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## Dee Norton opens facility in Mount Pleasant

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A Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center has opened east of the Cooper and will open to clients Aug. 14.

In May 2017, Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center launched a capital campaign to open a second location and renovate the existing location on King Street. Work on the second 6,000-square-foot location at 677 Longpoint Rd. in Mount Pleasant is complete and the center will hold a grand opening on Aug. 24 at 11 a.m. Soon work will begin at the center's current location at 1061 King St. Once



**Ground was broken on the Mount Pleasant Dee Norton facility last August.**

both locations are complete, the Centers will be able to treat 3,500 chil-

dren annually. The downtown center is expected to reopen in 2019 and be identical in look and feel so that the experiences will be similar from one facility to another.

Dixon Architects helped with the numerous touches that give the facility a welcoming feel that is of course child friendly. Redux Art Gallery will showcase their artists work throughout the facility and in certain intake areas display non-objective art so the art on the wall does not end up being part of the conversation when interviewing the children.

Also featured in the building are spaces for community partners to

work on-site with families and children and be included in the interview process and other steps so that each partner can be fully integrated in the process. And Medical University of South Carolina partners have a dedicated medical suite with two exam rooms and clinician offices.

It is a thoughtful design with way-finding points such as colored ceiling tiles and ancillary waiting areas.

Plans for the center's expansion come after extensive strategic analysis by the organization's leadership. Research indicates that in areas east

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of the Cooper River, the center serves only an estimated 36 percent of children suffering from abuse. On Daniel Island and in Cainhoy, only 21 percent are served. An East Cooper facility will improve accessibility for these populations.

The Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center is the region's leading resource to prevent abuse, protect children and heal families. Primary services include forensic interviews, medical examinations and mental health assessments as well as immediate support and coordination.

Dr. Carole Swiecicki, Executive Director of the Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center said the grand opening of this second center is a significant milestone in the organization's history. "Since opening in 1991, we have helped more than 28,000 children. This expansion will ensure we are able to meet the needs of our area's



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**The Dee Norton Advocacy Center will open off of Longpoint Road.**

children for the next 20 years. With the proper support, children can, and do, heal from the effects of abuse. This expansion will ensure that children in the Lowcountry will be able to heal for years to come."

According to Beverly Hutchison, director of development and marketing incidences of

sexual abuse, assault and physical abuse don't fluctuate across socio-economic boundaries.

And with help from the center the children come out on the other side of their tragic and terrible experiences, she said. "Children heal if adults step in and do the right thing. Kids are beautifully resilient."

All of this was made possible by an ambitious capital campaign that proved successful due to the generosity of the local community.

The center also provides evidence-based therapy to child victims and their families. For more information, visit [deenortoncenter.org](http://deenortoncenter.org).