



# REGISTRATION LETTER

## SEVERN RUN EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HOME SCHOOL UMBRELLA MINISTRY

Severn Run EPC Umbrella is a community ministry of Severn Run Evangelical Presbyterian Church and is registered as an education oversight program with the Maryland State Department of Education. Our program operates in compliance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13.A10.01 and is designed for responsible families sincere in their efforts to guide their children spiritually and academically. Because we recognize God's mandate throughout the Bible for parents to take active responsibility for their children and for their education, **we strive to assist parents in fulfilling this mandate.** We are assured by your registering with Severn Run EPC Umbrella that you are striving for God-led excellence in your endeavors.

\* **Note that all text in bold typeface indicates a June 2007 revision.**

### PROCEDURES

*By completing and returning the application information, you are agreeing to the following:*

- To take accountable responsibility for your child's education.
- To submit curriculum information for the current year and to complete a high school credit form in spring for secondary students.
- **To maintain a portfolio of samples and dated, written documentation of your child's work for each subject covered during the school year.**
- To participate in a mid-term **Progress Report Questionnaire** with the **SREPC Umbrella.**
- **To schedule and attend a meeting with another presently enrolled SREPC Umbrella member to have your child's portfolio reviewed in May of each school year.** This visit will include an evaluation of each child's work and will confirm your compliance with state standards. **The Portfolio Review Form will be used to document the review process.**
- **To mail the Portfolio Review Form and the High School Credit Form to the SREPC Umbrella by June 15.** A family may not register with the SREPC Umbrella for the following school year until the completed annual portfolio review form has been received by the SREPC Umbrella.
- To work with **the SREPC Umbrella** to correct any deficiencies in your educational program. If you refuse to cooperate in this effort, Severn Run EPC Umbrella must discontinue its coverage of your home schooling.
- To acknowledge the statement of faith and goals expressed in the Pastor's Letter.
- To include a yearly family fee of \$50.00, checks made payable to *Severn Run EPC Umbrella*, and mail it with your **registration** application and **curriculum form** to:

Severn Run EPC Umbrella  
**1110 Abbingdon Lane**  
**Crownsville, MD 21032**



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### GENERAL INFORMATION

Severn Run E.P. Church is located at 1624 Millersville Road in Millersville. We are a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Rev. Arch Van Devender is our Pastor. Rev. Charlie Morrison is our Associate Pastor of Missions. Besides worship services on Sunday morning and evening, we offer Sunday school, junior and senior high youth groups, adult choir and men's, women's and family Bible study groups. The phone number of the church office is 410-987-9570 or 410-923-7500.

You are invited to come worship with us anytime, whether you are looking for a church home, considering a change or are curious about the fellowship with whom you have aligned yourself for the coming school year. Information is available if you would like to know more about our beliefs or about church membership.

Besides providing academic oversight, our Umbrella strives to provide support, fellowship, and encouragement. If you have ideas on ways we can accomplish these goals, suggestions of service needed or and ability to assist fellow members, please let us know.

Maryland's by-laws are legally binding; by applying for membership with our Umbrella, you are agreeing to meet those requirements as a minimum standard of accomplishment for your children. Our reviewers are required to see evidence of compliance; please realize that you are agreeing to provide this documentation when you sign the registration form. If you have questions or concerns about the requirements, read the enclosed information carefully and contact us.

Year-end reviews will be conducted in May. Please consider whether this is convenient for your family.

This autumn we will publish a directory of members that includes addresses, phone numbers, and the names and ages of children enrolled in the group. You can use this resource to make contacts. The Umbrella provides legal accountability; our members define the quality and quantity of fellowship and support. Contact us if you have ideas for events, projects, classes, or trips and would like to share your plans or to enlist help.

**SREPC Umbrella members** are eligible for a 15% discount when joining or renewing membership with Home School Legal Defense **Association**. Call us for details.



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### REVIEW INFORMATION

According to Maryland state law, all home schooling families must report their children's progress to local county public school authorities or to a "bona fide church organization," also known as an umbrella group. All umbrella organizations are operated through established churches and have been approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. The purpose of an umbrella is to assure that each child enrolled is receiving regular, thorough instruction in the subjects stipulated in the **Maryland state law**.

Severn Run EPC Umbrella addresses this requirement in three stages. When a family registers with the group, they submit curriculum plans for the year; this ensures that goals have been set. At mid-term, each family participates in a **progress report questionnaire designed to evaluate progress and identify problems**. In spring, members schedule an interview with their reviewer to provide evidence of compliance with the **Maryland state law**. If deficiencies are found in any area, the family works with the **SREPC Umbrella** to make acceptable improvements.

Because educational philosophies, priorities, and personalities vary, each family will have a unique way of home schooling. Reviewers appreciate this and are receptive to a variety of methods and timetables. **Regardless of the style of teaching, each family is responsible to furnish dated, written documentation showing evidence that their instruction has been regular and thorough.**

Reviewers make decisions concerning the acceptability of a student's work based on **dated, written documentation** and samples that are shared during the portfolio review. Even though the Umbrella and the reviewer record can validate a member's compliance, each family is ultimately responsible to the county and the state to conduct quality education and to be able to prove their fulfillment of the **Maryland state law** requirements should the situation arise. Reviewers judge accomplishment on conversation, records, and work samples. In the event of an inquiry **by the county or state**, these same records should provide proof of compliance. Records should be kept for at least two years. Although Maryland is currently a relatively safe and friendly state in which to home school, requirements and attitudes can rapidly change; it is prudent to be prepared.

Members are welcomed and encouraged to contact **the SREPC Umbrella** with questions or comments at any time. Our first formal contact is at mid-term. No preparation is required for the mid-term **progress report questionnaire**. Each family will be **contacted** in January or February and will have an opportunity to **report** their progress. **Each family is required to schedule and attend a portfolio review with another presently enrolled SREPC Umbrella member in May. Please see the enclosed New Portfolio Review Procedures document for more details.** Most reviews last no more than thirty minutes. The primary teaching parent must attend; spouses and children are, of course, welcome. Evidence of instruction, or a portfolio, should include **dated** lesson plans and samples of work done in each subject.

Lesson plans can be recorded in any form. Suggestions include, but are not limited to: calendars, journals, planning books, or dated lists. Syllabuses or Homework Sheets that show week-to-week instruction provided by any tutors involved may be used as well. Planning may be in any time unit – daily, weekly, or monthly, and can be recorded in advance or after accomplishments have been completed. **Please record the date that the lesson is actually completed.** Although home schoolers are



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not required to provide school attendance records or to conduct classes for a certain number of days, a record of the days on which school occurred in any form could serve as evidence of regular instruction.

Also required at the review, are samples of the child's work in each subject. This includes subjects in which less time was spent or less formal instruction used; evidence of work must be shown for every subject required **by the SREPC Umbrella**. For young children, very little written work will be available; projects, pictures, or descriptions are acceptable evidence. If the curriculum is a computer program, print out and bring samples of work accomplished. Reviewers do not need to see textbooks unless the work is done directly in the book (**in this case**, bring the book instead of ripping out pages or making copies). **A review can be conducted before the school year is completed. Portfolio reviews must be completed by May 31. The completed Portfolio Review Forms must be mailed to the SREPC Umbrella with a postmark no later than June 15.**

One additional requirement exists for high school students: the Umbrella is required to keep documentation of the courses taken and credits earned (the assignment of grades is optional). The Umbrella provides a form that is signed by the parent, student, **and the reviewer**. This form must be brought to the year-end **portfolio** review **and mailed to SREPC Umbrella with the Portfolio Review Form**.

**Each family must provide dated, written documentation showing evidence that "regular, thorough instruction" has occurred during the school year in each course for each student. The reviewer must decide if this documentation has been presented and the Maryland state law requirements have been met. The reviewer will offer suggestions for improvement if they have not.** All records are confidential and are released only upon written request by the family involved. Each county sends a yearly verification list to the Umbrella, asking for confirmation that families claiming to be enrolled are actually members of the group. We are also required to notify them if a family currently in our group requests to leave our group, either because they are joining a different Umbrella organization, are reporting directly to the county themselves, or have ceased home schooling altogether (up-to-date regulations can be found on [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org)). Other than a state requested head-count by grade, neither the county nor the state has any access to, or knowledge of, our records.

Each family is legally and morally responsible to meet the requirements they agreed to in signing the 'Notification' form with their county. The option of Umbrella oversight is a blessing to Maryland home schoolers; maintaining and providing proof of compliance protects both the families involved and the Umbrella organization. Our review process is friendly, noninvasive, and simple. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact our Umbrella staff. **The Umbrella staff can be reached by telephone at 410-799-8284 (Virna) or by e-mail at [SevernRunUmbrella@comcast.net](mailto:SevernRunUmbrella@comcast.net) (Lisa).**



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### LEGAL INFORMATION

Maryland state law requires that children between the ages of five years and sixteen years be in an education program. A one-year exemption from mandatory kindergarten attendance will be granted if a written request is submitted to the county superintendent before the opening of school in the year the child becomes five.

The Annotated Code of Maryland; Education 7-301(a) states that public education is not required for a child “otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age.” This applies to home schools, provided the parent signs the ‘Notification’ form at least fifteen days before the beginning of home schooling, and again only if compliance options are changed or new students are added.

Public schools are required 180 days of attendance; home schools must provide regular instruction of sufficient duration to implement the instructional program. No teacher qualifications are required. Standardized tests are not required, but home schooled children are allowed to participate in the regularly scheduled standardized testing programs administered in the local school; requests should be made in writing as part of the ‘Notification’ form.

Each home schooling family must report their child’s progress to the local (county) public school authorities or to a “bona fide church organization,” known in Maryland as an “Umbrella” program. Umbrella groups have the following responsibilities: to provide pre-enrollment conferences/information, **to ensure that textbooks, lesson materials, and other instructional materials are used at the site where the pupil is receiving instruction, to conduct annual visits, and to arrange periodic conferences with parents.** The purpose of these responsibilities is to confirm that each home schooling family is in compliance with state regulations, specifically that they are providing regular, thorough instruction. The required subjects to be addressed **for kindergarten through eighth grade** are English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, and **one or more electives in: Art, Music, or Physical Education. For ninth through twelfth grade, please see the SREPC Umbrella High School Graduation Requirements for required subjects.** You are also required to maintain a portfolio of representative samples of your child’s work.



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### HIGH SCHOOL

Umbrella organizations are required to submit a transcript record for each enrolled secondary student to the Department of Education, if the Umbrella ceases home supervision. This is to ensure that documented records will be available should they be required by other schools, colleges, or employers. Parents would have the option of submitting the transcript to an alternate umbrella organization.

**The SREPC Umbrella is pleased to offer a diploma program beginning with the 2008 graduating class, contingent upon completion of the SREPC Umbrella graduation requirements. Please note that the State of Maryland officially recognizes only diplomas awarded by its own public schools. Each college, university or employer, may decide to accept or refuse any other diploma.**

To best ensure your student's success after high school, it is important that you conscientiously choose an organized selection of subjects, balancing your child's interests and abilities with an awareness of established standards, and that you document accomplishments. Graduation requirements vary only slightly among different programs. While there are basic core standards, you have ample room for individuality. **On the following page** is a list of **the SREPC Umbrella's minimum** graduation requirements concerning credits.

Some colleges may require foreign languages, etc., so you should research what options are available for you when you decide what classes to teach your child. **The University of Maryland System Schools (including Coppin State College, Frostburg State University, Towson University, Bowie State University, Salisbury University, University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, University of Maryland University College, and UMBC) require two Foreign Language credits (some state schools will accept two Advanced Technology credits instead, please check with the college's admissions department) for admission as well as Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry. Please check with the admission requirements for the college that your child plans to attend when selecting your child's high school courses.**

Among the most useful home schooling resources are *Christian Home Educators' Curriculum Manual – Junior/Senior High* by Cathy Duffy and *Creating Transcripts & Issuing Diplomas – What Every Parent Should Know* by Inge Cannon.



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**Minimum of 21 credits to graduate. Credits must be earned in the following areas in order to earn a SREPC Umbrella diploma:**

- 1 credit = 1 school year of work = approximately 9 months = minimum of 130 hours to maximum of 170 hours
- 1/2 credit = 1/2 school year of work = approximately 4 1/2 months = minimum of 65 hours to maximum of 85 hours

<u>Credit</u>	<u>Course</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Bible Course or Christian Service	May include any systematic Bible study or course, or any type of service for a Christian ministry. Please document hours spent on Christian service.
4	English	English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12 May include Literature, Grammar, Composition, Speech, etc.
3	Social Studies	<i>Must include one U.S. History credit.</i> Others may include Geography, U.S. Government, World History, etc.
3	Math	May include Algebra, Geometry, Calculus, Accounting, etc.
3	Science	<i>Must include laboratory experience</i> in all three science classes. Classes may include: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, etc.
1/2	Physical Education	May include organized sports, personal training, swimming lessons, karate lessons, or a Physical Education curriculum such as <i>We Win! A Complete Non-Competitive Physical Education Program for the Entire Family</i> by Alexander D. Marini, etc.
1/2	Health	Must include most of the topics covered in a typical Christian high school health course. The usual topics covered in a Christian high school health curriculum are: the circulatory system, respiratory system, skeletal system, muscular system, digestive system, integumentary system, immune system, nervous system, endocrine system, reproductive system, responsible living, mental health, fitness, nutrition, eating disorders, infectious diseases, noninfectious diseases, systemic diseases, personal hygiene, drug use, first aid, home safety, environmental safety, recreational safety, emergency preparedness, and preventative health care. <sup>1</sup>
1	Fine Arts	May include music, art, dance, drama, musical instrument, choir, etc.
<u>5</u>	Electives	Any elective course may count. Foreign languages, sign language, computer science, advanced technology courses, any vocational type course, etc.
<b>21</b>	<b>(TOTAL CREDITS)</b>	



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<sup>1</sup> Some examples of high school health curriculums are:

1. *Health in Christian Perspective* by Abeka
2. *Health* by Bob Jones University Press
3. *Switched-On Schoolhouse 2009 High School Health* by Alpha Omega
4. *Lifepac Electives: Health, Complete Set* by Alpha Omega
5. *Total Health High School* by the Association of Christian Schools