



### An Update from the Project

#### Texas Advocacy Project, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid and the Webb County Sheriff's Office Partner to Help Victims in Southwest Texas

Leaving an abusive relationship is difficult under the best of circumstances. Imagine how complicated it becomes if you do not speak the same language as those who are trying to help you? Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault face many obstacles as they attempt to break the cycle of violence permanently. Primary among those are language barriers and difficulty in navigating the network of available services. To address those problems, the Project has partnered with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, the Webb County Sheriff's Office and several local domestic violence services agencies to bring additional legal services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Southwest Texas. In addition to operating monthly clinics in Webb and the surrounding counties, the Project and TRLA are cooperating on a unified intake and referral process to help increase access to legal services for primarily Spanish-speaking victims. The Project has also undertaken an aggressive program to educate victims living in the surrounding colonias about legal services available through the Project. We are excited about this opportunity to reach a traditionally under-served group of victims and their families.

#### Prime Partner Banks Help Bring Legal Services to the Poor

Did you know that lawyers are required to keep certain client funds separate from their general operating funds and that the interest earned from those accounts is a critical source of funding for legal services to the poor? The Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts Program (IOLTA) was created to ensure access to justice for all Texans, regardless of income. The Project relies on IOLTA funds to provide legal services that bring about long-term solutions for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In December 2006, the Texas Supreme Court approved a rule mandating that Texas lawyers place their IOLTA accounts with financial institutions that pay interest rates comparable to rates paid on similarly situated non-IOLTA accounts. Until this historic shift, banks could pay less than the prevailing rates on these accounts. This new rule is expected to make millions of additional dollars available to legal services agencies-like the Project. A special group of banks, called Prime Partners, have gone the extra mile in the effort to ensure access to justice for all. Prime Partners have agreed to pay at least 70 percent of the Federal Funds Target Rate on IOLTA accounts. We at the Project hope you will do your banking at one of the Prime Partner banks listed below. When you do, make sure to thank them for their support and let them know that you are supporting them in return.

Prime Partners are: Access 1st Capital Bank, Amegy Bank of Texas,

#### **FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL LINE**

800-374-HOPE (STATEWIDE)

512-476-5770 (IN AUSTIN)

#### **FAMILY LAW HOTLINE**

800-777-FAIR (STATEWIDE)

512-476-1866 (IN AUSTIN)

#### **SEXUAL ASSAULT LEGAL HOTLINE**

800-296-SAFE (STATEWIDE)

512-476-9290 (IN AUSTIN)

#### **TECHNICAL ADVOCACY HOTLINE**

888-325-SAFE (STATEWIDE)

512-476-5386 (IN AUSTIN)

Brazos Valley Bank, Capital Bank, Citibank Texas, Comerica Bank, Compass Bank, Coppermark Bank, Crosby State Bank, Dallas City Bank, First International Bank, First National Bank of Bosque County, First State Bank, First Victoria National Bank, Green Bank, Legacy Texas Bank, Lindale State Bank, Nexbank, North Dallas Bank & Trust, Northstar Bank of Texas, OmniAmerican Bank, PlainsCapital Bank, Security State Bank, State National Bank, Sterling Bank, Texas Brand Bank, Town North Bank, Vision Bank Texas, Washington Mutual Bank

### **2008 Is the Year for Justice Partners**

Please help Texas Advocacy Project reach our goal of recruiting 100 new Justice Partners in 2008! Justice Partners are a special group of donors who provide sustained monthly support for the Project's programs. Monthly giving is a great way to support the Project: it allows us to put long-range plans into place, and it eliminates the burden of making large, expensive donations. Most Justice Partners tell us they don't even miss the monthly contribution! As we face the challenges of funding our programs for another quarter-century, the Justice Partners will form the backbone of dependable support for the Project, providing long-term security for the thousands of Texas victims who depend on our services. Please visit [www.texasadvocacyproject.org](http://www.texasadvocacyproject.org) and click on "donate"...**help us by becoming a Justice Partner today!**

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