

The News Tribune (Tacoma, WA)

December 10, 2005, Saturday

Family Violence Center Set to Open

In the works since Tacoma's police chief fatally shot his wife in 2003, a new domestic violence center opens Monday. Advocates hope to prevent another such case.

By: Kris Sherman, The News Tribune

A one-stop center for people seeking solace and help with domestic violence problems is set to open Monday at 717 Tacoma Ave. S.

The Crystal Judson Family Justice Center was modeled after a successful program in San Diego, said Tacoma City Councilwoman Connie Ladenburg. City, county and other officials, including representatives of the Puyallup Tribe, have worked to set up the center since the fatal shooting of Crystal Judson Brame by her police chief husband, David Brame, rocked the community on April 26, 2003.

Tacoma City Council members voted unanimously this week to name the facility The Crystal Judson Family Justice Center.

The name change must be approved by the center's governing board and by the Pierce County Council, but those approvals should be done without controversy, Ladenburg said.

A formal opening ceremony is expected early next month, said City Councilman Rick Talbert.

Tacoma City Council members also unanimously declared April 26 of each year as Domestic Violence Awareness Day in Tacoma.

Both moves are included in the city's settlement agreement to end a wrongful-death lawsuit brought by Crystal Judson Brame's family. The family settled the lawsuit in September in exchange for \$ 12 million and a series of civic reforms.

Although the ugly chapter in the city's history was the impetus for the center, Tacoma is far from the only player, said John Briehl, the city's human rights and human services director.

The facility will include representatives from Tacoma police and courts, Pierce County sheriff's deputies and court personnel and a variety of nonprofit agencies that work with domestic

violence victims. The idea is that victims can get help with everything from advocacy to counseling, housing and child care needs, Briehl said.

According to the multiparty agreement that formed the center, the services are aimed at:

- Reducing the number of domestic violence cases that go unreported in Tacoma, Pierce County and neighboring cities.
- Ensuring those who commit family violence are prosecuted.
- Coordinating and consolidating existing community resources to better serve victims.
- Providing appropriate legal assistance to victims.

The center will operate with a mix of money from the city, the county, Lakewood and tribal funds as well as other government grants and services from nonprofit agencies.

Kris Sherman: 253-597-8659 kris.sherman@thenewstribune.com.

Copyright © 2005 The News Tribune.