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Texas Bar Foundation Supports Center for Child Protection to Provide Specialized Training

Third Year of Funding Will Provide Specialized Training for Child Abuse Investigators

AUSTIN, Texas—January 25, 2007—The Center for Child Protection today announced receiving a \$3,900 grant from the Texas Bar Foundation to implement The Educating for Justice Project. The Project will provide critical multidisciplinary training for law enforcement officers, Child Protective Services investigators, prosecutors, attorneys ad litem, victim services professionals, and others working with child abuse and neglect victims in Austin and throughout the state. The training will better prepare professionals to respond effectively when cases of child abuse and neglect go before the court. Since 2005, the Texas Bar Foundation has contributed \$13,400 towards projects sponsored by the Center for Child Protection to enhance legal representation for abused children.

“The Educating for Justice project will improve the ability and skill of the many professionals who investigate child abuse. Using techniques that meet the special needs of these fragile children, the professionals also gather evidence to present in court,” said Anne Yeakel, executive director for the Texas Bar Foundation.

In order to provide child victims of sexual assault, physical abuse, and/or witnesses to violent crime the chance to heal, it is critical for child protection professionals to be well prepared for their role in the legal system. This training will bring in experts in the fields of criminal justice, social work, and prosecution to impart a greater understanding of child development and how it relates to children giving testimony and the child protection professional’s preparation for court after an investigation is complete. The net result will be enhanced and improved legal representation for children.

Travis County Child Protection Team members who conduct joint investigations at the Center for Child Protection and other community professionals in Austin and throughout the state will be invited to attend.

“The Center for Child Protection is proud to be involved in seeking justice for children by improving the resources to the professionals charged with keeping children safe from harm,” said Sandra Martin, chief executive officer for the Center for Child Protection. “The generous

Texas Bar Foundation Supports Center for Child Protection – Page 2

grant from the Texas Bar Foundation will ensure that those advocating for abused and neglected children will have the training they need to skillfully represent a child's best interest.”

Since the Center's founding in 1989, the Center has generated \$259,559 to train Child Protection Team professionals in Travis County.

Texas Bar Foundation

Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation (www.texasbarfoundation.org) has awarded more than \$8.5 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably-funded bar foundation.

About the Center for Child Protection

The Center for Child Protection, a nationally accredited Children's Advocacy Center, is the first stop for children entering the criminal justice system because of suspected sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and for children who have witnessed a violent crime. The Center is a child-friendly, specially-equipped facility where children and their caregivers go for evidence gathering, forensic medical exams, counseling and intervention during the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases. All services are provided free of charge.

The Center for Child Protection serves as the community representative to the Child Protection Team (CPT). The Child Protection Team is a public collaboration established in 1989 to more effectively and quickly coordinate the investigation and care for abused children and their families to reduce child re-victimization and promote healing. Other team members include the Travis County District Attorney's Office, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Children's Hospital of Austin, Austin Police Department, Travis County Sheriff's Office, Austin Independent School District Police Department, Pflugerville Police Department, Jonestown Police Department, Lakeway Police Department, Cedar Park Police Department, Leander Police Department, Sunset Valley Police Department, Lago Vista Police Department, Manor Police Department, Rollingwood Police Department, Bee Cave Police Department, West Lake Hills Police Department, and Mustang Ridge Police Department. For more information, please call 512-472-1164 or visit www.centerforchildprotection.org.

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