



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2010

CONTACT: District Attorney Paul V. Gallegos
PHONE: (707) 267-4400

CONTACT: Kelly Neal, CAST Attorney
PHONE: (707) 441-3051

REACT TO SUPERVISORS' CAST RESOLUTION; CAST OPEN HOUSE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2010 - 2:00PM to 4:00PM

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors Tuesday passed a resolution expressing their appreciation to the members of Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) "for their 14 years of dedicated service to sexual and physical abuse victims of Humboldt County."

CAST is a multi-disciplinary team comprised of specially trained individuals representing the district attorney's office, child welfare services, the DA Victim/Witness program, law enforcement, county mental health services, the North Coast Rape Crisis Team, Children and Adults Learning to Mend (CALM) and tribal agencies. The purpose of CAST is to reduce the number of interviews a child victim must undergo and to better coordinate the response to child abuse allegations.

The board's resolution noted that the impact of sexual and child maltreatment "can cause severe and long-lasting physical, emotional and psychological consequences, and can be a devastating experience not only for the child, but also for the family and friends of the child."

In its resolution, the supervisors said all citizens of Humboldt County "benefit from coordinated services provided" from CAST, adding that CAST, since October 1996 "has conducted 2,179 comprehensive forensic interviews, a coordinated response which has proven successful in criminal investigation and the prosecution of child abuse cases."

District Attorney Paul Gallegos said: "The entire department at CAST has earned this well-deserved honor. CAST is working as good as ever. In fact, it's even better since we've expanded it into Hoopa with a special grant we sought and obtained. This will bring CAST's proven record of success to residents who might not be able to travel to Eureka to receive its services."

While at CAST, a child is interviewed in a “child friendly room.” The interview is videotaped, audiotaped and observed by a police officer, a deputy district attorney, a district attorney investigator and, when appropriate, a Child Welfare Services Social worker. Representatives from the DA Victim/Witness, CALM and CYFS (Children, Youth and Family Services, from Humboldt County Mental Health) will be available to answer questions.

CAST will be holding an open house between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. today at 333 K Street in Eureka as part of National Child Abuse Prevention Month

The CAST open house precedes the third Annual Remembering Crime Victims Candlelight Vigil at the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center, next to the Adorni, at 921 Waterfront Drive, in Eureka, on Thursday, between 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

The event is part of the annual National Crime Victims’ Rights Week being observed April 18 through April 24, which has been held each April since 1981.

The Office for Victims of Crime has helped organize the events throughout the country to help promote victims’ rights and to honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf.

Event sponsors emphasize that this is a time to remember those who have lost their lives to violence, honor survivors who have broken their silence and support victims who have yet to find their voice.

Sponsors urge that together, we can let victims throughout our community know that they are not alone and forgotten.