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**MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES THE CREATION OF THE FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER TO PROVIDE ONE STOP ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS*****New York City Receives \$1.2 Million Department of Justice Grant, and Support from Founders' Circle, to Develop One of Fifteen Family Justice Centers Across the Country***

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the [Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence](#) Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez, and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes today announced the award of a \$1.2 million dollar grant from the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, to create a Family Justice Center in downtown Brooklyn. The Center will allow victims to access comprehensive services more easily by putting dedicated domestic violence prosecutors and all essential service-providers under one roof. With only one appointment, victims will be able to meet with a prosecutor, petition for an order of protection, receive legal advice on housing and custody issues, talk to a counselor, and apply for housing and financial assistance – all while their children play safely in the next room. The Mayor was joined at the 67th Precinct for the announcement by Deputy Mayor Carol Robles-Roman, [Police](#) Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, [Department for the Aging](#) Commissioner Edwin Mendez-Santiago Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt, New York State Crime Victims Board Commissioner Joan A. Cusack and members of the Founders' Circle, a diverse group of foundations and corporate citizens who have made a commitment to join with the City in this innovative venture.

For victims of domestic violence, the physical wounds are only part of the trauma they are forced to endure," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Victims suffer terrible emotional wounds, and many lose their sense of security, their financial support, even their homes. These pressures often prevent victims from leaving their abusers or reporting crimes to the police. Our administration took an important step toward easing these pressures by creating the Domestic Violence Response Teams. Now, we're taking our campaign against domestic violence to the next level. Our new Family Justice Center is an innovative way of making victims safer, healthier, and more secure, and it's going to be a model for the City and the nation."

The opening of the Center means that victims of domestic violence will find the help they need, under one roof. It will save them precious time and reduce the emotional, and physical, wear and tear on these women and children as they seek the counseling and legal resources they deserve," said Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes.

When a victim leaves an abuser, she may need a new place to live, a new source of income, and a variety of other services," said Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat

Domestic Violence. "These varied needs cause victims of domestic violence to seek assistance from an average of five City agencies at any given time, in addition to several community organizations."

Mayor Bloomberg launched the Domestic Violence Response Teams (DVRT) pilot program in May of 2002 to bring all relevant agencies and service providers to the table. In its first two years, DVRT has served 150 victims in the 67th, 43rd Precincts and a Public Service Area in the Bronx with the highest concentrations of domestic violence and 96% of those victims have not reported any subsequent physical harm by the batterer. The new Center will take DVRT's model for the coordinated delivery of vital services and place it under one roof so that even more victims can get the help that they need. While DVRT teams are able to serve approximately 75 clients each year, the Center anticipates serving 7,000 adults and up to 14,000 children annually.

The key feature of the Center will be the on-site presence of the District Attorney's entire 68-member domestic violence unit, headed by Special Victims Division Chief Wanda Lucibello, along with staff from five City agencies and 25 community-based programs and organizations. Bilingual receptionists will greet clients, who will be escorted to comfortably furnished consultation rooms. While children are cared for on-site by pre-screened childcare workers and art therapy professionals, an intake specialist will work with the client to determine the range of services required, and schedule the appropriate sequence of appointments within the Center for that day. A trained volunteer will escort the client through the building providing a "warm hand-off" between appointments. Supportive services, from counseling to social services to legal assistance on issues such as housing, custody and immigration and will be handled by the respective Center partner, eliminating gaps in services, and expediting the process for the victim. The Center will house a Crime Victims Board claims staff who will be able to provide victims with immediate access to financial compensation for their injuries.

This Center is a victory for women who have fallen through the cracks, and a symbol of hope for women who are trapped in a violent cycle they feel cannot be broken," said Vanessa, a survivor of domestic violence.

The first New York City Family Justice Center will be centrally located in downtown Brooklyn at a site to be determined. One third of all domestic violence related homicide last year occurred in Brooklyn. The Center will provide victims with the services they need to put their lives back together. The most serious domestic violence crimes are down by 5% in Brooklyn, year to date. The ultimate goal of this collaborative is to reduce the number of family violence incidents, recidivism and homicides.

A wide spectrum of services will be accessible on-site, including:

- Civil legal representation for immigration, housing, and family court matters
- Public benefits
- Child care
- Safety planning
- Counseling
- Support groups
- Services for the elderly and/or disabled
- Court accompaniment
- Credit counseling
- Access to shelter and housing
- Language interpretation
- Voluntary spiritual support

The following City and State agencies will be partners at the Center: Kings County District Attorney's Office, the New York City Police Department, the New York City Department of Probation, the Human Resources Administration, Health and Hospitals Corporation, and the Department for the Aging, and the New York State Crime Victims Board.

The following community-based organizations will be partners: Arab American Support Center, Art Start, Barrier Free Living, Caribbean Women's Health Association, Center Against Family Violence, Church Avenue Merchants Block Association, Dwa Fanm, Haitian Violence Prevention/Intervention Project, Health Industry Resources Enterprises, Inc., Help Roads/Help USA, Jewish Association for Services for the Aged, Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, NY Asian Women's Center, NY Association of New Americans, Ohel Children's Home and Family Services, Puerto Rican Family Institute, Rape Crisis Intervention/Victims of Violence Program, Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn, Safe Horizon, Sanctuary for Families, South Brooklyn Legal Services, STEPS to End Family Violence, Turning the Corner and Women Working for a Better Community.

The following faith-based organizations will be partners: the Association of Hispanic Ministers, Catholic Charities, the Christian Cultural Center; Global Ministries in Christ, Long Island College Hospital Chaplaincy Program and the New York Board of Rabbis.

Representatives from the following colleges and universities are also partners: Brooklyn Law School, City University of New York Kingsborough Community College, City University of New York Medgar Evers College, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University School of Social Work, Long Island University, Brooklyn and New York City Technical College.

The Founder's Circle is a group of foundations and corporate citizens who have been the first to pledge financial support to the New York City Family Justice Center. The Founder's Circle includes Kathleen Walas, President, Avon Foundation, Charles Hand, President of Verizon Wireless, New York Metro Region, Joe Torre, Chairman, Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation, Maurice Tunick, Program Director, and Dr. Joy Browne of WOR Radio, Michael Bolton, Michael Bolton Charities, Inc., Lawrence Mandell, President and CEO, United Way of New York City, and Meredith Wagner, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Corporate Communications, Lifetime Entertainment Systems.

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