

Shepherds General Communication Statement
Re: Financial Challenges and Program Changes at Shepherds Ministries, Union Grove, WI

January 20, 2017

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Following an extensive review of ministry reports during the May 2016 Shepherds Ministries Board meetings, the Board of Directors appointed a Financial Task Team to evaluate the status of all current activities, programs, and services at Shepherds Ministries. This included Shepherds College, Day Services Center, the Catalyst Independent Living Program, the Endeavor long-term residential program, Shepherds Foundation, Shepherds Enterprises, and Respite Services. The task team consisted of Board members, the Shepherds Executive team, and key administrative staff. Their assignment was to review revenue sources, all services to residents, clients, and students currently being offered, and develop recommendations that would address the serious financial challenges being faced by the ministry at this time, as well as adopt a plan for the viability of Shepherds in the future.

The Financial Task Team presented its report confirming the unsustainability of the ministry's current financial model, particularly as it relates to the Endeavor program, and made recommendations for operational improvements at the November 2016 Board of Directors meetings. Numerous changes in programs, staffing, and utilization of resources were included in the report impacting every department and division of Shepherds. Most notable was the need to move forward with planning initiated in previous years to gradually phase out the Endeavor long-term residential program and ensure the continued health of the overall ministry. The Financial Task Team recommendations included a timetable of reductions and transitions for Endeavor and related programs to be completed in multiple phases within a two-year time period. The Endeavor client relocations will be accomplished in six month phases, with the final phase completed before the end of 2018. These recommendations were accepted by the Board of Directors and the Executive Team.

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As a ministry, we have sought the Lord for wisdom and direction and have considered every conceivable option to keep up with the growing needs of the Endeavor Program, but the gap has become too great and therefore unsustainable.

While the recommended changes will be both difficult and challenging for clients, parents, guardians, and staff, the two-year plan to close the Endeavor Program is designed to safeguard the viability and financial stability of Shepherds in the future. In taking these necessary steps at this time, it is our goal and prayer that this unique ministry, established nearly 60 years ago, will continue to reach a vastly underserved population through the expansion of our College and Catalyst Programs. This realignment, coupled with a return to our educational roots, will allow Shepherds Ministries to serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through relevant programming designed to maximize their God-given potential and reach them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.