

Brooks Avenue Church of Christ
700 Brooks Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27607

Date

To: Families at Brooks Avenue

From: Shepherds

RE: Changes in the Education Program

Education Program Reorganized

The Brooks Avenue congregation is blessed with a goodly number of people who work in the education program. We have an outstanding array of teachers for our children, youth and adults, and we are thankful for their service. As it is always our desire to seek ways the teaching and opportunities for learning can be improved, we have put into place a new organizational structure for the education program. (See enclosure #1 – Organization for the Oversight of the Education Program of the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ.) We believe the new organizational structure will provide for improvement in teacher recruitment and selection, curriculum implementation, and overall program management.

Along with the change in the organizational structure are two additional and very important changes.

Application Process

The first change is the submission of an application by all teachers and others who work with our children, nursery through high school age. We are asking that our teaching force (those who are teaching and assisting now, those who will be teaching and assisting in the upcoming trimester, and those who have taught or assisted in the past and are willing to do so in the future) submit an application to teach. Too, as we are always seeking new teachers and assistants, we hope many of you who have not taught or assisted will submit an application. (See enclosure #2 – Brooks Avenue Children and Youth Education Volunteer Application, Parts I and II.)

The applications will be reviewed by the Chair and Coordinators of the Education Committee to match teachers and assistants with the age levels of children and youth and plan teacher training. The applications will be under lock and key when not being reviewed by the Chair and Coordinators. At no time will the applications leave the church premises.

Background Check Process

The second change is the requirement that all teachers, assistant teachers and other persons who provide services for and with our children, nursery through high school, submit to a criminal background check. The criminal background check is considered necessary in today's schools, nursery programs, churches and other places where children are cared for. It is accepted practice, parents expect it, and our insurance carrier demands it. (See enclosure #3 – Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, Waiver and General Release, Request Form for Criminal Background Check.)

The church has contracted with Carolina Information, Inc., a nationally recognized public record retrieval firm, to handle the criminal background checks. A number of organizations, including the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and several private and public schools, use Carolina Information, Inc. We have heard good reports from the work and the professional ethics of this firm.

We recognize the information gathered by Carolina Information, Inc., is confidential and want you to know that we will guard the confidentiality of the information. Three members of the Brooks Avenue congregation -- Nicole Leonardz, Donald McCoy, and Don Moore (Chair) – serve as the Education Information Review Committee to receive the information retrieved by Carolina Information, Inc. These three persons will have a private password provided by Carolina Information, Inc., so they alone may electronically view the reports. No paper copies of the reports will be available. Upon reviewing reports that are determined to be favorable, the chair of the committee will contact David Mills, Chair of the Education Committee, so that persons can be contacted about teaching, assisting or otherwise helping provide services to our children and youth.

Please know that it is necessary for Social Security Numbers to be submitted to Carolina Information, Inc. to make the background checks. The Social Security Numbers will be treated confidentially and any documents that contain Social Security Numbers will be placed in a secure location.

Summary

The reorganization of the Brooks Avenue education program is underway. All persons interested in working with our children, nursery through high school, are to submit an application. All persons submitting an application and a completed form for a background check will be considered as a potential teacher, assistant or other care provider for our children. Persons obtaining a clear background check will be eligible for selection as a teacher, assistant or other care provider.

The two-part application (three pages) and the criminal background check form are to be placed in an envelop, sealed, marked confidential, and handed to David Mills, or it may be mailed to him at Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, 700 Brooks Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27607. Note: Persons who wish to fax the criminal background check form (Enclosure 3) themselves may do so by sending it to Carolina Information, Inc. at 919/570-9864. The church office fax machine may be used for this purpose, should persons wish to use it.

Persons with questions or concerns are invited to contact David Mills at 919/845-9985 or wdmills@nc.rr.com. Questions or concerns may be addressed to the elders as well. Thank you for your love and care for the Lord's work at Brooks Avenue.

Organization for the Oversight of the Education Program of the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ

Education Committee

- Chair: **David Mills**
- Members:
 - Nursery Coordinator – **To be determined**
 - Preschool Coordinator – **Nancy Ficht**
 - Kingdom Kids Coordinators – **Luray Jeffers, JoEllen Holder, Suzanne Norfleet, Laura Clougherty**
 - Elementary Coordinator (K-5th grades) – **Curt and Jennie Couzzo**
 - Middle School Coordinator (6th – 8th grades) – **To be determined**
 - Senior High Coordinator (9th – 12th grades) – **To be determined**
 - Special Needs Coordinator – **Melinda Oldham**
 - College-Age Coordinator – **Shaun Casteel**
 - Resident Adult Coordinator (all above college age) – **Don Hicks**
- Duties
 - The committee plans the education program for all ages, including teacher recruitment, curricula selection, staff development for teachers, budget planning, room assignments, teacher recognitions, and the like.
 - Committee coordinators plan within their specific areas of assignment and report their suggested plans to the committee as a whole for discussion and approval. The chair submits the committee's recommendations to the elders for final approval.
 - The committee makes efforts to have the curricula and teachers identified for approval by the elders at least two months in advance of new classes beginning.
 - The committee develops a document that states policies and gives guidance to all areas/components/aspects of the education program. (NOTE: The present guidelines that are being edited for the children's education program would be a component of this larger document.)
 - The committee keeps the congregation updated about the education program, including announcements of the time and place of new classes, promotion dates, and the like.
 - The committee meets at least once each month.
 - The committee reports to the elders, or a designated elder.

(Elders approved 11/25/06)

Three Personal References: (Must be over 18 years old and not elated to you.)

Name: _____
Phone Number _____
Street Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Relationship _____
How Long You Have Known This Person? _____

Name: _____
Phone Number _____
Street Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Relationship _____
How Long You Have Known This Person? _____

Name: _____
Phone Number _____
Street Address _____
City _____ Zip _____
Relationship _____
How Long You Have Known This Person? _____

**Brooks Avenue Children and Youth Education Ministry Volunteer Interview Questions
Part II**

The questions listed below are part of our interview process in order to help provide a safe and secure environment for our children. All information is held strictly confidential by the elders and the chair of the Education Committee for this specific purpose. Answering yes to any of the questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in the Children and Youth Education Ministry. Thank you for your understanding.

Have you had any painful experiences in your life that have better equipped you or may hinder you from a productive ministry with children? _____ Would you like to meet with an elder or minister regarding this circumstance? _____

Do you use illegal drugs? _____ Do you misuse or abuse prescription drugs? _____

Have you ever been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse? _____

Have you ever been arrested for a criminal offense excluding minor traffic violations? _____

Have you ever been accused, arrested or convicted of any sexually related crimes? _____

Have you ever been accused, arrested or convicted of any abuse-related crimes? _____

Are there any circumstances involving your life-style or your background that would call into question your ability to work with children and youth, such as cohabitating as a married couple? _____

If you answered yes to any of the above questions please explain.

Volunteer's Statement

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references, churches or other organizations listed in this application to give you any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for working with children and youth and I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you. I understand that any omission of material fact on this application may be grounds for rejection of this application. I understand that the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ will conduct a criminal background check.

Brooks Avenue Church of Christ Teacher's Covenant

Having committed to the ministry of teaching and the habits essential for spiritual maturity, and have attended the Teacher Orientation, I commit to...

- Preparing for ministry by maintaining my personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Supporting the teaching ministry by praying for the church, the other teachers, and specifically the children and youth in my class.
- Cooperating with other ministries and place the greater good of the whole body over my personal wants and needs.
- Participating in teacher preparation classes for my personal growth and education as I have opportunity.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to follow the expectations laid out in the *Children and Youth Education Ministry Volunteer Handbook* and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I understand that the personal information included in this application will be held in confidence by those persons who are assigned by the elders to oversee the Children and Youth Education Ministry.

Volunteer's Signature _____ Date _____

Brooks Avenue Church of Christ
 Waiver and General Release
 Request Form for Criminal Background Check

_____/_____/_____
 FULL NAME (LAST) (FIRST) (MI) MAIDEN/OTHER DATE CHANGED

 OTHER NAMES USED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS DATES USED

 SEX RACE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

_____/_____/_____
 DATE OF BIRTH DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER STATE ISSUED

List all of your prior places of residences for the past ten (10) years, beginning with most current address.

STREET ADDRESS	CITY	COUNTY	STATE	ZIP	FROM	THRU

I understand that the information listed above is STRICTLY used for a criminal background check and is part of the process for volunteering as a teacher, assistant teacher or other child-care or youth worker with the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ.

I hereby expressly authorize the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ to make any investigation of my personal history, expressly federal and or state criminal, law enforcement and periodic record checks after I'm approved as a volunteer to teach or otherwise provide services to children and youth.

I certify that all information provided on this application is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree that if any information or answers change either or before being approved as a volunteer to teach or otherwise provide services to and with children and youth, I will notify the appropriate person at the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ.

I understand that the information on this form and the report provided to the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ based on the information I submitted on this form will be used in a professional and Christ-like manner, that information about me will be used only for making decisions about my volunteer services to and with children and youth, and that the information will be kept confidential. I also understand that my Social Security Number will only be used as part of the background check.

The above is understood and agreed to:

 Signature Printed Name Date

Note: Persons completing this form may fax it themselves to Carolina Information, Inc. at 919/570-9864. The church office fax machine may be used for this purpose, should persons wish to use it. Another option is to give the form to David Mills, Chair, Education Committee, for confidential faxing.

(BACC 12/4/06)