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## **ARIZONA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM AMONG TOP 50 GOVERNMENT INNOVATIONS FOR 2008**

**Nogales, Arizona**, - April 15, 2008 –The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School announced this week that Santa Cruz County's Constructing Circles of Peace program is one of the Top 50 Programs of the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards competition. Selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 applicants, Circles of Peace represents the best in government innovation from local, county, city, tribal, state, and federal levels.

Constructing Circles of Peace (CCP) is the first court-referred restorative-justice treatment for domestic violence in the country. In this model, entire families, as well as community volunteers, participate in weekly sessions (called "circles") to address such issues as the triggers for violence and how the dynamic of abuse is transmitted from one generation to the next. CCP utilizes familial and community participants to ensure safety of the family, facilitate healing, and mobilize the community around this issue.

"Constructing Circles of Peace is delighted to be recognized as a national leader in government innovation," said, Judge Mary Helen Maley, of Santa Cruz County, a founder of the program. "Seeing progress in the families we work with is inspiring—getting outside validation for this innovative model affirms our commitment to expanding this groundbreaking program."

For more information about the award and description of each of the 50 award-winning programs, visit <http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu> and <http://www.excelgov.org>.

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