

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 12/31/03
Department Name: Superior Court
Department No.: 025
Agenda Date: 1/13/04
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: N/A
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Barbara J. Beck, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court
Superior Court

STAFF CONTACT: Gary M. Blair, Superior Court Executive Officer
3150

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF "THE CHILDREN'S PROJECT of SANTA BARBARA COUNTY"

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution of Support for *The Children's Project of Santa Barbara County*, affirming Board support for evaluating and addressing the needs of the County's abused and neglected children for emergency care, for comprehensive needs assessments and for the establishment of a local residential treatment facility for these children; and authorizing County employees to sit on *Children's Project* committees and to otherwise aid the *Project*, as needed.

ALIGNMENT WITH BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal VII: A Community that Fosters the Safety and Well-Being of Families and Children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

Santa Barbara County has approximately 420 children that are dependents of the Juvenile Court. As distinguished from delinquent juveniles who are also subject to local Court jurisdiction, these dependent juveniles come under the jurisdiction of the Court by reason of abuse, neglect or abandonment. These children require a substantial degree of special care and treatment. The Court, with the advice and assistance of the, resource-constrained, Child Welfare Services-County Social Services Department, must obtain and prescribe these special services by Court order.

Many of these children can be, and are, placed with relatives or in foster care arrangements, with services provided in an attempt to reunify them with their natural families. However, foster homes are often unable to meet special needs, and some of these abused and neglected children require far more care, including extensive needs assessment, therapeutic services and residential treatment. Currently, the Court must approve placement of many of these special needs dependent children outside of the County, in Ventura, San Luis

Obispo, Los Angeles and Kern Counties, and beyond. This can and does create special difficulties and additional costs, related not only to the special out-of-County care, but also for Court supervision and caseworker visitation, and for family visitation, family reunification efforts, etc.

The Children's Project, working in conjunction with *Casa Pacifica*, is designed as a non-profit public-private collaborative project, created for the purpose of exploring the possibilities for development of an appropriate residential placement program for these children within Santa Barbara County. The goal of the *Project* is to improve and expand the collective local ability to fully address the needs of these vulnerable children, with a view to building an appropriate residential placement program for them in the County, thus ensuring the well-being, the safety and the opportunity of each of these children for a permanent local home. All initial funding for the *Children's Project* is being provided by a local charitable foundation.

MANDATES AND SERVICE LEVELS:

This proposed Board action is not specifically mandated by law, but it supports local assessment, care and treatment of Dependent children who are residents of the County, which care and treatment is required by California law.

FISCAL AND FACILITIES IMPACTS:

There are no current or currently anticipated fiscal or facilities impacts from the proposed Board action.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Please furnish us with a conformed copy of the Resolution, following adoption.

CONCURRENCE:

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Santa Barbara County

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SUPPORT FOR)
The Children's Project of Santa Barbara County) RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, Santa Barbara County has approximately 420 abused, neglected and abandoned children that have become dependent wards of the Juvenile Court and are in need of emergency care, comprehensive needs assessment and residential treatment; and

WHEREAS, the special needs of many of these children have required that they be placed in residential facilities outside the County, with attendant difficulties and costs for court and caseworker supervision, family visitation and family reunification efforts; and

WHEREAS, the *Children's Project of Santa Barbara County* has developed private funding and is initiating collaborative public-private efforts to address the special needs of these children for local care and residential treatment, including possible development of a local residential treatment facility;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara does hereby lends its support to *The Children's Project of Santa Barbara County*; affirming the importance of developing and enhancing local capability for evaluating and addressing the needs of the County's abused and neglected children, for emergency care and comprehensive assessments as well as for the establishment of a local residential treatment facility for these children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes and encourages County employees to serve on committees of the *Children's Project*, and to otherwise assist this worthy *Project* as needed, and as appropriate.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this _____ day of _____, 2004, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Chair, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
CLERK OF THE BOARD

By _____
Deputy Clerk