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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MANATEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES EARNS ACCREDITATION FROM NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE**

*National Children's Alliance recognizes Manatee Children's Services for its delivery of high quality and effective services to child abuse victims through accreditation*

**Bradenton, FL, 1/26/2016** – Manatee Children's Services (MCS) has been awarded accreditation by National Children's Alliance following an extensive application and site review process. As the accrediting agency for Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) across the country, National Children's Alliance awards various levels of accreditation and membership to centers responding to allegations of child abuse in ways that are effective and efficient, and put the needs of child victims of abuse first. Accreditation is the highest level of membership with National Children's Alliance and denotes excellence in service provision.

Manatee Children's Services, a child abuse prevention non-profit, has been serving the Manatee County area since 1977. Over the years the agency has grown from providing shelter to child victims of abuse to 13 other child abuse prevention and intervention programs. Each year these important programs serve over 14,000 children and their family members with services such as trauma focused counseling, parenting education, teen pregnancy prevention, group homes for children in foster care, relative caregiver support, advocacy, and forensic services for cases involving child abuse. As an Accredited Member of National Children's Alliance, Manatee Children's Services is dedicated to providing comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate services to victims of child abuse.

National Children's Alliance awards Accredited Membership based on a CAC's compliance with 10 national standards of accreditation to ensure effective, efficient and consistent delivery of services to child abuse victims. National Children's Alliance updated these standards in 2010 to reflect the most recent evidence-based practices in the field of child abuse intervention and prevention. According to these standards, Accredited Members must utilize a functioning and effective Multidisciplinary Team approach to work collaboratively in child abuse investigation, prosecution, and treatment. National Children's Alliance also considers standards regarding a center's cultural competency and diversity, forensic interviews, victim support and advocacy, medical evaluation, therapeutic intervention, and child focused setting.

"As a team of individuals dedicated to responding to child abuse, we recognize the importance of accreditation from National Children's Alliance and supporting the Multidisciplinary Team approach. Accreditation not only validates our proven effective approach to responding to allegations of child abuse, but also provides consistency across the child advocacy center movement as a whole," said Melinda Thompson, Chief Operating Officer of Manatee Children's Services.

"Manatee Children's Services is to be commended for its excellent work serving victims of child abuse. As the national association and accrediting body for Children's Advocacy Centers across the country, our goal is to ensure that every victim of child abuse has access to high quality services that result from professional collaboration," remarked Teresa Huizar, Executive Director of National Children's Alliance.

For more information about Manatee Children's Services, visit [www.manateechildrensservices.com](http://www.manateechildrensservices.com)

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For nearly four decades MCS has provided life-saving services to thousands of our area's most vulnerable population, child victims of abuse. MCS is the only agency of its kind providing comprehensive services that support the agency's mission, "To advocate for and provide the resources, skills, and shelter to alleviate abuse through prevention and intervention for all children and their families". MCS receives funding from federal, state, and local governments, United Way, National Children's Alliance, Florida Network of Child Advocacy Centers, foundations and private donations.

**National Children's Alliance** is the national association and accrediting body for the 777 Children's Advocacy Centers and 49 State Chapters serving each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Dedicated to helping local communities respond to allegations of child abuse in ways that are effective and efficient, and put the needs of child victims of abuse first, National Children's Alliance provides support and advocacy to its accredited membership, as well as numerous developing centers, multidisciplinary teams and child abuse professionals around the country, and the world. As the national authority on multidisciplinary approaches to supporting child victims of abuse, the purpose of National Children's Alliance is to empower local communities to provide comprehensive, coordinated and compassionate services to victims of child abuse. Founded in 1990, National Children's Alliance provides accreditation opportunities, financial assistance, training, technical assistance, research and education to communities, child abuse professionals and children's advocacy centers throughout the United States in support of child abuse intervention, advocacy and prevention.