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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, BROOKLYN DISTRICT ATTORNEY HYNES
AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMISSIONER JIMENEZ
ANNOUNCE OPENING OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER*****City Opens First One-Stop Service Center For Domestic
Violence Victims***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg opened New York City's first Family Justice Center located in downtown Brooklyn. At the Center, professionals from 37 community partners and nine government agencies will provide an array of necessary services to domestic violence victims. For example, with only one visit, victims may meet with a prosecutor, access social services, begin long term counseling, and meet with a clergy member – all in their native language. The Center will also provide high-quality childcare. The Center anticipates helping approximately 7,000 adults and 14,000 children each year. Joining the Mayor at the opening were Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, Deputy Mayor Carol Robles-Roman, U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Director Diane M. Stuart, [Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence](#) Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez, New York City [Police Department](#) Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt, Avon Foundation President Kathleen Walas and actress/producer and Avon spokesperson Salma Hayek, representing the Avon *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program.

"Domestic violence often leaves victims physically, financially and emotionally devastated," said Mayor Bloomberg. "The Family Justice Center will be a place where domestic violence victims will be able to find the essential services they need under one roof in a supportive, comfortable and understanding environment. We want domestic violence survivors to know that the process of recovery and a new life can begin here."

"I very much appreciate the Mayor's partnership in curtailing the sorrow of domestic violence," said Brooklyn District Attorney Hynes. "I am particularly grateful that the Mayor has agreed to dedicate the Center in memory of my mother, Regina Drew."

Last year in Brooklyn there were 82,000 reported incidents of domestic violence – representing one-third of all reported incidents Citywide. For victims, putting their life back together is a full-time job that requires multiple visits to City agencies and community providers. The initiative on which the Family Justice Center was modeled, the Domestic Violence Response Team program (DVRT), brought all these providers together monthly to better coordinate service for high risk victims. Now these providers will work under the same roof on a daily basis.

"The Family Justice Center takes the burden off of the victim to

travel around the City – often with children in tow – to receive the services she needs,” said Commissioner Jimenez. “Now all the service providers are right down the hall from each other.”

The following are services that will be provided at the Center:

- Civil legal representation for immigration, housing and family court matters
- Children’s activities
- Safety planning
- Assistance with filing Police and Probation reports
- Counseling
- Support groups
- Prosecution of domestic violence crimes
- Services for the elderly and/or disabled
- Access to shelter and housing
- Language interpretation
- Voluntary spiritual support

Since January of 2002, the City has developed a comprehensive approach to combat domestic violence. Domestic violence 911 calls have been digitized so that they can be produced more quickly as criminal evidence against batterers. Emergency rooms and hospitals have been equipped with digital cameras, making it easier to document injuries. The Language Line Program that was started in Queens, and is now a Citywide initiative, equips Police Officers with special phones that offer them direct access to interpreters in more than 150 languages. This service makes it easier for domestic violence victims to tell their stories. Through these efforts to date, domestic violence crime (murder, rape and felony assaults) decreased by 38% over the past four years. Homicides have decreased by 23% compared to last year. Help is available 24-hours-a-day to victims by calling 911, 311, or the NYC Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-621-4673.

The Family Justice Center has received a \$725,000 from The Founders’ Circle, a diverse group of foundations and corporate citizens who were the first to commit financially to the Center. Members of The Founders’ Circle include: the Avon Foundation, Altria Corporate Services, Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell, Inc., Dr. Joy to the World Foundation, Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation, Lifetime Television, United Way of New York City and Verizon Wireless, New York Metro Region. Additional funding is provided through in-kind donations from the City and community partners, and more than \$1.2 million in a Federal grant. The City’s \$6.5 million Family Justice Center is the first of 15 centers to open nationwide as part of a U.S. Department of Justice initiative.

“It is an honor to take part in the opening of the Family Justice Center, which I hope will be the first of many,” said Ms. Hayek. “We cannot tolerate a world in which one in three women is a victim of domestic violence, and for the past year I have worked with Avon on the new *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program. Individuals, companies like Avon, the government and domestic violence organizations working together can help empower women and break the cycle of domestic violence.”

“The Avon Foundation Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program launched a year ago, and we awarded one of our first grants to the Family Justice Center,” stated President, Avon Foundation Kathleen Walas. “We are proud to be members of the Founders’ Circle, and extend our gratitude to the dozens of agencies whose collaboration made this Center a reality. We invite other foundations and corporations to join us and help continue the unique vision of hope that the Center represents.”

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