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Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services and Stanislaus County Superior Court

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 13, 2014

Contact: Tamara Thomas – SCDCSS Director, (209) 558-3062 or Stanislaus Superior Court CEO Rebecca Fleming (209) 530-3111.

Child Support Court Commissioner Named Judicial Partner of the Year

MODESTO – On Wednesday May 7, 2014, the Child Support Director’s Association for California (CSDA) named Stanislaus Superior Court Child Support Commissioner, Kenneth J. Hara, the CSDA Judicial Partner of the Year. This award is given by the CSDA each year to one Child Support Commissioner in California who best exhibits excellence in the areas of positive collaboration, innovation and resourcefulness in conjunction with the local Department of Child Support Services.

The Stanislaus County Department of Child Support Services (SCDCSS) nominated Commissioner Hara for his actions in ensuring a fair judicial hearing and process to every litigant who enters his courtroom as well as for his actions in working collaboratively with the SCDCSS on innovative and customer friendly approaches to the enforcement of child support.

One such collaboration was Commissioner Hara’s agreement to create a special calendar once a month for the National Child Support Parent Employment Demonstration grant (CSPED) participants. The Federal grant was awarded to the SCDCSS in 2012 and its purpose is to ensure reliable and consistent child support payments to families by providing unemployed parents with job training and job search assistance. To assist the SCDCSS in

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reaching this goal, Commissioner Hara agreed to set aside one day a month to specially hear the unique cases of the grant participants. "I congratulate Commissioner Hara on receiving this award. He is committed to successful outcomes and is a pleasure to work with. SCDCSS is proud to partner with Commissioner Hara as we work towards achieving self-sufficiency for the families we serve." Baljit Atwal, Assistant Director, Department of Child Support Services.

Additionally, Commissioner Hara represented the court, showing his support and partnership with the SCDCSS and the community he serves by collaborating with the SCDCSS to provide a paperless environment for order creation within his Courtroom. This enhanced use of technology within the Courtroom by the SCDCSS attorneys allows SCDCSS to provide immediate and easy to read orders to customers in the Courtroom, and increases the efficiency of the SCDCSS staff all while saving paper. By sending the orders electronically without any creation of paper for the SCDCSS staff or for the Court, the project saves both resources and time. Customers' case information is immediately available for staff and a reduction in document errors has been observed. This in turn has helped the SCDCSS to be more cost effective and use its shrinking resources in other more impactful ways.

Commissioner Hara's courtroom was the first in Stanislaus County to achieve the distinction of a using and electronic case file and subsequently implementing electronic forms creation and processing and is being looked at by other family law and LCSA courtroom personnel as a model of efficiency and customer service. His willingness and courage to take on this complex technical endeavor along with his personal participation in the CSPED grant project shows his leadership and concern for the overall success of the child support program. It required a considerable amount of his time to be spent on change management activities and program complexity. His willingness to be a proactive partner and the court's administrative support resulted in the successful technical conversion. Commissioner Hara is truly a judicial professional who cares about putting children first and who is committed and dedicated to helping SCDCSS support these families. "The patience and investment shown in this endeavor is a consistent representation of Commissioner Hara's dedication to the Stanislaus County Superior Court and our SCDCSS partners. He has been a pivotal part of the success that has been achieved." Rebecca Fleming, Court Executive Officer.

Commissioner Hara is currently presiding in the Stanislaus Superior Court, Department 11 and hears child support cases Monday- Thursday at 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Parents who want more information about the SCDCSS services are welcome to visit the website at www.stanccdcss.org, call 866-901-3212, or drop by the office from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday to talk to a child support professional. The SCDCSS office is located at 251 E. Hackett Road, Modesto.

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