



San Mar Children's Home, Inc. has successfully completed the voluntary peer-review process known as the *Standards for Excellence*, a code of conduct for nonprofit organizations in Maryland.

The Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organization's (MANO) Standards for Excellence Program is designed to promote excellence and integrity in nonprofit organizations. The program is based on a code of conduct called *The Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*. Through an anonymous peer review process, the *Standards for Excellence* sets high standards and promotes ethical operations in nonprofits. Organizations that participate in the voluntary certification program are leaders among their peers; they have taken the extra step to show donors, service recipients, volunteers, and the public at-large, that they act ethically and are accountable in their program operations, governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising practices.

As part of the Standards certification program, San Mar voluntarily submitted to a rigorous review of all aspects of their program operations. The agency earned the Seal of Excellence by passing this review and was found to be exemplary. San Mar goes beyond the minimum legal requirements by outlining how well managed and responsibly governed nonprofits should operate.

The Standards cover eight areas of nonprofit operations:

- Mission and Program
- Governing Board
- Conflicts of Interest
- Human Resources
- Financial and Legal Accountability
- Openness and Disclosure
- Fundraising
- Public Policy and Public Affairs

The *Standards* cover a broad range of topics such as: how many times each year an organization's board of directors should meet, what subjects should be covered in an organization's personnel policies, and when audited financial statements should be prepared. The *Standards* also mandate that organizations have procedures in place to evaluate their programs and require board members to disclose any conflicts of interest. In all, the *Standards for Excellence* outline 55 performance standards for nonprofits to follow.