



Media Contact
Cori Streetman
cori@barefootpublicrelations.com
303.887.4298

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National Children's Alliance Receives Over \$825,000 Grant from The Duke Endowment to Expand Mental Health Services to Victims of Child Abuse in the Carolinas

Washington, D.C. (June 26, 2014) – National Children's Alliance announced it is the recipient of a three-year grant from The Duke Endowment, beginning Sept. 2014 and totaling \$825,890 to fund its program, *Introducing, Implementing and Evaluating the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI) in Children's Advocacy Centers in the Carolinas*. Grant partners include the Yale School of Medicine Child Study Center, Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina, and South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers.

This grant enables National Children's Alliance and its project partners to train staff of Children's Advocacy Centers in the Carolinas on CFTSI and to support Children's Advocacy Centers in implementing the intervention in their facilities. Introduction of CFTSI in these facilities will expand mental health services to child victims of abuse and non-offending caregivers, and improve the multi-disciplinary team response to victim's mental health issues at a local level. This project will also include expanded CFTSI treatment applications serving children between three and six years of age and foster care youth. These funds will result in an expansion of the CTSFI model to eight Children's Advocacy Centers, and responding to upwards of 300 more child abuse cases during the course of the grant.

By intervening early with children who have experienced physical and sexual abuse, CFTSI has been shown to reduce traumatic stress symptoms and prevent chronic PTSD; improve screening and initial assessment of children impacted by traumatic stress; and assess a child's need for longer-term treatment. "Many child abuse victims have a difficult time coping and recovering from traumatic events in their lives, which can lead to serious mental health issues," stated Teresa Huizar, Executive Director of National Children's Alliance, "This grant enables National Children's Alliance to expand vital support and training to Children's Advocacy Centers in the Carolinas, and we are grateful to The Duke Endowment for supporting this program and, ultimately, children and families in need."

Sharing in this sentiment, Kim Hamm, Executive Director of the South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, stated, "This program offers an exciting opportunity to have local Children's Advocacy Centers trained directly by the developers from Yale on the CFTSI model. CFTSI is an evidence supported treatment model, which has been proven to be effective in reducing traumatic stress reactions and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children who have experienced trauma such as sexual and physical abuse. The model aligns perfectly with the mission and purpose of Children's Advocacy Centers. This program will assist South Carolina's Children's Advocacy Centers in more effectively responding to allegations of child abuse by adding to our evidence supported toolbox of mental health treatment services and by filling gaps between acute responses and longer term treatments designed to address

trauma stress symptoms and disorders that become established. We are very excited to get started so that we can better meet the needs of vulnerable children in South Carolina.”

In describing the goals of the CFTSI model, model co-developer Carrie Epstein, LCSW-R, Director of Clinical Services and Training at the Childhood Violent Trauma Center at the Yale University School of Medicine, said, “When children are alone with and don’t have words to describe their traumatic reactions, their symptoms and symptomatic behaviors are their only means of expression. In order to recover, children need recognition and understanding from the most important source of support in their lives – their caregivers. The CFTSI treatment model works to improve support by helping the child communicate about their reactions and feelings more effectively, and increasing the caregiver’s awareness and understanding of the child’s experience. CFTSI can bring immediate, real relief for children who have experienced trauma and abuse.”

“The Duke Endowment saw this grant as a way to help vulnerable children in the Carolinas heal from trauma through an effective evidence-based intervention,” said Phil Redmond, associate director of the Endowment’s Child Care program area. “This effort will make CTSFI more widely available to the children and families who need it, and provide training and resources to help the healing process begin.”

Children’s Advocacy Centers in the Carolinas will be invited to apply and eight will be selected to participate in the program.

From 2008 to 2012, there were more than 482,000 reports of child abuse or neglect in North Carolina and South Carolina combined. During this period, more than 54,000 children were served by Children’s Advocacy Centers in the Carolinas in response to allegations of child abuse or neglect. There is a clear need to address expansion of services, and this generous grant helps to meet this goal.

For more information about National Children’s Alliance visit www.nationalchildrensalliance.org.

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National Children’s Alliance is the national association and accrediting body for the over 770 Children’s Advocacy Centers and 47 State Chapters serving each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Dedicated to helping local communities respond to allegations of child abuse in ways that are effective and efficient, and put the needs of child victims of abuse first, National Children’s Alliance provides support and advocacy to its accredited membership, as well as numerous developing centers, multidisciplinary teams and child abuse professionals around the country, and the world. As the national authority on multidisciplinary approaches to supporting child victims of abuse, the purpose of National Children’s Alliance is to empower local communities to provide comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate services to victims of child abuse. Founded in 1990, National Children’s Alliance provides accreditation opportunities, financial assistance, training, technical assistance, research and education to communities, child abuse professionals and children’s advocacy centers throughout the United States in support of child abuse intervention, advocacy and prevention.

The Duke Endowment is based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke. The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$3 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.

The Yale Childhood Violent Trauma Center (CVTC) based at the Yale Child Study Center is a major contributor to the development and dissemination of early interventions and collaborative responses to childhood trauma. The CVTC is a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and offers a range of treatment interventions, research and training programs aimed at helping children, adolescents and families who are struggling with traumatic reactions and disorders and for professionals working in the field. The Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention was developed at the CVTC, growing out of decades of experience responding to children and families in the aftermath of overwhelming events.