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## **KIDSPeACE GEORGIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO STEP DOWN IN FEBRUARY**

### ***M. Scott Merritt Completes Service at KidsPeace Facility in Bowdon After 11 Years***

**BOWDON, GA (February 3, 2016)** - KidsPeace announced that M. Scott Merritt, Executive Director of KidsPeace National Centers of Georgia in Bowdon, GA, will be leaving that post effective this month.

Mr. Merritt has served as executive director at the KidsPeace Georgia facility since its founding in 2004. KidsPeace Georgia consists of a residential program that provides Room, Board & Watchful Oversight and Outpatient Therapy, and an on-campus school that was accredited by the Southern Association of Schools & Colleges in 2009.

His resignation follows his appointment as president and CEO of the Murphy-Harpst Treatment Network, an agency of the United Methodist Church based in Cedartown, GA and committed to meeting the needs of abused and neglected young people in the state.

“This was not an easy decision for me. KidsPeace and our associates and clients here in Georgia have been such a big part of my life and career for all these years,” Merritt said. “I’m proud of all we have accomplished in serving the children in our care, and I know that’s why I’m fortunate enough to have this new opportunity to serve at Murphy-Harpst.”

During Merritt’s service as executive director, the KidsPeace facility in Bowdon has treated approximately 900 clients and their families. Among the accomplishments during his tenure: maintaining a 96% or above occupancy rate; achieving one of the shortest lengths of stay throughout the state despite treating one of the most acute populations; participating in a capital campaign that raised nearly \$2 million to construct a gymnasium and swimming pool at the Bowdon facility; and operating the only residential program on-campus school in the state to be recognized as a Reward School by the Georgia Department of Education and a top performer in U.S. News & World Report’s ranking of outstanding high schools in the nation in 2015.

KidsPeace officials said Merritt is leaving the Georgia organization in excellent shape, and his departure will have no impact on the day-to-day care provided to children at the 60-bed facility.

“While we are sad to see Scott go, we are extremely grateful for his outstanding work and leadership at the Bowdon facility for all these years,” said William Isemann, president and CEO of KidsPeace. “We congratulate him on his new opportunity with Murphy-Harpst, and wish him every success in the future.”

Merritt will conclude his service at KidsPeace as of February 12, 2016. KidsPeace says it will appoint an interim leader for the facility while it conducts a search for a permanent replacement.

*For 133 years, KidsPeace has been building on its expertise to give hope, help and healing to children, families and communities throughout the United States. Through its comprehensive range of residential treatment programs; accredited educational services; unique psychiatric hospital and foster care and community-based programs, KidsPeace is dedicated to helping people connect, transform and overcome their challenges to ensure a stable future, transition to adulthood and gain independence. Since its doors opened in 1882, more than 200,000 children have participated in one of the multitude of programs KidsPeace offers. For additional resources or more information on how to get involved, become a foster parent or make a donation, please visit [www.kidspeace.org](http://www.kidspeace.org). Follow us at [www.facebook.com/kidspeace.org](https://www.facebook.com/kidspeace.org) or on Twitter @KidsPeace.*

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