



P.O. Box 1473 / Harrisonburg, VA 22803
www.thecollinscenter.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact Information:

Cory Davies, Outreach Coordinator

Office: (540) 432-6430

Fax: (540) 432-6293

E-mail: daviesc@ntelos.net

COMMUNITY RALLIES AROUND COLLINS' MEMORY AGAIN

Crisis Center Honors Prominent Citizen's Memory and Expands to Better Serve Community

Harrisonburg, VA – Today Citizens Against Sexual Assault (CASA) announced that it is expanding to better serve the community. The newly expanded organization will continue to provide services for those affected by sexual violence, as well as open a new office to provide professional therapy for all mental health issues. As part of this expansion, the organization will take on a new name – “The Collins Center.” The name “Collins Center” honors the memory of Shirley Collins, whose sexual assault and death nearly 20 years ago inspired the creation of CASA.

“Twenty years ago the community rallied together to create CASA after Shirley Collins’ tragic sexual assault and death,” remarked Gianna Gariglietti, LPC, Executive Director of The Collins Center. “By expanding the organization to better serve all of our community, we are honoring not only the memory of Ms. Collins, but also the hard work of those community leaders who came together after Ms. Collins’ death to make this community a safer and nicer place to live.”

In addition to the free and confidential services CASA has always offered, including a 24-hour hotline, hospital and court accompaniment for sexual assault victims, crisis counseling, and prevention education, the Collins Center will now provide therapeutic mental health services for all mental health issues. In doing so, and keeping in line with its mission as a non-profit organization, the Collins Center will reach out and provide services to those who face the most barriers to receiving treatment in our community, including children, those who have Medicaid, or are Spanish speaking.

“There are simply not enough services currently available to provide all of the low-cost mental health services that families in our area need,” commented Beth Lawler, Director of Child Protective Services for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. “The addition of services at the Collins Center is very promising and provides quite a bit of hope for those who need it most.”

In order to offer these newly expanded services, the Collins Center has hired two new full-time therapists, Sarah Lewis, LCSW, and Sue Swift, LPC. Lewis, who will serve as the Lead Therapist, specializes in working with children and victims of trauma, and comes to the Collins Center with over 10 years experience. Swift also has over 10 years experience working with a variety of clients and treating a variety of conditions including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, among many others. Ana Castañeda, LPC, and Gariglietti, both previous employees at CASA, will also provide treatment.

“It is wonderful to see an organization that was truly born at the grassroots level blossom to meet the needs of the community,” remarked Dr. Judith Perdue, a founding board member of CASA. “I am truly proud to have played a part in the creation of this organization.”

Those interested in receiving services at the Collins Center can call (540) 432-0773 or visit www.thecollinscenter.org for more information.

For media inquiries please contact Cory Davies at (540) 432-6430 or by emailing daviesc@ntelos.net.

Citizens Against Sexual Assault (CASA), a United Way community partner, has served the Harrisonburg and Rockingham Community for nearly 20 years. In January 2007, CASA expanded and undertook a new name, The Collins Center. While still specializing in working with victims of sexual assault, anyone interested in mental health treatment for any other reason can now receive services at the Collins Center.