



OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

PRESIDENT

PALMER HOME FOR CHILDREN



**PALMER HOME
FOR CHILDREN**

*A Christian Children's Home
Where Hope Still Grows.*

Columbus, Mississippi

LETTER FROM SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR

Dear Prospective Presidential Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the position of President of Palmer Home for Children. It is our hope that this Opportunity Profile will help give you a sense of who we are as an organization, and will describe the key qualities and characteristics we are seeking in our next leader.

Since its inception in 1895, Palmer Home has served over a thousand children in need, children growing up as social orphans without the nurture and support of a loving family. Palmer Home remains faithful to its mission statement:

The mission of Palmer Home for Children is to reflect the hope and love of Christ by providing a stable, long-term Christ-centered home for children who lack an adequate family structure.

With the retirement of the current President, Ed Waldron, who has served faithfully for twenty-one years and overseen tremendous growth, we are actively searching for the 10th leader in Palmer Home's 115 year history. This position is currently being filled on an interim basis as we undergo this search.

We encourage you to read through this Opportunity Profile and to further explore our website for additional information. If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity, please go to the Process of Inquiry page to begin the application process. If you have any questions, please contact the office of Tommy Thomas and Laura Coverstone (615-261-4623), the SIMA[®] International Consultants, who are assisting Palmer Home in the search.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Guest

Search Committee Chair

ABOUT PALMER HOME

Palmer Home for Children is a ministry to children in need; children who are growing up as social orphans without the nurture and support of a loving family; children who need a place to be and to become. Palmer Home currently serves up to 90 boys and girls from birth through college age who live year-round on two campuses in the Columbus, MS area and one new campus near Hernando, MS. It also extends counseling to the family of origin, foster care, and other family-related services that Palmer offers through its well-qualified, professional staff.

Palmer serves both individual children and sibling groups, brothers and sisters who need and want to be kept together, providing opportunity for every child to learn traditional family values and to become responsible, caring adults. Each day is structured to provide a careful blend of education, work, family, fun and freedom - all the things a healthy child needs, including the incorporation of Biblical principles into every aspect of life.

But whatever the length of stay or depth of need, Palmer is there to extend effective, healing help, so that hurting children can dare to hope, to dream, and to love again...all because caring friends have chosen to participate in Palmer's growing outreach, prayerfully and lovingly providing financial support and volunteer help.

Palmer Home for Children has had hundreds of children come through their doors since its inception in 1895. Many of those children have gone on to be leaders in their communities, successful business owners, ministers, and godly mothers and fathers. Of note, Palmer alumnae include a past president of the Tandy Corporation, former Chair of the Republican National Committee, a Miss Mississippi and a second runner up to Miss America, as well as numerous men and women who have served our country in the armed forces.

To view the current edition of ***The Southern Charity Ledger***, the magazine for The Palmer Home for Children, [click here](#).

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Palmer Home for Children is to reflect the hope and love of Christ by providing a stable, long-term Christ-centered home for children who lack an adequate family structure. To that end, Palmer Home, as it has since 1895, remains committed to privately-funded, non-government child care which keeps siblings together, models evangelical Christian values, mends emotional scars, restores self-esteem, and provides for each child the full opportunity to reach his or her God-given potential.

HISTORY OF PALMER HOME

Palmer Home is named for Dr. Benjamin Morgan Palmer, a native of South Carolina and perhaps the leading Southern Presbyterian preacher of the nineteenth century. During his more than 50 years as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, Dr. Palmer touched the lives of both small and great, winning wide popular support and public acclaim.

Among Dr. Palmer's many admirers was William States Jacobs, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbus. The son of the founder of South Carolina's Thornwell Orphanage (named for the great Southern Presbyterian theologian James Henley Thornwell), Jacobs arrived in Columbus fresh out of seminary and soon challenged his congregation to start its own orphanage and to name it after Palmer. The women of First Presbyterian Church became the driving force behind the new orphanage, which was officially chartered by the State of Mississippi on March 13, 1895 and located on the south side of Columbus, MS at 912 11th Ave South.

By 1898, Palmer opened the doors of its Lindamood Building, a three-story structure that today serves as Palmer's main administration building, and began admitting children that same year. Interestingly, early Palmer records confirm that Palmer Home, like Dr. Palmer himself, quickly won more than Presbyterian hearts. Every church in town, including the local synagogue, helped contribute funds to construct the Lindamood Building.

By 1902, with some 40 children in residence, Palmer's support base grew to include Presbyterian churches throughout Mississippi and Louisiana, as well as interested friends and other organizations in Columbus and beyond.

In 1905, when the Rev. William Frierson became Palmer's third superintendent, the orphanage consisted of about 18 acres, two brick buildings, and a small farm. Following William Frierson's death in 1919, his son, John Frierson, a bachelor lawyer who had moved to Columbus in 1910 to assist his ailing parents, was named superintendent. John Frierson served without pay as Palmer's leader for 31 years. He led Palmer through the depression and two world wars until his retirement in 1950 at age 74, winning hearts and changing lives throughout his entire distinguished career.

John Frierson's successor, Rev. William C. Sistar, brought new prosperity to Palmer, but also found himself enmeshed in a period of turmoil. With Palmer's original buildings long beyond their original projected life and in need of major repairs, there was an offer to move Palmer Home to Vicksburg, a proposal that sparked division among Palmer's trustees. In 1955, to end the dispute, the Presbyterian synods involved in Palmer's governance, renounced all legal right and title to Palmer, but never built a competing institution. Sistar resigned the same year, but in his five years as superintendent annual contributions to Palmer nearly doubled from \$49,000 in 1950 to \$84,000 in 1955.

Sistar's successor, Palmer Business Manager Mr. J.O. Davis, faced the daunting challenges of rebuilding church relationships as well as the Palmer campus. His efforts proved to be highly successful. During Davis' years as superintendent from 1956-1977, all of Palmer's present residential cottages, with the exception of Buchanan and Brotherhood Cottages, were completed through private contributions and volunteer help. Palmer was again re-embraced by

Presbyterians as an approved cause, even as its support from other denominations, corporations, foundations, and interested individuals continued to grow.

Succeeding "Papa Joe", as Davis was affectionately known, was Mr. Joe Mitchell, Palmer's seventh leader in a period of nearly 80 years. Like Davis, Mitchell continued to expand the Palmer physical plant, completing a new dining hall facility funded by the Telephone Pioneers. He also championed a change in Palmer's governance structure, which led to Palmer becoming independent of direct church control. Today, Palmer is governed by an independent, self-perpetuating Board of Directors, each of whom must personally affirm his or her loyalty to the basic tenets of the Christian faith as further expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In 1984, Rev. Taylor McGown was named as executive director, bringing with him a fresh sense of professionalism from his prior years as a businessman. McGown's footwork paved the way for Palmer's next leader, Dr. Ed Waldron, who led Palmer Home from 1990 until 2011. During Dr. Waldron's tenure, Palmer celebrated its Centennial in 1995, constructed Brotherhood Cottage and Veitch Villa in Columbus, established a second campus in Hernando (DeSoto County) MS, and added expanded thrift store, orchard and greenhouse programs. Also during Dr. Waldron's tenure, in December, 2004, the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association unanimously voted to join forces with Palmer Home. Both Palmer's board and the sheriffs viewed this union as a perfect fit and a natural step, since the Ranch and Palmer Home have long been allies, sharing the same values and serving the same type of youngster. Under the union, the Ranch operates as a division of Palmer Home, maintaining its own identity, programs and core values. The Ranch is located on 320 acres of farmland near the Golden Triangle Regional Airport in Lowndes County, Mississippi.

Palmer has also significantly enhanced its child care outreach through the addition of its counseling and educational programs. Palmer's annual budget exceeds \$6 million, with up to some 90 children in year-round residential care at its three campuses in Columbus, Sheriffs Ranch and Hernando. When fully completed, the Hernando Campus will serve as many as 120 children in residence and numerous others through Palmer's foster care and counseling programs.

Palmer's alumni, more than 1,000 strong, have gone on to lead productive family lives, providing leadership and service in their varied professional, church, and community activities. And Palmer's founding vision—to provide a privately supported, loving Christian home for children who have no place else to turn—remains flourishing and intact.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Our Doctrinal Statement tells you what our spiritual beliefs are here at Palmer Home for Children:

Because genuine Christians may differ in their doctrinal views, the corporation herewith adopts the following statement of faith in order to provide clarity and to prevent any misunderstanding of the basic doctrinal standards undergirding the corporation's expression of the Christian faith. Each Director shall be required to sign this doctrinal statement annually,

and the rejection of any of the particulars contained herein shall be grounds for dismissal from the Board. The Corporation believes the following statement of beliefs to be entirely consistent with the Scriptures, our only rule of faith and practice, and in accord with the Westminster Standards, which the corporation also herein expressly affirms as a true and more complete statement of the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures.

- (a) We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, creator of all things.
- (b) We believe that Jesus Christ, God the Son, became incarnate, was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
- (c) We believe that the Bible, in its entirety, is the inspired Word of God and is the only infallible rule of faith and conduct.
- (d) We believe in the resurrection of the dead, the eternal blessedness of the saved, and the eternal punishment of the lost.
- (e) We believe in the personal salvation of believers through the shed blood of Christ alone.
- (f) We believe in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, through the blood of Christ, resulting in personal holiness of heart and life.
- (g) We believe in the Christian's blessed hope - the imminent, personal return of the resurrected and living Lord Jesus Christ.

CULTURE OF PALMER HOME

The organizational culture at Palmer Home can be described as passionate, caring, and familial. While it is an "institution", every effort is made to create a warm home environment in each cottage. The staff is loyal, hard-working and stable. There exists a hunger to move the organization forward, embracing best practices that a new leader could bring.

THE POSITION

The President of Palmer Home for Children provides vision and strategic leadership to the organization with a budget of \$6 million. He or she will carry out the planning, management and administrative responsibilities of the organization to insure that the mission and critical objectives are fulfilled. The President must be able to inspire and motivate groups of individuals to support Palmer Home through skills in effective public speaking and compelling presentation development. The President must be outgoing and available to donors, board members, and staff. S/he must genuinely enjoy interacting with people, and be willing to fill the role of Palmer Home's lead ambassador. The ideal candidate will have a strong skill set and a proven track record in cultivating major donors (or customers) and in managing or guiding organizations that depend on major donor revenue streams.

The President reports to the Board of Directors, interfacing regularly with the Board Chair. The President supervises the two campus directors, Executive Vice President, VP Financial Development, VP Business Affairs, and indirectly supervises all other organizational employees.

The President must be competent at maintaining key relationships with donors, and specifically major donors, foundations, media, and other individuals who have either a direct or indirect relationship with the organization and its employees.

The headquarters of Palmer Home are in Columbus, MS, and the President is expected to live in the Columbus vicinity, with regular travel required to work with the Hernando campus and to nurture donor relationships. A majority of this person's time will be spent outside the office as an advocate for the Palmer Home, growing external relationships and networking contacts.

Specific Expectations

- Lead and grow the development/fundraising function of Palmer Home to fund future initiatives and growth.
- Lead the organization toward CORE (Coalition for Residential Education) accreditation, ensuring 1) consistent care of every child and 2) documentation of excellence in outcomes.
- Communicate the mission, vision, and goals of Palmer Home to staff, board, donors, and other constituents, cultivating unity across the organization's campuses.
- With the input from the Board and Palmer Home staff, steward the physical resources of Palmer Home with integrity and excellence, making necessary immediate and long-range decisions about campuses and property.
- Lead communication improvements, internally and externally, technologically and interpersonally, to improve organizational effectiveness.

Key Areas of Responsibility

- To implement the policy directives of the Board and to manage the entirety of PHC's affairs.
- To supervise and provide leadership to PHC's management team, inspiring their best efforts in achieving PHC goals.
- To set goals and evaluate performance of each direct-report employee at least annually.
- With the consultation and approval of the Board and with the assistance of the PHC staff, to prepare the documents that govern PHC's affairs, including the annual budget, the strategic plan, the financial development plan, and the policies and programs pertaining to youth care.
- To oversee and approve the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of PHC's key systems, including the accounting system, the personnel system, the youth records system, the financial development system, the organizational chart, the communications system and others as needed.
- To preserve the assets of PHC and to see that gift and other income is prudently and effectively expended in accord with the approved budget.

- To achieve PHC's financial targets, to redress deviations from PHC policy, and to fulfill PHC's mission and potential.
- To inform the Board of trends and changes in the external operating environment and to recommend appropriate policy directives for the Board's consideration.
- To maintain in the spiritual integrity of Palmer Home in accord with historic Presbyterian standards and the PHC Statement of Faith.
- In the absence of the Chairman of the Board, to act as Palmer Home's chief public spokesman before various publics, including the judicial and legislative publics.
- To otherwise fulfill the duties of President as described or inferred in PHC's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Must have passion for PHC's mission and vision for the future and be able to effectively articulate the same verbally and in writing.
- Must have had extensive exposure to the field of residential group childcare.
- Must be an effective leader, administrator, and money manager.
- Must be able to work long hours, demonstrate a high energy level, and the ability to work under pressure.
- Must profess a personal commitment to Christ as demonstrated by effective use of the means of grace and demonstrated spiritual growth.
- Must be an effective fundraiser.
- Must be an active learner in the fields of residential childcare, non-profit management, fund raising and public relations.
- Must be able to accept criticism, admit errors, and forgive others.
- Must, in accord with Palmer's core mission, be qualified, capable, and willing to serve as a role model and mentor to children in care.

Minimum Training and Experience

- Master's Degree from an accredited college or university in a field appropriate to residential child care
- At least five (5) years of progressively responsible leadership experience (preferably in residential child care or similar non-profit leadership experience.)

Travel Requirements

- Travel/Driving Requirements: Must have the capacity to spend time as needed with Palmer Home's three campuses and donors in the region. In addition to regular field work, overnight travel could be required up to 25-30% of time.

LOCATION

Columbus, Mississippi is a town that thrives on its rich heritage and Southern charm. Columbus is perfect for anyone who appreciates classic Southern architecture, good food, a friendly atmosphere, or just a down-home way of living.

Columbus is the birthplace of Tennessee Williams. He spent his beginning years in an 1875 Victorian home in Columbus. In 1993, his home was moved to Main Street, restored, and now serves as a Welcome Center for the city of Columbus.

Columbus is proud to be the home of Mississippi University for Women, America's first state-funded public university for women. A walk through downtown offers a chance for shopping in the unique boutiques lining Main Street. Visitors can peruse the gallery in the Rosenzweig Arts Center or the newly renovated Princess Theatre.

Columbus' location on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway makes it ideal for fishing and other outdoor water recreation. Columbus plays host to a variety of fishing tournaments and wakeboard competitions. The newly opened Riverwalk offers a place for the community to jog, bird watch, fish, or just relax and take in the beautiful scenery of the Waterway.

Columbus prides itself on keeping up with the times while preserving the past. It continues to break through boundaries and remain pioneers in arts, education, and cultural diversity. Columbus is a place that people are proud to call home.

For more information about Columbus, visit the [Columbus Convention and Visitor's Bureau](#) website.

PROCESS OF CANDIDACY

If after reading this Opportunity Profile you sense that the gifts and experience God has given you are a good match for Palmer Home, we invite you to begin the inquiry process. We handle all candidate information and conversations confidentially. You may contact Tommy Thomas or Laura Coverstone at any stage of the process to get more information and to ask questions. (Contact information is below.) Candidates will be considered until the position is filled.

- 1) Please submit your résumé in Word (.doc or .docx) format. For each position held, include the aspects of the position which brought you the most satisfaction and the reason for leaving.

- 2) Over the years, we have found that one can learn only so much from the résumé. In order to help us get a more complete picture of you and your interest in Palmer Home, provide us with responses to the following questions.
- a) Describe your faith in Christ. Tell us, in one to two pages, about your faith journey and how that has affected your career. Also incorporate into that any involvement you have had with your local church and/or parachurch ministries, e.g., service opportunities, teaching, offices held, etc.
 - b) Using Palmer Home's website, this document, and other research, what about the President position attracts you to it?
 - c) Using this document as your guide, tell us in two pages or less why you believe your experiences in both your Christian life and career qualify you for this leadership role at Palmer Home.
 - d) Provide the names and contact information (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) for four references who know you and your career well enough to comment on your suitability for this role. (References will only be contacted after we have requested and received your permission to do so.)

Submit this information in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format to:

Tommy Thomas or Laura Coverstone

SIMA®International

resumes@simainternational.com

Phone: (615) 261-4623

In the subject line, please write "President-Palmer Home"