

April 9, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As the community mourns the deaths of the five children in Orting, this is a reminder about resources available to those threatened by domestic violence:

The Crystal Judson Family Justice Center (FJC) provides comprehensive services under one roof for victims of domestic violence and their children.

Clients visiting the FJC have access to an array of services, including civil legal support, protection orders, assistance with navigating resources from the state Department of Social and Health Services, spiritual support, military advocacy, victim support in criminal cases, safety planning, housing, transportation and other emergency assistance. Translation services are available for non-English speaking clients.

“As the tragedy in Orting shows, the most dangerous time in a domestic violence situation is when the victim decides to leave,” said Pierce County Council Member Barbara Gelman, who serves as chair of the FJC’s board. “It’s important that victims know there are resources in place to help.”

“The Family Justice Center isn’t just another government office,” added County Council Member Shawn Bunney, who also is a member of the center’s board. “With play areas for children and a friendly atmosphere, it’s a warm, welcoming place of compassion that helps victims through their time of crisis.”

In 2008, the FJC had 2,654 client visits (note that some individuals visited more than once); 863 children visited the center with those clients. The FJC Helpline served 3,137 clients by phone. The most common services requested were civil legal/protection order assistance (80 percent), housing/shelter assistance (26 percent), and DSHS/public assistance (23 percent).

The FJC opened in December 2005. It is jointly operated by Pierce County and the City of Tacoma, with additional funding support from such partners as the cities of Lakewood, University Place and Gig Harbor, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and the federal government.

The FJC also seeks applications for volunteers who serve on an as-needed basis, and it accepts donations of money, food, new toys and toiletry items.

For more information:

Online: www.aplaceofhelp.com

FJC Helpline: 253-798-4166; (toll free) 1-800-764-2420; (TDD) 253-798-4620 Media contact: Craig Roberts, FJC assistant director, 253-798-4330; or Hunter George, Pierce County communications director, 253-798-6606 or hgeorge@co.pierce.wa.us.