

# **Board of Child Care**

*of the United Methodist Church*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Board of Child Care Piloting National Initiative to Recruit Human Service Workers**

BALTIMORE – (Sept. 26, 2008) – The Board of Child Care, a Baltimore County-based child welfare agency, is taking part in a new national program to attract and retain more young professionals to positions within the human services field that typically experience high turnover.

Three fellows with the new Turning the Tide Fellowship Program have committed to two years of full-time employment with the Board of Child Care (BCC) at its residential care facility and emergency shelter for children and youth in the Randallstown-area. During their time with BCC, the fellows will be trained as child care workers, as well as child care worker supervisors.

The Turning the Tide Fellowship Program launched this fall at three pilot agency sites – the Board of Child Care in Baltimore, the Children’s Home and Aid Society in Chicago and Lutheran Social Services in Wisconsin. The purpose of the program is to recruit bright, young professionals to opportunities within the human services to ensure the future viability of the sector. Turning the Tide is similar to two other national workforce recruitment programs - Teach for America and AmeriCorps, which have successfully trained and retained young talent in fields that need them.

Turning the Tide is a partnership between the Alliance for Children and Families – a Milwaukee-based membership association for child and family serving agencies - and Public Allies – an organization also based in Milwaukee that builds young leaders within communities.

Public Allies will provide on-going leadership training to BCC’s fellows during their employment. After completing their two-year commitment, BCC’s fellows will receive a stipend from Public Allies. By providing the Turning the Tide fellows with extra support and training, BCC hopes the young professionals will either continue as employees in Baltimore or pursue their career elsewhere within the human services field.

BCC has been involved from the beginning in developing the Turning the Tide program. BCC President and CEO Thomas Curcio helped plant the seed for the idea as an advisory

committee member with the Alliance for Children and Families, and BCC contributed some of the program's upstart funds.

"It's a real passion and interest of mine as an executive to continue to try to find ways to enrich and enhance the workforce in child welfare," said Mr. Curcio. "Since 75 to 80 percent of most child welfare agencies' budgets relate to personnel, and because our direct service workers are especially important, our continued focus must be on ways to improve so that the children we serve are getting the highest degree of care."

One of the primary drivers for exploring new recruitment and retention strategies is the high turnover rate within the human services profession. Among the Alliance's 350 member agencies with budgets above \$10 million – including BCC – the turnover rate for program staff averages about 43%.

"Being a child care worker at a residential care facility for youth is a challenging job," said Mr. Curcio. "The hours are long, the wages are low, and the children we serve have complex needs. Most child care workers are young, with little or no experience. They enter the field with a mission driven purpose, but often burn out quickly when they find the work is demanding and difficult."

During their time at BCC, the fellows will be encouraged to learn more about leadership roles within child welfare, as well as to provide feedback on the pros and cons of their daily work.

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**The Board of Child Care is a nonprofit, multi-service organization serving children and families in Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia as an outreach ministry of the United Methodist Church. Programs include residential treatment, foster care, early childhood education, emergency shelters, counseling, adoption and education services. Learn more at [www.boardofchildcare.org](http://www.boardofchildcare.org).**

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