

Moving Forward: Focused on Ministry with a New Admissions Policy

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The Baptist Home Board of Trustees has given approval for a new Admissions Policy that will broaden the scope of ministry and preserve historic Baptist values. One might think the controversy among Missouri Baptists is what motivated the revision. However, The Home has been thinking about the admission issue for several years and is trying to stay current with the ebb and flow of changes in retirement living and Baptist life. At the same time we want to provide a Christian, yet distinctively Baptist, ministry.

Not too long ago applicants had to wait as much as two years or more before having an opportunity for admission. The intentional planning of leadership was and is to become more relevant to people's timing needs. TBH expanded into additional areas. The Chillicothe campus, located in North Central Missouri, is serving 72 residents. The Ozark facility has 96 residents living on its Southwest campus. And the flag ship facility in the beautiful Arcadia Valley near Ironton continues to serve 110 residents.

The Arcadia Valley facility was purposely downsized for two reasons. A smaller campus is easier to manage. Also the campus originally built in 1923 is in need of updating and remodeling. A reduced census will enable TBH to remodel the campus that has sacrificed to help make the others possible.

The whole climate of older adult ministry is changing. TBH understands these changes. People are choosing services closer to home, family, community and church. There are many good aging services out there. TBH is one choice available to aging folks. We are committed to add more campuses as resources become available. All of this to say, that revising our Admissions Policy was necessary in order to position The Home for future growth and to fulfill the mission God has given us.

The new policy has dropped the age requirement. Historically, the qualifying age for admission is on or after 65 years. Now we have more flexibility to provide services to those with special circumstances related to age. Occasionally we have had inquiries from married couples in which a spouse is a few years younger than the qualifying age of the older spouse. Also, we have had requests for admission from an adult child with special needs who is a few years younger than 65 and lives with a qualifying aged parent. Or we may provide services for a younger widow or widower who has interest in retirement living at The Baptist Home.

Applicants who are members of churches historically related to Missouri Baptists shall receive certain priorities and considerations for admission to The Home. Those who relate to churches of the Missouri Baptist Convention, Baptist General Convention of Missouri and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and new churches and missions related to any of the three organizations, will have considerable access to this ministry.

If space is available, admissions will be extended to those who live out-of-state and to those who have similar evangelical roots and values. Consideration for services will be offered to:

1. Those who are members of churches historically related to Southern Baptists, or
2. Those who are members of evangelical churches who have had a Baptist connection either as a former member of a historically related Southern Baptist church or have a significant caregiver who is a member of a historically related Southern Baptist church, or
3. Those who are members of Baptist churches of like faith and practice, or
4. Those who are members of other evangelical churches who desire to live in a Baptist Retirement Community.

Again let me emphasize that, while preserving conservative Christian values and Baptist heritage, the new Admissions Policy will position The Baptist Home to grow and fulfill God's mission for this ministry. We are excited about the new promises these revisions will unfold to us. We ask for your prayers and financial support as we endeavor to meet the needs of aging humanity for the cause of Christ.