



LYNNE ABRAHAM
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
THREE SOUTH PENN SQUARE
CORNER OF JUNIPER AND SOUTH
PENN SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107**

NEWS RELEASE

Date: June 21, 2007

**Contact: Cathie Abookire
Director of Communications
(215) 686-8711**

**\$300,000 STATE GRANT TO HELP SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN BY
CONSOLIDATING, IMPROVING AND EXPANDING SERVICES IN A NEW
'UNDER-ONE-ROOF' FACILITY**

*Children's Alliance To Move To Episcopal Hospital To Minimize Trauma to Child
Victims of Sexual Abuse*

WHAT: CHECK PRESENTATION AND NEWS CONFERENCE

**WHEN: THURSDAY JUNE 21, 2007
9:30 AM**

**WHERE: DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
3 South Penn Square
Corner of Juniper and South Penn Square
Mezzanine Press Room**

Participants:

District Attorney Lynne Abraham

Dennis M. O'Brien – Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Chris Kirchner, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Children's Alliance

June 21, 2007 -- Pennsylvania House Speaker Dennis O'Brien today presented a state grant in the amount of \$300,000 to The Philadelphia Children's Alliance to benefit children who have been sexually abused. The Philadelphia Children's Alliance will use the grant to move to a new location in the Tower Building of Episcopal Hospital, which is also home to the Special Victims Unit of the Philadelphia Police Department.

Work on the new facility is expected to begin this fall.

“Providing services under one roof allows us to help five times as many children as we now serve, and we will be able to offer them a wide range of expanded services, such as

private meeting rooms,” said District Attorney Lynne Abraham. “This will be a tremendous benefit to our youngest and most innocent victims of crime.”

The new home of the Children’s Alliance will have child-friendly interview rooms with observation space, waiting areas, private meeting rooms, and a medical examination rooms. The \$300,000 grant will be applied to equipment and furnishings, computer and telephone systems, and videotape and medical equipment.

“These funds will enable us to create a warm and welcoming facility for victims of child abuse, a place where public and private agencies can coordinate their investigations and children and families will receive comprehensive services and support,” said Chris Kirchner, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Children’s Alliance. “We are extremely grateful to District Attorney Lynne Abraham and Speaker O’Brien for their outstanding efforts on behalf of abused children in Philadelphia.”

"As a long-time partner with the Philadelphia Police Department, The District Attorney’s Office and the Children's Alliance, I have seen how valuable a facility like this is in avoiding further trauma for the youngest victims of sexual abuse. This state funding I was able to obtain represents the final piece of the puzzle in creating a better facility, and I am very pleased we could make it happen," said Pennsylvania State Representative and House Speaker Dennis O'Brien.

The Philadelphia Children’s Alliance acts to create a coordinated, multi-agency, interdisciplinary response to child sexual abuse that promotes healing and justice for victims in Philadelphia. The Alliance also conducts forensic interviews of victims to aid the police investigators, the District Attorney’s Office and the Department of Human Services.

“This incredible gift will support improved services for sexually abused children, as we use the funds to help renovate a state of the art facility for child abuse investigations in North Philadelphia. Similar to programs in other cities, this center will house public and private agencies for the sole purpose of improving services to children and their families, said Kirchner.”

The Children’s Alliance has outgrown its current location at 40th and Chestnut Streets and is moving to a larger facility that is more convenient for child victims and their families. Currently, the Children’s Alliance is able to provide services to only a fraction of the child rape cases reported to the police and DHS, but the new facility will allow it to serve five times as many children and to expand its services.

In child abuse cases, collaboration among agencies is critical because it creates effective and efficient investigations and avoids multiple interviews of child victims in various settings by the police, DHS social workers and medical professionals. The new facility will include an on-site medical examination facility that will be staffed with child abuse

experts. This co-located model has been used successfully in other urban centers and truly represents “one-stop shopping” for children and families in Philadelphia.

Today’s announcement exemplifies strong working relationship between the District Attorney’s Office, the Victim Services Community, and Speaker O’Brien, who is a tireless champion in Harrisburg for children and crime victims. The District Attorney and Children’s Alliance lobbied the General Assembly for these funds, and Speaker O’Brien was instrumental in making the grant a reality. The District Attorney’s Office has a long history of partnering with the Children’s Alliance and other victim service providers to ensure that our citizens receive the best possible care when they come into contact with the criminal justice system.