



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2008

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**CHILDREN'S QUILT FEATURED AT
NEW YORK CITY'S FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER IN BROOKLYN**

Children who have witnessed abuse display message of peace

In celebration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence today unveiled a "Peace Quilt" made by child witnesses of domestic violence who have received services at the New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn. Over the past six months, 165 children, ages three to 17, decorated individual quilt sections with their visions of a peaceful world where they could feel safe. The quilt measures 10 by seven feet and will be displayed in the lobby of 350 Jay Street through the end of October.

"This quilt, designed by children, uniquely expresses all of our visions for a world where children feel safe," said Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez. "The New York City Family Justice Center works toward this vision by providing a welcoming and supportive place where victims and their children can heal."

"We at the Safe At Home Foundation support the Family Justice Center in Brooklyn with Margaret's Place in letting children know, 'It's not their fault.' 'They are not alone.' and 'We're here for them.'" said Joe Torre, founder and chairman of the Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation.

Since it opened in July 2005, the New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn has served as the City's first one-stop domestic violence center, bringing together dedicated domestic violence prosecutors, civil attorneys, and social service providers all under one roof. The Center, a collaboration with the Kings County District Attorney's Office, has assisted over 13,000 victims to find safety and support. The Center's children's room, Margaret's Place, is funded by the Joe Torre Safe At Home Foundation through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. It is a safe, peaceful environment that provides a forum where the youngest victims, often silent witnesses of domestic violence, can be heard and begin healing. More than 3,500 children who have visited Margaret's Place have had the opportunity to engage in organized play activities and

talk with trained staff about what they have experienced. In addition, since November 2006, 33% of the children who have been assessed have begun one-on-one and/or group counseling with one of the Center's on-site partners, Sanctuary for Families.

"Having been a child who witnessed domestic violence myself, I know the pain and fear these children have experienced," said Brooklyn District Attorney Charles J. Hynes. "Through programs offered at the Family Justice Center, I hope victims, like these children, will some day experience the types of positive visions they express in this unique work of art."

The City currently operates two New York City Family Justice Centers, one in Brooklyn and one in Queens, with a third Center in the Bronx planned to open in 2009. Services available at all of the Centers include: safety planning, civil legal information, assistance with filing police and probation reports, counseling and support groups, prosecution of domestic violence crimes, services for the elderly and/or disabled, assistance with accessing emergency shelter and housing, job training, resume assistance, English as a Second Language classes and language interpretation, child care, and counseling for children. The Centers are part of Mayor Bloomberg's overall effort to reduce domestic violence and provide comprehensive services to victims. As a result of the City's focus on this issue, family related crimes have declined by 21% and intimate partner homicides have declined by 51% citywide over the last six years.

Additional information regarding locations and services available at the Centers is available at www.nyc.gov/domesticviolence. To learn how to make a donation to the New York City Family Justice Center Initiative through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector, please visit www.nyc.gov/fund.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, please call 311 or the City's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-621-HOPE for more information. In an emergency call 911.

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