



For Immediate Release

April 7, 2008

Sanctuary for Families reunites mother with her children abducted across borders

New York, NY – This past weekend, Sanctuary for Families successfully reunited a domestic violence victim with her twin daughters six months after they had been abducted by their father, Luis Osnaya, and taken to Mexico.

Sylvia Trujillo had been physically and sexually abused by Mr. Osnaya and in 2004 fled with her young daughters to the safety of a domestic violence shelter operated by Sanctuary for Families. Without Ms. Trujillo's knowledge, Mr. Osnaya sought the intervention of the Suffolk County Family Court to retrieve the children and obtained a bench warrant for their return. After Ms. Trujillo moved into her own apartment in New York City and registered the girls for school, Mr. Osnaya located her. The NYC Police were notified of their whereabouts and the existence of the warrant. In July 2006, over repeated protests from the Sanctuary attorney representing Ms. Trujillo, the NYPD executed the warrant and turned the children over to Mr. Osnaya. After extensive litigation, the Suffolk Family Court returned the children to Ms. Trujillo's custody with a court-ordered stipulation granting Mr. Osnaya visitation.

In November 2007, Mr. Osnaya abducted the children during a visitation. Extensive efforts to locate him and the children in the United States were fruitless.

Working in close collaboration with the Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women in Mexico City, Dorchen Leidholdt, the Director of Sanctuary for Families' Legal Center, found the girls living with their father and paternal grandmother in Mexico City.

Ms. Trujillo's Sanctuary lawyer, Linda Lopez, flew to Mexico on Thursday, April 3, and accompanied the Mexican federal immigration authorities as they successfully removed the children from the home. The girls immediately recognized Ms. Lopez, who explained that she was there to bring them back to their mother. The Mexican authorities accompanied Ms. Lopez and the children to New York on a midnight flight, where Ms. Trujillo was reunited with the children in the early hours of Saturday, April 5th.

Ms. Trujillo and her daughters will continue to work with their attorney, Linda Lopez, and their social worker, Monica Roldan, both of whom are Spanish speaking.

In the interim, the Suffolk County Criminal Court has issued a warrant for Mr. Osnaya's arrest and the Suffolk County Police Department is planning to issue an order of

extradition for Mr. Osnaya to be arrested, returned to the United States, and prosecuted in Suffolk County for custodial interference.

Sanctuary for Families is the largest not-for-profit agency in New York State dedicated exclusively to serving domestic violence victims and their children. It provides shelter, counseling, legal advice and representation, economic development assistance, and a special program for children who have witnessed domestic violence.

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