

## **MercyFirst is Sanctuary Certified**

MercyFirst recently received notice that it has been Sanctuary Certified by the Sanctuary Institute for successful implementation of this innovative trauma-informed approach throughout the organization. MercyFirst is the largest agency in the country to receive this recognition and the first to earn it for all our programs. The objective of the Sanctuary Institute is to help organizations, like MercyFirst, create and implement a trauma-informed, trauma-sensitive culture that promotes healing and recovery.

In December 2009, MercyFirst was evaluated by members of the Sanctuary Institute for successful implementation of the Sanctuary Model. This evaluation was conducted over three days and included interviews, program observations and document review. Certification is contingent upon the agency's ability to adhere to the standards described in the Sanctuary Implementation Standards Manual.

"Achieving Sanctuary Certification is a historic moment for MercyFirst. The three year process of becoming Sanctuary Certified was a great example of the entire MercyFirst community coming together with the common goal of improving the quality of services and care provided for the children and families we serve," Howard Traub, Sanctuary Model coordinator.

The Sanctuary Institute is a trauma-informed training organizational development program offered by Dr. Sandra L. Bloom and the Andrus Children's Center to teach organizations how to adopt the Sanctuary Model as a trauma-informed approach to intervention and treatment. The mission of Sanctuary is to teach individuals and organizations the necessary skills for creating and sustaining nonviolent lives and nonviolent systems.

