



## *News Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Gannett Foundation/FLORIDA TODAY Award Grant to Children's Advocacy Center Melbourne, Fla.—The Gannett Foundation/FLORIDA TODAY awarded a \$2,000 grant to the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard (CACB) for its Clinical Intervention Program (CIP), which provides immediate mental health counseling to child victims of abuse and their non-offending family members.

“Given the traumatic nature of sexual and severe physical abuse, immediate and appropriate counseling by a trusted advocate can help a child learn how to work through the emotional crisis, and can greatly influence the non-offending parents' ability to be supportive and protective,” explained Charles Biehl, Director of the Child Protection Team and the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard. “CIP is provided free of charge and we depend on the generosity of those like the Gannett Foundation and FLORIDA TODAY. We are grateful for their financial support and for their recognition of the CIP's importance to child abuse victims.”

The cases handled through the Advocacy Center are the most severe cases of abuse found in Brevard County, and we recognized a gap in services that was filled in late 1997 through the Clinical Intervention Program. The CIP primarily, though not exclusively, serves child sexual abuse victims between the ages of 3-17 years old, and the non-offending family members of these victims.

In addition to immediate, on-site crisis and short-term counseling, the Clinical Intervention Program also provides:

- case consultation to child protective service agencies
- expert testimony in court
- personal advocacy services (such as communication with the victim's school or parent's workplace)
- assistance in the transition to long-term therapy (if appropriate)
- follow-up with the victim and family for up to six months to ensure that they are maintaining appointments and receiving the identified needed services intended to strengthen their family.

Established in 1996, the Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard is a nonprofit organization affiliated with Wuesthoff Health Services. CACB is a multiple-agency collaboration of the Child Protection Team, the Florida Department of Children and Families, Brevard County Sheriff's Office and municipal law enforcement agencies, the Office of the State Attorney and community mental health professionals. CACB tours are available by appointment by calling Teresa Munroe at 259-1883.

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