

February 5, 2010

Senator Ben Nelson  
United States Senate  
720 Hart Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

We are writing in strong support of the Child Advocacy Center's application for federally appropriated dollars to support construction of a co-located facility in Northeast Lincoln.

For the past 11 years, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) has been a model in interagency collaboration in the investigation of child abuse cases. On a daily basis, the CAC works closely with law enforcement, protection and safety, medical and mental health providers to provide direct services to child victims of abuse and their non-offending family members. The CAC actively assists in the investigation and prosecution of these very difficult cases by providing forensic interviews and medical evaluations, as well as ongoing support to the family. Over the past 11 years, the CAC has served over 5,250 unduplicated child victims of abuse, mainly cases of child sexual abuse.

Since the CAC opened in October 1998, The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Psychological Consultation Center has partnered with the CAC to provide mental health services for child sexual abuse victims and their families. At this time, approximately 200 children and their non-offending family members have completed the UNL Project SAFE12-week treatment program conducted at the CAC. Evaluation of our group treatment has continually demonstrated that children and families benefit from our services and we look forward to continuing to partner with the CAC to offer mental health services to victims of childhood sexual abuse and their families.

Unfortunately, the Child Advocacy Center has outgrown their little yellow house in Antelope Park and is building an expanded facility in Northeast Lincoln. They have successfully raised over \$2,000,000 privately and are requesting additional federal dollars from Housing and Urban Development specifically for the co-location piece of the project. Co-location would allow law enforcement and protection and safety workers to be located on site. Other Child Advocacy Centers who have developed a co-located model have found significant improvement in coordination and communication resulting in better outcomes for families.

We fully support the work of the Child Advocacy Center and encourage full funding of this financial request. The CAC is an incredibly valuable resource for southeast Nebraska and beyond.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us (402-472-2619 or [dhansen1@unl.edu](mailto:dhansen1@unl.edu)).

Sincerely,



David J. Hansen, Ph.D.  
Project SAFE Director  
Professor and Chair of Psychology



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