



## Child Advocacy Paper Released for Louisiana Gubernatorial Race, “Child Well-Being: Louisiana Among Worst in the Nation for 25 Years”

July 31, 2014 Ruston, LA – Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services announces the release of a second Advocacy Paper, “Child Well-Being: Louisiana Among Worst in the Nation for 25 Years”.

The growing series of advocacy papers is designed to draw the attention of Louisiana’s 2015 gubernatorial candidates to significant issues related to the needs of Louisiana’s children and families. Each paper addresses a single topic which will require the active attention of Louisiana’s next governor. The current advocacy paper is titled, “Child Well-Being: Louisiana Among Worst in the Nation for 25 Years”. Each paper ends with questions for candidates to consider as they develop the “child and family” plank of their political platforms.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released its 25th *KIDS COUNT Data Book* on July 22, 2014. Louisiana’s poor ranking in 2014 has been widely reported across our state and nation. Most news articles are reporting this year’s rank of 47th among the states in overall child well-being as if this were a one-time event. It is not.

A few articles reporting Louisiana’s rank in the 2014 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* have made mention of Louisiana’s rank during recent years. For example, a Shreveport Times article reports, “The state has been ranked 46th or 47th in each of the last three years.” (The overall child well-being ranks during the last three years, in annual order, are 47, 46, and 47.) Relative to other states, we have made no progress during the short-term.

Unreported is that Louisiana’s low rank among the states is neither a singular nor only a recent event. Louisiana’s poor ranking in overall child well-being is a chronic condition. In fact, Louisiana has ranked among the lowest states each year, for 25 years, since 1990 when the Annie E. Casey Foundation released the first *KIDS COUNT* report. Louisiana’s 25-year average rank for overall child well-being among the states is 49.

The factors driving Louisiana’s low rank among the states have had negative effects on more than an entire generation of Louisiana’s children. Babies born in 1990 have grown into adulthood and many have had their own babies. Neither generation has lived during a period when we have cared well for our children relative to other states. Until we care well for our children, we will continue to hobble Louisiana’s future.

According to Rick Wheat, President and CEO of Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services, “Everyone knows Louisiana’s next Governor faces tremendous challenges. Chief among these is leading Louisiana to improve how we care for our children. For the Governor who can help our state

begin the climb out of the child well-being basement, there will be a reward. Making this happen will become the stuff of political legend.”

Each advocacy paper includes questions for consideration by Louisiana’s 2015 gubernatorial candidates. The goal is to provide information to candidates about the issues which significantly impact Louisiana’s children and families. In this way, we believe Louisiana’s gubernatorial candidates will have opportunity to consider how, if elected, they will address the needs of children and families.

“Child Well-Being: Louisiana Among Worst in the Nation for 25 Years” is available for download at:  
<http://www.LMCH.org/advocacy/>

To learn more about Louisiana Methodist Children’s Home call (318) 255-5763 or visit our web site at  
<http://www.LMCH.org>.

# # #

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Gary Strebeck  
Executive Director  
Public Relations, Development and Marketing  
[gary.strebeck@LMCH.org](mailto:gary.strebeck@LMCH.org)  
<http://www.LMCH.org>  
318-242-4716