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**COX COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERS WITH THREE SAN DIEGO
ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARNES MONTH**

(SAN DIEGO) July 12, 2004 – **Cox Communications will donate \$30,000 to help victims of domestic violence** in the San Diego Area in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. The Cox Kids Foundation has selected three San Diego organizations—**Center for Community Solutions, Casa de Amparo, and Voices for Children**— **which will receive \$10,000 each** to help fund programs that fight domestic violence.

The donations will support a range of programs that aim to improve the well being of children and families who are victims of domestic violence. The Cox Kids Foundation will support the Center for Community Solutions' 24-hour bilingual crisis hotline for victims of domestic violence. It will help Casa de Amparo provide immediate shelter, counseling and support to infants and children who are removed from their homes. And it will contribute to Voices for Children volunteer advocate program, providing children who are dependants of the San Diego Court with a Court Appointed Special Advocate to look out for their interests until they find a permanent home.

The Cox Kids Foundation was founded in 1999 to improve the education, health and well being of San Diego County's children. The Foundation is made possible by employee contributions, which are matched 100% by Cox Communications. More than 900 Cox employees donate a portion of their paychecks each month, resulting in over \$1,100,000 in contributions. For more information visit www.CoxKidsFoundation.org.

Center for Community Solutions

The Center for Community Solutions (CCS) has provided prevention and intervention services for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors since 1969. Their mission is to create safe, healthy and violence-free environments for individuals and families by providing education, therapeutic services, advocacy and cultural and community services. Each year, CCS provides assistance to more than 12,000 men, women and children in the San Diego area who have been affected by relationship violence or sexual assault.

The center operates the San Diego County Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline, a 24-hour crisis line for immediate and confidential phone counseling in both English and Spanish. CCS has over 18 years of experience running crisis intervention hotlines and provides an extensive 56-hour training program for hotline volunteers. The training program ensures that each volunteer meets the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning's criteria to become a Certified Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Crisis Counselor.

The hotline provides an immediate resource for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Counselors are trained to listen, provide emotional support, educate and provide appropriate referrals to callers. They can inform callers how to obtain a temporary restraining order against an abuser, where to find an emergency shelter, where to find counseling services for individuals and their families, and where to find support groups. The counselors also have access to up-to-the-minute bed availability in all six of San Diego's domestic violence shelters, allowing them to refer callers to a safe shelter.

Cox Communications donation of \$10,000 will provide funding for volunteer training and support of the Center for Community Solutions Crisis Hotline. In partnership with CCS Cox will support Domestic Violence Awareness Month in

October to help raise awareness in the community on issues related to domestic violence prevention and intervention.

For more information visit www.ccssd.org.

Casa de Amparo

The Casa de Amparo was created in 1978 to provide a safe environment for abused, neglected and abandoned children. Located in Oceanside, Casa de Amparo operates as an emergency shelter and also provides intervention services, counseling and educational and emotional support. The Spanish word *Amparo* has no direct translation into English, but literally means to offer protection, aid, comfort and rest; Casa de Amparo can be translated as “house of refuge.”

Casa de Amparo is home to two short-term emergency shelters that provide children with shelter and counseling while long-term living arrangements are organized. The Children’s Shelter accommodates children ages six to 17 while the Casita houses children and infants under six years old. Both focus on instilling a sense of calm and stability to help the children adjust to their new situation. The staff and volunteers are sensitive to the fact that children who are put in their care are often scared and confused from being removed from their home, and caring professionals greet and comfort children upon their arrival to ensure that they are not only in a safe environment but a supportive one.

In addition to providing emergency shelter, the Casa de Amparo operates several programs to help children and their families cope with separation and reduce trauma. A Counseling Center allows licensed therapists, clinical interns and psychiatrists to work with children staying at the shelter. A Child Development Center helps children ages 18 months to five years who are at risk of abuse, neglect or domestic violence and are living with their families. The unique program provides therapeutic day care for the children while their parents participate in support and education groups that help them create a safe and

healthy home environment. Casa de Amparo also facilitates a Family Visitation Program, providing a neutral environment where children who have been removed from their homes can visit and build relationships with their biological parents. Cox Communication's donation of \$10,000 will contribute to the operating expenses of the shelter and programs at Casa de Amparo. For more information visit www.CasadeAmparo.org.

Voices for Children

Voices for Children hopes to help "break the cycle of violence and neglect...by helping children at critical junctures in their impressionable lives." They accomplish this by pairing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA's) with children who have become dependants of the San Diego County Court. These are children who have been removed from their home or their parents because they have been abused, abandoned or neglected, and have no other family to turn to. They become dependants of the San Diego County Court while the court looks for a suitable home environment, a process that can take months. In the mean time, the children are moved from foster home to foster home until someone is able to take them in.

Court Appointed Special Advocates work on behalf of these children, providing invaluable support and stability during an often-rocky transition period. CASA's are volunteers who commit at least 10-20 hours a month for 18 months to stand by a child in need. They are trained by Voices for Children and partnered with one or more children that they will follow until they see that child placed in a safe permanent home. The CASA acts as a spokesperson for the child they represent, attending all court hearings to ensure that decisions are made in the child's best interest. They research situations and placement options that are best suited for the child, facilitate communication between all parties involved, and work with key agencies, legal council and community resources. Most importantly, they form an ongoing relationship with the child, providing emotional support and stability until the child is placed in a safe, healthy home.

Through this system, Voices for Children hopes to shorten the time that each child in San Diego spends as a dependant of the Court. The CASA program costs approximately \$1,000 per child per year, which is the cost to train one Court Appointed Special Advocate. Cox Communications' \$10,000 donation will allow ten San Diego area children to receive the attention and concern needed to quickly move them into a permanent home.

For more information visit www.voices4children.com.

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