NWACC Launches Regional Child Protection Training Center

Center is one of four in the nation; $3 million needed to renovate facility

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (Oct. 19, 2011) – Taking steps to eradicate child abuse, NorthWest Arkansas Community College launched efforts today to create a permanent home for the southern regional center of the National Child Protection Training Center. The regional center, established by a 2009 Department of Justice grant and one of only four in the nation, will be housed in the former Highlands Oncology Clinic building adjacent to the NWACC campus and serve a 15-state area.

The center will ultimately have a mock courtroom, staged residence areas, interactive video capabilities and flexible use space to train child abuse professionals – everyone from social workers to public school teachers and law enforcement officers – with the latest techniques to identify and eliminate child abuse situations. It will also serve as a resource for numerous organizations throughout the region that have similar child abuse eradication goals.

During a special event today outside the Highlands Oncology Building featuring NCPTC Director Victor Vieth and other dignitaries, NWACC President Dr. Becky Paneitz announced the launch of a $3 million campaign to renovate the building to provide state-of-the-art training facilities for child abuse professionals. Hadley Hindmarsh, a Rogers attorney and member of the college’s Board of Trustees, will be the campaign’s honorary chair, while Paneitz and Wyley Elliott, the college’s Vice President for Public Relations and Development, will serve as co-chairs of the committee. Other Campaign/Advocacy Committee members include Ramsay Ball, Jo Ellen Carson, Pat Curran, David and Beverly Engle, Rhonda French, Hershey and Denise Garner, Betsy Reithermeyer, and Shelly Simpson.

The purpose of the NCPTC and its regional partners is to educate and train present and future child protection professionals in the field of social work, education, health professions, counseling, law enforcement and the justice system to detect child abuse, promote early intervention, and improve investigation, prosecution and litigation procedures to ensure that young victims receive the support they need. NWACC has already implemented courses and curriculum for students on its campus and will be a resource for other colleges and universities in the region.

Stephanie Smith, a former prosecuting attorney, serves as the director of the regional facility. Dr. Steve Gates, the college’s Senior Vice President for Learning and Provost, currently serves on the National Child Protection Training Center Board of Directors.
NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a comprehensive, public two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living. NWACC's service area is defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as Benton and Washington counties in extreme northwest Arkansas. The commitment of NWACC to life-long learning can be seen in the quality of instruction it offers, and the variety of programs it has designed to move students into the job market in a minimum amount of time, enrich people's lives, and prepare them to further their education. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.