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**Contact:** Sandy Furnell, Communications & Marketing Director  
864.631.0158 or 864.420.7292 (cell)  
[sfurnell@miraclehill.org](mailto:sfurnell@miraclehill.org)



## **Miracle Hill Foster Care Receives Waiver Protecting Religious Freedom**

GREENVILLE, SC (Jan 23, 2019) – In response to a request from South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a [waiver](#) allowing Miracle Hill Foster Care to maintain its religious beliefs and still be licensed and funded to recruit foster parents for the state’s foster children.

“We are deeply gratified by this decision, which allows Miracle Hill Foster Care to keep its license and continue serving nearly 200 foster children and more than 230 foster families,” said Reid Lehman, President/CEO of Miracle Hill Ministries. “It’s always been about the license, our right to exist.”

In early 2018, Miracle Hill Foster Care’s license was threatened by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) because of additional HHS regulations put in place during the closing days of the Obama administration. Those additional regulations, which purported to prohibit foster care agencies like Miracle Hill from choosing employees and foster parents who share the same religious motivation and mission, unlawfully expanded the original requirements placed on such agencies by federal law.

Since the initial threat from DSS, Miracle Hill Foster Care has been operating under a provisional license pending the outcome of the Governor’s request to HHS. The decision to grant the waiver allows Miracle Hill to continue to be a part of the solution to South Carolina’s foster care crisis. More than 4000 children are in foster care, and the state needs more than 1,000 new foster homes to adequately meet the demand.

Serving vulnerable children is not new to Miracle Hill Foster Care as the organization has been in operation for 30 years recruiting Christian foster parents and providing loving homes for children in crisis. The program is a vital piece of Miracle Hill Ministries’ overall mission “that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, and move toward healthy relationships and stability.” Foster parents who partner with Miracle Hill believe in the mission, are motivated by their faith, and desire to be supported by an organization that shares their faith.

Bill and Patti Sult, who served as foster parents with Miracle Hill Foster Care after working with DSS for several years, said they chose to work with Miracle Hill when they learned about the organization’s faith-based approach to caring for foster families. “The peaceful feeling that came over me was so wonderful. I knew we belonged there with other Christians,” said Mrs. Sult. “Every question, every phone call I made was met and discussed with me by the most caring, sincere people I’ve ever met. We talked and laughed, and we prayed. Everyone reached out to us with love and generosity,” she added.



**Video Statement from Reid Lehman, President/CEO and Brenda Parks, Director of Foster Care**

**About Miracle Hill Ministries**

Miracle Hill Ministries is the Upstate’s largest, most comprehensive provider of services to homeless children and adults. Serving the Upstate since 1937, Miracle Hill’s programs include rescue shelters for the homeless, residential addiction recovery, transitional housing, shelters for children, and foster care. Miracle Hill’s eight thrift stores provide employment opportunities for the community as well as Miracle Hill guests transitioning out of programs. Miracle Hill has been recognized as a Certified Mission and has been awarded the Certificate of Excellence by [City Gate Network](#), a distinction given to fewer than 30 missions nationwide. Additionally, Miracle Hill’s foster care program and group homes for children have been accredited by [CARF International](#). For more information about Miracle Hill, please visit [www.MiracleHill.org](http://www.MiracleHill.org) or call 864.268.4357. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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