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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**NEGLECTED AND ABUSED CHILDREN IN EL PASO NEED FOSTER FAMILIES**

On Friday, August 24, 2007, El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the El Paso C.A.R.E. (Child Advocacy Recruitment Effort) Coalition will host the 2007 Adoption Conference and Professional Seminar.

The purpose of the conference is to recruit foster and adoptive homes for local abused and neglected children.

This year's meeting will focus on promoting the adoption of teenagers who are in the system. Of the 94 children who currently are up for adoption in El Paso, more than half are older than 9 years old. It is much more difficult to find adoptive homes for teenagers because most individuals prefer to adopt babies or young children. In many cases, teenagers are never adopted and end up being released into the community after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Without a family that cares for them, or a network of friends that can help them succeed in life, many of them become homeless and addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Adopting a child is not as difficult as some people believe. The legal process is simple, and in most instances, families receive financial assistance from the government to help them pay for the additional expenses.

Attendees at this conference will be able to participate in breakout sessions. These sessions will provide information about CARE's local children available for adoption, post-adoption financial assistance programs, and exploration of issues regarding birth parents, adoptive families and the child, and parenting alternatives. They will also be able to have one-on-one discussions with foster parents.

The event also provides professional training to individuals who work with abused children by bringing nationally recognized experts on complex needs of vulnerable children. This year C.A.R.E. is bringing to El Paso psychologist **Dr. Richard J. Delaney**, who will speak about the 5 predominant attachment styles in adopted children and the influence in the adoptive family's dynamics, and **Pat O'Brien**, founder and director of "*You Gotta Believe!*," an organization that specializes in the adoption of older children. O'Brien will review the findings of several studies about what happens to teens after their discharge from care to no one but themselves.

Both the conference and professional seminar are free and open to the public. Simultaneous Spanish translation will be available.

**WHO: County Attorney's Child Protective Services Unit**

**WHAT: 2007 C.A.R.E. Conference and Professional Seminar**

**WHEN: Friday August 24, 2007, from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

8:00 am – 3:00 p.m. Seminars

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Recruitment information on fostering adoption

**WHERE: Ysleta Administration and Cultural Arts Center**

**9600 Sims**

**INFO: Norma Perú at 546-8160 Ext. 4455**

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**County Attorney José R. Rodríguez will be available for interviews right after the closing remarks, around 3:00 p.m. on Friday August 24, 2007 at the Ysleta Administration and Cultural Arts Center.**