

PRESS RELEASE

March 21, 2016

**FREEHOLDERS HONOR WYNONA’S HOUSE
AND PROCLAIMED APRIL 2016
AS CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH IN ESSEX COUNTY**



Freeholders (from rear left to right) Cynthia D. Toro, Leiby C. Jones, Britnee N. Timberlake, and Patricia Sebold (center) present the Board's Commendation to Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(Newark, NJ) – During its Wednesday, April 27, 2016, meeting at the Hall of Records, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center and Proclaimed April 2016 as Child Abuse Awareness Month in Essex County. The Board's Commendation was presented to Wynona's House Chief Program Officer and MDT Coordinator, Carol Berger. The Commendation was sponsored by Freeholders Patricia Sebold, Wayne L. Richardson, Leiby C. Jones, President Britnee N. Timberlake, and Rufus I. Johnson. Freeholders Timberlake, Jones, Toro and Sebold were all on hand for the presentation.

Freeholder Patricia Sebold began the program with opening remarks, stating: "I'm, once again, honored to recognize outstanding work. Sometimes this work may go unnoticed until the need presents itself, but thankfully these services exist. Today, we recognize an agency that bears the name of a trailblazer, one whose name stands for perseverance and excellence. I am speaking of none other than the late great Senator Wynona Lipman, whose memory continues to live on through the work of the agency that is affectionately named for her, the Wynona's House Child Advocacy Center."

Freeholder Cynthia Toro added: “For 16 years servicing neglected and abused children, that is one of the things that is the hardest for me. When I see children who have, you know, traumatic experiences, as they are innocent victims that can’t help themselves, and it is because of programs as this that exist that these children have a place to rehabilitate and emotionally and psychologically, hopefully, overcome those experiences and reach adulthood emotionally stable and reach success in their life and in their careers. So, I humbly congratulate all of you for all the hard work because I’m really sure it’s hard some days.”

Freeholder Timberlake shared remarks, adding: “Thank you so much to Wynona’s House for what it is that you do for our community. A lot of times children don’t necessarily know that the treatment in which they are experiencing is bad, but they feel that something is wrong, and without child advocacy groups that are out there advocating on their behalf, many of them would be slipping through the cracks and growing up with a horrific childhood. So, I just thank you so much for caring for the children.”

Freeholder Jones added: “These good people, angels, who have taken from themselves because there’s no money in this type of service. It is a willingness of a person who cares about other human beings and especially our future and our children. I want to congratulate them.”

In Federal fiscal year 2014, 52 States reported 702,000 victims of child abuse or neglect. Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem affecting every segment of our community, and finding solutions requires input and action from everyone in our community. Children are our most valuable resources and will shape the future of Essex County, and child abuse can have long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects that can have lifelong consequences for victims of abuse.

Sixteen years ago, the Senator Wynona M. Lipman Child Advocacy Center (known as Wynona’s House) was founded in Newark, New Jersey, as a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to helping children who have been abused or neglected. Law enforcement, prosecutors, medical and mental health professionals, child protective services and a nonprofit administrator all work together in one, child-friendly facility. Serving more than 700 children in a typical year and in 2015, 852 children were served.

Wynona’s House Child Advocacy Center’s mission is to promote justice and provide healing for child victims of abuse and neglect in Essex County. This is accomplished by coordinating investigations, prosecution, treatment, and prevention services for children and non-offending families utilizing innovative, evidence-based, multi-disciplinary team approaches to improving outcomes for the children and families they serve.

Carol Berger, Chief Program Officer and MDT Coordinator, thanked the Board for its Commendation. Ms. Burger stated: “Wynona’s House is really a team concept. We have several partners. We have Wynona’s House, which is a not-for-profit, and then we have other partners who are collocated within our building. Among them are the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office, DCPP (the Division of Child Protection and Permanency), and then we have the Metro Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Center of Beth Israel Hospital. And with us today, we have the Administrative Director of the Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Center. Without our partners, we could not do what we do.”

For Additional Information:

**Medinah E. Muhammad, Public Information Officer
Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
(973)-621-4452**

mmuhammad@freeholders.essexcountynj.org

**Board of Chosen Freeholders, County of Essex
Hall of Records - Room 558
465 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.,
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Tel: (973) 621-4486 Fax: (973) 621-5695**