**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR DICKERSON CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY CENTER, UPON THE OCCASION OF ITS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY, TO EXPRESS PROFOUND APPRECIATION FOR THE SIGNIFICANT SERVICES OFFERED TO THE MOST VULNERABLE CITIZENS IN OUR COMMUNITIES BY ITS DEDICATED STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, AND TO WISH THEM CONTINUED SUCCESS AND FULFILLMENT IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives are pleased to learn that the Dickerson Children’s Advocacy Center (DCAC) will celebrate its twentieth anniversary with the Sixteenth Annual Benefit, a Mardi Gras Gala, to be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Columbia on February 14, 2015; and

Whereas, in the early 1990s, children in the Midlands already traumatized by physical and sexual abuse had to be often transported to facilities in the lower and upper parts of the State to have forensic medical examinations, forensic interviews, and therapy; and

Whereas, a task force of representatives from Lexington Medical Center, Lexington County Sheriff’s Department, the Department of Mental Health, and other local partners began exploring the possibility of a location in the county to provide these services; and

Whereas, in 1995, long‑time Lexington resident and philanthropist Nettie Dickerson was persuaded by the task force to donate her former home for a children’s advocacy center, and the Lexington Children’s Center was established, later renamed the Dickerson Center for Children; and

Whereas, the children who enter the doors of the now Dickerson Children’s Advocacy Center have been drug‑endangered, witnessed violence, suffered physical and sexual abuse, and been neglected, and they find comfort in the child‑friendly setting; and

Whereas, over the years, DCAC has grown through loving support of local women known as the Center’s Fun(d)raisers, founded by Mollie DuPriest Taylor over fifteen years ago. Events, such as golf tournaments and an annual GALA, have raised over three‑quarters of a million dollars to enable the center to provide forensic medical examinations and forensic interviews, as well as individual, group, and family therapy; and

Whereas, community‑based children’s advocacy centers have proven effective in reducing the hardships imposed on children as they recite their stories of abuse and undergo examinations. Each month DCAC brings together the professionals involved in cases, known as multi‑disciplinary teams, to discuss the cases, share critical information, and develop specific plans of treatment for each child. This procedure enables law enforcement to proceed from prosecution to conviction and allows the child and family to begin the important journey of healing and recovery; and

Whereas, accredited by the National Children’s Alliance in Washington, D. C., the small but impressive staff of DCAC is comprised of licensed, caring child‑abuse professionals and a bi‑lingual victim advocate; and

Whereas, the South Carolina House of Representatives appreciates the outstanding dedication of the Dickerson Children’s Advocacy Center which has helped thousands of defenseless children for two decades with assessment and treatment services. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, recognize and honor Dickerson Children’s Advocacy Center, upon the occasion of its twentieth anniversary, express profound appreciation for the significant services offered to the most vulnerable citizens in our communities by its dedicated staff and volunteers, and wish them continued success and fulfillment in the years ahead.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Carol Yarborough, Executive Director of Dickerson Children’s Advocacy Center, and other staff members.

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