**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE WORK OF THE CARE HOUSE OF THE PEE DEE, AND TO COMMEND THE EFFORTS OF THIS CHILD‑ADVOCACY CENTER TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO CHILDREN OF ABUSE.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are grateful for the critical work of the CARE House of the Pee Dee in serving children of abuse; and

Whereas, the CARE House of the Pee Dee is a child‑advocacy center that facilitates a multidisciplinary‑team approach to the investigation and treatment of child abuse and that serves Florence, Darlington, Dillon, Marion, Marlboro, Lee, Kershaw, Sumter, and Williamsburg counties; and

Whereas, CARE represents an acrostic of the mission of the CARE House: Child Abuse Resource and Evaluation, which offers a broad spectrum of services from a professional staff, maintains the focus on child victims, and works to ensure that systems designed to protect children are able to do so more effectively; and

Whereas, the National Children’s Alliance reports that the number of children served across the nation in child‑advocacy centers in the first half of 2010 exceeded a quarter of a million, representing a staggering epidemic in child abuse, and the CARE House of the Pee Dee saw eight hundred five new cases in 2010; and

Whereas, since no single state or federal agency, individual, or discipline has all the knowledge, skills, or resources to provide the assistance needed for abused children and their families, child‑advocacy centers combine the wisdom and professional knowledge of child‑protective services, law enforcement, prosecution, and medical and mental‑health professionals to provide a more complete and effective response system; and

Whereas, the CARE House of the Pee Dee offers crisis intervention and emotional support for victims and non‑offending family members, as well as access to the victim’s compensation system and referrals for counseling services for the victim child and non‑offending family members; and

Whereas, videotaped interviews of the victim child, in a safe, child friendly environment prevents the need for multiple interviews and preserves statements for court purposes, and forensic medical evaluations by a trained, expert healthcare provider and photo‑documentation of evidence and accurate documentation of findings can be used by investigative agencies; and

Whereas, the CARE House also provides follow‑up medical services to ensure the ongoing health of the child, and a bi‑weekly interdisciplinary review of cases by multidisciplinary‑team members ensures that the needs of the child are being met; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are thankful for the professional and compassionate efforts of the CARE House of the Pee Dee to support and advocate for the most vulnerable members of our State. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize the work of the CARE House of the Pee Dee, and commend the efforts of this child‑advocacy center to provide effective services to children of abuse.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to Jamie DeWeerdt, executive director of the CARE House of the Pee Dee.

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