Regarding the Cost of Residential Care Services

Date Resolution is Submitted:

Submitted by: Congregational United Church of Christ
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Summary Statement of Intent of the Resolution: As long-time charitable contributors to residential care services for youth at-risk in our state, we would like to draw attention to the insufficiency of funding for these needed services in our state. Organizations providing residential care services have struggled more each passing year in which state budgets for these services have been constrained, and charitable contributors have not been able to compensate for the rising costs and emerging programming needs. It is the intent of this resolution to encourage members of churches across the state, in the interest of the compassion of our faith and social justice, to work together with state policy-makers to see how this problem can be solved, particularly in light of rapid population growth in the western part of the state and around major city centers all across the state.

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, compassion for children and youth is a fundamental tenant of our faith (Mark 10:13-16, Proverbs 22:6) and those who are unable to remain in their home situations are most in need of that compassion;

WHEREAS, social justice for those in need is a basic tenant of our faith (Psalms 82:3, Matthew 7:12, Luke 10:30-37) and foundational to the mission of the United Church of Christ;

WHEREAS, youth in residential care are considered wards of the state, not wards of charitable organizations, charitable organizations alone cannot solve this issue, but must work in concert with the state to increase funding commensurate with need;

WHEREAS, youth in residential care have suffered events traumatic enough to require removal from their home situations, or are themselves troubled; they are in need of programming to address their unique coping and readjustment needs, not just basic direct care as is currently budgeted;

WHEREAS, programming beneficial to at-risk youth with these needs requires specialized training for staff and periodic retraining; but costs of providing training for staff is not currently supported by the state;

WHEREAS, we believe that residential care most like a home or small community setting, as we provide in our state, is most beneficial to at-risk youth, rather than the options of sending our youth in need out-of-state to larger facilities and communities unfamiliar to them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, all local churches are encouraged to educate their congregation members and wider community members regarding the needs of at-risk youth in our state and those in residential care in particular—regarding increasing costs of basic direct care, programming to meet at-risk youths’ coping and readjustment needs, periodic training and retraining for staff, and increasing costs for personnel in today’s economy.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Northern Plains Conference is asked to communicate this resolution to all local churches.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Northern Plains Conference is asked to communicate the passage of this resolution and its position to the general public via state-wide media.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Northern Plains Conference and members of its churches are asked to participate in public discussions of the needs of at-risk youth needing residential care leading up to and during the upcoming state legislative session; including increasing costs of basic direct care, programming to meet at-risk youths’ coping and readjustment needs, periodic training and retraining for staff, and increasing costs for personnel in today’s economy.

Funding
Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be primarily the responsibility of local congregations.

IMPLEMENTATION
Implementation for this resolution will occur at the local church and conference levels.