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**California Protective Parents Association**

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May 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

California Protective Parents Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping protect children in custody disputes through education, advocacy and research. Ongoing national research by Geraldine Stahly, Ph.D. demonstrates that children who disclose abuse in the context of custody are at risk of being placed in the unsupervised custody of the identified perpetrators. In more than half the cases studied, the non-abusive parents are placed on supervised visitation or are denied contact with the children.

Almost all the cases involved non-abusive protective mothers. In 90% of the cases, the mothers were primary caretakers and had custody at the time of separation. At the end of protracted litigation, only 20% of the mothers had custody. 75% of the children continued to disclose abuse after the custody switch. This unconscionable process of stripping a child from a nurturing caregiver and placing that child with a parent identified as the child's abuser inflicts maximum damage.

Some of the older children in various California counties have managed to free themselves from court-ordered abusive situations, and have formed a group called the Courageous Kids Network (CKN). They are beginning to sue the professionals who placed them at risk and to speak out about their experiences. Their first speaking engagement was at the Tenth Annual Northern California Child Sexual Abuse Awareness conference, where their powerful testimony resulted in a standing ovation.

CKN members have been asked to give a keynote address at the Ninth International Conference on Family Violence in San Diego on September 20, 2004 ([www.fvsai.org](http://www.fvsai.org)). Ten CKN members and twelve adults are expected to participate. We estimate that two nights of hotel accommodations (\$129/double), airline tickets, and meals, along with minimal entertainment will cost about \$500 per person. It is extremely important to bring these brave young people to San Diego to educate this international audience of professionals about this issue.

Since our non-profit organization must show a broad based public support to maintain our tax-exempt status, we urge you to donate any amount – it all will help. Please make a check out to CPPA and send it to P.O. Box 15284, Sacramento, CA 95851-0284. Thank you in advance for your help and support for the Courageous Kids Network.

Karen Anderson, Executive Director