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## **CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OPENS IN WATSEKA**

**The Children's Advocacy Center, a program within Child Network**, has opened a satellite Center in Watseka to better serve the residents of Iroquois County.

The Kankakee County Center opened in 1994, providing a child-friendly atmosphere for interviews and advocacy services to children of alleged sexual and physical abuse and their non-offending family members. All services are provided free of charge.

Working with a multidisciplinary team comprised of law enforcement, child protective services, the State's Attorney's Office and other victim assistance providers, Child Network aims to reduce the incidence of child sexual and physical abuse, minimize trauma to the alleged child victims, and promote healing for victims and their families.

The new Iroquois County Center opened July 1<sup>st</sup> and provides more immediate and convenient access to services for investigative agencies and families. "In looking at the map and the travel time involved, it was clear we could do better for children and families," commented Kristin Jackson, Executive Director of Child Network. It's our hope that by providing the services closer to home, the number of children served will increase significantly."

The satellite office is located with the Iroquois Mental Health Center at 323 W. Mulberry St. in Watseka. Dr. Dennis Hopkins, Executive Director of the Mental Health Center stated, "We are honored to work alongside the Children's Advocacy Center and we believe in what they do. We are committed to the children and families in our community and the surrounding communities and we see this partnership as an important part of this effort."

The Center received start-up dollars from the National Children's Alliance through a competitive Development Grant and will be sustained through federal, state and local grants and fundraising.

**Child Network** is a non-profit agency working in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties to improve the response to child sexual and physical abuse and to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the court system. **The Children's Advocacy Center** is an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance. For more information about Child Network, visit [www.childnetwork.org](http://www.childnetwork.org).

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