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## The Family Justice Center Collaborative Model

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## THE FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER COLLABORATIVE MODEL<sup>1</sup>

CASEY GWINN,\* GAEL STRACK,\*\* SUSAN ADAMS,\*\*\*  
REBECCA LOVELACE,\*\*\*\* AND DEBORAH NORMAN\*\*\*\*\*

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1. In February 2007, Saint Louis University held the Urban Family Symposium and invited four directors from operating Family Justice Centers to present on “Family Justice Centers: Providing Support for Victims of Domestic Violence.” The four directors, along with another, co-authored this article to explain the Family Justice Center collaborative model, share their insights, and document the exciting history of the Family Justice Center movement to date.

\* Casey Gwinn, J.D., CEO of the YWCA of San Diego and the San Diego Family Justice Center Foundation. Casey Gwinn was the visionary behind the creation of the San Diego Family Justice Center during his tenure as the elected San Diego City Attorney. He now serves as the CEO of the YWCA of San Diego County and is the Board President of the National Family Justice Center Alliance. Casey was a prosecutor from 1985 to 1996 and then served as the elected San Diego City Attorney from 1996 to 2004. He was admitted to the California State Bar in 1985 and is a graduate of Stanford University and UCLA School of Law. He is a recognized National/International trainer and author on domestic violence issues. He can be reached at: [casey@ywcasandiego.org](mailto:casey@ywcasandiego.org). It is almost impossible to thank all those who made the Family Justice Center a reality. In addition to those individuals acknowledged by Gael Strack, I would like to thank our national training team including Jim Barker, Diane McGrogan, Jennifer Bodine, Robert Keetch, Charles Wilson, Tim Campen and Judi Adams.

\*\* Gael Strack, J.D., National/International Family Justice Center Alliance. Gael B. Strack is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Family Justice Center Alliance, which provides technical assistance to over thirty existing and pending Family Justice Centers across the world. Prior to this position, Gael served as the Director of the San Diego Family Justice Center from October 2002 through May 2007 and was a domestic violence prosecutor for seventeen years at the San Diego City Attorney’s Office. Gael has also worked as a deputy public defender and a deputy county counsel for the San Diego County Counsel’s office handling juvenile dependency matters. She graduated from Western State College of Law in December 1985. Gael can be reached at [gael@nfjc.org](mailto:gael@nfjc.org). I am particularly grateful and proud of our City Leaders for making the Family Justice Center a reality and their commitment to keeping it going. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to our Mayor, our City Council members (past & current), the Family Justice Center’s Steering Committee (which includes Police Chief William Lansdowne, Fire Chief Tracy Jarman, District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, City Attorney Mike Aguirre, Council members Jim Madaffer and Brian Maienschein), Former Police Chief David Bejarano, Former Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, Former City Attorney Casey Gwinn, Former City Manager Lamont Ewell, the Board of the FJC Foundation and Kimberly Weisz, President of the Operation Hope Auxillary. It has been a wonderful opportunity to work with so many dedicated professionals from the 27 onsite partners, the volunteers, the San Diego Police Department’s Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse units, the City Attorney’s Domestic Violence and Special Crimes unit and--in particular--the small but mighty staff of the Family Justice Center Department. Everyone has played a key role in the day-to-day operation of the Center and provided commitment and spirit to helping hurting families in San Diego. I have been truly humbled by the realization that literally thousands and

## I. INTRODUCTION

For nearly thirty years, the domestic violence shelter movement in the United States has been developing and implementing a vision for co-located, multi-disciplinary services for victims of domestic violence and their children. The concept first focused on providing emergency housing but it soon expanded to include food, clothing, job training and placement, credit repair, medical services, and access to a host of other services. By the early 1980s, leaders of the national domestic violence movement sought support and assistance from the criminal and civil justice systems to protect victims and holding abusers accountable.<sup>2</sup> Once recruited into this powerful feminist social

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thousands of victims of violent crimes are counting on our leadership and our ability to work together in order to make the system work for their safety and the safety of their children.

\*\*\* Susan B. Adams, J.D., Crystal Judson Family Justice Center. In May of 2005, Susan Adams was selected as the Director of the newly created Crystal Judson Family Justice Center. Prior to working at the Family Justice Center, Ms. Adams worked in the criminal justice system in Pierce County. After graduating from the University of Puget Sound School of Law, she served as a judicial assistant in Pierce County Superior Court for one year. Ms. Adams spent the next fourteen years as a deputy prosecutor with the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office. During her years as a prosecutor, Ms. Adams served as a Division Chief, the Supervisor of the Domestic Violence Unit, a Felony Trial Team Chief and a Felony trial lawyer. I would like to recognize Eileen O'Brien, retired Justice Services Manager from the Prosecutor's Office, for her work in making the FJC happen. She was our visionary!

\*\*\*\* Rebecca Lovelace, Nampa Family Justice Center. Since November 2005, Rebecca has served as the Director of the Family Justice Center in Nampa, Idaho. Rebecca has been involved in helping victims of domestic violence for fourteen years, first, as an Alternative Sentencing Worker, interviewing and making sentencing recommendations for offenders at the felony level for alternatives to incarceration, and then, as a probation officer. In 1997, Rebecca started working directly with victims of domestic violence victims and their families doing grant writing, financial management and court advocacy at the local domestic violence shelter. Rebecca has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from California State University, Fresno. I would like special recognition to go to Nampa City Mayor Tom Dale and Detective Angela Weekes of the Nampa Police Department for their never ending support and dedication to making the lives of domestic violence and child abuse victims and survivors better in Canyon County, Idaho.

\*\*\*\*\* Deborah Norman, J.D., St. Louis Family Justice Center. Deborah L. Norman is President of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Family Violence Council, which is responsible for the operation of the St. Louis Family Justice Center. Professionally, Debbie is Associate General Counsel for Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc. practicing trademark law. She received her J.D. and M.S.W. from Washington University, St. Louis, and a B.S. Education from Illinois State University. A special thank you and acknowledgment is expressed to St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, the St. Louis City Police Department and its DART unit, the St. Louis Family Violence Council, Mary Burns and Anna Ginsburg.

2. See Del Martin, *BATTERED WIVES* 179-80 (rev. ed. 1981); Emily J. Sack, *Battered Women and the State: The Struggle for the Future of Domestic Violence Policy*, 6 *Wis. L. Rev.* 1657, 1666, 1675 (2004). Rita Smith at the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Lynn Rosenthal (formerly) at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, Cheryl Cataes at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, and Esta Soler at the Family Violence Prevention Fund have also been instrumental in teaching the lessons of organizing through leadership.

movement to stop violence against women, the criminal and civil justice systems began to engage and mobilize through legislative initiatives and mandates, policy and protocol changes, participation in coordinated community response efforts, and a variety of other initiatives advocated by domestic violence movement leaders.<sup>3</sup>

The movement's decision to engage the criminal and civil justice systems in the social change effort to stop violence against women laid the foundation for today's Family Justice Center movement. By the late 1980s, a proliferation of new programs had emerged to help victims and children.<sup>4</sup> With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994,<sup>5</sup> federal funding became available for many new programs,<sup>6</sup> and it quickly became apparent that as public awareness and funding increased, so did agencies and programs serving victims and children. Rather than having only one or two shelter-based locations for services, large communities developed many agencies and, therefore, several locations offering services and support.

The added criminal and civil justice system involvement dramatically increased the number of places victims and children had to go to obtain all necessary services. In the midst of trauma and danger, navigating so many agencies and systems was overwhelming for most victims.<sup>7</sup> In the mid-1990s, domestic violence professionals called for the development of a "coordinated community response."<sup>8</sup> Coordinated community responses ("CCRs") created task forces and coordinating councils to get all community agencies working together to avoid duplication and inconsistency. CCRs took the form of coordinating councils, criminal justice center system reform and/or community intervention projects. One of the most well-known CCRs, the Duluth

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3. CASEY GWINN & GAEL STRACK, HOPE FOR HURTING FAMILIES: CREATING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS ACROSS AMERICA 27 (2006).

4. Sack, *supra* note 2, at 1666.

5. *Id.* at 1675.

6. Violence Against Women Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1902-55 (codified in scattered sections of 18 U.S.C., 28 U.S.C., and 42 U.S.C.). This statute is a United States federal law, passed as Title IV, sec. 40001-40703 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 HR 3355 and signed as Public Law 103-322 by President Bill Clinton on September 13, 1994. It provided \$1.6 billion to enhance investigation and prosecution of the violent crime perpetrated against women, increased pre-trial detention of the accused, provided for automatic and mandatory restitution of those convicted. *See* San Diego, Cal., Ordinance O-19339 (Nov. 29, 2004); *see also* 42 U.S.C. §§ 3796gg-3796hh (2000) (detailing grant programs authorized to strengthen domestic violence law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services programs).

7. Eilene Zimmerman, *Where Justice is Served*, SAN DIEGO MAGAZINE, Sept. 2004, at 2, available at <http://www.sandiego-online.com/media/San-Diego-Magazine/September-2004/Where-Justice-is-Served/>.

8. *See, e.g.*, National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Fact Sheet, [www.ncdsv.org/ncd\\_factsheet.html](http://www.ncdsv.org/ncd_factsheet.html) (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DAIP), serves as a model for many CCRs.<sup>9</sup> Such efforts, however, did not slow the production of more specialized domestic violence programs or units in prosecutor's offices, police and probation departments, criminal and civil courts, hospitals, mental health programs, advocacy agencies, and drug and alcohol treatment organizations.

In San Diego, in 1989, Casey Gwinn, Gael Strack, and Ashley Walker of the YWCA of San Diego County saw the problem with disparate and inconsistent services emerging and called for a "Family Justice Center," a centralized location housing staff from each relevant agency. By providing a single location, victims of domestic violence could access the services of the criminal/civil justice systems and the social service community.<sup>10</sup> Between 1989 and 1998, these visionaries and over eighty survivors and service professionals, organized through the San Diego Domestic Violence Council, began working toward this vision by bringing together the staffs of the multiple agencies within the San Diego City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit.<sup>11</sup>

The core philosophy supported by all key stakeholders of the Family Justice Center movement came directly from the vision for co-located services being pursued at the YWCA, which was the largest and domestic violence shelter-based service agency in San Diego at the time. By 1998, more than forty agencies in the public and private sectors endorsed the vision for the Family Justice Center.<sup>12</sup> Between 1998 and 2002, a comprehensive strategic planning process led and facilitated by Judith Adams helped evaluate and address the myriad of complex issues prior to formal creation of the Center.

Thus, as we describe the now evolving national Family Justice Center movement, it must be emphasized that Family Justice Centers are not and should not be viewed as rejecting the community-based domestic violence movement, but rather as a product of it. While other co-located service centers evolved in communities all across America during the 1990s,<sup>13</sup> after four years

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9. Meg Townsend et al., *Interim Report: Evaluability Assessment of the President's Family Justice Center Initiative 5* (Research Report No. 212278, 2005), available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/212278.pdf>.

10. Zimmerman, *supra* note 7.

11. See Casey G. Gwinn & Sgt. Anne O'Dell, *Stopping the Violence: The Role of the Police Officers and Prosecutor*, 20 W. ST. U. L. REV. 298, 311 n.39 (1993).

12. See Family Justice Center Fiscal Year 2008 Proposed Budget 362, <http://www.sandiego.gov/budget/proposed/pdf/vol2/55v2famjus.pdf>. (last visited Oct. 27, 2007).

13. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Attorney General Ashcroft Announces \$20 Million for Communities Through President Bush's Family Justice Center Initiative (July 21, 2004), available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/July/04\\_opa\\_499.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/July/04_opa_499.htm).

of aggressive planning efforts San Diego created the largest and most comprehensive center with the opening of the Center in 2002.<sup>14</sup>

## II. HISTORY OF THE SAN DIEGO FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER

### A. 1989–*The Vision is Born*

In September, 1989, City Attorney John Witt called District Attorney Ed Miller to propose a “one stop shop” domestic violence service center in San Diego.<sup>15</sup> Deputy City Attorney Casey Gwinn had written a ten-page proposal to be distributed to all the supervisors in the DA’s Office. The premise was simple: victims would have an easier time receiving needed services if they only had to go one place to get all the necessary help.<sup>16</sup>

When Gwinn arrived in the DA’s Office on the 14th floor of the Wells Fargo Building, he was ushered into the main conference room to meet with the heads of each branch, with the District Attorney, the Assistant District Attorney, and the Chief Deputy District Attorney. Gwinn’s proposal was distributed and he was given the floor for twenty minutes.<sup>17</sup> Upon conclusion of his presentation, there were a few questions, and Gwinn was ushered out without ever receiving a formal response to his proposal.<sup>18</sup> It seemed fair to say that a “one stop shop” for domestic violence victims was an idea whose time had not yet come.

Even after that discouraging day, the City Attorney’s office was determined to move forward with the concept. By the early 1990s, the YWCA and the Center for Community Solutions (“CCS”) were invited to be on-site partners inside the City Attorney’s Child Abuse and Domestic Violence (“CADV”) Unit.<sup>19</sup> The CADV Unit expanded its own advocacy program with grants and City General Fund revenue and soon thereafter, staff from the District Attorney’s Victim-Witness Program joined the City Attorney’s CADV Unit and deputy city attorneys were cross-deputized to handle felonies as well as misdemeanors.<sup>20</sup>

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14. Press Release, San Diego City Attorney, President Bush Announces Creation of Family Justice Centers for Victims of Domestic Violence, Modeled After The San Diego Family Justice Center 2–3 (Oct. 8, 2003), *available at* <http://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney/media/pdf/news03/031008.pdf> [hereinafter Press Release: Bush Announces Creation of Family Justice Centers].

15. National Family Justice Center Alliance, About Us, History of San Diego Family Justice Center, <http://www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/get-help/about-us/history> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

18. *Id.*

19. *Id.*

20. *Id.*

From the City Attorney's determination to move forward with a limited one stop shop, prosecutors from the CADV Unit and detectives from the San Diego Police Department began rotating between offices on a weekly basis.<sup>21</sup> The City Attorney successfully pursued grants for partnerships with Children's Hospital and Child Protective Services<sup>22</sup> and within a year of this humble attempt at a multi-disciplinary service center, it became abundantly clear that the idea was the right one. Under one roof, victims could now get a restraining order, see a prosecutor talk to a detective, and meet with an advocate from Children's Hospital;<sup>23</sup> co-located, multi-disciplinary services were an idea whose time *had* come.

*B. 1998–The Partnership & Planning*

Within six months of David Bejarano becoming the Police Chief of San Diego in 1998, he sat down with now-elect City Attorney Casey Gwinn to discuss two initiatives: 1) creating a neighborhood prosecution unit; and 2) creating a one stop shop for victims of domestic violence.<sup>24</sup> They took the idea of co-located services to the next step and created a planning team led by Assistant Chief Rulette Armstead and Assistant City Attorney Gael Strack, among others.<sup>25</sup> Together, they held community forums, conducted focus groups, and visited other sites. A feasibility study was ultimately completed by Sgt. Monica Kaiser from the San Diego Police Department.<sup>26</sup> Seeking input from the community and the stakeholders was key in determining the right model for San Diego. It was the foundation for community buy-in, long-term support and ultimately our sustainability plan. With each community forum, presentation and meeting, came the gift of new ideas, enthusiasm and pledges of support.

*C. 2001–City Approval*

By October 2001, Gwinn and Bejarano, with support from the community and the San Diego Domestic Violence Council, were ready to formally propose an all-in-one center for victims of domestic violence before the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services (“PS&NS”) Committee of the City Council.<sup>27</sup> At

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21. History of San Diego Family Justice Center, *supra* note 15.

22. *Id.*

23. *Id.*

24. *Id.*

25. Also included were Lt. Jim Barker, Sgt. Monica Kaiser, Head Deputy City Attorney Brian Erickson, Senior Analyst Mary Ann Stepnowsky, Senior Advocate Kimberly Pearce, Investigator Chris Lee, Senior Legal Secretary Marta Overly, and Information Technology Analyst Kevin Westover. *See id.*

26. GWINN & STRACK, *supra* note 3, at 49.

27. *See* History of San Diego Family Justice Center, *supra* note 15.

the hearing, the duo outlined the City's fifteen-year response to domestic violence, the current problem, and the potential solution—the San Diego Family Justice Center by documenting the planning and preparation for a Family Justice Center over the previous years.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the Council concluded these efforts created the right time to move forward with concrete plans for a Family Justice Center. Their proposal included best practices, local partners, proven strategies, innovative programs, and a potential site,<sup>29</sup> and after public comment, the PS&NS Committee unanimously directed Gwinn and Bejarano to submit their plan to the City Council for their review and approval.<sup>30</sup>

*D. 2002—The San Diego Family Justice Center is Launched*

In April 2002, the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager unanimously supported the proposal to open a Family Justice Center in the heart of downtown San Diego.<sup>31</sup> The center promised to be one of the most significant initiatives to help domestic violence victims in this region in the past twenty years, bringing over twenty agencies and over one hundred domestic violence professionals under one roof. The goal was simple: consolidate San Diego's efforts and expertise to provide more services, more safety, and more justice to victims and their children. The Family Justice Center was poised to be the first facility in the country to house: the Police Department's entire Domestic Violence Unit (forty officers), the City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit (thirty-five attorneys), and staff from approximately twenty other community nonprofit domestic violence and sexual assault agencies and county agencies. For the first time in San Diego history, the criminal justice community would have the opportunity to offer a wide range of services and tap the expertise of many professionals from a single location.

With the unanimous vote from the Mayor and City Council, and a \$500,000 Challenge Grant from the California Endowment, the Family Justice Center was launched, realizing a fifteen-year-old dream to one day provide services for victims of family violence from one location.<sup>32</sup> The San Diego Family Justice Center had the full support of over forty community organizations and the county's entire congressional and state legislative delegations.

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28. *Id.*

29. *Id.*

30. *Id.*

31. See Press Release: Bush Announces Creation of Family Justice Centers, *supra* note 14, at 3–4.

32. *Id.*



On October 10, 2002, the San Diego Family Justice Center opened its doors,<sup>33</sup> and victims of domestic violence in the San Diego could now come to one location to talk to an advocate, get a restraining order, plan for their safety, talk to a police officer, meet with a prosecutor, receive medical assistance, counsel with a chaplain, get help with transportation, and obtain nutrition and pregnancy services counseling. During its first month, the Family Justice Center welcomed over eighty-seven clients and received over 650 phone calls requesting assistance,<sup>34</sup> and today the Center averages over 1,000 new and returning clients and over 3,000 phone calls per month.<sup>35</sup>

*E. 2004—The Creation of a New Family Justice Center Department*

Given the tremendous success and growth of the Family Justice Center during the first twenty-four months of operation, city policy makers and community leaders realized that a clear governance structure was needed to ensure continuation of benefits to the citizens of San Diego. The loosely-structured collaboration under the auspices of the City Attorney and Police Chief succeeded in creating the Center, but a clear governance structure was crucial to its long-term success. In October 2004, Gwinn, along with City Manager Lamont Ewell, Police Chief William Lansdowne, and Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, proposed a city ordinance to establish a new city department that was separate from the Attorney's Office and the Police Department, to support and advance the Center's mission, goals, management, operation and future challenges.<sup>36</sup>

On November 29, 2004, the mayor and city council unanimously approved an Ordinance to create the Office of the San Diego Family Justice Center with a new director reporting to the City Manager and a steering committee.<sup>37</sup> Consisting of the Chair of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee of the City Council, Director of the FJC, and representatives from the San Diego Police Department, City Attorney's Office, and the District Attorney's Office, the Steering Committee assists the City Manager in developing and overseeing operational guidelines, a long range strategic plan, and recommendations pertaining to programs, priorities and the annual budget for the Family Justice Center to the Mayor and Council. On December 4, 2004, City Manager Lamont Ewell appointed Gael Strack Director of the

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33. KPBS Homepage, Help is Available, [http://www.kpbs.org/interactive/features/domestic\\_violence/stalking/help](http://www.kpbs.org/interactive/features/domestic_violence/stalking/help) (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

34. See Press Release: Bush Announces Creation of Family Justice Centers, *supra* note 14, at 3.

35. *Id.*

36. See San Diego, Cal., Ordinance O-19339 (Nov. 29, 2004).

37. Family Justice Center Fiscal Year 2008 Proposed Budget, *supra* note 12, at 362.

Office of the San Diego Family Justice Center.<sup>38</sup> The initial staff for this new city department included: Jean Emmons, Executive Secretary; Kimberly Pearce, Manager of Client Services, and Diana Monaco, Grants Analyst, and Sgt. Robert Keetch, on special assignment from the San Diego Police Department as Manager of Operations.

The San Diego Family Justice Center's collaboration eventually grew to include twenty-seven agencies participating in an on-site or off-site capacity. Each week, nearly 120 professionals provide services to victims and their children<sup>39</sup> and are supported by a volunteer program that, at its peak, included more than 100 volunteers who attended a forty-hour training academy before joining the Family Justice Center team.<sup>40</sup> Each volunteer commits a minimum of twelve hours per month for a year. To date, the San Diego Family Justice Center has served over 30,000 clients.<sup>41</sup> It has gained national and international attention based on the qualitative feedback from clients participating in focus groups and exit interviews.<sup>42</sup> The Center has also been recognized for continuing the twenty-year decline in domestic violence homicides in the City of San Diego which now gives San Diego the lowest domestic violence homicide rate of any major city in America.<sup>43</sup>

### III. HISTORY OF THE PRESIDENT'S FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER INITIATIVE

#### A. 2003—President Bush Announces Presidential Family Justice Center Initiative

In April 2003, Gwinn attended a White House Roundtable on Family Violence organized by Lifetime Television. He participated in a panel at the White House with Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson, Office on Violence Against Women Director Diane Stuart, Domestic Policy Advisor to the President Margaret Spellings, and others to discuss the future of the national movement to stop family violence. During the meeting, Gwinn advocated for two major ideas: that the President should speak in a national address on the issue of family violence; and that the administration should support innovative, forward-

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38. GWINN & STRACK, *supra* note 3, at 54. The initial staff for this new city department included: Jean Emmons, Executive Secretary; Kimberly Pearce, Manager of Client Services, and Diana Monaco, Grants Analyst, and Sgt. Robert Keetch, on special assignment from the San Diego Police Department as Manager of Operations.

39. History of San Diego Family Justice Center, *supra* note 15.

40. *Id.*

41. See Family Justice Center Fiscal Year 2008 Proposed Budget, *supra* note 12, at 363.

42. *Id.* at 362.

43. Press Release, Office of San Diego Mayor, 2005 Crime Index 2, 10 (Feb. 21, 2006), available at [http://www.sandiego.gov/mayor/pdf/crime\\_stats\\_pr\\_feb.21.pdf](http://www.sandiego.gov/mayor/pdf/crime_stats_pr_feb.21.pdf).

looking initiatives such as the San Diego Family Justice Center. Gwinn argued that without new approaches to service delivery, the national domestic violence movement would continue to proliferate services to victims without providing the most efficient, easily accessible services to victims.

Six months later, Gwinn and Strack (then Director of the Family Justice Center) were invited to participate in a White House event on October 8, 2003 hosted by the President to recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month. During the event, Gwinn met privately with the President and Diane Stuart, the Director of the Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women ("OVW") and then joined over 150 national leaders in the domestic violence movement for a presidential address. In his October 8 speech, President Bush announced the President's Family Justice Center Initiative designed to create Family Justice Centers across America modeled after the San Diego Family Justice Center.<sup>44</sup> Subsequently, Diane Stuart from the OVW was asked to take the lead on this pilot program to develop fifteen similar centers in communities across the country.<sup>45</sup>

*B. 2004—Over 400 Submit Letters of Intent to Open FJC, 15 Sites are Selected*

By January 2004, over 400 communities responded with letters of intent to the United States Department of Justice's announcement of the Family Justice Center Initiative,<sup>46</sup> and the San Diego Family Justice Center Foundation (the "Foundation") was asked to become the comprehensive technical assistance provider for the entire initiative.

On July 21, 2004, Attorney General Ashcroft announced that the Department of Justice was awarding more than \$20 million to fifteen communities chosen under President Bush's Family Justice Center Initiative to prevent and respond to violence against women. Furthermore, five communities would receive technical assistance grants to provide specialized expertise and consultation.<sup>47</sup> The fifteen recipients of the Initiative awards were selected, among other criteria, based on geographic distribution,

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44. Press Release, The White House, President Bush Proclaims October Domestic Violence Awareness Month (Oct. 8, 2003), available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/10/20031008-5.html>; Joe Hughes, *San Diego's Family Justice Center is Hailed by Bush*, SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE, Oct. 9, 2003, available at [http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20031009-9999\\_1m9center.html](http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20031009-9999_1m9center.html).

45. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Justice Department to Spearhead President's Family Justice Center Initiative to Better Serve Domestic Violence Victims (Oct. 8, 2003), available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2003/October/03\\_ojp\\_560.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2003/October/03_ojp_560.htm).

46. See History of San Diego Family Justice Center, *supra* note 15.

47. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Attorney General Ashcroft Announces \$1,248,008 For Hillsborough County Area through President Bush's Family Justice Center Initiative (July 21, 2004), available at <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/AshcroftAnnouncesFJC.pdf>.

economic and cultural diversity, service to underserved populations, and coordination with Native American communities.<sup>48</sup>

The San Diego Family Justice Center Foundation was designated the “comprehensive technical assistance provider” for the initiative.<sup>49</sup> The initiative was guided by a national advisory board and supported by a national faculty of trainers and four targeted technical assistance providers from the Julian Center (Indianapolis, Indiana), Hennepin County (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Safe Havens (Boston, Massachusetts), and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (Washington, D.C.). Together, the San Diego team and the other faculty assisted OVW in providing onsite training and technical assistance for the fifteen sites across the nation.

The President’s Initiative was founded on a number of fundamental elements distinguishing it from other co-located services:<sup>50</sup>

- Co-located Services: one site for detectives, prosecutors, advocates, civil legal, medical, spiritual support, and community-based social service professionals;<sup>51</sup>
- Pro-Arrest/Mandatory Arrest Policies: law enforcement and prosecution services emphasizing the importance of arrest, prosecution and long-term accountability for offenders;<sup>52</sup>
- Policies Incidental to Arrest/Enforcement: policies to eliminate dual and/or mutual arrest;<sup>53</sup>
- Victim Safety/Advocacy: on-site staff to assess and provide victim safety, which includes security for staff and clients at the center;<sup>54</sup>
- Victim Confidentiality: confidentiality policies and procedures in place as required by law;<sup>55</sup>

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48. The fifteen communities receiving the awards were: County of Alameda, Oakland, California; Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas; City of Boston, Boston, Massachusetts; Defiance Municipal Court, Defiance, Ohio; County of Erie, Buffalo, New York; Hillsborough County, Tampa, Florida; City of Knoxville, Knoxville, Tennessee; City of Nampa, Nampa, Idaho; City of New York, Brooklyn, New York; Ouachita Parish Police Jury, Monroe, Louisiana; Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka, Alaska; Somos Familia Family Institute, Inc., Las Vegas, New Mexico; St. Joseph County, South Bend, Indiana; City of St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri; City of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma. *See id.*

49. *Id.* As the comprehensive technical assistance provider, the Foundation developed an executive committee composed of Casey Gwinn, Gael Strack, and Charles Wilson and staffed by Lt. Jim Barker (Ret.), training director; Diane McGrogan (LCSW), co-training director; Jennifer Bodine, administrative assistant; and Judi Adams, consultant.

50. OFFICE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, THE PRESIDENT’S FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER INITIATIVE BEST PRACTICES 2–4 (2007), available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/docs/pfjci\\_bestpractices\\_overview2007.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/docs/pfjci_bestpractices_overview2007.pdf) [hereinafter BEST PRACTICES].

51. *Id.* at 2.

52. *Id.*

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

- Victim-Centered Facility where Offenders are Prohibited: services oriented toward victims and their children and not towards assistance for violent criminal defendants;<sup>56</sup>
- History of Domestic Violence Specialization: specialized training is a priority for each discipline, i.e. law enforcement, advocates, prosecutors, judges, court support personnel, and medical professionals;<sup>57</sup>
- Strong Support from Local Leaders: policy makers, elected officials and tribal leaders provide strong local support to the center;<sup>58</sup>
- Strategic Planning is Critical to Short-Term and Long-Term Success: each center works with a strategic planner to ensure sustainability, development of the program, and local funding options for future operations;<sup>59</sup>
- Strong/Diverse Community Support: recognition that all centers need strong, diverse community support from local government, state government, business, labor, diverse community-based social service and faith based organizations.<sup>60</sup>

C. *2005–Congress Adds Family Justice Centers to the Violence Against Women Act*

Under Title I of the Violence Against Women Act, Congress recognized the importance of the Family Justice Centers by denoting the model as a “purpose area.”<sup>61</sup> The Family Justice Center has been identified as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention services by OVW and the California Attorney General for using a “wraparound” service delivery model.<sup>62</sup> This significant and historic federal legislation will allow more communities to seek federal assistance in planning and operating their centers in the years to come.<sup>63</sup>

Preliminary outcomes and evaluation results have included reduced domestic violence homicides, increased victim safety, increased autonomy, increased empowerment for victims and professionals, reduced fear and

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55. *Id.* at 3.

56. BEST PRACTICES, *supra* note 50, at 3.

57. *Id.*

58. *Id.*

59. *Id.* at 4.

60. *Id.*

61. *Id.* at 1.

62. BEST PRACTICES, *supra* note 50, at 1.

63. *Id.*

anxiety for victims and their children with the court system, increased peer support, reduced witness recanting, and increased numbers of victims receiving services.<sup>64</sup>

To date, all fifteen federally funded sites have begun operating as part of the President's Family Justice Center Initiative and provide:<sup>65</sup>

- Medical care, including on-site or off-site primary physical care, mental health counseling for victims and dependents, and sexual assault forensic evidence collection;<sup>66</sup>
- Law enforcement and civil legal assistance services, including electronic processing of protective orders, investigation and prosecution of offenders, victim-witness assistance, and court-based victim advocacy services;<sup>67</sup>
- State-of-the-art information sharing and case management systems;<sup>68</sup>
- Social services, including federal and state welfare assistance for parents and children;<sup>69</sup>
- Employment assistance, including employment and career counseling and training through local One Stop Employment Centers or other local services;<sup>70</sup>
- Substance abuse treatment;<sup>71</sup>
- Child-related needs such as parenting classes, teen pregnancy services, supervised visitation and safe exchange programs, services for child witnesses of domestic violence, assistance for relocating children into new schools, truancy programs, and youth mentoring programs;<sup>72</sup>
- Housing and transportation assistance to cover immediate needs and help with long-term housing solutions;<sup>73</sup> and

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64. *Id.*; CAL. ATT'Y GEN'S. CRIME AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER, REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL FROM THE TASK FORCE ON LOCAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, KEEPING THE PROMISE: VICTIM SAFETY AND BATTERER ACCOUNTABILITY 87 (June 2005), [http://www.safestate.org/documents/DV\\_Report\\_AG.pdf](http://www.safestate.org/documents/DV_Report_AG.pdf).

65. San Diego Family Justice Center President's Initiative, <http://sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/info/presidents-initiative> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

66. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Fact Sheet—The President's Family Justice Center Initiative (Oct. 8, 2003), *available at* <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/newsroom/2003/FJCIfacts.htm> [hereinafter Dep't of Justice, Fact Sheet].

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

69. *Id.*

70. *Id.*

71. *Id.*

72. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Fact Sheet, *supra* note 66.

73. *Id.*

- Chaplaincy or faith-based counseling programs providing victims and their families with non-sectarian spiritual guidance.<sup>74</sup>

Beyond the federal initiative, the Family Justice Center movement is developing rapidly in other communities, evidenced by the thirty centers now in operation and the many planning centers across the United States that managed to open even absent federal funding.<sup>75</sup> Many communities who were denied federal funding through the President's Family Justice Center Initiative nonetheless determined that their communities were ready for such a program. Among the first to open Family Justice Centers outside the federal initiative were Riverside, California and Tacoma/Pierce County, Washington.<sup>76</sup> National Alliance Director Gael Strack refers to these sites as the "unstoppables" for their unrelenting commitment to making their dream of helping the hurting families of their community a reality.

The Family Justice Center movement is also spreading around the world with similar centers now operating in Canada, Mexico, and Great Britain with plans for additional centers in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.<sup>77</sup>

*D. 2006—Mary Beth Buchanan Appointed Acting Director of OVW, New Orleans Family Justice Center Added to the Vision*

On November 29, 2006, President Bush appointed United States Attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Mary Beth Buchanan, as acting director of OVW.<sup>78</sup> Buchanan is also responsible for handling the OVW's legal and policy issues regarding the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act and overseeing an annual budget of almost \$400 million.<sup>79</sup>

Buchanan immediately set her sights on opening a new Family Justice Center in New Orleans. After the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans's population was reduced by half but domestic violence simultaneously increased by more than half.<sup>80</sup> Within her first few days,

74. *Id.*

75. SAN DIEGO FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER NEWSLETTER (Family Justice Center, San Diego, CA), Fall 2005, at 2, available at <http://www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/Media/oct-dec-05-newsletter.pdf>.

76. *New Crystal Judson Family Justice Center Offers Hope and Safety*, PIERCE COUNTY FRONT PAGE NEWS, Dec. 9, 2005, available at [http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/internet/news.cfm?node\\_id=36750&media=PC](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/internet/news.cfm?node_id=36750&media=PC); John Hunneman, *Family Justice Center Set to Open*, NORTH COUNTY TIMES-THE CALIFORNIAN, Jan. 22, 2006, available at <http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2006/01/23/news/californian/12206191956.txt>.

77. National Family Justice Center Alliance, International Alliance, <http://www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/info/international-alliance> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

78. Office on Violence Against Women, OVW Acting Director, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/ovwactingdirector.htm> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

79. *Id.*

80. Anne Rochell Konigsmark, *Crime Takes Hold of New Orleans*, USA TODAY, Nov. 30, 2006, available at [www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-11-30-orleans-crime-cover\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-11-30-orleans-crime-cover_x.htm).

Buchanan individually met with Mary Claire Landry, Director of Crescent House, U.S. Attorney Jim Letten, and Casey Gwinn. Together they formed an impressive Steering Committee to lead the effort to open the New Orleans center.

After visiting the San Diego Center in January 2007, Buchanan stated:

The Family Justice Center model is, at its core, a concept that increases community capacity while also providing diverse, culturally competent services to victims and their children from a single location. It is common sense that such an approach, if executed properly, will provide greater assistance to those in need.<sup>81</sup>

By February 2007, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced a \$3 million Department of Justice grant to open a Family Justice Center<sup>82</sup> that, along with technical assistance from the National Family Justice Center Alliance, helped launch a strategic planning process.<sup>83</sup> Only six months later, on August 28, 2007, Gonzales returned to Louisiana to participate in a ribbon-cutting for the New Orleans Family Justice Center, housed in a city-owned fire station that was previously used by the Historic District Landmarks Commission.<sup>84</sup> The two-story, 10,000 square foot center will initially house staff from five on-site partners, the New Orleans Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, the District Attorney's Office, Crescent House, and Project SAVE.<sup>85</sup> The New Orleans Family Justice Center, directed by Theresa Marchese, Crescent House Legal Director of Project SAVE, is a public-private partnership between Catholic Charities and federal, state, and local agencies to provide social, legal, and medical services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

#### IV. A LOOK INTO THE LIFE OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE BEFORE THE FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER: A REAL CASE FROM SAN DIEGO:

A victim calls 911 to report domestic violence at 9:30 p.m. on a Friday night. She is Hispanic and speaks very little English. She is the mother of two small children, ages four and six. Her common-law husband, angry that she refused to cook him dinner and that she was taking care of the children when

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81. BEST PRACTICES, *supra* note 50, at 1.

82. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Attorney General Gonzalez Announces New Initiatives for Law Enforcement Efforts in New Orleans (Feb. 13, 2007), available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2007/February/07\\_ag\\_084.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2007/February/07_ag_084.html).

83. Family Justice Center National Alliance, Thinking About Starting Family Justice Center?, <http://www.adams2.org/startfjc.html> (last visited Jan. 8, 2007).

84. Coleman Warner, *Gonzales Mum on Resignation During Visit to N.O.*, THE TIMES-PICAYUNE, Aug. 28, 2007, available at [http://blog.nola.com/times-picayune/2007/08/gonzales\\_mum\\_on\\_resignation\\_du.html](http://blog.nola.com/times-picayune/2007/08/gonzales_mum_on_resignation_du.html).

85. *Id.*



she should have paying attention to him, just “choked” her and hit her with his belt. The victim threatens to call the police and her husband responds by threatening to take the children and have her deported. Fearing for her safety and the safety of her children, she calls the police. Her husband yanks the phone out of the wall, and the victim runs to her next door neighbor’s apartment to call the police. She begins to experience trouble swallowing.

The police dispatcher transfers the call to an interpreter and two police officers are dispatched to the scene. Fortunately, one officer speaks Spanish. Statements are taken from the victim, the suspect, the neighbor, and the six-year-old child. The suspect is arrested and taken to jail. The six-year-old starts to cry upon seeing his father being arrested and taken away. The shaken and frightened victim begins to ask questions: When will he get out of jail? What if he comes back and takes my children to Mexico? How will I pay the rent? Where will we go? Will I get deported? Where can I get help? Will he lose his job? Will he get prosecuted?

After answering her questions, the officer gives the victim a list of numbers to call and where to get help. As the officer prepares to leave, the victim again asks, when her husband will get out of jail. The officer responds that he has the right to post bail and could be released within a matter hours. The victim asks again how, and when, will she know. The officer merely refers her to the victim information sheet. The victim asks what will happen next and is told that her case will be submitted to the San Diego Police Department Domestic Violence Unit and a detective will be assigned to handle the case who will call her. To find out more about the case, she will need to talk to the detective.

Afraid that her husband will retaliate when released, the victim asks where she can go with her two small children. She has no family or friends to turn to except for her husband’s family. The officer suggests a shelter but the victim is worried about how long she will be allowed to stay. The officer informs her that after thirty days, she will have to find other housing, or if she wants to keep her husband away from the house and stay in the apartment, she would have to go to family court to obtain the appropriate orders. The victim is referred to a legal clinic that will help her file a protective order, seek child custody, restitution and spousal support but she has to wait until Monday to call from the numbers listed on the information sheet. Because she does not have a phone, the officer recommends she use a cellular phone that she could obtain from the San Diego City Attorney’s office on Monday. But the victim asks “Where is that and how do I get there? I don’t have a car.”

While she begins to cough and her voice becomes raspy, the officer encourages the victim to seek medical attention for any injuries she may have suffered from being strangled, but the victim declines because she does not have medical insurance and does not want to take the children with her to the hospital in the middle of the night.

The officer then calls the duty judge to obtain an emergency protective order that gives the victim temporary custody of the children and orders her husband to stay away from her. The emergency protective order, however, is only valid for five days.

The defendant calls his family and is bailed out of jail by 3:30 am. By 9:00 a.m., the defendant's family is visiting the victim's apartment, pressuring her to drop the charges and take her husband back. The victim, however, insists she cannot take it any more and refuses.

Later that morning, a detective stops at the apartment to take the victim's statement and photograph her injuries and the broken phone. The detective also speaks with the children and neighbors. Asking what happens next, the victim is told that the detective will refer the case to the City Attorney's Office for prosecution and it is left to the prosecutor to decide whether to file the complaint against her husband. The victim is then given another number for the City Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit.

By Sunday, the children are asking when their "Daddy" is coming home but the victim can barely make sense of all the phone numbers or and all the people she needs to speak to or how she will do so because she has neither a phone nor transportation. Upon opening the door to leave, she finds a letter and roses from her husband on the doorstep of her apartment. In his letter, he is remorseful, begs for forgiveness and promises to go to counseling if she just gives him one more chance. He will wait for her call.

Determined to live a different life for the sake of her children, she does nothing. She plans to call the prosecutor on Monday to find out if the case will be prosecuted. From a public payphone, she is referred to a Spanish-speaking advocate and advised that a determination has not yet been made. She will need to call back.

In the meantime, the victim calls the legal clinic to make an appointment for help with her restraining order and other legal issues. She makes an appointment with the YWCA legal clinic for the restraining order and is told she needs to contact Casa Cornelia for immigration issues. She takes the bus with her two small children to the YWCA.

When she arrives at the YWCA, she is helped with her paperwork and told to go to the police department for a certified copy of the police report, but she must wait until Wednesday to get it. After obtaining the certified police report, she files her paperwork at family court to get the order. The victim also asks for a cell phone but is told she has to go to the City Attorney's Office for one, so she walks to the City Attorney's Office with her children to get the cell phone. However, she arrives at lunch time and needs to wait for the person who handles the cell phone program to return. By now the kids are hungry and cranky and she leaves without the phone.

On Thursday morning, she and her children take the bus to the court house. After waiting to see the judge, the protective order is granted and she is given

temporary custody of the kids. The suspect is also ordered to stay away from the house, but the court does not grant any financial support so the rent and bills go unpaid. She is advised that her financial issues will be addressed at the hearing roughly two weeks after serving the suspect with the order.

That afternoon, she again takes the trolley to the City Attorney's Office for a cell phone, which she receives but realizes it is only able to call 911 or the hotline, not to make calls for other services. She also learns her case will be prosecuted as a misdemeanor and that the next court date is two weeks away.

In the meantime, she takes the protective order to the Sheriff's Department to have it served on her husband and she then begins to worry about how she will pay the rent. She also suffers continuous pain while swallowing as a result of being choked. The victim decides to seek medical attention from a medical clinic, although she does not have medical insurance or money to pay for treatment, the clinic qualifies her for emergency medical assistance. However, to get additional treatment, she is referred to County Hospital.

The victim returns to the legal clinic at the YWCA to inquire about housing as well as spousal and child support. She has the option of staying at the shelter or she may be eligible for Section 8 housing if Child Protective Services (CPS) is involved. Even with a CPS referral, she it will take weeks to find a place, interview, qualify, and move to the new apartment. Transitional housing is also available, but only through a referral from a shelter or self-referral if she is homeless and only after at least two face-to-face interviews. Otherwise, she will need to get on a waiting list for Section 8 housing which is now five to eight years.

To obtain financial assistance and food, the victim would need to go to the county and meet with a social worker. Once there, she is told that she could lose these benefits if the children miss fourteen days of school or if she receives additional income. To secure assistance for transportation, the victim is instructed to visit a Traveler's Aide office, which are located throughout the city and to apply for a monthly bus pass, for which she would need to reapply every month.

Because the children were present at the time of the incident, The Police Department referred the case to CPS. Like the other agencies involved at this point, CPS visits the house and interviews the victim and children. Given the history of domestic violence, the CPS worker advises the victim to change her locks, seek a protective order, and enroll into counseling for herself and children. If she complies with terms, they would close their case within a year.

Two weeks have passed and it is time to return to family and criminal court. The victim returns to family court for the protective order, but her case is continued because her husband was never served. When she calls the prosecutor and speaks with the victim advocate, she is informed that the defendant pled not guilty and that the case is being continued for a month for disposition and two months for a jury trial. The advocate suggests she take the

children to the Kids in Court Program. However, because the victim does not have a phone, she is asked to call the coordinator who advises her that she just missed the new session and the next three week session is the following month.

Because the defendant has a criminal history, his probation from a prior case is revoked and the matter is set for hearing. Shortly thereafter, the probation officer is next to contact the victim for her statement. In preparation for the jury trial, the defense attorney also sends an investigator to interview the victim and her children. Her version varies slightly from her initial statement, as she has now told her story at least seventeen times, including to the dispatcher, police officer, follow-up detective, CPS worker, City Attorney advocate, prosecutor, YWCA legal advocate doctor at the clinic, police officer at records, Traveler's Aide, judge at the ex parte hearing, social worker for Calworks and Medical, counselor at Children's Hospital, coordinator for Kids in Court, probation officer, and to her friends as well as her husband's family.

Meanwhile, the children are not sleeping and the six-year-old does not want to go school or leave his mother's side. The victim is not sleeping and is depressed, anxious, worried about the bills, and angry with her husband while missing him at the same time. Her husband is continuing to send her love notes and his family is pressuring her to drop charges.

The landlord advises the victim that the rent is overdue and if it is not paid, she will be evicted. The next person at the door is her husband, bearing gifts for the kids and flowers for her.

The victim receives a copy of the criminal stay order in the mail and is served with a subpoena to testify at the jury trial, none of which has been fully explained or, even if it had, she is struggling to understand it all.

The victim fails to return to family court for her protective order, but goes to criminal court to testify for the defendant. The defendant pleads guilty and the court orders the defendant to complete counseling and public work service, pay restitution to the victim, a fine of \$200, and to show proof of progress in thirty days. At the next hearing, the defendant inquires how the victim can get the criminal stay-away order lifted. The victim is then referred back to the City Attorney's Office to speak with an advocate.

Meanwhile, the victim is contacted by the defendant's new probation officer, the treatment provider concerning defendant's counseling, and the prosecutor's office regarding restitution and the stay-away order. Because the victim does not have a phone, letters are sent to her home but are ignored. Tragically, within six months another domestic violence incident occurs and the process starts all over again.

The problems with this system are obvious. The system was designed for the professionals who work with victims, not for victims who need to work with professionals. Under the current system described above, the victim is placed in the position of having to repeat her story many times, seek out services, and navigate through a maze of red tape and agencies.

The Family Justice Center collaborative model seeks to put the victim and her children first by bringing as many professionals and services as possible under one roof. The victim will have access to the professionals she will need concerning her criminal case as well as access to answers concerning the civil court, legal issues and resources. She will no longer need to travel or call multiple locations to talk to the detective, prosecutor, advocate, probation officer, social worker, or child protective service worker about her case. She will not need to travel to multiple locations to seek medical attention, obtain a copy of the police report, or fill out the forms for a protective order or for transportation or housing. She will not need to repeat her story on seventeen occasions because instead, professionals will seek to limit the number of times a victim will need to be interviewed and even make use of specially designed interview rooms that allow for video taping of witness statements. Further, an advocate will be assigned to the victim who will vertically handle her case from the time it is received at the center until the matter is closed.

#### V. A CLOSER LOOK AT THREE WORKING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTERS

##### A. *Nampa Family Justice Center Launched November 30, 2005 - Rebecca Lovelace*

The Family Justice Center concept offered a solution to bring all the related services together in one location. We determined the City of Nampa owned a building suitable for housing such an agency, and committed the building and necessary remodeling funds to the Nampa FJC. With the efforts of Detective Angela Weekes and Rebecca Lovelace, organization and implementation of the FJC has been realized, and the operation has been a huge success for our citizens needing help in troubled times. Based on the success of this program, the city remains committed to the continued operation of the FJC in Nampa.<sup>86</sup>

The development and operation of the Nampa Family Justice Center is the epitome of partnership, bringing a wide variety of community services together to efficiently and effectively serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse through a multi-disciplinary, community-based approach. The Nampa Family Justice Center (“NFJC”) opened in November, 2005 and provides victims of domestic and family violence access to advocacy, counseling, law-enforcement, prosecution, legal services, housing, employment services and limited medical/forensic services at a single location.<sup>87</sup> NFJC’s mission is to create and grow a partnership of skilled,

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86. Interview with Tom Dale, Mayor, City of Nampa, Idaho.

87. Press Release, Senator Mike Crapo, Crapo to Speak at Family Justice Center Opening (Nov. 29, 2005), available at [http://crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release\\_full.cfm?id=249370](http://crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release_full.cfm?id=249370). See generally Nampa Family Justice Center Homepage, <http://www.nampafamilyjusticecenter.org/> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

motivated, decision makers who share the vision of a community without family violence and are willing to commit the resources necessary to see that vision realized. The City of Nampa is the legal entity under which the Center operates with an Advisory Board of Directors consisting of partners and strategic representatives from involved agencies that is responsible for the direction and operational effectiveness of the Center.

As the largest city and population base within the immediate area, Nampa is the central location where victims seek services for the vast area of Canyon County (590 square miles) and much of the region. Nampa's population grew 83% between 1990 and 2000,<sup>88</sup> and from April 2000 to July 2003, Nampa's population grew again at a rate of 22.1% by comparison with a growth rate of 5.6% for Idaho as a whole.<sup>89</sup> According to census data from March 20, 2007, Canyon County is the 39th fastest growing county in the nation of those with a population of 10,000 or more and comprised of 72% Anglo and 25-28% Hispanic.<sup>90</sup> With the dramatic increase in population in Southwest Idaho, there is a corresponding growth in need to provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

### 1. In the Beginning

In early 2004, the steering committee looked at two options for the site of the Nampa FJC. The first was to occupy a city owned building where the Center would use federal community development block grant funds ("CDBG") for rehabilitation of a public facility to meet the need. If a city building was not available, the second option would be to use the CDBG funds for lease/hold improvements in a leased facility. Under either option, the funds would be used to create a facility to meet the needs of the victims as well as to bring the building up to code and meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.<sup>91</sup>

In October 2004, through CDBG funds, the City of Nampa awarded a total of \$332,731.00 over two years to a steering committee committed to the

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88. Press Release, Idaho Department of Labor, Idaho's 2000 Census Figures Show Population Increases from 1990-2000 (Mar. 26, 2001), *available at* <http://labor.idaho.gov> (follow "News & Resources" hyperlink; select "news releases"; enter "2000 census" into search box; select first result).

89. U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts, Nampa (city), Idaho, *available at* <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/16/1656260.html> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

90. Press Release, US Census Bureau, Population Estimates for the 100 Fastest-Growing US Counties with Populations over 10,000 by Percentage Growth from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006 (Mar. 22, 2007), *available at* [www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/cb07-42tbl3.xls](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/cb07-42tbl3.xls).

91. *See* Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-336, §§ 301-309, 104 Stat. 328 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 26 U.S.C., starting at § 12201).

Family Justice Center vision.<sup>92</sup> After the initial city council meeting in 2004, the Nampa city council voted to give the FJC a grant of approximately \$292,000 to renovate and remodel a building to be used for the NFJC.<sup>93</sup> The mayor then offered the Mangum Building to use as the NFJC.<sup>94</sup> The Mayor's support demonstrated the first commitment from the city to the FJC concept, support that has not wavered since. The Mayor, City Council and Finance Director along with other public safety officials, are all extremely supportive of the NFJC.

## 2. Why establish a Family Justice Center in Nampa, Idaho

The following statistics illustrate the underlying need for a Nampa Family Justice Center:<sup>95</sup>

- In 2001 the City of Nampa experienced two adult homicides related to domestic violence and two child deaths where the perpetrator had a history of domestic violence;
- In that same year the state of Idaho had thirty-two homicides, 50% of which were domestic violence related. The statistics are similar in years past with an average of 30% to 50 % of homicides being domestic violence related;
- In 2003, the city of Nampa lost another life to domestic violence;
- In 2003, the Nampa Police Department documented 414 domestic violence incidents and 176 child abuse cases. This was an increase of 8% and 10% respectively;
- In 2004, the City of Nampa had one murder case involving a baby (child abuse) and two domestic violence related murders;
- In 2005 Nampa experienced one domestic violence homicide;
- In 2006 Nampa experienced two domestic violence homicides;
- In 2007 (August 2007) Nampa experienced one child abuse homicide;

The Angie Leon "Community Response" report was published in 2004<sup>96</sup> as the result of a concerned citizen response to the death of Angie Leon. Angie, a young mother of three, was shot to death in her home by her estranged

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92. CITY OF NAMPA, 2005 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT 51 (2006), available at [http://ci.nampa.id.us/pages/View\\_File.php?id=183](http://ci.nampa.id.us/pages/View_File.php?id=183) [hereinafter 2005 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT].

93. 2005 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT, *supra* note 92.

94. See City of Nampa, City Council Minutes, Sept. 20, 2004, available at [http://ci.nampa.id.us/pages/View\\_File.php?id=837](http://ci.nampa.id.us/pages/View_File.php?id=837).

95. The following statistics were obtained through restricted access to the Nampa Police Department's Crime Database. Statistics are on file and may be verified with the author, Rebecca Lovelace.

96. Dan Popkey, *Local Group Turned Tragedy into Sense of Purpose*, THE IDAHO STATESMAN, June 6, 2004, at 3.

husband<sup>97</sup> with whom there was a long history of domestic violence. In response to the senseless act of violence, approximately 100 citizens came together to informally evaluate the response system.<sup>98</sup> The probe found “obvious systemic flaws between agencies, due to the lack of communication and coordination between service providers and agencies.”<sup>99</sup> This report spurred the change process, leading to the creation of the Nampa Family Justice Center.

Nampa public officials were very familiar with the issues. Prior to the Family Justice Center, domestic violence and child abuse victims faced many challenges in the criminal justice system and were often “re-victimized” by the very system set up to help them.<sup>100</sup> Victims were referred to multiple agencies to receive the help and support they needed. Initially, victims were introduced to a reporting agency at the beginning of the process, the Police Department for domestic violence cases and the Police Department or Family and Children Services in child abuse cases.<sup>101</sup> Within a law enforcement agency, a victim would potentially speak with a dispatcher, patrol officer, detective, and a victim witness coordinator and could be referred to a health care provider in the event of physical injury or sexual assault trauma. Victims were also referred to a counseling service and given information on victim’s compensation insurance. Victims would also receive encouragement to seek court assistance if they desired to file for a protection order, for custody of children, or seeking divorce.<sup>102</sup> Victims were often referred to shelters if their home environment was not safe. Most referrals were made to other agencies as the police department did not have the staff or the facility to carry out the needed services.<sup>103</sup> As the victim moved through this process and made contact with so many agencies, each referral agency listed additional referrals of services they did not have the capacity to provide.

The FJC sought to bring all of these agencies and professionals together under one roof to improve victim services in Nampa and surrounding areas. Having a streamlined, coordinated community response would prevent

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97. Sandra Forester, *Officials Agree: System Failed Leon; Canyon Agencies Promise Changes Based on Report*, THE IDAHO STATESMAN, May 20, 2004 (Local) at 1.

98. *Id.*

99. Idahoans for Openness in Government, The Idaho Newspaper Foundation, *Courtwatch Awarded 2005 Max Dalton Open Government Award*, July 18, 2005, available at <http://www.openidaho.org/?p=17>.

100. See generally Lucy Salcido Carter et al., *Domestic Violence and Children: Analysis and Recommendations*, 9 THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN 4, 9–13 (1999).

101. Idaho Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance, *Filing Protection Orders*, <http://www2.state.id.us/crimevictim/victims/protectionorders.cfm#anchor337762> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

102. *Id.*

103. Townsend et al., *supra* note 9, at 64.



duplication of services and speed the referral process for victims, allowing them to access services quickly and efficiently.

Today, all participating agencies report that the FJC collaborative approach to victim services has been very beneficial to the victims and survivors in the community. Furthermore, police investigations and criminal prosecutions have been enhanced because of the coordination of resources and on-going support the Center offers domestic violence victims.<sup>104</sup>

The intent of the steering committee was to take advantage of the excellent programs and services available in the City of Nampa, not to establish new programs. The FJC made use of what was available by centralizing services and coordinating efforts between agencies, which meant victims no longer had to travel from location to location and repeat their story to gain the help they need. Bridging the gaps between existing services and allowing for an exchange of information and resources made reporting domestic violence and child abuse much less overwhelming for the victims and children involved.

### 3. Who We Are Today

The NFJC has become an excellent example of coordinated community collaboration to combat domestic violence and child abuse in Idaho.<sup>105</sup> The Center works hand in hand with the shelters, courts, community based programs, and local, state, and federal agencies to streamline the process of service delivery for the victims and survivors of family violence. The Nampa Family Justice Center was the first, and is the most comprehensive, collaboration of this magnitude in Idaho for victims of domestic violence and child abuse, paving the way as a model program for other professionals working in the field of family violence.<sup>106</sup> Since NFJC's opening, similar program models have emerged or are in the planning stages. Specifically, FACES-Family and Children Evaluations Services, in Boise, and another

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104. *Id.* at 62.

105. Nampa Family Justice Center Homepage, <http://www.nampafamilyjusticecenter.org> (last visited Oct. 26, 2007).

106. The NFJC houses the following providers and provides the following services: Chaplaincy; Child Protective Services; Civil Protection Orders/Modifications; Domestic Violence Counselor; Idaho Legal Aid; Mountain Home AFB-Family Advocacy Program; Nampa PD (Victim Witness Coordinator); Easter-Seals Goodwill (Working Solutions); Idaho Health & Welfare Self Reliance; Valley Crisis Center-shelter referral; Community Council of Idaho; Nampa Prosecuting Attorney (Victim Witness Coordinator); Canyon County Prosecuting Attorney (Victim Witness Coordinator); Online Legal Aid Service; Catholic Charities of Idaho-Immigration assistance; Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence – Rental Assistance; Safety Planning; Housing application assistance through Nampa Housing Authority; Casey Family Programs-Kinship Care program; “Wrap around” case management; Forensic Medical Unit-open 2007.

Family Justice Center, in Idaho Falls, are being developed based on the Nampa model.<sup>107</sup>

From January to June of 2007, the Nampa Center helped over 650 clients, 45% (302) of which were new victims of domestic or sexual violence seeking services for the first time.<sup>108</sup> In 2006, 10% of the clients were children that had been victims of physical and/or sexual abuse.<sup>109</sup> In the first half of 2007, the Center saw ninety-two children who were victims of child sexual abuse, an increase of 64% from 2006.<sup>110</sup>

Upon arrival, at the center, clients complete an intake form that consists of basic demographic information along with a “menu” of services offered. Whether they have a scheduled appointment due to an open investigation or they have walked in looking for help, clients fill out a color-coded intake sheet and are then escorted into the kitchen area to wait for services, where they are offered snacks, drinks and child-care, if needed. All services are free of charge and the client is under no obligation to receive services from any agency.

#### 4. The Intersection between the Family Justice Center Movement and the Children’s Advocacy Center Movement

The NFJC is working towards national certification of a Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) through the National Children’s Alliance. The concept of wraparound services for victims of domestic violence and their children are directly in line with the child advocacy movement, which follows the wraparound concept of victim’s services for children suffering from physical and/or sexual abuse. The collaborative model of service provision has many benefits. A cost benefit analysis conducted by the National Children’s Advocacy Center and funded by National Children’s Alliance found that when conducting child abuse investigations, cities and counties with a CAC spent 41% less than those without such a collaborative model.<sup>111</sup> The benefits to the victim include coordination and communication between services providers. The benefit to the community members, public safety officials, and local, state

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107. Sandra Forester, *Nampa Justice Center Celebrate First Year*, IDAHO STATESMAN, Nov. 29, 2006, at 2.

108. Nampa Family Justice Center, Internal Statistics for 2007 (on file with author, Rebecca Lovelace) [hereinafter Nampa Center 2007 Statistics].

109. Nampa Family Justice Center, Internal Statistics for 2006 (on file with author, Rebecca Lovelace).

110. See Nampa Center 2007 Statistics, *supra* note 108.

111. AMY SHADOIN, PH.D. ET AL., NAT’L CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY CTR., EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: FINDINGS FROM THE NCAC COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO CHILD MALTREATMENT 2, available at <http://www.nationalcac.org/professionals/research/CBA%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>.

and federal government officials include cost savings on investigations and increased prosecution of cases.<sup>112</sup>

The NFJC now provides all of the initial physical exams to all children entering foster care in its region. Through a collaboration with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare in Region III and Boise State University, the Center is able to bring children entering foster care into the FJC and provide them with not only the initial physical assessment they need, but also with other supportive services children experiencing abuse or neglect and often times witnessing domestic violence may need. In addition, the NFJC is also conducting forensic interviews on alleged victims of child sexual abuse. These interviews are being requested by law enforcement agencies in our area and we have expanded our services to meet this need and offer this service as part of our move toward accreditation of a childrens advocacy center through the National Children's Alliance. The NFJC has become a Medicaid approved provider so that if any of these services we are offering to our children are reimburseable either through Medicaid, private insurance companies or Crime Victims Compensation, the FJC will receive these funds that will go right back into the sustainability and growth of the Ellen Marie Pediatric Unit of NFJC. The Ellen Marie Pediatric Unit was named after a two-year-old child who was killed at the hands of her babysitter and most of that investigation and subsequent conviction was based on forensic evidence.<sup>113</sup> This led the NFJC to dedicate its forensic medical unit to Ellen Marie Sinclair to keep the Center focused on why it does the work it does and because she was such an inspiration in the lives of everyone this case touched.<sup>114</sup>

##### 5. Continuing Challenges

Despite its successes, the NFJC faces perpetual challenges as it seeks to accomplish its mission. The NFJC is constantly working to increase its sustainability. Additionally, NFJC must continue its outreach programs and public relations efforts to ensure that those in need of help are aware of NFJC and that those who are willing to support NFJC get the message. By

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112. Services offered at the NFJC include: Civil Protection Order; application and modifications; Legal Aid services (also available online); Safety Planning; Case Management; Mental health counseling; Access to housing/application assistance; Limited medical treatment-adult and child forensic sexual assault exams and interviews will begin November 2007; Health and Welfare Self-Reliance application and card issuance of food stamps; Immigration assistance; Victims Compensation; Access to employment and training through Easter Seals Goodwill programs. These services are offered through the providers listed *supra* note 106.

113. Kristin Rodine, *Nampa's New Forensic Unit Dedicated on Friday in Memory of Slain Child*, IDAHO STATESMAN, Nov. 30, 2007, available at <http://www.idahostatesman.com/newsupdates/story/224926.html>.

114. *Id.*

successfully meeting the challenges above, the NFJC can focus on educating community (what we really do).

The NFJC also continually strives to better serve its clients by working to ensure client confidentiality with in NFJC and better educating volunteers and partners on the topics of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

Whatever the challenge, the following sampling of client and partner comments illustrates the vital role the NJFC has come to play in its short existence and the role it will play in the future: “*You are such a blessing! Thank you!*” –FJC Client 2006; “*This is the most amazing outreach to the community. I feel very blessed to have been referred here for help.*” –2007 FJC Client; “*The Nampa Family Justice Center is the most innovative thing in the State.*” –Bob Marsh, BSU Professor, Criminal Justice Administration; “*I love that the welfare of my daughter is first.*” –2007 FJC Client Parent; “*FJC has helped me immensely. I wouldn’t have been able to get through my situation without them.*” –2007 FJC Client; “*This is most comprehensive, collaborative effort in the State.*” –Randy Woods, Regional Director Region III Department of Health and Welfare.

*B. Crystal Judson Family Justice Center, launched December 2005 - Susan Adams, J.D.*

Pierce County, Washington, with a population of 773,000 and home to two large military bases, is located about thirty miles south of Seattle<sup>115</sup> and is a diverse county with urban, suburban and extremely rural areas. The City of Tacoma is the largest urban area within the county.<sup>116</sup>

For years, Tacoma has lived in the shadow of Seattle, but now is in the midst of a renaissance. The downtown core has been converted from seedy strip clubs and dangerous apartments to hot night clubs, upscale restaurants and million dollar condos.<sup>117</sup> While the renewal has done much to polish the town’s image, the fact remains that Tacoma/Pierce County has one of the highest violent crime rates in the state.<sup>118</sup> In particular, domestic violence continues to be a significant problem in the community<sup>119</sup> and even became national news in 2003 when the Tacoma Chief of Police shot and killed his

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115. Pierce County, Washington Homepage, Pierce County Population, <http://www.travel.tacoma.com/static/index.cfm?contentID=313> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

116. *Id.*

117. See generally Dan Voelpel, *The Stage Is Set, We Just Need Some Players*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, May 7, 2006, at D01.

118. Kim Bradford, Editorial, *A High Crime Rate, Courtesy of the State*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Feb. 13, 2007, at B04.

119. Kathleen Merryman, *Family, Supporters Savor Success at Opening of Crystal Judson Center*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Jan. 21, 2006, at A01.

wife and then himself in a parking lot while their two young children sat watching in a nearby car.<sup>120</sup>

### 1. Domestic Violence: Not Simply a Family Matter

*Thank you, Thank you this was extremely hard. You never think that your family who is supposed to love you can also hurt you. Now I might get some peace. Thank you. Thank you.*<sup>121</sup>

Over the past twenty years, domestic violence services in Pierce County underwent a significant evolution, particularly in the realm of law enforcement and prosecution. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the criminal justice world began to shift its thinking about domestic violence and state legislation created a mandatory arrest policy for domestic violence crimes.<sup>122</sup> No longer would domestic violence be considered simply a “family matter.” Domestic violence units were created in both the sheriff’s department and the county prosecutor’s office<sup>123</sup> and deputy prosecutors and law enforcement officers were encouraged to attend specialized training in domestic violence investigation and prosecution.<sup>124</sup> Deputy prosecutors soon began prosecuting domestic violence cases with or without the cooperation of the victim. The message to domestic violence defendants was clear: the state decides whether to file charges, not the victim.

### 2. Access to Justice: A Step Forward

*I thought I was coming to a business to fight my way through horrible experiences. I want to say thank you for reminding me there are kind people in this world that help you and have hope and energy when you think you have none.*<sup>125</sup>

As the criminal justice response to domestic violence began to improve, leaders in law enforcement and prosecution decided to try something completely new. In 1995, they decided to move the prosecutor’s Domestic Violence Unit (comprised of deputy prosecutors and criminal justice victim

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120. *A Police Chief’s Incomprehensible, Bewildering Crime*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Apr. 27, 2003, at B12; Karen Hucks, *Crystal Brame, 35, Dies Saturday, Seven Days After Husband Shot Her*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, May 3, 2003, available at [http://dwb.thenewstribune.com/news/projects/david\\_brame/shooting/story/3856142p-3455327c.html](http://dwb.thenewstribune.com/news/projects/david_brame/shooting/story/3856142p-3455327c.html).

121. Client Exit Survey Comment to the Family Justice Center (March 2007) (on file with author Susan Adams).

122. WASH. REV. CODE ANN. § 10.31.100(2)(c) (2002).

123. Lisa Kremer, *One Year Later: The Brame Shootings—Out of Tragedy Come New Laws, Policies and Help for Victims*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Apr. 27, 2004, at A01 [hereinafter Kremer, *One Year Later*].

124. *Id.*

125. Client Exit Survey Comment to the Family Justice Center (Nov. 2006) (on file with author Susan Adams).

advocates), the sheriff's department Domestic Violence Unit and the Protection Order Division of the clerk's office into one area in the County-City building—Room 108.<sup>126</sup> The goal was to make access to justice much easier for victims, instead of three different places in a very large and confusing building; victims could walk through one door and access an advocate, prosecutor, and detective, in addition to obtaining a protection order. While no one knew it at the time, this was the first big step toward the eventual creation of a Family Justice Center in Pierce County.

Victim access to service was the driving force behind this co-location of services. However, there was a secondary benefit that could not be discounted. Before the creation of Room 108, resentment and misunderstanding often existed between law enforcement, advocates and prosecutors. Prosecutors wondered why the detectives were not doing enough on their cases. Detectives felt like giving up because it seemed to them that prosecutors often ended up reducing the charges or dismissing the cases they had worked so hard to build. Advocates were frustrated on all fronts because no one seemed to remember the impact this work had on the victim. Bringing all services under one roof changed all that. Prosecutors sitting across the hall from detectives could see first hand the work being done and soon, detectives and prosecutors started talking to each other about the cases and working on them together. Similarly, advocates had the opportunity to work closely with both and keep the human element in perspective.

The creation of Room 108 was a major accomplishment for Pierce County. Other jurisdictions began hearing of the successes of Room 108 and started to follow suit.<sup>127</sup> Even though Room 108 was a big step forward for victim access, the community/social services were missing. There was simply no space in the County-City building to bring in social services.

### 3. Moving Towards a Family Justice Center

*I was so worried, afraid and desperate when I came in. I had tried to find the right forms on line to do this myself, but could not figure out what was right. I feel so grateful to have help in keeping my self and my son safe from my husband who is very angry with me for filing for divorce. The former restraining order expired and did not protect me from my husband's harassment and demands on me and my child. Thank you for helping me.*<sup>128</sup>

Almost a decade later, government leaders again began looking at making improvements to the domestic violence service delivery system in Tacoma and

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126. Lisa Kremer, *I-Stop Center No Longer at Forefront*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Oct. 20, 2003, available at [http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/projects/david\\_brame/domestic\\_violence/v-printerfriendly/story/30657.html](http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/projects/david_brame/domestic_violence/v-printerfriendly/story/30657.html) [hereinafter Kremer, *I-Stop Shop*].

127. Kremer, *I-Stop Shop*, *supra* note 124.

128. Client Exit Survey (on file with author Susan Adams).

Pierce County.<sup>129</sup> San Diego opened the first Family Justice Center in October 2002<sup>130</sup> and discussion began about what a Family Justice Center would look like in Tacoma. The tragic domestic violence murder/suicide of the Tacoma Police Chief and his wife in the spring of 2003 brought a real sense of urgency to this conversation.<sup>131</sup> Leaders from both the City of Tacoma and Pierce County made the creation of a FJC a priority.

In January 2004, Tacoma and Pierce County applied as partners for the President's Family Justice Center Initiative ("PFJCI"). While awaiting word on the grant, the Pierce County Executive directed the FJC planning team to devise an alternative plan that would create an FJC with funding from the City and County. The message from the top was clear. Pierce County and Tacoma would establish a Family Justice Center, with or without federal funding.

The Presidential Family Justice Center Initiative sites were selected in August 2004, but Pierce County was not on the list.<sup>132</sup> With the alternative plan in place, the process moved forward. Because this plan was a joint mission of the City of Tacoma and Pierce County, the entities entered into an inter-local agreement outlining the governing structure and obligations of both entities.<sup>133</sup> Creation of a center with local resources resulted in a strong commitment to the center by local government from the outset. Additionally, without the limitations and requirements of the federal grant, FJC planners had more freedom to utilize funding in a way that best suited local needs.

The inter-local agreement created a joint governing system in which the City of Tacoma and Pierce County agreed to equally fund the essential functions of the FJC.<sup>134</sup> The agreement called for an Executive Board of Directors that would be comprised of two city council members, two county council members and a fifth at-large member to be appointed by the other four.<sup>135</sup> The board was then to appoint a director to manage the overall functioning of the FJC.<sup>136</sup>

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129. Kremer, *One Year Later*, *supra* note 121, at A01; *see also* Ruth Teichroeb & Julie Davidow, *Clean Up Your Act, Police Told*, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER, July 25, 2003, available at [http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/132285\\_cops25.html](http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/132285_cops25.html).

130. History of San Diego Family Justice Center, *supra* note 15.

131. Teichroeb & Davidow, *supra* note 127.

132. Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Attorney General Ashcroft Announces \$20 Million for Communities Through Presidents Bush's Family Justice Center Initiative, *supra* note 13.

133. Pierce County Council Proposal No. R2005-53, Pierce County Council (Apr. 26, 2005), available at <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/xml/Abtus/ourorg/council/res2005rpt.pdf> (last visited Nov. 30, 2007) (approving the Inter-local Agreement between the City of Tacoma and Pierce County creating a Family Justice Center).

134. *See* City of Tacoma and Pierce County Res. No. 36485, Tacoma City Council (Apr. 26, 2005) <http://131.191.130.69/CityClerk/Files/CityCouncil/RecentLegislation/2005/RL20050426.pdf> (last visited Mar. 13, 2007).

135. *Id.*

136. *Id.*

In May 2005, with the inter-local agreement and funding sources in place, the appointed FJC director and assistant director were tasked with creating the Tacoma/Pierce County Family Justice Center.<sup>137</sup> Finding a suitable space was the first of many challenges on the road to opening the doors of the FJC. Because prosecutors and law enforcement would be moving to the Center, the location had to be within walking distance of the county courthouse. After much searching, an 11,000 square foot space, once the basement of a mortuary, was selected and remodeled to suit the Center's specific needs.<sup>138</sup>

The FJC team found that locating and designing the space was a simple task compared to establishing partnerships with various service providers in the community. While many of these providers had initially signed on as FJC partners in the memorandum of understanding for the PFJCI grant application, a significant time had elapsed, agency leadership positions had changed hands in some cases, and there seemed to be a general wariness about this new approach to domestic violence service delivery.

Historically, there has been tension between those working on behalf of domestic violence victims within the government and those working in the social service setting. Although significant progress has been made in the governmental sector in recent years to alleviate this tension, it is naive to suggest that it does not persist to some degree in most communities, including Pierce County.

Because the Crystal Judson FJC is a governmental entity, and both the director and assistant director were hired from within the government, some in the domestic violence community were skeptical of the concept. From the outset, FJC planners and leaders understood the need to have true and meaningful support from the domestic violence service providers in the community. A Family Justice Center without these important partners cannot be a healthy, functioning center. Those working behind the scenes needed and wanted the insight and perspective of the social service providers.

The question was how to move past the perceptions and begin working on the realities of the situation. The FJC planners' mission was to create a center that reflected the needs of the community, which could only happen with a coordinated planning process that included both government and social services.<sup>139</sup>

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137. *Id.* The name of the FJC was later changed to the Crystal Judson Family Justice Center in honor of Crystal Judson Brame, who was murdered by her husband, Tacoma Police Chief David Brame, in April of 2003. *See* Merryman, *supra* note 117, at A01.

138. *Id.*

139. *Id.*



#### 4. Strategic Planning: Who Are We?

*Thank you for taking the time to make a bad situation where I was confused about actions to take in this matter, less confusing. Confirming that what I'm doing is the right thing to do, and removing the guilt I feel.*<sup>140</sup>

Recognizing that it sometimes takes an expert from the outside to bring groups together, strategic planners from the San Diego FJC were hired to take all stakeholders (government and community) through a strategic planning process to design and implement the FJC vision.<sup>141</sup> Interestingly, the issues raised during this event were similar to those raised in other communities developing Centers across the United States.<sup>142</sup> The hot button issues during the planning process were safety, accessibility, and funding.<sup>143</sup> With the guidance and experience of a strategic planner, however, the group was able to navigate these issues in an open, honest, and direct fashion.

In this open environment, stakeholders with vastly differing opinions were able to express their ideas and concerns. The discussion around security is an excellent example. Like all centers, partners from the world of law enforcement and prosecution are housed with social service agencies. Historically, there has been mutual tension going between government and community-based domestic violence service providers.<sup>144</sup> Security planning at the Center brought out this tension. Some social service providers wanted unfettered client access to the FJC, while law enforcement and others in government felt having metal detectors and/or security guards in the lobby might be the best approach. Clearly, a middle ground was needed; the question was how to get there.

With the help of a facilitator, a dialogue took place during the session that allowed for a free exchange of ideas. Stakeholders listened to one another and began to find common ground.

Through this process, one of the most vocal advocates for limited security and screening offered a middle ground. The conversation had been focused on how to deal with a client's belongings. All agreed that some clients can be dangerous and may carry weapons. Yet, short of searching the bags of all entering the FJC, how could the center avoid this potential danger? The answer was simple and ingenious: place lockers in the lobby and have clients check their belongings. No need to search the bags because the bags would not

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140. Client Exit Survey Response, April 2007 (on file with author Susan Adams).

141. Family Justice Center National Alliance, Thinking About Starting a Family Justice Center?, <http://www.adams2.org/startfjc.html> (last visited Jan. 8, 2007).

142. See generally *supra* Parts II. B, V.A.2.

143. See *News from PFJCI TA Providers*, PFJCI MONTHLY BULLETIN, (Family Justice Center Found., San Diego, CA), Aug. 2006, available at <http://glenpricegroup.com/Background/August%20PFJCI%20Monthly%20Bulletin%5B1%5D.pdf>.

144. GWINN & STRACK, *supra* note 3, at 106–07.

go into the Center. Not only was this a great idea that has worked extremely well, but it was also proof that all views and concerns would be heard during this process. There was no secret agenda. The strategic planning process was not necessarily smooth, but all stakeholders felt secure in knowing that all opinions would be heard and respected. Out of this process, the Center created a number of work groups to accomplish the many tasks that lay ahead.

##### 5. Partnerships and Funding: A Balancing Act

*For me this was a scary step for a very long time. My welcome here was such that I was compelled to make this move- finally. I'm so glad I have and the staff was very cool!!*<sup>145</sup>

Building the partnerships with agencies who would eventually assign staff to work at the FJC was the next undertaking on the road to opening the center.<sup>146</sup> The Tacoma/Pierce County area has many excellent social service providers for domestic violence victims. While several agencies were very interested in partnering with the FJC, they did not feel they could afford to send staff to work at the FJC and keep their own programs intact.

This pivotal funding issue has thus far been dealt with through the use of grant funding.<sup>147</sup> The FJC applies for grants that will support various partners and programs working out of the FJC, which creates various advantages and disadvantages. It can lead partners to expect funding indefinitely. Yet, for the community, it has provided some smaller agencies with funding they had little chance to receive without the support of the FJC. It has also helped to foster much good will for the FJC. Instead of seeing the FJC as a competitor for funding, the partners view the FJC as a collaborative partner.

Of course, the day may eventually come when grant funding is not renewed. This will be a test of the nature of these partnerships. The vision is that the FJC will have done enough to cultivate and support the partner agencies that they will find a way to help support and sustain the FJC should the need arise.

In addition to strong community partner relationships, the center has developed strong ties to federal and state government leaders. U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, Congressman Norm Dicks, and Congressman Dave Reichert

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145. Client Exit Survey Comment, April 2007 (on file with author Susan Adams).

146. Agencies included: YWCA of Pierce County, Pierce Youth Counseling, Fort Lewis Family Advocacy Program, Associated Ministries, Asbury Methodist Church, Our Sisters' House, Korean Women's Association, and Centro Latino. Agreement Providing for the Creation and Operation of a Combined City of Tacoma-Pierce County Family Justice Center, <http://131.191.130.69/CityClerk/Files/CityCouncil/RecentLegislation/2005/RL20050426.pdf>.

147. *Id.*

were instrumental in obtaining federal funding.<sup>148</sup> The center is also exploring funding opportunities with the state legislative delegation. The bottom line is that sustainability cannot be had by depending on only one source of funding.

The annual administrative operating budget for the FJC is approximately \$600,000<sup>149</sup> and provides for the facility lease, utilities, salaries for four employees (director, assistant director, office assistant and receptionist) and all other basic administrative expenses.<sup>150</sup> Partnerships and grants with the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians provide funding for three victim advocates who operate the FJC domestic violence telephone resource hotline and provide direct service to clients visiting the FJC.<sup>151</sup> Additional funding for FJC partners is currently provided through federal grant funding.

## 6. Opening Day and Beyond

*I love the calm, peaceful feeling I get from being here. Everyone was very helpful and kind to me. The FJC is very beautifully furnished and has a calm atmosphere.*<sup>152</sup>

The Crystal Judson Family Justice Center opened in December 2005 with sixteen on-site partners and programs.<sup>153</sup> Clients visiting the Center can access a wide array of services, including access to protection orders, public assistance through the state Department of Social and Health Services, family law legal assistance, criminal justice assistance, financial assistance for housing, transportation and other needs, spiritual support, and much more.<sup>154</sup>

In 2007, the FJC staff and partners provided service to more than 2,000 victims of domestic violence.<sup>155</sup> The philosophy of the FJC calls for offering a case management approach to clients. Wrapping a client in services necessarily means providing more than support during one single visit to the

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148. Dick Ferguson, *Senator, Congressman Help Secure \$750,000 Grant*, PIERCE COUNTY FRONT PAGE NEWS, Aug. 15, 2005, available at [http://www.cp.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/internet/news.cfm?node\\_id=32699&media=PC](http://www.cp.pierce.wa.us/cfapps/internet/news.cfm?node_id=32699&media=PC).

149. See Agreement Providing for the Creation and Operation of a Combined City of Tacoma-Pierce County Family Justice Center, *supra* note 144.

150. *Id.*

151. *Id.*

152. Client Exit Survey Response, October 2006 (on file with author Susan Adams).

153. Kris Sherman, *Family Violence Center Set to Open*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, Dec. 10, 2005, at B1, available at 2005 WLNR 19961822.

154. See Crystal Judson Family Center, Services, <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/fjc/Services.htm> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

155. CRYSTAL JUDSON FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER, CRYSTAL JUDSON FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER 2007 ANNUAL REPORT (forthcoming Apr. 2008) (draft on file with author, Susan Adams).

FJC.<sup>156</sup> Advocates at the FJC routinely make follow up calls to clients offering support and providing reminders about upcoming court dates, if any.

This case management philosophy has also led to the implementation of new programs at the FJC. When the FJC first opened, service delivery to clients was focused on the clients' immediate needs during times of crisis. However, it was soon apparent that additional services addressing client needs in the periods following the crisis were also needed. Assistance with parenting and financial management were identified as areas in which clients needed more help. The center has also recognized the importance of providing a program to help children deal with the trauma they have experienced.<sup>157</sup>

The FJC now offers on site financial literacy assistance. A ten-week dual track parent/child program called "Stepping Stones" is offered three times per year.

Great programs and partnerships are easy to write about; however, the real story of an FJC lies in the lives of the clients who have been touched by the advocates working at the center. Before the FJC, law enforcement had little to no contact with advocates in the social service setting. It would have been unheard of for a domestic violence detective to coordinate with a social service advocate to help a client escape a dangerous situation. Not anymore. Below is an edited version of an email from a deputy sheriff in the domestic violence unit, describing his contact with an FJC community advocate:

I just wanted to let you know about a very positive experience I had with a family justice center advocate.

I had a case which was charged as felony assault, but could have been an attempt murder case just as easily. The victim was uncooperative with police on the morning of the incident (3 o'clock in the morning) and did not seem like she wanted help. The reason – he had told her he would kill her if she spoke to us and she whole-heartedly believed it.

I called the victim hours later (9 o'clockish) and she agreed to provide a statement, but wanted help with another problem first. She was living in a motor home on the suspect's mother's property with the suspect's mother living in the house next door. Mom was a real pain and was actively trying to kick her off of the property. The victim was fearful of having no place for her and her ten month old child to go and was also fearful of being assaulted by the mother.

I told the victim to wait five minutes and to call 798-4166. I went over and spoke to Elizabeth and informed her of the situation. Within a few hours, she

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156. See Kris Sherman, *Progress Reports Show Achievements, Challenges for Crystal Judson Family Justice Center*, THE NEWS TRIBUNE, March 18, 2007, available at [http://www.thenews-tribune.com/news/projects/david\\_brame/story/25624.html](http://www.thenews-tribune.com/news/projects/david_brame/story/25624.html).

157. See Merryman, *supra* note 117, at A01.

had set up a shelter in another state, arranged for bus tickets there, a cab to the FJC, and even set up my interview for me. By 2 o'clock, the victim was here, provided a taped statement and photos, and was then sent to the community side of the FJC to rest.

Just wanted to make sure you knew of the good work one of your employees has done.<sup>158</sup>

An important component of any effective organization is evaluation. The Crystal Judson FJC is constantly evaluating the programs and services offered to determine whether it is meeting the needs of the clients. Outcome data from such evaluations also play a significant role in obtaining future funding.

Through grant funding, the Center has contracted with a professional evaluator to examine various FJC programs and assist in creating a comprehensive database. The data base allows the Center to track a wide variety of information, including client demographics, actual services offered and accessed, and level of client satisfaction. The Center is committed to being responsive to client feedback.

Clients visiting the FJC are asked to complete an exit survey before leaving.<sup>159</sup> The information provided on these surveys is also tracked in the database. By listening to the clients and responding to their needs, the Center ensures that the programs are relevant and effective.

The journey toward a Family Justice Center in Tacoma/Pierce County was as unique as the community it serves. However, while every community is unique, much can be learned by studying the work of those who have come gone before. The Pierce County team will be forever grateful to the San Diego Family Justice Center for their leadership, support, and friendship. As the only Family Justice Center to date in the state of Washington, the Crystal Judson FJC is now "paying it forward" by sharing its lessons learned with others around the state who are embarking on their journey toward their own Family Justice Center.

*C. St. Louis Family Justice Center Launched January 12, 2006—Deborah Norman, JD*

The St. Louis Family Justice Center, one of the fifteen established through the President's Family Justice Center Initiative, opened its doors in January 2006.<sup>160</sup> The FJC brings together existing domestic violence services throughout the City of St. Louis to a single location. Based on the highly

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158. E-mail from Deputy Sheriff (on file with author, Susan Adams).

159. Crystal Judson Family Center, Services, <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/fjc/Services.htm> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

160. Alberto R. Gonzales, Prepared Remarks for Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales at the Opening of the St. Louis Family Justice Center, (Jan. 12, 2006), available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2006/ag\\_speech\\_060112.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/speeches/2006/ag_speech_060112.html).

successful San Diego Family Justice Center, the Center provides centralized resources and services in a safe and accessible environment that promotes the healing of individuals who experience violence in their relationships and families.<sup>161</sup>

The FJC is operated by the St. Louis Family Violence Council (“Council”),<sup>162</sup> which was founded in 1992, and its mission is to significantly reduce the incidence of family violence in St. Louis through discussion, education, advocacy, intervention, systemic change, and coordination of community resources.<sup>163</sup> The Council is comprised of forty-five member agencies working together to address all of the contributing factors preventing victims from breaking free from the cycle of violence.<sup>164</sup> The Council creates a forum for agencies to communicate, collaborate, and share information in a structured manner.

In January 2007, the Board of Directors, comprised of 80% community at-large members and 20% Council members, took office. The board is responsible for the financial oversight of the organization. Board selection occurred through a nominating committee, with ratification by the Council. The Board established the Executive Committee and a ten-member Advisory Committee for policy and procedure oversight of the FJC. Board members are also drawn from the Advisory Committee. This has proven to be a highly successful arrangement.

The Center is comfortable and inviting, with a waiting area that resembles a family room and a children’s playroom painted with a mural and filled with toys.<sup>165</sup> This welcoming environment eases the stress and confusion of obtaining comprehensive services for domestic violence, allowing victims and their children to better break the grip of domestic violence.

At the FJC, victims can access the services they need without making a separate trip to each agency.<sup>166</sup> The FJC provides on-site medical, legal, chaplaincy, counseling for adults and children, safety planning, and police and prosecutorial services.<sup>167</sup> Off-site partners provide additional supportive services such as shelter and employment training. The Center also facilitates better collaboration among domestic violence providers and eliminates the duplication of services. The Center was developed as a coordinated community response with the ultimate goals of breaking the cycle of violence,

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161. Kim Bell, *Victims of Domestic Violence Get Help to Escape, Halt Abuse*, ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH, July 10, 2006, at B1, available at WLNR 11895564.

162. St. Louis Family Violence Council, St. Louis Family Justice Center, <http://familyviolencecouncilstl.org/stlfjc.html> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

163. *Id.*

164. *Id.*

165. Bell, *supra* note 159, at B1.

166. St. Louis Family Justice Center, *supra* note 160.

167. *Id.*

bringing safety into the lives of adults and children, and reducing the rate of family violence in the community.<sup>168</sup>

The Center currently has twelve on-site partners (Council member agencies) that provide advocacy, counseling, legal assistance, medical services, and shelter referral to victims of domestic violence and their families. A victim of domestic violence can access the police, circuit clerk, prosecutors, attorneys providing civil representation, a nurse-practitioner, and child advocates in one visit—all at no cost. Clients that visit the center can also benefit from a food pantry, clothing room, and toiletry items such as diapers and personal care items. Providing a wide variety of services in one location dramatically reduces the barriers that may exist for victims of domestic violence, such as a lack of transportation or a lack of privacy from abuser to make multiple phone calls.

The health, economic, and social costs of domestic violence warrant attention from our community. By providing a coordinated community response for residents in the City of St. Louis, the St. Louis Family Justice Center provides safety and an opportunity to restore to victims of domestic violence a sense of well-being.

#### VI. THE NATIONAL FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER ALLIANCE

With Congress recognizing the importance of the Family Justice Center model and the increasing demand for technical assistance for existing and pending centers across the world,<sup>169</sup> the San Diego Family Justice Center Foundation launched the National/International Family Justice Center Alliance (“Alliance”) in 2006.<sup>170</sup> The Alliance provides an annual international conference,<sup>171</sup> technical assistance for interested communities, interactive relationships and shared learning opportunities for centers in compliance with the fundamental elements of a Family Justice Center (pursuant to the guidelines developed during the PFJCI).<sup>172</sup> The Alliance also serves as a Technical Assistance Provider for OVW to provide technical assistance and support to all federally funded Family Justice Centers.<sup>173</sup>

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168. *Id.*

169. BEST PRACTICES, *supra* note 50, at 1.

170. National Family Justice Center Alliance, National Alliance, <http://sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/info/national-alliance> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

171. National Family Justice Center Alliance, International Family Justice Center Conference, <http://www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/event/2008-04-22-international-family-justice-center-conference> (last visited Jan. 8, 2008).

172. National Alliance, *supra* note 168.

173. National Family Justice Center Alliance, PFJCI Training and Technical Assistance, <http://sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/info/pfjci-training-and-technical-assistance> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

The Alliance is currently developing an institute, a national and international Board of Directors, an Advisory Board, and an Honorary Board. The national/international board of directors will provide leadership, guidance, and oversight to the entire initiative. The Alliance will also include staff exchange programs, an annual learning exchange conference, international internships, web-based and e-learning education programs, and other technical and educational support, and training to Family Justice Centers across the United States and around the world.

The Alliance is currently seeking its first major grant from the European Union in partnership with the Croydon Family Justice Centre in Croydon, England.<sup>174</sup> The Alliance has already developed sister-city relationships with existing Family Justice Centers in Canada<sup>175</sup> and Great Britain,<sup>176</sup> and it has hosted international students from England, France, Germany, and Sweden. New centers are being planned in Mexico, Jordan, Scotland, Ghana, Germany, Russia, Taiwan, France, the Czech Republic, Guam, New Zealand, Australia, and Serbia. The State Department is currently evaluating the application of the model for potential public-private partnerships in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

With over thirty centers in operation and an additional thirty Family Justice Centers in the planning stages in the United States and the around the world,<sup>177</sup> the annual International Family Justice Center conference has now become the primary training venue and learning exchange opportunity for professionals working in and developing such centers. It also provides excellent substantive training on domestic violence, sexual assault, children exposed to violence, and elder abuse. This conference further serves as the gathering place for academics, practitioners, policy makers, and national leaders to set the course for the future. The conference is co-sponsored by state and national domestic violence organizations and presents a unique opportunity for communities operating or planning such centers to come together to learn from one another.<sup>178</sup>

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174. THE FJC CONNECTION, (Family Justice Center, San Diego, CA.), Summer 2005, available at [http://www.familyjusticecenter.org/nwsltr/content\\_jun-05.htm](http://www.familyjusticecenter.org/nwsltr/content_jun-05.htm).

175. GWINN & STRACK, *supra* note 3, at 104.

176. *Id.*

177. United States Mission to the OSCE Session 10: Gender Aspects of Security (I), Prepared Statement of Gael Strack, Executive Director National and International Family Justice Center, Oct. 1, 2007, available at [http://osce.usmission.gov/archive/2007/10/HDIM\\_Session10\\_10\\_01\\_07.pdf](http://osce.usmission.gov/archive/2007/10/HDIM_Session10_10_01_07.pdf).

178. National Family Justice Center Alliance, International Family Justice Center Conference, <http://www.sandiegofamilyjusticecenter.org/event/2008-04-22-international-family-justice-center-conference> (click on co-sponsors hyperlink).



## VII. CONCLUSION

The Family Justice Center collaborative model described and illustrated in this Article is not without its critics.<sup>179</sup> Some consider this rapidly growing movement to be a threat and others fear that when government takes a leadership role in helping battered women negative consequences will follow. Some fear that battered immigrant women will not seek help at a Family Justice Center because of the strong presence of on-site government professionals.<sup>180</sup> Still others fear that if certain agencies are involved, they may not understand the dynamics of domestic violence and children may improperly be taken away from battered women. Fears also exist that on-site agencies may improperly share a victim's personal and confidential information with others and compromise her safety. Some fear that battered women who are also defendants may be arrested, turned away and/or not served at Family Justice Centers. And, there is also the fear that Family Justice Centers will cost too much or compete for funding with other battered women's programs and shelters ultimately taking very limited and precious resources away from their programs.<sup>181</sup>

These are all valid concerns which have been carefully discussed and should continue to be addressed by all centers. The criminal justice system will never solve the complex social problem of family violence, but it can be an important partner in holding criminal domestic violence offenders accountable for their conduct. The Family Justice Center vision does not make law enforcement the central focus of intervention and prevention efforts, but because of the criminal nature of most violence and abuse, intervention efforts must continue to see the importance of police officers and prosecutors in the overall approach to these centers.

On behalf of hurting families across America, the National Family Justice Center Alliance remains committed to developing and following the core principles originally identified in the President's Family Justice Center Initiative. The Alliance continues to tap into the experience and network of faculty members, policy advisors, subject matter experts, and other technical assistance providers to review and identify best practices in the field. The Alliance further seeks to ensure that the best protocols are followed by member sites, pending sites, and potential sites in order to promote victim safety, offender accountability, and long-term support for victims and their children.

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179. Townsend, *supra* note 9.

180. See Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence, <http://eccafv.org/122003.pdf> (last visited Nov. 2, 2007).

181. Joseph Ditts, *Booster Addresses Questions about Facility*, SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE, Mar. 22, 2006, available at <http://www.southbendtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060322/News01/603220356/-1/NEWS01/CAT=News01>.

Far from being a threat, Family Justice Centers offer the opportunity for the domestic violence advocacy community to have another ally in the social change effort still needed to transform community responses to family violence. The newly developing centers, whether led by prosecutors, law enforcement, or community-based agencies, have a role to play in the diverse, complex social change process begun by the domestic violence movement. The FJC service delivery model also offers an excellent approach for building bridges with child advocacy, sexual assault, and elder abuse professionals.

The Family Justice Center movement is a phenomenon whose time has come. There is no doubt that the Family Justice Center collaborative model is the product of nearly twenty years of local and national work to end family violence and has been informed by the work of child advocacy centers, domestic violence response teams, coordinated community responses, community oriented policy, domestic violence courts, specialized units, community-based programs, and domestic violence shelters. Since the beginning of the shelter movement, specialized advocacy and support services for victims of family violence have been central to meeting their needs. As coordinated community response efforts have advanced and new programs for victims have emerged, the need and the benefits of co-location have become clear: victims should not have to go from place to place and tell their stories over and over again; victims should not be re-traumatized by the agencies that were created to help them; victims should not be referred from agency to agency and system to system.

Fortunately, many communities across America have now identified the benefits of bringing a multi-disciplinary team of professionals together to work together in serving domestic violence victims and their children under one roof. By talking to survivors, they have also found that many victims long to have their services delivered in a co-located service model. Many communities have also realized that launching a center is relatively inexpensive. It is not about creating another bureaucracy, but rather it is about efficiently bringing together those who already work in the field of family violence prevention and intervention. To that end, collaborative efforts have developed and succeeded in communities such as Colorado Springs,<sup>182</sup> Indianapolis,<sup>183</sup> Phoenix<sup>184</sup> and Mesa, Arizona,<sup>185</sup> Irving, Texas,<sup>186</sup> and San

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182. See Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team of CO, <http://www.dvert.org/> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

183. The Julian Center, <http://www.juliancenter.org/> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

184. Family Advocacy Center, <http://phoenix.gov/CITZASST/fac.html> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

185. Mesa Police Department Center Against Family Violence, <http://www.cityofmesa.org/police/cafv/default.aspx> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

186. Irving Family Advocacy Center, <http://www.cityofirving.org/police/community-pages/community-programs/family-advocacy-center.html> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

Jose, California.<sup>187</sup> Court-based approaches have evolved such as the Barbara Hart Justice Center in Scranton, Pennsylvania<sup>188</sup> and the Hennepin County Domestic Abuse Center in Minnesota.<sup>189</sup> Different models have begun to develop, including shelter-based centers which include child advocacy and domestic violence services. While every community is unique and different models have developed, each approach seeks to make existing services more accessible, efficient, and effective for victims. The goal is to create networked, linked, living organisms that grow and change over time. But, no center will ever succeed by creating itself and then simply maintaining the status quo. The biggest challenge will be to fight the tendency toward inertia, complacency, and bureaucratic procedures that tend to set in and exert daily influence even in good organizations. The antidote is a daily recommitment to change, growth, adaptation, and accountability to survivors/clients.

Over the last five years, a vision statement has emerged from the movement that can and should be a starting point for discussion for any community considering development or expansion of a Family Justice Center: “A future where all the needs of victims are met; where children are protected; where violence fades; where batterers are held accountable; where economic justice increases; where families heal and thrive; where hope is realized and where we all work together.”<sup>190</sup> This powerful vision is grand and will not be accomplished in a day, a week, a month, or a year. It also is not the “end all” or “be all” of solutions to family violence. But the Family Justice Center approach has now become one other option for communities seeking to provide comprehensive services to victims and their children. Every community owes it to those being abused to ask them how they would like their services delivered and then seek to provide them while staying accountable on a daily basis to the very women, children, and families that we are dedicated to serving.

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187. San Jose Police Department Family Violence Center, <http://www.sjpd.org/fvc/home.htm> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

188. Women’s Resource Center, <http://www.wrcnepa.org/center/> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

189. Domestic Abuse Service Center, <http://www.mncourts.gov/district/4/?page=369> (last visited Nov. 1, 2007).

190. GWINN & STRACK, *supra* note 3, at 58.