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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PILOT PROJECT HELPING TRANSITION PEOPLE
FROM WELFARE TO GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT**

Carson City—Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director Mike Willden and Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) Administrator Nancy Ford said today that a public-private partnership pilot project underway in Washoe County is providing a successful gateway for people receiving welfare benefits to attain employment in the community.

The NEON—New Employees of Nevada—Project is a partnership between DWSS, The Children's Cabinet, and JOIN (Job Opportunities in Nevada). The purpose of the project is to help adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) financial aid to transition from welfare to work by collaborating with community-based agencies to provide job training and placement. The NEON Project began operation on January 28, 2008, with the goal of assisting around 300 families each month. In less than a month, about 120 families are already receiving services through this partnership.

"Our hats are off to the good people at The Children's Cabinet and JOIN, who have made this pilot program possible," Willden said.

The NEON concept draws upon the strengths of established community agencies. The Children's Cabinet provides child care assistance and stabilization for adults receiving training, going on interviews, and going to work. JOIN provides case management, job training, and employment placement services. In addition, adults are provided with transportation assistance and proper work clothing, if necessary.

"The combination of these two agencies creates a broad base of programs and assistance from which clients can rely upon in moving their families to a more stable financial future," Ford said.

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The Children's Cabinet Executive Director Meg Cleary said, "Piloting the NEON Project with JOIN and the State is our privilege and everything The Children's Cabinet is about: collaborating with others to assist children and families improve their self sufficiency in our community."

JOIN Executive Director Carolyn Wilson added, "For JOIN, this project isn't just about meeting Federal Welfare requirements, it's about concentrating on each individual's or family's interests and needs to allow them to reach goals that may have been postponed or perhaps never identified. We are particularly pleased to be doing this in conjunction with The Children's Cabinet. Their excellent child care program presents a range of options and continual support for parents in order to remove one of the biggest concerns about getting and keeping a job."

The NEON Project was established as a vehicle for Nevada families receiving TANF aid to meet the mandates of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which requires single parent TANF recipients to participate in at least 30 hours of work-related activity per week; two-parent households at least 35 hours.

NEON Program participation starts when an adult applies for TANF at the DWSS Reno District Office, located at 3697 Kings Row.

For more information about DWSS, go to <http://dwss.nv.gov>.

Developed in 1985, the Children's Cabinet bridges the gap between social services and needs of the area's youth. The mission of Children's Cabinet is to serve the community and ensure every child and family has the services and resources to meet fundamental development, care, and learning needs. The organization has successfully created a lasting public-private partnership to address the needs of children and families in the area. To find out more about the services being offered by The Children's Cabinet, go to www.childrencabinet.org or call (775) 856-6200.

JOIN, Inc., a part of Northern Nevada communities for over 30 years, provides a unique perspective on local labor markets and the developing needs of employers and employees. Consistently taking on the challenges of specialized populations, JOIN works in partnership with numerous local agencies to enhance the capacity, employability, self-sufficiency, and viability of the individuals, families, and communities in Northern Nevada. For more information about JOIN, go to www.join.org or call (775) 785-6106.

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