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URL: <http://www.cornerhousemn.org>

Minneapolis-based CornerHouse Marks 20th Anniversary of Helping Sexually Abused Children Around the World

Local nonprofit has revolutionized and improved the way child abuse is investigated in 48 states, seven foreign countries and the International Criminal Court at The Hague

MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 24, 2009) – In August 1989, a ground breaking ceremony was held at the site of what was to become one of the first child advocacy centers in the nation, CornerHouse. Since that day CornerHouse has become a groundbreaking organization, improving the way child abuse is investigated around the world.

CornerHouse conducts forensic interviews and non-emergency medical examinations for children and vulnerable adults who report sexual abuse or witness a violent crime. CornerHouse's pioneering interview protocol is recognized by the Minnesota State Supreme Court and has been adopted by the American Prosecutors Research Institute.

“While difficult to imagine, it wasn't until the 1960s when our society began to truly recognize and deal with the painful issue of child sexual abuse. Until that time, there were minimal public services to report, document and prosecute child sexual abuse,” said Thomas Frost, executive director of CornerHouse. “CornerHouse was established in 1989 to be a safe place in our community for skilled, dedicated and compassionate professionals to interview child victims of sexual abuse and violence.”

CornerHouse's Internationally Recognized Interviewing Protocol

Since it was founded in 1989, CornerHouse has trained more than 22,000 professionals around the world as mandated reporters and on its interviewing protocol. CornerHouse interviews approximately 500 children each year.

“CornerHouse had revolutionized the way child abuse is investigated,” said Frost. “Instead of a child being interviewed over and over at multiple professional offices, CornerHouse's interviewing protocol puts the child's needs first. Now, the professionals

come to the child-friendly environment at CornerHouse where a single recorded interview meets the needs of all investigators.”

CornerHouse Interview Specialists interview a child in one room while members from law enforcement, child protection and the prosecutor’s office observe through closed circuit television from another room. Coordinating the interview between the various offices reduces the number of interviews the child must endure, thereby reducing stress and trauma on the child. The interviewer conducts the interview with attention to the child’s development, cognitive, social and emotional levels. Age-appropriate questions, drawings and anatomical dolls help children describe their experiences.

CornerHouse statistics and research indicate that between 50 and 60 percent of all cases accepted for charging for adult criminal court have resulted in a guilty plea, eliminating the need for costly trials.

20th Anniversary Gala, September 19

In its 20th year of helping children and families, CornerHouse is marking the occasion with a gala event on Saturday, September 19, honoring founding members Tom Johnson and Mary Ellison. The 20th Anniversary Gala will be held at the Golden Wings Museum at the Anoka County Airport in Blaine, Minn. The evening will feature helicopter and airplane rides, live jazz music and tours of the rare and one-of-a-kind antique airplanes at the museum. Tickets can be purchased for \$85 at <http://cornerhousegala.eventbrite.com>. The event is open to the public.

CornerHouse Ambassadors

This past year, a team of CornerHouse Ambassadors has been asked to raise awareness of child abuse prevention and the important role of CornerHouse in our community. Ambassadors have been asked to distribute safety information cards to help adults who may be in a position to help a child, promote and participate in fundraising opportunities, speak in a public forum about CornerHouse and contribute to 20th anniversary activities.

About CornerHouse

CornerHouse is a public-private partnership organized as a non-profit agency. It provides forensic interviews and medical examinations for children and vulnerable adults suspected of being physically or sexually abused. CornerHouse hears the cries of approximately 500 children each year. Opened in 1989, CornerHouse works with police, child protection and prosecutors to provide the highest quality and most reliable information and evidence regarding allegations of abuse. CornerHouse also provides training locally, nationally and internationally.