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Miracle Hill Ministries Strengthens Christian Identity by Opening Foster Program to Catholic Foster Parents

GREENVILLE, SC (July 5, 2019) – In order to strengthen its mission of providing comprehensive care in the name of Jesus Christ and for the sake of unity among followers of Jesus Christ, the Board and CEO of Miracle Hill Ministries have clarified the non-profit's identity as an evangelical, Christian, Gospel-infused mercy ministry, and have opened the door for Catholics who affirm Miracle Hill's doctrinal statement in belief and practice to serve as foster parents and employees.

"We are grieved that the recent religious freedom struggle surrounding our foster care program has been mischaracterized in the media as a dispute between followers of Christ instead of the right to exist as a Christian organization providing invaluable services to our community," said Reid Lehman, President/CEO. "Our calling as an organization is not primarily to evaluate and emphasize differences between various branches of Christianity or between denominations within Protestantism. Rather, Miracle Hill's spiritual identity is first and foremost that of brothers and sisters in Christ working together to minister to the needy in Christ's name."

In January 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services clarified that in South Carolina faith-based child welfare organizations may partner with those who share their religious beliefs while caring for children placed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, a ruling that protected Miracle Hill Foster Care's right to exist. The Catholic Diocese of Charleston applauded the decision saying, "This organization should not be forced to discontinue these life-affirming services because they desire to serve children consistent with their Protestant faith."

While this religious freedom victory protected all faith-based organizations in South Carolina, a subsequent lawsuit filed by Aimee Madonna gave the impression that Miracle Hill was in a dispute with other followers of Jesus Christ. "Although we advocate to protect the rights of Protestant and other religious organizations to work with those who share their faith, we recognize our previous stance has wounded other followers of Jesus Christ," said Lehman. "For Miracle Hill, embracing Christians who share our beliefs simplifies our affiliation process while protecting core values and doctrinal consistency. It's the right thing to do."

The organization's spiritual identity has been clarified as the following:

Miracle Hill Ministries defines itself as an **evangelical, Gospel-infused mercy ministry**. Christians who share a commitment to the Gospel and embrace our [doctrinal statement](#) in belief and practice are valued ministry partners in employment and fostering. God's call on us is to be broad in our outreach and broad in our donor/volunteer base while standing firm on our core beliefs. Miracle Hill wants to be known for what it stands for – our allegiance to Jesus Christ, His Good News, and serving those in need in Christ's name. Miracle Hill Ministries is Protestant in doctrine, teaching, and leadership, but by broadening its policy surrounding employment and fostering, the organization expands its ability to serve the needy and vulnerable in Christ's name and to heal wounds within the Christian community.

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For more than 80 years, Miracle Hill has worked collaboratively with both religious and secular community partners to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness in Upstate South Carolina. Miracle Hill serves everyone who comes seeking help, regardless of their faith or no faith at all. Embracing Christianity is not a requirement for receiving services.

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 former Miracle Hill guests. Miracle Hill has been awarded the Certificate of Excellence as a Certified Mission 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 or call 864.268.4357. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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