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Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Family Justice Center officially opens

80 clients have been seen in facility's first three weeks

—Janel Davis |
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County officials and health-care advocates celebrated the grand opening Monday of the county's Family Justice Center in Rockville, a one-stop center for victims of domestic violence.

The full-service center provides in one place a range of services, including help with protective orders, criminal charges, attorney representation and immigration issues.

The center, located on the fifth floor of an office building on Jefferson Avenue across from Richard Montgomery High School, began taking in clients April 28. Since then, 80 people from 28 countries have been helped at the center, Chief Deputy Sheriff Darren M. Popkin reported. One of the cases led to the arrest of a person in violation of a protective order.

Studies of female homicide cases in the county show that about 80 percent involve domestic violence, said State's Attorney John McCarthy.

Monday's grand opening comes after about two years of planning and advocacy work by health advocates, Councilwoman Duchy Trachtenberg and county public safety agencies. The center cost \$750,000 to open and will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"My hope is that another woman will have the privilege of standing before you one day and tell you, like I told my friend [who helped her leave her abusive husband], 'Thank you for saving my life,'" Cheryl R. Kravitz, a 10-year domestic violence victim-turned-advocate, told the crowd Monday.

For more information on the Family Justice Center, call 240-773-0444.



Naomi Brookner/The Gazette
 Domestic violence survivor Cheryl Kravitz (center) of Silver Spring gets a hug from Montgomery County Councilwoman Duchy Trachtenberg (D-At-Large) during the grand opening for the Montgomery County Family Justice Center for victims of domestic violence in Rockville.



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