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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 26, 2008

## **Mayor-Elect Johnson Joins CAPC in Urging Parents to “Chill Out, Protect Kids this Holiday Season”**

*Stress, tough economic times could fuel child abuse this holiday season.*

SACRAMENTO — Mayor-Elect Kevin Johnson, the Child Abuse Prevention Center and local safety leaders are urging Sacramento parents to “chill out, step up for your kids and reach out to your neighbors” this holiday season.

During the holidays, Sacramento County typically experiences an increase in child and domestic abuse because of stress, the expense and bustle of holiday shopping and an increase in alcohol consumption. The Sacramento Police Department’s Crime Analysis Unit recorded a 64 percent increase in child abuse crimes reported during the November 2005 to January 2006 holiday season.

With many Sacramento families facing the added stress of home foreclosures, unemployment and economic uncertainty, this holiday season could be especially deadly.

“This doesn’t have to happen,” said Sheila Anderson, President and CEO of the Child Abuse Prevention Center. “Child abuse is a wholly preventable tragedy.”

To reduce stress this holiday season, CAPC offers these guidelines:

- Keep it simple. Don't over commit yourself or your family. Remember what children really want is to spend time with you.
- Put Santa on a budget and don't buy gifts you can't afford. Emphasize the act of giving, not the gift.
- Help your child understand cultural differences by talking with them about all of the holidays people celebrate and why.
- Surround yourself and your children with safe, supportive people.
- Set differences aside and accept family members and friends as they are.
- Encourage positive family interactions like playing games, wrapping gifts and baking.
- Take good care of yourself and your family. Get enough rest, eat healthy foods and avoid alcohol or drugs.
- Take time out if you feel you are losing control of yourself or the situation
  - and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Parents and caretakers who are feeling overwhelmed are encouraged to call these hotlines for help:

- The Parent Support Line (888-281-3000) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for immediate counseling.
- The Crisis Nursery (916-679-3600) provides a variety of resources and referrals, including short-term childcare in crisis situations.

“We can all help protect our children,” said Anderson. “We need to reach out to neighbors and families who are having a tough time — and give them the support they need.”

**About the Child Abuse Prevention Center:**

Located in Sacramento, California, the Child Abuse Prevention Center is a 24,000 square-foot state-of-the-art training, resource and administrative facility. The CAP Center’s mission is to prevent child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

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