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Contact:           Joannah Barela or  
                          Ty Sheppard  
                          Bock Communications, Inc.  
                          +1.714.540.1030 phone  
                          canyonacres@bockpr.com

**CANYON ACRES FINDS LOST FAMILY  
FOR TROUBLED CHILDREN IN THE COUNTY'S CARE**

*Canyon Acres' Creating Family Connections Program Brings 400 Family Members Into  
the Lives of 47 Children*

**ANAHEIM HILLS, Calif., February 19, 2008** -- CANYON ACRES CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, a charity organization committed to providing homes, care, treatment and supportive services for abused, neglected and emotionally troubled children and their families, today announced it has facilitated more than 400 family connections in 2007 through Creating Family Connections (CFC), a program developed in collaboration with Orange County Social Services. Canyon Acres developed CFC for children in the county's care who have little or no relationship with their biological families.

From 2006 to 2007 the program served **47** children, found more than **900** family members and connected more than **400** of those family members to the respective children. After finding a family member, Canyon Acres contacts that person to determine if they know or would be interested in meeting the child. If they are interested in meeting, Canyon Acres supports and facilitates the connection. Whether it's a single meeting or ongoing contact, these connections help children experience a sense of identity and belonging that has been shown to help them heal and recover from their past abuse, neglect and emotional trauma. CFC has been in operation since 2004.

"We are extremely proud of our Creating Family Connections program," said Executive Director of Canyon Acres, Clete Menke. "Helping a child find someone like themselves –

finding family – has made an enormous impact in their lives for the better. This program is one of the truly energizing times when you can see the tangible results of philanthropic work.”

In addition, CFC has allowed families from across the country to reunite and actually live together again. A young boy landed in foster care after his parents’ divorce and subsequent abuse from his father. The former wife, who technically was the boy’s stepmother, always had been concerned about the boy’s welfare but was forbidden, under the terms of the divorce settlement, from seeing the boy again. However, when Canyon Acres contacted her, she was heartbroken to hear about the abuse and eager to begin the process of bringing the boy back into her life. Since that time, the boy has blossomed. He brings home A’s, is on the National Honor Society and has joined JV Basketball – a big change from the tormented child who received D’s.

Canyon Acres partnership with Orange County Social Services allows for a rare opportunity to reunite families under non-committal circumstances so that they may bond at their own pace and focus on what it means to have family ties in difficult situations. Through its innovative Creating Family Connections Program, Canyon Acres has been able to provide a much needed resource for Social Workers looking to help the county’s most at-risk youth. As CFC Supervisor, Heather Schwartz states, “It’s a pleasure to work in a field that changes the lives of children daily.”

## **ABOUT CANYON ACRES**

Canyon Acres Children and Family Services is the only facility in Orange County or the surrounding counties serving the most severely abused and emotionally troubled children between the ages of 6-17. Since 1980, Canyon Acres has been providing the highest level of care, therapeutic treatment and most importantly a home, to children throughout Southern California who suffer from a variety of emotional and psychological disorders. Canyon Acres gives children nurturing, treatment, and opportunities that they need to grow up in safe, loving, and stable families. For more information about Canyon Acres Children and Family Services, contact Bock Communications at + 1-714-540-1030 or [canyonacres@bockpr.com](mailto:canyonacres@bockpr.com) or visit the Canyon Acres Children and Family Services web site at [www.canyonacres.org](http://www.canyonacres.org).