

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
THE SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS  
AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHILD WELFARE AGENCY**

**PREAMBLE**

Throughout its history, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its predecessors have maintained an active relationship with and support for residential programs serving suffering and troubled children and their families. These programs for children have been associated with the Church in a variety of ways. Some missions were owned by Presbyteries, or synods, others maintained varying types of formal and informal agreements with governing bodies for their mutual benefit.

From the earliest days, Presbyterians have heard the words of Jesus, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," and have committed themselves to a variety of mission efforts for children who are troubled, neglected, abused, homeless, poor or otherwise in need of the care and nurture of the people of God.

In 1972, a reorganization of the structure of the United Presbyterian Church, USA, brought about the formation of new synod boundaries with new names. The Synods of Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky became The Synod of the Covenant. The new Synod exercised ownership and demonstrated its commitment to the mission to children at the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center by the election of the Agency's Board of Directors, counsel and guidance through the appropriate committee of Synod and assistance in obtaining financial support.

In 1981, The Synod of the Covenant recognized that a new climate for ministry meant that both the Church and the institutions with which it related would be better served by a partnership arrangement in which neither controlled the other, but both entered into voluntary agreements which detailed the commitments each made to the other and ways in which they might cooperate together in ministry. As part of that process, the Synod Assembly of The Synod of the Covenant on January 27, 1987 approved changes in the Articles of Incorporation of the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center which recognize the new status of the Agency as an independent corporation no longer controlled by the Synod.

At the beginning of 1988, a realignment of synod boundaries brought an interruption in the relationship between the Synod of the Covenant and the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency because the three Kentucky presbyteries became part of the Synod of Living Waters which was comprised of the states of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Recognizing that the suffering children of Ohio needed and deserved Buckhorn's care, many Presbyterians in Michigan and Ohio continued their support of the agency and encouraged the Synod of the Covenant, with the blessing of the Synod of Living Waters, to continue a covenantal tie with the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency. This relationship continues to this day. These Presbyterians also challenged the Agency to develop a campus in Ohio. Their support led to the opening of the Buckhorn Children's Center of Ohio in Chesterville on property donated by the Broad Street Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Ohio.

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

At the First Annual Meeting of the Synod of Living Waters, January 18-19, 1988, this Memorandum of Understanding between the Synod of the Covenant and the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center was adopted by the new Synod.

## I

On its part, The Synod of Living Waters agrees to cooperate with the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center in the following manner:

- a. At the heart of the Synod's agreement is its conviction that troubled and suffering children are the responsibility of the Church and individual Presbyterians, and that the care and nurture of the children is a vital mission of the Church.
- b. The Synod will cooperate fully with the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center in the interpretation of the program of the Agency in the congregations of the Synod, and in the development of support for child welfare issues and the ministry of the Agency.
- c. When special needs arise for the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center, the Synod will receive and act on requests for special offerings. If authorized, the Synod will join the Agency in seeking authorization by the presbyteries within whose bounds such offering would be solicited.
- d. Individual donors from the Presbyterian Church (USA) within the Synod of the Covenant may be asked to give directly to support the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center without prior approval of the Synod. These gifts need not be reported to the Synod, nor will they be deducted from any allocation Synod may make.
- e. The Synod of Living Waters will seek to interpret and promote the common concerns of the communities of faith and nurture as represented by the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

## II

On its part, the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center through its independent Board of Directors agrees to the following statement of its responsibilities and procedures for the period of this agreement.

- a. At the heart of the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center's program lies the conviction that every troubled and suffering child needs and deserves a program of the highest quality that provides love, discipline, choices with concomitant responsibilities, high expectations, and encouragement if he or she is to develop to his/her full potential.
- b. The President/CEO of the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center, or his/her designee, will cooperate regularly in counseling with the Synod concerning the status of children in the Synod and in the presbyteries as it relates to the response of these governing bodies to the child welfare needs of the day.

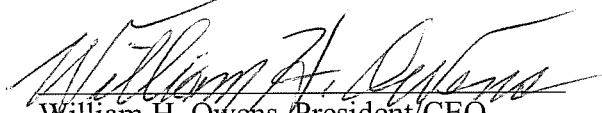
- c. The Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center agrees to cooperate with the Synod of Living Waters in fund-raising within the Church constituency in harmony with the procedures and policies of the Synod and those set forth in Part I. When major campaigns are planned, there will be prior consultation with the Synod for purposes of coordination.
- d. The Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center agrees to work with Synod in approaching presbyteries and congregations with the interpretation of the service goals of the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center and their relationship to the mission objectives of the Church.
- e. The Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency/Buckhorn Children's Center will maintain its basic child and family nurture program as a vital outreach of the Church. It will also provide and support the Synod in offering special programs in the areas of continuing education for church and community leadership, and assist that leadership in identifying urgent children's needs and developing programs to meet those needs to the limit of its resources.

III

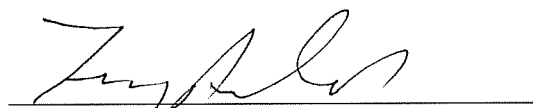
A copy of this covenant shall be printed in the Minutes of the Synod. It will be reviewed periodically by the Synod Ministries Committee, and by the CEO and the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency, and will remain in effect until such time as either party requests a revision in writing. Any revision must then be ratified by the Synod and the Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency Board of Directors.

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After reviewing this Memorandum of Understanding, we find the terms agreed to in 1997 just as timely and acceptable now as they were then and, therefore, we sign it without any changes being made.

  
William H. Owens, President/CEO  
Presbyterian Child Welfare Agency

11-04-08  
Date

  
Terry Newland, Synod Executive  
Synod of Living Waters, PC(USA)

1/30/09  
Date