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River Oak Center for Children Receives “Exemplary Program of the Year 2008” Award

River Oak Center for Children Recognized for Leadership in Providing Best Practice Services to Troubled Children and Youth

River Oak Center for Children has received the “Exemplary Program of the Year 2008” Award by the California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY). The award recognizes the agency’s commitment to delivering the most effective, state-of-the-art services to children, youth and families, and honors River Oak’s state-wide leadership in the successful implementation of evidence-based practices that dramatically improve the lives of children and families in the greater Sacramento community.

“This award is a tremendous honor for the 200 dedicated and hard-working River Oak employees whose tireless efforts bring hope to so many vulnerable children and their families,” said Mary Hargrave, President and CEO. “River Oak is proud to be at the forefront of implementing best-practice model programs that produce lasting positive results in the lives of the children we serve.”

River Oak is the only Sacramento-area non-profit organization providing five nationally recognized evidence-based practices that are proven by research to be the most effective in treating emotionally and behaviorally challenged children and youth. These programs are: 1) The Incredible Years, which teaches emotional and social skills to pre-school children and improves their overall kindergarten readiness; 2) Multi-systemic Therapy, which prevents out-of-home placements of youth with delinquency problems; 3) Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care, which provides services to foster children and youth with delinquency, behavioral, and emotional problems; 4) Teaching Pro-social Skills, which equips youth with emotional competencies; and 5) Functional Family Therapy, which strengthens families through intensive positive relationship building.

Established in 1966, River Oak (www.riveroak.org) has grown from an organization of group homes to an agency reaching 2,000 emotionally and behaviorally challenged children and their families annually through 12 programs and services operating at 4 sites throughout Sacramento. The agency’s programs span from Early Intervention & Prevention Services for the youngest

children living at home or in foster care and teens with behavioral challenges, to Outpatient Counseling.

A demonstration of its commitment to safety and high quality of client care is the accreditation and Gold Seal of Approval™ awarded to the agency by the Joint Commission, an honor rarely bestowed on non-profit organizations not affiliated with large hospital systems.

Formed in 1980 by people who saw the need to focus attention on children’s issues, CMHACY (www.cmhacy.org) has grown into a large and broad-based coalition of persons deeply concerned with the mental health needs of California’s vulnerable children and youth. CMHACY is the only statewide voice for children’s mental health in California. A champion for children in the legislative and public policy arena, CMHACY is frequently identified in legislation as an organization with whom policy makers should consult, and is increasingly included on task forces and work groups. Through public testimony, newsletters, position papers and an annual statewide conference, CMHACY strives to educate and influence decision makers affecting vulnerable children.