



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Youth Ranch Opens With Dedication And Celebration

Florida United Methodist Children's Home celebrates the opening of its new campus

Pinetta, FL – Today, the Trustees of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH) will dedicate two residential youth homes at the Madison Youth Ranch, a new expansion campus which allows the organization to serve more children who are placed in situations of financial hardship, abuse and neglect, by providing a home where each of them can feel safe, and experience the love and care they need to succeed in life.

The Madison Youth Ranch is located on more than 400 acres of donated land in Pinetta, Florida, and will be home to children from across the state. Referrals come from local community based care agencies out of Gainesville, Tallahassee and Jacksonville, as well as from local churches and community groups, while others will be placed by their families due to economic hardships, behavioral issues or other family problems.

"Today is a special day in the life of the Florida United Methodist Children's Home ministry," said Becky Dotson, CEO of FUMCH, "now there will be one more place for children who desperately need a Christian environment, a place where they can grow up into the healthy, productive men and women God created them to be."

This first phase, now opened, includes two residential homes for children, along with a recreation area and administrative offices. The continued growth plan of the campus will be determined by the amount of funds raised to support the additional projects, which include more residential homes for children, a stable, campus life center, chapel and more.

Currently, the Youth Ranch campus can welcome up to 24 youth. However, the goal is to eventually serve over 100 youth ages 6-17 in the residential program, with future inclusion of an independent living program, and foster care services to the surrounding area.



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Each residential youth home houses up to 12 children, and has two sets of houseparents who have alternating shifts every other week. Each child has their own bedroom and bathroom. The children eat in their homes “family” style, share in chores, and attend local public schools. The staff create a family-like atmosphere while providing therapeutic opportunities, including equine-assisted therapy, to resolve any issues the children may bring with them. In recent years, studies on equine-assisted therapy show that care and training of horses can have a powerful affect on a person. Experts now see the positive benefit it has on children from traumatized backgrounds too — everything from developing healthy relationships and a strong work ethic to overcoming fears, building teamwork and much more.

“I am extremely excited about today’s dedication,” said Dr. Charles Lever, chairman of the Board of Trustees of FUMCH. “The Madison Youth Ranch will be a place where boys and girls can explore things like canoeing, gardening, swimming, horsemanship and more — all while developing spiritual growth, teamwork, communication skills and loads of self-confidence.”

The length of stay for a resident varies from a few weeks to several years. Each child is an individual and the time in residence will be influenced by the complexity of the problems they and their families face and the progress they can make in dealing with those problems. The best interests of the child are always of primary concern to the programs of the Home.

“It greatly troubles us that there are so many children in Florida without a loving home environment,” said John and Bunny Maulsby, supporters of the Youth Ranch. “We are so thankful that we have been able to have a hand in providing a safe, loving home for some of these children, where they can experience love, forgiveness and acceptance.”

The special dedication ceremony and luncheon will be held today, on the Madison Youth Ranch campus. The event starts at 10:30 a.m. with driving and walking tours of the campus provided prior and following the noon time program.

“Over 700 people are expected to come to campus today and help us celebrate the dedication of the Ranch,” stated Ruth Moore, Community Relations Director. “This includes the Madison Boys Choir, who will give a special performance at the close of the ceremony.”

For more information, or to learn how you can help, please contact Mark Nelson, at 407.222.1040, or email at mark.nelson@fumch.org.

Who: Florida United Methodist Children’s Home - Madison Youth Ranch Dedication Celebration

Where: 1647 NE Captain Buie Road, Pinetta, FL 32350

Time: 10:30am – 2:30pm

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The Florida United Methodist Children’s Home was established in 1908 in Enterprise, Florida on the banks of Lake Monroe. The Children’s Home provides services to families and to children from childhood into adulthood. Our Residential Care Program provides school-aged children who have been victimized by abuse, neglect or family trauma a family-style home, education, counseling, and recreation and ministry opportunities. The Home also provides Foster Care, Adoption Services, an Emergency Shelter, an Independent Living Program and Child Care to the public and is supported primarily through the generosity of churches within the United Methodist Florida Conference, individuals and legacy gifts. For more information, visit www.allchildrenfirst.org.