



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF SHASTA

Robert J. Maloney
Assistant District Attorney

Gerald C. Benito
District Attorney

PRESS RELEASE

**SHASTA COUNTY CHOSEN AS A NATIONAL
FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER ALLIANCE SITE
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The Shasta County District Attorney's Office and The National Family Justice Center Alliance (www.familyjusticecenter.org) are pleased to announce that Shasta County was selected as one of the six sites to participate in the California Family Justice Initiative, after a competitive process that began in June 2009.

This exciting new Initiative has been funded by the Blue Shield of California Foundation (www.blueshieldcafoundation.org) and involves the development of six "learning laboratories" across California where a network of co-located, multi-agency groups will provide expanded and better supported services for victims of domestic violence and their children.

The Initiative involves the sharing of information and strategies among the 6 chosen sites in California and the few existing Family Justice Centers. The Initiative provides grant funding for each selected site in the second year of the Initiative, and technical assistance and strategic planning support for two years for the participating sites.

Casey Gwinn, President of the National Family Justice Center Alliance was a guest speaker at the Shasta County District Attorney's Office 2007 Crime Victims Assistance Center – Victim's Rights Luncheon and discussed the importance of the California Family Justice Center Initiative.

"The CA Family Justice Initiative is very important to Shasta County because it will strengthen the community partner relationships we have forged thus far and allow for better client services. The initiative will allow counties involved to learn from one another to form best practices in meeting client needs. Meeting a client's needs in one location will allow for easier access to resources, which they may have never utilized otherwise," said Angela Fitzgerald, the Program Director for the Crime Victims Assistance Center in Shasta County.

District Attorney Jerry Benito said, "Shasta County is uniquely qualified for this initiative. Our County already has strong relationships and cooperation among governmental and private, non-profit agencies. We will

now learn how to take that cooperation to a new level that will benefit victims of domestic violence and their children and make services more readily available to them.” District Attorney Jerry Benito praised Angela Fitzgerald of his office for her dedication and perseverance in establishing a Family Justice Center in Shasta County. “I have supported Ms. Fitzgerald in her efforts to establish a ‘one stop shop’ for victims of domestic violence, but she is the real force behind making this happen for our domestic violence victims and their children. I am very proud of her.” District Attorney Benito and Shasta County District Attorney Crime Victims Assistance Center Program Director Angela Fitzgerald will serve as joint project leaders. In addition to the District Attorney and his office’s Victim Assistance Center and Bureau of Investigations, the following other agencies will be participating in the collaborative: Shasta Women’s Refuge, Legal Services of Northern California, Inter-Tribal Council, the Shasta County Department of Health and Human Services Agency, Redding Police Department and the Shasta County Sheriff.

While the District Attorney’s Crime Victims Assistance Center has currently expanded services to include restraining order assistance for victims of crime and community crisis counseling on-site, the Shasta Family Justice Center will expand upon these services for the convenience and benefit of victims of domestic violence and their children. Under the Initiative, the first year will involve education, training and planning. A Family Justice Center in Shasta County is expected to officially open sometime in 2010.

For further information, please contact District Attorney Jerry Benito at (530) 245-6310.