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For Immediate Release:

Devou Park Campus of Children's Home of Northern Kentucky Evacuated *Communication Tower Structurally Compromised and Scheduled for Demolition*

Covington, KY (August 14, 2017) – On Friday, August 11, Kenton County's Homeland Security & Emergency Management department recommended that Children's Home of Northern Kentucky (CHNK) evacuate its Devou Park campus due to a structurally compromised emergency communications tower located on CHNK's property and operated by Kenton County.

Upon receiving this guidance, the CHNK treatment team began an emergency evacuation of clients and staff from the campus's three residential buildings and administration building. Clients and residential treatment team members relocated to CHNK's Burlington campus; administrative personnel were moved to the agency's Deaconess Health Check location at 525 W. Fifth Street in downtown Covington. CHNK also canceled a gathering of major donors who were scheduled to come together that evening to celebrate the 199th birthday of CHNK founder Colonel Amos Shinkle.

Simultaneously, CHNK contacted Kentucky's Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) and all parents and/or legal guardians of current clients to notify them of the situation and to confirm the safety of the youth. Faculty and staff of Covington Independent Public Schools' Transformational Learning Center, which operates out of CHNK's Devou Park campus, were also notified in light of the fact that classes resume next week.

"The safety of our residents and staff has been and remains our top concern," CHNK Chief Executive Officer Rick Wurth said, noting that his team is using trauma-informed tactics to help CHNK's young clients adjust to the change in routine. "Our youth in treatment struggle with consistency; they've often experienced multiple moves from foster placement to foster placement. Ensuring their sense of safety – not just physical but also emotional – is a priority for us at this time."

Despite the interruption to CHNK's main campus, all programming and daily operations continue to move forward on its other two campuses, thanks in part to supportive community partners who pivoted quickly to assist the agency with these alternate, temporary accommodations. The timeline for returning to the Devou Park campus is fluid, as it depends on the demolition and removal of the tower. Structural engineers advised that the tower is not salvageable, based on observable damage and the tower's age. Demolition of the tower is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, August 15 between approximately 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.

"CHNK staff members and professionals from the community are prepared to immediately inspect the campus and its facilities following the tower's demolition, to make certain that children in our care and our staff members are returning to safe conditions," CHNK Chief Strategy Officer Julie Raia said.

In the meantime, individuals needing to contact CHNK can continue to do so by calling the agency's main number at 859.261.8768 or by emailing info@chnk.org. Updates about the re-opening of the Devou Park campus will be shared on CHNK's Facebook page (CHNK1882) as they become available.

"We are grateful to Judge/Executive Kris Knochelmann and his staff, our partners with Homeland Security, and local first responders for the partnership that has been critically important over the last



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few days," Wurth said. "Continued partnership and support will be absolutely necessary in the upcoming days as we attempt to bring our children back to their cottages in time for their first day of classes this new school year."

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Children's Home of Northern Kentucky takes a family-centered, holistic approach to behavioral health and substance use treatment for youth experiencing abuse, neglect, addiction, or other trauma. CHNK's menu of services includes community-based services, intensive outpatient services, and residential treatment; CHNK's team of 120 healthcare professionals operates the region's most sophisticated and robust integrated physical and behavioral healthcare service model. Accredited by the national Council on Accreditation, CHNK has served the Northern Kentucky community and Commonwealth of Kentucky for over 135 years.

For more information about Children's Home of Northern Kentucky, please visit www.chnk.org or contact Rick W. Wurth, Chief Executive Officer, at 859.292.4177 or 859.468.5418.