



401 North Ewing Street  
Lancaster, Ohio 43130  
www.fmchealth.org

## NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Donna Stalter  
Fairfield Medical Center  
Public Relations Specialist  
(740) 687-8108  
donnas@fmchealth.org

(For immediate release)

### NEW CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER FOR FAIRFIELD COUNTY

**LANCASTER, Ohio (May 14, 2007)** – At 9:00 a.m. this morning a press conference was held at Fairfield Medical Center to discuss the new Child Advocacy Center for Fairfield County. The Center is becoming a reality thanks to the dedication of many Fairfield County agencies, including Fairfield County Job and Family Services, the Law Director's office, Fairfield Medical Center and the Abuse Prevention Fund. In attendance were: Lisa DeGeeter, Project Developer for the Child Advocacy Program; Mina Ubbing, President and CEO of Fairfield Medical Center; Terre Vandervoort, City Law Director; Dave and June Harcum, Abuse Prevention Fund; Mike Orlando, Fairfield County Job and Family Services Director; Rich Bowlen, Fairfield County Job and Family Services/Child Protective Services; Melinda VanBuren, Emergency Department Assistant Manager; and Terri Lehman, Emergency Department Registered Nurse. Terre Vandervoort, will serve as President of the Board of Directors for the Advocacy Center.

The Child Advocacy Center is set to open in August or September of this year. It will be located at 1147 East Main Street in Lancaster, Ohio. The concept is to have one central location for children who are victims of abuse to go to for treatment and guidance. According to Lisa DeGeeter, Project Developer, "The current system requires the patient to see a prosecutor, counselor, or medical exam if needed, and the list goes on. This Center will bring all those resources to the child and their family. This eliminates stress on both ends of the spectrum." The Abuse Prevention Fund and Fairfield Medical Center have covered the first two years of rent for this facility.

Dave and June Harcum, local philanthropists who have a passion to help the child victims of abuse, represented the Abuse Prevention Fund. Dave Harcum commented, "Where there is a child of abuse, there is often a family of abuse. This can open doors to provide assistance to the entire family." Just last year, there were 133 reported cases of sexual assault on children in Fairfield County. Considering that only about 12% of the cases are actually reported, there were potentially over 900 cases of sexual assault. Terre Vandervoort, Law Director made a statement about how the Child Advocacy Center will help our community, "The Center will be a leader in the community. Not only for the medical and legal needs of working with the victims and prosecuting the offenders, but it will also serve as an educational function. It will be a resource for family and friends to understand what to do or how they

can help. It can also educate employers to know what the signs of abuse are, and most importantly, how they can help and support a parent of an abused child, so that the family can heal."

The Child Advocacy Center has come from an obvious need in the community, of the 133 cases, 80 victims were required to go to Columbus for the forensic exam. Fairfield Medical Center now has six Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and recently sent four nurses for Pediatric SANE certification. With the Child Advocacy Center those exams could be done locally for the ease of the victim and family. This Advocacy Center will be centered on the needs of the victim and a focus on the family to provide them with the support and assistance they need during the trials and tribulations they endure.

# # #