



## **Strategic Plan 2006-2008**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Introduction**

Circle of Parents® is a national network of parent leaders and statewide and regional non-profit organizations dedicated to using the mutual self-help support group model to support its mission of preventing child abuse and neglect and strengthening families. It was incorporated as a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization in April 2004 as it neared the completion of a four-year project to develop a national network of mutual support and self-help parent support programs. That project, funded by the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was a successful collaboration of the National Family Support Roundtable and Prevent Child Abuse America from October 2000 to September 2004.

Circle of Parents is currently supported by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice, through its Congressional Earmark Program. This funding supports the administration of the national network as well as local program development through the statewide and regional member organizations. In addition, Circle of Parents participates as a national resource partner for the FRIENDS National Resource Center. FRIENDS supports state-operated, community—based child abuse prevention networks in all fifty states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Circle of Parents contributes its expertise in parent leadership by helping these networks engage parents as partners with professionals to develop, implement and evaluate programs. FRIENDS is funded by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Circle of Parents national staff and members practice principles of mutual respect, equal contribution and shared leadership, and pool resources, expertise and in-kind contributions of time to carry out its activities. Members represent all walks of life and include parent leaders, organization administrators, community organizers, management and program services staff and a variety of human services professionals. The national staff consists of a Chief Executive Officer, Training and Technical

Assistance Manager and an Executive Assistant. The organization is governed by an eight-member board of directors.

The partnership agreement of staff, member organizations and parent leader members espouses the full participation of everyone in the work of Circle of Parents. Such participation includes:

- Active involvement on at least one of the standing committees and in membership meetings of Circle of Parents;
- Willingness to share resources with other members and the national office;
- Substantial contribution to strategic planning, problem solving, implementation and evaluation of Circle of Parents' activities and projects;
- Commitment to the growth and development of Circle of Parents through membership fees, involvement in special projects, sharing data, sharing information about program outcomes, and participating in collaborative ventures with other national family support organizations;
- Engagement in advocacy and development efforts to promote and support the work of Circle of Parents; and
- Agreement to share equal responsibility for the success of Circle of Parents;

## **Strategic Planning Process**

In January 2005, the board of directors engaged in a vision planning session to outline a strategic direction for the organization. It was held in Chicago and facilitated by the Director of Chapter Services of Prevent Child Abuse America. The board set the priorities for the organization using a consensus-building process, similar to the way that decisions are made by the network membership. Three (3) major priority areas emerged with tentative strategies for each. They included:

- **Network Development:** Addressing national office capacity, network membership, network standards and program innovation and development.
- **Board Development:** Focusing on board member diversity, accountability, and the governance structure.
- **Fund Development:** Suggesting a diversity of fund raising approaches to support the organization's growth and development.

In the spring of 2005, the board of directors authorized the creation of a committee to develop a three-year strategic plan for Circle of Parents. Committee members were selected to be representative of the board, member organizations and parent leaders. It was also geographically diverse and consisted of older and newer national network participants of the national network. The members of the strategic plan volunteered their services and were approved by the entire Circle of Parents membership. The Chief Executive Officer served as the convener. One of the board members, who also represents a member organization, served as the committee chair.

The Strategic Planning Committee met at least once a month during the summer of 2005. To ensure that the entire membership and board had ample opportunities to provide input into the plan's development, the committee presented a first draft in July 2005. It contained the three major categories initially proposed by the board with a listing of proposed strategies. A few comments were made which led to an improved format, clearer objectives and some additional strategies. Mostly, members expressed support for the initial work completed.

A final draft of the strategic plan, which included more specific strategies, timelines and responsible parties and / or committees, was presented to the membership and board at meetings in Washington, D.C in September 2005. Members who could not attend in person were able to access both meetings by teleconference call. After much discussion, the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan was approved, pending the addition of an executive summary. A one page list of the goals and objectives is provided at the end of this executive summary.

Circle of Parents is now prepared to implement its first and new strategic plan. The next steps include the development of work plans for the first year of the strategic plan by the board, staff and network committees. The development of these plans should take place by the end of December 2005 and be approved by the board and membership, as appropriate, in January 2006.

Circle of Parents would like to thank the staff of its member organizations, our parent leaders and its board of directors for their contribution to the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan. Specifically, we acknowledge the following persons for taking the leadership on this important task:

- Jan Buchler, Committee Chairperson, Milwaukee, WI (Member Organization and Board Member)
- Karen Barbee-Dixon, Illinois (Board Member)
- Jack Edgerton, Washington State (Member Organization)
- Patti Herman, Wisconsin (Member Organization)
- Dawn Patzer, Texas (Parent Leader)
- Kim Streb, Florida (Member Organization)
- Dora Walker, Committee Recorder, Executive Assistant
- Cynthia Savage, Chief Executive Officer

**Network Development:**

1. Increase the capacity of the national office and member network to better provide parent and family support services.
  - a. Increase the capacity of