

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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*silent tears*™  
Giving a Voice to Child Sexual Abuse.



### With Over 200 in Attendance, Silent Tears: Giving a Voice to Child Sexual Abuse was Officially Launched.

**GREENVILLE, SC-JANUARY 5, 2012** In a semi-circle representatives from the hospital system, the judiciary, law enforcement, faith based and the business community stood shoulder to shoulder in support of this impactful initiative.

Comments were made by three (3) individuals including Congressman Trey Gowdy, world recognized expert Victor Vieth, and philanthropists, Lisa and Bob Castellani.

Congressman Gowdy's remarks revolved around his experiences as the Solicitor for the 7th Judicial Circuit. He reflected upon cases he tried and the poignant horrors he observed as a prosecutor.

Victor Vieth outlined the five (5) elements of the strategic plan underpinning the Silent Tears initiative, "First, we will meet with child protection stakeholders from throughout the state to obtain their input for effectively administering the project.

Second, after receiving input from these stakeholders, we will select five representative counties in the state and conduct as many as 400 hours of onsite interviews with front line child protection professionals to determine the strengths and weaknesses in responding to cases of child sexual abuse.

Third, from these interviews, we will work with the Child Advocacy Studies program at the University of South Carolina Upstate in developing and administering a statewide survey of child protection professionals including prosecutors, law enforcement officers, social workers, mental and medical health providers. This survey will aid in determining whether the information gained from the onsite interviews reflects strengths and weaknesses throughout the state.

Fourth, we may conduct follow up phone interviews with a representative sample from the statewide survey. Finally, we will draft a summary of our findings and propose specific recommendations for improving the ability of South Carolina to respond to cases of child sexual abuse."

With heartfelt thanks, Bob Castellani presented Shauna Galloway-Williams and Elizabeth Willingham of the Julie Valentine Center, Ty Williams of the Greenville County Sheriff's Office and Kris Hodges of the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office with flowers as a sign of appreciation for their dedication and passion to the Silent Tears project. Bob and his wife Lisa conceived the vision of the Silent Tears initiative from Lisa's experiences as a pediatrician. They endowed the project accordingly beginning with a baseline study for \$250,000.00.

The strong showing of support by the many collaborations signal a beginning of a national program designed to give a strong voice to silence the tears of these abused children.

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