



Superior Court of California
County of Orange

News Release

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Orange County Team to Join Statewide Summit Focused on Implementing Sweeping Changes to California's Foster Care System

Local leaders to join the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care to discuss issues of local significance and systemic concerns that act as barriers to ensure every child a safe, secure and permanent home

Santa Ana, CA - On December 10, 2008, a team of county professionals involved in foster care, led by Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court Carolyn Kirkwood, will join teams from over 50 California counties at an historic summit in San Francisco. The summit will focus on implementing the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care's recently issued sweeping recommendations to reform the state's juvenile dependency court system and improve outcomes for foster children in California. Team members from Orange County include:

Mike Ryan – Director, Division of Children & Family Services, County of Orange Social Services Agency

Deborah Kwast – Orange County Public Defender

Colleene Preciado – Chief Probation Officer, County of Orange

Patricia Rogers – Division Manager Children & Youth Services, County of Orange Health Care Agency

Rick Martin – Director, Division of Alternative Education, O.C. Department of Education

Kevin Dunn – Deputy County Counsel, Dependency Trial Court

Harold LaFlamme – Minor's Counsel Contract Firm

Gene Howard – Director, Orangewood Children's Foundation

Greg Bradbard – Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates

Frank Ospino – Assistant Public Defender Supervisor, Dependency Court

The summit will convene county teams to examine key areas of local concern and to begin building the capacity to enact change at the local level. County teams will meet together to discuss issues of local significance, including systemic concerns such as availability of appropriate services, barriers to information sharing among entities that serve families,

communicating local needs and concerns, raising public awareness of foster care issues, and sharing successful strategies.

The Blue Ribbon Commission is a multidisciplinary panel appointed by the Chief Justice of California to make recommendations for improving safety, permanency, well-being, and fairness outcomes for children and families. The Judicial Council of California accepted the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on August 15, 2008. Formulated with extensive stakeholder input, the recommendations call for enhanced understanding of the role of the courts, adequate and flexible funding, manageable caseloads, improved information systems, and court collaboration with child welfare and other system partners. Among the commission's most important recommendations is the formation of local implementation commissions.

Convened jointly by the courts and child welfare agencies, the implementation commissions will build on county-level efforts to move forward commission recommendations and related reforms. The statewide summit will initiate the work of these commissions.

For more information about the Blue Ribbon Commission, see <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/tflists/bluerib.htm>