-informed care.

Trauma is defined as an exposure to an event that threatens/harms the physical or emotional integrity of an individual or someone close to them, overwhelms the person's ability to respond, and creates significant difficulty in functioning. Based on research, we have learned that exposure to trauma can change the way the brain works.

As we learn more about trauma, we recognize its impact not only on the youth and families that we serve but on many who live in our communities. It's important for us to enhance our trauma-informed treatment approaches, support caretaker capacity and increase community awareness so we can improve the lives of those impacted by it.



We will develop competencies that engage children, youth, and families in creating healthy solutions.

Abused and neglected individuals yearn to be part of a family, and research shows that developing family-like relationships can offer healing. Our agency has always worked to maintain and/or establish healthy relationships with family for our kids. Sometimes working with families offers unique challenges, and for that reason, we will need to improve our competencies in this area.



We will develop a broader spectrum of services for children, youth, and families.

Based on our observations, we believe there is a growing demand for community-based services. While residential treatment, foster care, and education services will continue to be at our core, we will look for new services with better financial margins. Our current lack of diversity of funding sources creates a threat to our long-term sustainability. We plan to provide community behavioral health services and will begin by exploring partnerships with local providers.

We will build an Education and Recreation Center to enhance the quality and safety of our services.

Currently, the school facilities on our Urbana campus create barriers to academic success for our students in these ways:

- noise levels create stress and hinder their ability to focus and learn
- crowded classrooms and narrow hallways create safety issues for youth, teachers, and staff
- “time out” space is not always sufficiently separated from classroom activities
- classroom layouts make it difficult for staff to be immediately accessible in a crisis
- separate classrooms, recreation, and eating facilities require transitions across campus which create opportunities for youth to run away or engage in unsafe behaviors

For this reason, we will continue to work toward building the Education and Recreation Center (ERC), a new, single facility to serve students from Gerber School and CIRCLE Academy-Urbana. Our students need and deserve school buildings where they can safely and effectively receive the very best education and treatment possible.



We will continue to enhance governance by improving communication, expanding educational opportunities, and broadening board diversity.

As a means of enhancing the governance of Cunningham, we will develop a balanced scorecard/performance dashboard to provide pertinent information in a concise, manageable way to those in leadership roles in order to help them make the best decisions for the agency. In addition, we will seek training opportunities that inform Board Members on issues that specifically relate to their governance role. And we will continue to look for board members who offer a variety of work/ life experiences, cultural backgrounds, and talents to enrich our diversity.



We will evaluate Cunningham’s brand and its impact on new funding and service opportunities.

As Cunningham looks to expand needed programs and services, the agency must determine the resonance of its brand. We will explore opportunities to conduct a brand-recognition survey and market analysis and use results to drive future marketing of programs and services.

