



December 1, 2011

Dear New Orleans Family Justice Center Partners and Supporters,

We are wishing you all a blessed holiday season and wanted to update you on some of the things our New Orleans Family Justice Alliance are thankful for as we begin the holiday season. This week has been an amazing week in the history of the New Orleans Family Justice Center. Even as the Center and its partners continue to provide services day in and day out to survivors and their children, we are moving forward toward the exciting future for the Family Justice Center. Three exciting developments occurred this week that point the way toward our future.

First, as many of you know, we have been moving toward creating a new 501c3 non-profit corporation, the New Orleans Family Justice Alliance, to provide oversight and leadership to the Center. This is an important evolution for the Center. Catholic Charities gave birth to the New Orleans Family Justice Center in 2007 and has nurtured and grown the vision for the last four years. Without Catholic Charities and its support and leadership, the Center never would have come into existence. Now, the next phase of the Center is beginning, including a diverse leadership team from both government and private, non-profit agencies. The 501c3 Board is now in place and we have finalized all the IRS documents this week to begin official operations as a new organization.

The new board includes:

- ❖ Tania Tetlow, *President, Tulane University Domestic Violence Law Clinic*
- ❖ Melanie Talia, *Vice-President, New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation*
- ❖ James R. Kelly, *Treasurer, Covenant House*
- ❖ Pam Jenkins, *Secretary, Professor, University of New Orleans*
- ❖ Colonel Jerry Sneed, *City of New Orleans Representative*
- ❖ Sgt. Rick Pari, *New Orleans Police Department Representative*
- ❖ District Attorney Leon Cannizaro, *Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office*
- ❖ Gordon R. Wadge, *Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans Representative*
- ❖ Mark Moreau, *Southeast Louisiana Legal Services Representative*
- ❖ Paulette Carter, *Children's Bureau of New Orleans Representative*
- ❖ Sue Jernigan, *National Council of Jewish Women Representative*

This will allow the Center and its affiliated agencies to have a structure to develop the Center, raise money, expand community outreach and education initiatives, and begin promoting the Center's mission and vision as a separate legal entity. We so appreciate the leadership of Catholic Charities in starting and operating the Center since 2007 but it is now time for the Family Justice Center to move forward as a separate public-private partnership with its own identity and leadership team.

Second, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with negotiating and finalizing a lease agreement (approx. 13,000 sq. ft) for the New Orleans Family Justice Center to move into the U.S. Post Office building by March 2012. We have been working toward bringing together our two locations on Julia Street and Howard Street for nearly a year. Though this will be a temporary location (3-5 years), it is critical for the Center to have more square footage and for all the staff, partners, and volunteers to be able to work together from one location. Now, this critical step forward is becoming a reality. With the support of many of you, we can now be in our new location before the International Family Justice Center Conference comes to New Orleans in April 2012 (April 17-19). The conference will be profiling





our Center and the work of all our partner agencies and we need to be in a new location to showcase our collaboration and coordination efforts in addressing domestic violence and sexual assault for the visitors from across the country and around the world.

Third, we met Wednesday with Mayor Mitch Landrieu and all his Deputy Mayors to discuss the Mayor's support for the New Orleans Family Justice Center and his willingness to identify a city property for the permanent home of the Center within the next five years. The team advocating for the New Orleans Family Justice Center included: Tania Tetlow, our Board President; U.S. Attorney Jim Letten; Susan Williams, U.S. DOJ, OVW; Lynn Overmann, U.S. DOJ; and Casey Gwinn and Gael Strack, from the National Family Justice Center Alliance. We received a powerful endorsement from the Mayor. The Mayor pledged his support for the Center, committed to speak at the International Family Justice Center Conference in April 2012, and committed to help the Center obtain property for its permanent home. It was so gratifying to see the engagement and commitment for the New Orleans Family Justice Center from the Mayor and his entire leadership team. Their support was a testimony to the amazing work that you have all been doing day in and day out as part of the Family Justice Center team.

As we now move forward to the next steps in our journey, we look forward to your continued support and involvement in helping make our vision a reality. We need you all and we will need to recruit many more friends and supporters in the months to come. We are seeing our vision becoming a reality. We see a new short-term home for the Center with enough space for all our existing partners and new partners. We will see our work profiled on a national level next April by the National Family Justice Center Alliance. And we will see the Center ultimately move into a new home that will become a model for the Gulf and many other communities across the United States.

Thank you for your support, your passion, and your determination in seeing our vision become a reality. So many of you are playing important roles in supporting our vision, but I want to particularly thank two key people. First, U.S. Attorney Jim Letten for his leadership and commitment to seeing the New Orleans Family Justice Center survive and thrive. His support has been consistent, articulate, and unrelenting. Second, OVW Associate Director Susan Williams has been with us from the beginning and helped make the Center a reality. She flew down this week for the meeting with the Mayor on short notice and had to return to D.C. the same day! But her support and advocacy continues to give us such strong evidence that the Office on Violence Against Women believes in our vision and is standing with us each step of the way.

With the support of Mayor Landrieu, his Deputy Mayors, the District Attorney, the Sheriff, the City Council, the New Orleans Police Department, Catholic Charities, Southeast La. Legal Services, Children's Bureau, Children's Hospital, Tulane University, the University of New Orleans, our judges, and many other partners we will help change the way our community addresses family violence and sexual assault in the months and years ahead.

I am honored to work alongside all of you in this amazing journey.

Mary Claire Landry, Director  
New Orleans Family Justice Center