

# NEWS RELEASE

**R. Andrew Murray**  
District Attorney

**April 28, 2014**

## **DA's Office and Pat's Place partner to create kid-friendly room at the courthouse**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A kid-friendly room for children who are waiting to testify at trial will soon open at the Mecklenburg County Courthouse thanks to a partnership between the District Attorney's Office and Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center.

For children, testifying at trial can sometimes be a daunting task as they describe traumatic events or, in some cases, face their abusers in court. To spare them from additional trauma, children typically stay in one of the courthouse's waiting rooms until it's time for them to take the stand. After seeing the impact of the court process on children, creating a space where kids can feel comfortable and safe became a priority for prosecutors and Pat's Place, which conducts interviews and medical exams of children who've been abused and provides services for those children and their families.

Artists from the Ciel Gallery donated their time and talents to paint a mural of rolling hills and colorful villages on the walls of a private courthouse waiting room. Child-sized furniture will be added, and the room will be stocked with toys, books and movies to provide a welcoming environment for children.



**Artists from Ciel Gallery paint a mural in the new kid-friendly waiting room at the Mecklenburg County Courthouse. Pictured above are artists Cindi Spillman, Flavia Lovatelli and Laura Hitchcock.**

“It takes a lot of courage for a child to tell his story in front of a jury,” says Mecklenburg County District Attorney Andrew Murray. “We owe it to these children to help them feel safe while they help my prosecutors seek justice and protect others in our community.”

For more photos of the kid-friendly room, [visit the DA's Facebook page](#).

April is Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month. The DA's Office and Pat's Place are among several government, educational, nonprofit and health organizations that joined forces this month for a countywide campaign to raise awareness about the critical issue of child abuse and North Carolinians' legal responsibility to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. [Click here](#) for more information about Mecklenburg County Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention Month.

*Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit [www.charmeckda.com](http://www.charmeckda.com). For*

updates and other information, “like” the DA’s Office on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/charmckda](http://www.facebook.com/charmckda) and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.

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