



101 W. Broadway, Suite 1770 | San Diego, CA 92101
Toll Free: (888) 511-3522
Local: (619) 236-9551
Fax: (619) 236-0677

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Gael Strack, CEO
Alliance for HOPE
International
760-445-3559

gael@allianceforhope.com

Casey Gwinn, President
Alliance for HOPE
International
619-980-8883

casey@allianceforhope.com

Family Justice Center Evaluation Validates the Model as a Pathway to HOPE and Healing for Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

(San Diego, CA) The University of Oklahoma today released their evaluation report of seven California-based Family Justice Centers and Dr. Chan Hellman praised the Family Justice Center model as a “source of hope and wellbeing for survivors of intimate personal violence and sexual assault.” The study was funded by Blue Shield of California Foundation as part of their long-term support for the development of Family Justice Centers in communities across California. Dr. Chan Hellman, the Director of The Center of Applied Research on Nonprofit Organizations – the leading Hope Research Center in the country – and his research team, working closely with Alliance for HOPE International and its Family Justice Center Alliance program found statistically significant increases in Hope, Resiliency, Satisfaction of Life, Emotional Well-Being, and Flourishing in the lives of survivors after receiving services in Family Justice Centers in California. The seven participating Centers included the: Contra Costa County Family Justice Center (Richmond, CA and Concord, CA); San Diego Family Justice Center (San Diego, CA); Alameda County Family Justice Center (Oakland, CA); Strength United Family Justice Center (Van Nuys, CA); Stanislaus Family Justice Center (Modesto, CA); Sacramento Family Justice Center (Sacramento, CA); and Riverside County Family Justice Center (Murrieta, Indio, Riverside).

Family Justice Centers are multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Centers that provide services to victims of interpersonal violence including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and human trafficking. The Centers focus on bringing together government and community-based agencies under one roof so victims can come one place to get help instead of having to go from agency to agency and place to place to receive needed services and support. The Family Justice Center movement began in San Diego in the mid-1990's through the vision and work of San Diego prosecutors Casey Gwinn and Gael Strack. They began co-locating police officers, prosecutors, community-based advocates, civil legal service providers, and child trauma therapists in 1990 in the San Diego City Attorney's Office. In 2002, their multi-agency model evolved into the nationally recognized San Diego Family Justice Center, a coordinated, co-location of 120 professionals from 25 agencies in the City of San Diego. Casey Gwinn provided oversight to the Center as the elected City Attorney and Gael Strack served as the first Family Justice Center Director in the country in her role as an Assistant City Attorney in San Diego.

Lucia Corral Pena, Senior Program Officer for Blue Shield of California Foundation praised the work of the Alliance and its partners: “These communities have put in the time and energy to come together and work across sectors to help survivors find a path to health, healing, and strength. We are honored to support this collaborative effort to improve the wellbeing of survivors and their families. Progress toward equity and dignity starts with a strong support system; and it also starts with hope.”

www.allianceforhope.com | www.familyjusticecenter.com

Family Justice Center Alliance ♦ Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention ♦ Camp HOPE America

Justice Legal Network ♦ VOICES Survivors Network



101 W. Broadway, Suite 1770 | San Diego, CA 92101
Toll Free: (888) 511-3522
Local: (619) 236-9551
Fax: (619) 236-0677

Gael Strack, CEO of Alliance for HOPE International, called for a greater national focus on building multi-agency Centers: "Victims and their children want and need to be able to come to one place for all their services instead of going from agency to agency and having to tell their story over and over again. We now have a way to meet those needs more effectively. It is time for more communities to start pursuing a Family Justice Center model."

Casey Gwinn, the visionary behind the Family Justice Center movement, said, "The Family Justice Center model is simple and straight forward – bringing everyone together under one roof – but because of turf issues, ego issues, competition among agencies for funding, and different philosophies that drive government and community-based organizations, the Family Justice Center model is very difficult to implement. But when it is done well, it changes the destinies of survivors of violence and abuse and their children." Though the study did not focus on the power of Family Justice Centers to increase accountability for abusers, Gwinn noted that many communities have seen a dramatic drop in domestic violence homicides as well when Family Justice Centers work well: "Brooklyn has seen a 91% drop in homicides since they opened their Family Justice Center. San Diego has seen a 90% drop. By holding abusers accountable AND supporting victims, we can save many lives with Family Justice Centers."

Lisbet Perez, the co-chair of Proyecto Esperanza, a survivors' advocacy group in San Diego, praised the results of the study: "My children and I found hope and healing at the San Diego Family Justice Center. We have seen the model work in our own lives. Now, we know it can work for thousands of other survivors as well if communities will just invest the time and effort – set aside all their turf and ego battles among agencies – and create a Family Justice Center. Survivors want to come one place for all their help instead of navigating the maze of agencies and systems that currently exist. We owe it to survivors to create what they need."

Alliance for HOPE International is one of the leading systems and social change organizations in the country focused on creating innovative, collaborative, trauma-informed approaches to meeting the needs of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children. Alliance for HOPE International and its allied Family Justice Centers serve more than 150,000 survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children each year in the United States. The Alliance supports multi-agency Centers in more than ten countries and trains more than 10,000 multi-disciplinary professionals every year.

Alliance for HOPE International operates the Family Justice Center Alliance, the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention, Camp HOPE America, the Justice Legal Network, and the VOICES Survivor Network. The Alliance was launched by the founders of the San Diego Family Justice Center after the development of the President's Family Justice Center Initiative in 2004. At the request of the U.S. Department of Justice, the team was asked to develop a program to support new and developing Family Justice Centers across the country. There are currently more than 130 operational Centers in the United States with international Centers in ten countries. There are over 100 more Centers currently developing in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Central America.

###

www.allianceforhope.com | www.familyjusticecenter.com

Family Justice Center Alliance ♦ Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention ♦ Camp HOPE America
Justice Legal Network ♦ VOICES Survivors Network