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# NEWS RELEASE

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## USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES \$165,000 TO KIDS' HARBOR, INC.

Morris Westfall, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, joined the elected officials on March 27, 2008 to dedicate Kids' Harbor Inc.'s new headquarters. Purchase of the building was made possible through a USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Loan in the amount of \$165,000 and a State of Missouri Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$300,000.

Kids' Harbor is a not-for-profit agency which provides confidential services such as counseling, medical exams, interviews and other services and works with experts to evaluate, treat, prevent and prosecute for victims of child abuse. The new building allows experts to provide more services simultaneously, offers additional privacy and a more comfortable environment. The center has two family rooms, interview rooms, office space and an area for possible future expansion.

"This funding will certainly help Kids Harbor, Inc. to continue the important work they do on behalf of Missouri children," said U.S. Senator Kit Bond. "Ensuring the health and safety of Missouri's children is a top priority and I am pleased to have played a small part in helping them to secure these funds."

"No child should be subject to abuse and neglect. Programs run by Kids' Harbor are crucial to protecting Missouri's children, and I'm so pleased that this federal loan will help purchase a permanent building to continue the great work that they do," U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill said.

Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO) congratulated Kids' Harbor, Inc., who received a \$165,000 loan from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development to help purchase the building that they have been leasing for the past year. "I am pleased that Kids' Harbor, Inc. will receive a loan that will make an investment in the lives of abused children," said Skelton. "Kids' Harbor provides a valuable service to our children and their families, offering a safe haven for children as they combat the devastating



Pictured are, from left, front row: Morris Westfall, State Director, Missouri Rural Development; Ann Kutscher, representative from Representative Ike Skelton's office; Board member Janine Bullock; Executive Director Darrel Ashlock; Rite Helvey, Medical Counselor; Cara Gerdman, Advocacy Counselor. Back row: Lois East, USDA RD Clinton Area Office; David Rauch, representative from Senator Claire McCaskill's office, Mike Fitzgerald, USDA RD Eldon Sub-Area office; Chief Mark Maples, Lake Ozark Police Department; Board member Gary Drover; Gary Northrip, Child Advocacy counselor; School Liaison Brooklyn Braun, and Kelly Gregory, USDA RD Area Director.

consequences of abuse. Child neglect, sexual, physical, and emotional abuse is devastating and preventable. Every dollar invested in a child abuse program makes a real difference in the lives of our children. Through this loan, Kids' Harbor will be better able to respond to the psychological, medical, and legal needs of abused children and address prevention."

"This is a great partnership effort when everyone works together for a common goal of meeting the needs of the community's children," said Westfall. "This project mirrors USDA Rural Development's mission and President Bush's initiative of being committed to the future of rural communities. I want to personally thank everyone that has worked together to make this project a reality. Appreciation is extended to our federal elected officials for supporting USDA Rural Development. They have been strong proponents for the necessary funding for essential services for rural Missourians."

Other officials attending from USDA were: Area Director Kelly Gregory and Area Specialist Lois East.

Representing Kids' Harbor Inc. were: Executive Director Darrel Ashlock; board members Courtney Hulett, Bryan Fera, Chad Doerhoff, Janine Bullock, John Vieth, W. Gary Drover, David Thompson, Sheriff William Abbott, Charles Whelpley, Anita Pinson, and Sheryl Lampe.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs, you may visit the web site at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo) or contact the local office at 1306 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Clinton, Mo. 64735 or calling 660-885-5567.

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