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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meeks to Leave Open Arms

Open Arms Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Services announced this morning that effective December 28, 2009 Beth Meeks will be resigning her position as Executive Director after more than 13 years in that role.

Meeks has accepted the Executive Director position at The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The Louisiana Coalition is a statewide network of 20 domestic violence agencies. The Coalition supports those organizations through resource development, allocation of funds, technical assistance and training. It also acts as the statewide voice on behalf of the domestic violence community to elected leaders at state and federal levels.

Open Arms Board President, Lonna Bruskotter, announced that Yvette Mains, a Program Manager who has been with the organization for more than 18 years, will be serving as Interim Director while a search committee locates a permanent Executive Director.

‘Yvette is very familiar with agency staff and programs. She has a long history with the organization and is respected both inside and out. We are confident that she will provide the stability and leadership we need during our search.’, said Bruskotter.

Bruskotter, who will oversee the search process, thinks the leadership role at Open Arms provides an exciting opportunity. 'We have accomplished a lot. We own two debt free facilities and operate 6 programs with more than 20 staff. Last year the programs served more than 8,000 people.' She says, 'We have a really strong staff and board who operate well as a team. It will be a great experience for the right candidate.'

'I have learned much, been cared for and seen many positive changes and much growth in the people and community around me.' Says Meeks, the longest serving Executive Director in Open Arms' 30 year history. 'It is so hard to leave. This agency and this community mean so much to me.'

Meeks will be tasked with leading the Louisiana Coalition through the five year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina which completely destroyed some of the domestic violence agencies there. Most of the agencies are reopened but in various states of rebuilding. She hopes to issue a report that provides legislators and key stakeholders a comprehensive review of the state of services in Louisiana at the five year mark.