

NACCFA NEWSLETTER VOL I
APRIL 24, 2004

WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

SET YOUR CALENDARS

The 2005 NACCFA National Summit is scheduled for February 3-5, 2005 in Miami Beach, FL. His House Children's Home in Opa-Locka, FL is our host. A committee has been formed, chaired by Jean Caceres-Gonzales, His House CEO and progress has already been made in selecting speakers and setting the program elements. If you would like to make suggestions to the program committee please send them to summitprogram@naccfa.org.

The NACCFA Board of Directors has also decided to host an Executive Roundtable in conjunction with the CWLA Biennial Leadership Conference at Hilton Head, SC, Oct. 20-22, 2004. The Executive Roundtable will convene on the evening of Friday, the 22nd and conclude on Saturday, the 23rd.

Please watch the NACCFA website, www.naccfa.org, for details on both of these events.

NEWS FROM NACCFA COUNTRY

Class Action Law Suit In Mississippi: Children's Rights, a child welfare advocacy group based in New York has filed suit in Mississippi alleging maltreatment of children in the Mississippi Child Welfare system. The suit focuses on children in residential programs and the foster care system. At the core of the issue is whether or not dependent and neglected children should be placed for a significant length of time in a group living environment. This action is placing significant stress on several NACCFA member agencies in Mississippi and Children's Rights will likely proceed to other states in the future with the same agenda.

Kentucky Baptist Children's Home Update: Three years ago, a lesbian employee sued KBHC for Religious Discrimination. The ACLU also joined the suit naming the governor of Kentucky along with KBHC alleging a conflict in the separation of church and state because KBHC has public contracts with the state of Kentucky and is a Christian agency. Suit was filed in Federal District Court and the Religious Discrimination charge was dismissed. The case was appealed to the Federal Appellate Court which refused to hear it. However, the Separation of Church and State portion of the suit was not dismissed. The ACLU is taking no action at this time, thus the matter remains in limbo. The Separation issue of course has great significance to all agencies with state contracts. A judgment against KBHC and the state of Kentucky could set a national precedent likely impacting NACCFA agencies around the country perhaps forcing agencies to choose between economic viability and their own identity. We will remain watchful as this potentially far-reaching litigation develops.

Julian Academy Fire: Last October, during the California wildfires, Julian Youth Academy was totally destroyed. Fortunately, all staff and students were evacuated safely. From that time until now, Julian has remained in tact, having temporarily relocated to Hume Lake Christian Camp. CEO Phil Ludwig reports that God has been faithful in providing students for the Academy and even a waiting list. Julian is in the process of rebuilding at the original site and although it has been a long and tedious process, Phil reports that God has paved the way. The academy operations and students will be brought back to the original campus in the next couple of months and will use modular buildings until the new building is completed.

Sunshine Acres Celebrates 50 Years of Service: Sunshine Acres Children's Home is the result of a 17 year dream held by the late Rev. Jim Dingman and his wife Vera. In 1954, they took possession of a 150 acre parcel of desert with some old buildings outside of Mesa, AZ. Most thought it would never survive. Carol Whitworth, Jim's and Vera's daughter, and her husband Jack spent 6 weeks at Sunshine Acres in 1960 helping the Dingman's with the program. They moved into an old house on the property with 20 teenage boys and 3 children of their own. During that six week period, they caught the vision of what God and love could do in the lives of children and they stayed. Carol became Executive Director in 1981.

The 50 Year Celebration was held April 1-4, 2004. What began as an abandoned property in the middle of nowhere has become a beautiful campus where more than 1,400 children have called home. Many of them returned for the celebration some bringing their grandchildren with them. For 50 years Sunshine Acres has been supported solely by gifts from gracious donors.

SUMMIT SUMMARY 2004

The 2004 NACCFA Summit was held January 15-17, 2004 at Sunshine Acres Children's Home, Mesa, AZ. From all accounts, it was as one of the best. Kay Ekstrom and Carol Whitworth acted as co-chairs of the Summit and they did a superb job of organizing and presenting a program that was informative and enriching. The staff of Sunshine Acres hosted the NACCFA delegates with grace and hospitality.

The Summit highlights included the Sunshine Acres Choir. This group of kids sang praise songs and warmed the hearts of all in attendance. More than one delegate brushed a tear as they sang. "Coach" Carl Heath (retired) was inspirational with his testimony and his commitment speaking to the group after just a few weeks of recovery from multiple by-pass surgery. Georgia Dolph was an excellent worship leader. She began every plenary session with words and songs focused on the Lord and His majesty. John Trent's insightful presentation on "leading from your strengths" was quite informative. Whether you were a Lion, an Otter, a Golden Retriever, or a Beaver, everyone had a lot of fun with the Personal Strengths Survey he distributed. Daisy Hepburn's presentation on teaching using the II Timothy 2 passage was most helpful. Jordan Lorence of the Alliance Defense Fund presented a summary of the legal landscape Christian agencies are facing at this time in American history. This is often termed the "age of litigation". Christian organizations are constantly faced with the prospect of legal

action against the agencies themselves and the individuals who work in them. Jordan's presentation was timely, provocative, and profound.

The workshops were excellent as well. They were conducted by NACCFA members. The fact that NACCFA members are highly skilled and very competent was quite evident. The workshops were as good, if not better, than any presented at any other conference, bar none.

Friday evening Summit participants joined various board members and went to local restaurants. The food was only surpassed by the fellowship. The food nourished the bodies and the fellowship nourished spirits of all who participated.

Topping off the Summit was a free round of golf at the Longbow Golf Club of Mesa. It was a beautiful afternoon and the course was in great shape. While most of the rest of the country struggled with sub-freezing weather and snowy conditions, delegates played golf in shirtsleeves.

In short, the 2004 Summit was a great experience.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:

"A great opportunity to network with similar agencies around the country" Mike Dezember, White's Residential and Family Services, Wabash, IN.

"NACCFA has a great opportunity to become a prophetic voice in America" Gordon Hankins, Kleos Children's Community, Klammoth Falls, OR.

"It (the Summit) always ends up being the most valuable and enjoyable conference I attend the entire year." Gary Behler, Bethel Bible Village, Hixon, TN.

"We've been to a lot of good conferences over the past thirty-five years, but the Summit at Sunshine Acres was the best by far." Roy Martinez, Hope Youth Ranch, Minden, LA.

"The NACCFA Summit was an 'oasis in the desert', literally, figuratively, professionally, and spiritually." Nancy Hungerford, Natchez Children's Home, Natchez, MS.

"Going to the NACCFA Summit in Mesa, AZ from the cold of the Colorado winter was like having a warm cup of hot chocolate on a frosty morning." Harl Hargett, Lost and Found, Wheatridge, CO.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:

Thanks to the many agencies who have renewed their memberships to date. However, we have yet to reach our membership and budget goals for the year. If you haven't sent in your dues for 2004, please do so. The dues structure is uncomplicated and

remains unchanged for 2004. Annual membership fees are based on agency's total annual revenue:

- Less than or equal to \$250,000 \$100
- \$250,001 up to \$500,000 \$200
- \$500,001 up to \$1,000,000 \$400
- \$1,000,001 up to \$1,500,000 \$500
- \$1,500,001 up to \$2,000,000 \$700
- Over \$2,000,000 \$800

Remember: Membership has its privileges.

DIRECTIONS ...

This is the first newsletter I've written since becoming NACCFA's Executive Director. I am honored to be associated with this fine organization and humbled to be the person in leadership. Leading a bunch of other CEO's might be close akin to "herding cats", but you, my colleagues, have been extremely supportive and affirming. Thank you.

As we move forward it is critical that we know our direction. If we wonder aimlessly, we'll be totally ineffective and perhaps even dangerous. At the September 2003 Board Meeting, the Board drafted a vision statement that provides that compass we need to navigate the turbulent waters of our times. It is as follows:

It is our vision that by September 18, 2008, NACCFA will have the organizational resources to support its membership through national advocacy, comprehensive membership services, spiritual support, and standards of excellence.

In talking with other leaders in NACCFA I find that these words resonate with them. NACCFA has a Strategic Plan, a clear vision, and, most importantly, a cause to champion. I trust that you will join us as we boldly move forward to advance the cause of Jesus Christ and to fulfill His call on us to care for vulnerable children and families in the United States and around the world.

Stephen M. Yahnig
Executive Director