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San Diego Advocates Celebrate National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day on May 8, 2007

(San Diego, CA***) La Maestra Community Health Centers (La Maestra), Mental Health America of San Diego County (MHA) and NAMI San Diego (the National Alliance on Mental Illness) partner to celebrate National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (Awareness Day), May 8, 2007. Awareness Day has been established to promote positive youth development, resilience, recovery, and the transformation of mental health services delivery for children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

"Awareness Day provides us an opportunity to highlight a local program that is providing mental health care needs to our community's children and their families who live in underserved neighborhoods. This year, we have partnered with La Maestra Community Health Centers who has demonstrated the effectiveness of treating the whole family through an integrated physical and mental health care model at a community based facility in City Heights", stated Scott Suckow, CEO of Mental Health America of San Diego County and Bettie Reinhardt, Executive Director of NAMI San Diego.

The national partners, who are organizing a Capitol Hill briefing in honor of Awareness Day -- include NAMI, Mental Health America, the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (FFCMH), the National Association of Social Workers, and the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

For more information about Awareness Day and activities the public can visit the [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day web site](#).

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About Mental Health Association in San Diego County: Founded in 1942, the Mental Health America of San Diego County (MHASD) (*formerly know as Mental Health Association in San Diego County*) has served as the leading mental health advocacy organization in San Diego County. As an affiliate of the NMHA, the country's oldest and largest nonprofit mental health patient advocacy organization, the MHASD works to ensure available and affordable care to all San Diegans through advocacy, education, research, and service. The NMHA has more than 340 affiliates nationwide, For more information, please call 619-543-0412 or visit their website at www.mhasd.org.

About NAMI San Diego (the National Alliance on Mental Illness): NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons living with serious mental illness and their families. Founded in 1978, NAMI San Diego has become San Diego's voice on mental illness. The national organization includes NAMI organizations in every state and in over 1100 local communities across the country who join together to meet the NAMI mission through advocacy, research, support, and education. For more information, please call 619-584-5567 or visit their website at www.namisandiego.org.

About La Maestra Community Health Centers: Since 1990, La Maestra has been providing quality healthcare and community services to thousands of ethnically diverse clients in San Diego. The facility in City Heights, in San Diego's most diverse neighborhood, sees more than 55,000 patient visits per year with a staff of 147 doctors, nurses, counselors and social workers who speak 19 different languages and dialects. Clients of La Maestra can receive a full range of primary medical services for all ages. Additionally clients can receive dental, behavioral health, vision, geriatric care services. Social services including job placement, eligibility, housing assistance and a food pantry are also available. La Maestra currently provides services through an assortment of 13 residential buildings on a single city block in City Heights. La Maestra also has clinics in National City and El Cajon.

As a means to improve services, in March of 2006 La Maestra launched an aggressive \$10 million "Heart of the Community Campaign." The funds raised from the campaign will be used to construct a 32,000 square foot gold level LEED certified green community health clinic. LEED is the acronym for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System™ the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. This facility will be the first of its kind in the United States and it will be located just a block away from the existing health center. It will host a growth of dynamic new programs that will benefit the surrounding diverse and underserved communities. The new facility expects to break ground in September 2007.

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