



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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D.C. Family Court to Open Self-Help Center in Southeast

-- New Center to be Open One Day a Week, Hopes to Expand --

WASHINGTON, DC - The D.C. Superior Court's Family Court has partnered with Bread for the City to open a satellite office of the Family Court Self Help Center. The Satellite Center will open on September 9, 2008 at Bread for the City's southeast location, 1640 Good Hope Road. The Center will be open every Tuesday from 9 am to 1 pm and will provide information and guidance, on a walk-in basis, to unrepresented people in family law matters such as divorce, child custody, visitation and child support.

In 2002, the Family Court opened a Self Help Center on the John Marshall level of the Moultrie Courthouse, to assist those without attorneys who have matters before the Family Court. The Center began as a part-time volunteer program, but became a permanent, full-time service in 2005. In the three years since, the Center has helped over 15,000 people. The Satellite Center is designed to provide similar services in a facility that is closer to the homes of those in Southeast. The Family Court is hoping to open the Satellite Center an additional day each week, as staffing allows, and will look for partnerships in other quadrants of the city as well to better serve all residents of the District.

Chief Judge Rufus G. King III said that "the Self Help Center's role is to help our residents to understand their legal rights and obligations, to demystify the court process, and to provide access to the legal system. The Court can be intimidating to those without a lawyer. The Self Help Center helps to take some of that fear away. The satellite office will allow us to bring this important service into an underserved area of the District of Columbia."

Judge Anita Josey-Herring, Presiding Judge of the Family Court, explained that "Since enactment of the Family Court Act in January 2002, the Family Court has forged numerous partnerships with community service providers in the District, to better serve D.C. families and children. This latest effort helps bring court services and an understanding of court function to those in Southeast. We are pleased to be able to offer our services in a more convenient location."

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