

Methodist Home for Children ^[1]

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by Virginia Renna Deaton, 2006



Dining room in the Methodist Home for Children. Image courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives.

The Methodist Home for Children ^[2] (MHC) in Raleigh ^[3] developed from the Methodist Orphanage, which was founded in 1899. The number of children enrolled at the orphanage jumped from 28 in 1901 to 340 by 1931; and as the numbers grew, so did the scope of the institution. Its main purpose expanded from simply caring for disadvantaged children to encouraging and strengthening family systems. This evolution to a central focus on the family was a response to dynamic pressures in society, such as those produced by the Great Depression ^[4]. Family life specialists offered family, parenting, and marital counseling services to help those dealing with stress. In addition, seminars, workshops, and retreats were presented in churches and the community. The new name for the orphanage, Methodist Home for Children, was adopted in 1955.

As of the early 2000s, the MHC served more than 1,000 children and families in various facilities. Originally housing children in dormitories or cottages on its 60-acre base site, the MHC now utilizes youth homes and family-centered outreach programs across the eastern part of North Carolina. The MHC operates 11 residential youth homes and 5 juvenile homes. These homes are staffed by live-in married couples called teaching-parents. These couples are trained to work out individualized programs of care and treatment while providing a safe and healthy environment for the children. Foster care is available for children under the age of 18 who have special medical or emotional needs.

The juvenile homes offer a positive and secure alternative to detention placement for troubled teens, helping build respect among the youths themselves and their families. Skills are also taught to help adolescents successfully re-integrate into their families and the community. The MHC helps similar types of agencies get started nationwide and assists local churches in the development of family services. Although fiscally independent, the MHC has close ties to the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church ^[5] and depends on the support of its member churches. It is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc. ^[6]

Additional Resources:

Methodist Home for Children: www.mhfc.org/home/ ^[2]

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Dining room in the Methodist Home for Children. Image courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives.

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