



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

COUNTY OF SHASTA

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**SEXUAL ASSAULT FUNDING APPROVED  
5/07/08**

Last night, the Redding City Council approved the allocation of \$34,000 for fiscal year 2008-2009 to partially fund the local Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) program. The funding will allow specially trained nurses to be available 24 hours a day to examine and care for sexual assault victims. These examinations are critical to the sensitive collection of evidence in rape cases. Such evidence helps law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office hold sexual offenders accountable.

Historically, 100% of the funding was donated by Shasta Regional Medical Center until financial woes caused them to cut the funding in 2005. Since then, District Attorney Jerry Benito and Maggie John, the Executive Director of Shasta Women's Refuge, have worked to find funding to keep the program going.

For fiscal year 2007-2008, the City of Redding and Shasta County split the approximately \$100,000 needed to fund the program. This year, Shasta Regional Medical Center is contributing approximately \$34,000 and Shasta County is contributing \$34,000 as well. With the City of Redding's approval last night, full funding is now complete for the next fiscal year. This type of collaboration will keep experienced and well-trained SART nurses available in our community, and help ease the pain and embarrassment associated with being a rape victim.

District Attorney Jerry Benito and Executive Director Maggie John are extremely grateful to Shasta Regional Medical Center, Shasta County, and the City of Redding for their contributions to keep this worthwhile program going.

For information, contact Cyndy Gordon (244-8348) for Shasta Regional Medical Center, City Manager Kurt Starman (225-4060) for the City of Redding, Larry Lees (225-5269) for Shasta County, Maggie John (244-0118, Ext 203) for Women's Refuge, and Jerry Benito (245-6310) for the District Attorney's Office.