

**THE NATIONAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
dba DISCIPLES BENEVOLENT SERVICES**

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In the loving and caring spirit of Christ, Disciples Benevolent Services will partner with regions, congregations and others to develop ministries of care in response to the needs of their communities.

Disciples Benevolent Services is the 121 year-old social and health services general unit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). During 2007, Disciples Benevolent Services was privileged to serve more than 500 people through its residential and community-based programs for children, youth and families, people with disabilities and older adults. In addition, Disciples Benevolent Services sponsors 53 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing facilities for older adults and people with disabilities. These HUD facilities serve more than 4,700 people.

In 2007, Disciples Benevolent Services utilized the spiritual gifts, education and training of approximately 350 employees and volunteers in six operating facilities as it continued its mission of service.

What are the Disciples Benevolent Services long-range planning goals and how are they integrated into the mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?

Disciples Benevolent Services recognizes that mission work is very much at the heart of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Disciples Benevolent Services has heard the call from the Church to be more mission-oriented. Disciples Benevolent Services acknowledges that in many ways the Church is seeking to reduce the overall reliance on a single general ministry unit to provide mission on behalf of its regions and congregations, such as NBA once did throughout its long history. We believe that the Church is now looking to have mission work developed and administered at the “grass roots” level and we see our role within the Church as being the one who helps to enable mission work at the “grass roots” level.

To better reflect our mission and purpose/role within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we changed our “doing business as” name in 2007 to Disciples Benevolent Services. In addition, we restated our mission statement to the one that appears at the top of this report.

Our new name keeps the word “Benevolent” at the center/heart of our name. Benevolent is defined as “being organized for doing good,” and that is what we strive to do and to be. Also, we were intentional to change our name from the word “National” to “Disciples.” We believe that putting the word “Disciples” in front of our name is to better announce and define who and what we are. Lastly, changing the word “Association” to “Services” is meant to reflect a change from being an organization that is exclusively a provider of services to an organization that enables services. Our primary goal is to enable regions, congregations and others to develop locally-based ministries of benevolent care.

Our restated mission focuses on partnering with regions and congregations of the Church in order to develop ministries of care at the local level. Our mission is to help Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregations do mission work in their own communities. We don't seek solely to perform mission work on behalf of the Church, but rather, to help the Church perform mission work where it sees the greatest need.

Knowing the current priorities of the church are to start new congregations, transform existing congregations for mission, nurture leadership for these new and renewed congregations, and become a pro-reconciling/anti-racist Church, what is the role of Disciples Benevolent Services in fulfilling any of these priorities?

The main role of Disciples Benevolent Services in fulfilling these priorities is that of being a partner with different segments of the Church in helping to develop and to carry out mission work. As a partner, Disciples Benevolent Services will work with congregations in identifying mission needs and desires within their own community and in developing new programs to carry out the mission work. Through these efforts, Disciples Benevolent Services helps fulfill the Church's priority of transforming existing Disciple congregations for mission work.

As a partner with regions and local congregations in the development of new programs of mission work, Disciples Benevolent Services will nurture and enable leadership at the local level to administer the programs and services. By working with a de-centralized model that includes local ownership, management and governance of the programs, services and projects, Disciples Benevolent Services helps fulfill the Church's priority of nurturing and developing leadership within the Church.

Because our programs, services and operating units have always provided ministries of care to all walks of life, without discrimination, and because our mission is to continue providing similar ministries of care into the future, without discrimination, Disciples Benevolent Services helps meet the Church's priority of becoming a pro-reconciling/anti-racist Church. Without question, Disciples Benevolent Services will minister to all of God's children, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age or disability.

In what ways is Disciples Benevolent Services partnering with the other expressions of the Church and with other general ministries?

Starting with the 2007 General Assembly of the Church in Fort Worth, Texas, Disciples Benevolent Services has been approached by dozens of Disciple congregations throughout the United States about developing new ministries of care within their local community. Since the 2007 General Assembly, Disciples Benevolent Services has called upon multiple congregations, at their request, to offer support, guidance, direction and consultation on how to get started on their particular vision of a new ministry of care program within their community.

Disciples Benevolent Services has had meetings with Church Extension to discuss the possibilities of partnering with them to help finance future new ministries of care developments for Disciple congregations.

Disciples Benevolent Services continues to provide funds to Regions in which there is a former NBA older adult service unit to help support senior care in the Region through spending rate earnings on benevolent care funds. Disciples Benevolent Services will also be working with Regions in which there is a former NBA older adult service unit to help support either current senior care programs or new senior care programs through spending rate earnings of other funds that we continue to hold in the name of the corporations of the former NBA older adult service units.

Disciples Benevolent Services has consulted with Ben Bohren, Regional Minister of the Northern California-Nevada Region, and Sally Robinson of the Northeast Area of the Mid-America Region on developing a national senior services program, to include chaplaincy services. The initial goal of this program is to ensure that all residents of facilities previously owned and operated by NBA are given the opportunity to receive chaplaincy services from a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) clergy. Our ultimate goal is to have the initial emphasis on chaplaincy services lead to other potential services for senior adults.

During NBA's decades of ministry, care for senior citizens was a strong expression of "What We Do Best Is Care." In the process of emerging from bankruptcy, the eleven retirement communities, where NBA provided care to seniors, were sold.

The staff of Disciples Benevolent Services has maintained contact with most residents of those retirement communities that were sold. While many have expressed several areas of concern, one seems to be more common than any other throughout: the need for chaplaincy services.

While under NBA management, the eleven retirement communities were encouraged to provide chaplaincy services to their residents. Now that most of these facilities are owned and operated by for profit entities, the emphasis on chaplaincy services is no longer encouraged.

In the spirit of assisting with development of "grass roots" ministries, Disciples Benevolent Services looks to meet the need for chaplaincy services. A promising possibility is partnering with clergy in local congregations to enlist them to serve in a chaplaincy capacity for a former NBA retirement community.

Disciples Benevolent Services plans to meet with current owners of those retirement communities to seek permission to offer chaplaincy services at the facilities. In that conversation, Disciples Benevolent Services will inform current ownership about the program and that it comes at no cost to the facility or to the persons choosing to receive services.

Once approval is secured from current ownership, Disciples Benevolent Services will research the local area to identify a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) clergy that would be willing to partner with Disciples Benevolent Services to provide clergy services to the facility. Disciples Benevolent Services will hire a clergy initially on a part time basis. Clergy services would be rendered weekly with a scheduled worship and individual resident visits. The employee would have to undergo a background check and it would be preferred that identified clergy would have Clinical Pastoral Education. Chaplaincy services would be made available to all residents regardless of religious preference.

How has Disciples Benevolent Services served to strengthen congregations for mission?

Disciples Benevolent Services has engaged Southeast Gateway Area (of the Mid-America Region) congregations of the Church to develop a new ministry in the St. Louis area that is consistent with the congregations' mission desires. A steering committee of approximately 15 individuals from the Southeast Gateway Area meet on a monthly basis in order to develop viable, new programs for the 9-acre North St. Louis campus of ECHO. While this steering committee goes about its work, the ECHO transitional living program for homeless teenage youth and The Olive Branch program for homeless, pregnant teenage girls continues to be in operation on the ECHO campus.

The steering committee is also considering using part of the ECHO campus for a mission-based housing center for the Church. This would allow for congregations across the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to send their mission workers to St. Louis to work on mission needs within the St. Louis community while they are housed on the ECHO campus. This idea further supports how Disciples Benevolent Services may serve to strengthen congregations for mission.

Disciples Benevolent Services is also currently active in working with Hiram Christian Church in Ohio on the development of an adult autism farm project in their community, with Eureka Christian Church in Illinois on the development of a senior adult facility in their community and with various Disciple congregations in the Florida Region who are looking to develop affordable housing projects in their communities for senior adults.

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

Christian Services for Children in Alabama (CSCA), in Selma, since 1991, has provided community-based treatment care for emotionally challenged children, adolescents and their families. The Family Options program responds to early signs of neglect and abuse by providing in-home intensive services to families before the child is further endangered. This program is an intensive, in-home and crisis oriented service designed to safeguard children in an at-risk environment while preventing their removal from the home, or upon their return from placement.

ECHO, founded in 1889 as an orphanage called the Christian Orphan's Home, has adapted its services throughout its history according to the needs of the community. In the 1970's, ECHO worked with the Missouri Children's Division to create an emergency program that allowed police and the Missouri Children's Division to refer youth to ECHO in crisis situations. In 1978, the Christian Orphan's Home changed its name to ECHO/Emergency Children's Home to reflect its change in services. Since then, ECHO has continued to develop numerous programs such as residential living, transitional living and recreational programs to assist its "psychological orphans." The residential living program was closed on March 31, 2007, but the transitional living program and others continue. Currently, ECHO serves abused and neglected, homeless young men, ages 16-21, from the St. Louis area through a transitional living program. These young men have no or limited family support. ECHO provides them opportunities to develop the life skills needed to live as independent and productive citizens.

Florida Christian Center, in Jacksonville, since 1994, has a one-story, 8,246 square foot building that provides a home for ongoing programs and activities for the residents of neighboring Florida Christian Apartments and Sundale Manor, two NBA-sponsored HUD facilities for older adults. The Community Center is staffed by a full-time director/chaplain who ministers to on-site older persons as well as to expand services into the greater Jacksonville area. The Center is a popular gathering place for residents where they meet for fellowship, classes and other group activities. Amenities include a chapel, auditorium, kitchen, TV studio, therapeutic pool and a well-equipped exercise room. Recently, the Florida Christian Center contracted with an outside health care company to provide a health clinic for seniors in the Community Center building. A local Disciples Hispanic congregation uses the chapel on a regular basis for their church services.

The Olive Branch (A Center for Young Families), opened in 1994, provides residential and social services to homeless pregnant and parenting teen girls in St. Louis. Each of eight girls, ages 14 through 21, and their babies, live in private rooms on the ECHO campus. They share living room, bathroom and kitchen facilities, and share in cooking and cleaning responsibilities. While at The Olive Branch, all girls are required to be in school and participate in health care, parenting life-skills and goal-setting classes.

Serra Center, in Fremont, California, established in 1973, offers three types of support services for persons with developmental disabilities. The Intermediate Care Facility – Developmentally Disabled Handicapped Care (ICF-DDH) program provides 24-hour care and supervision in group living settings within the community. Supported Living Services offers individuals the opportunity to live in the environment of their choice – regardless of their disability. And Independent Living Services focuses on providing 1:1 staff-to-client training on specific identified living skills, thereby eliminating the need for the services when the skill is mastered. In April, 2007, we were notified that according to a study being conducted by the University of California-Irvine, Serra Center cares for the oldest living person with Downs Syndrome in America.

Woodhaven, in Columbia, Missouri, has been serving men and women with developmental disabilities since 1964. Persons aged 19-70 live in more than 50 homes and apartments in the Columbia area, where they work, shop and play. This fully accredited program is nationally recognized for its high standards of treatment of the people it serves. Woodhaven provides supported living services to more than 100 people. Many of the people served by Woodhaven have live-in staff to provide them with support. In addition, Woodhaven has a Day Program that is designed to meet the needs of the active men and women that Woodhaven serves and others not served by Woodhaven.

In all, every day, these six units provide support and care to over 500 families, children and adults, helping them lead a happier, healthier and fuller life.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
(Attached)