

the Connection

spring 2012



National Safe Place Week 2012



Sondra Jackson, Youth Services System, Inc. Safe Place Outreach Specialist, receives a NSP Week proclamation from Wheeling, WV Mayor McKenzie.

National Safe Place (NSP) Week was celebrated nationwide on March 18-24, 2012. The annual week is intended to raise awareness about the Safe Place program, which has helped more than 270,000 youth in crisis since it was founded in 1983. This year, each day during NSP Week had an optional theme: Safe Place Story Sunday, Media Monday, TXT 4 HELP Tuesday, Where is your Safe Place Wednesday, Thank You Thursday, Facebook Friday and Safe Place Site Appreciation Saturday.

Safe Place coordinators worked diligently to raise awareness about Safe Place and youth safety during NSP Week. More than 25 agencies secured local radio, television and print media coverage. Nearly 20 cities received

Mayoral Proclamations designating the week as NSP Week.

Agencies held various awareness events including Safe Place scavenger hunts, "Don't Get Boxed In" displays, volunteer luncheons, Safe Place rallies, poster and art contests, school presentations, Safe Place site dedications and more. Many agencies took the opportunity to thank Safe Place volunteers and sites that support the program. Overall, 40 agencies in 28 states participated in NSP Week.

NSP would like to thank all of the dedicated staff and volunteers that worked hard to share information about Safe Place and raise awareness about youth safety.

AWARD NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN!

It is awards season at NSP! We are now accepting nominations for NSP Awards and the HEROES for Youth Award. Please visit www.nationalsafeplace.org to nominate a friend or colleague. The HEROES for Youth Award information exists on the homepage and NSP Awards can be found on the "2012 National Conference" page. Nominations for NSP Awards are due by June 1st and HEROES nominations are due by July 1st.

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National Conference



Laurie's Corner

As we often hear, it only takes one person or interaction to influence the life of a young person. I heard this again at a breakfast I recently attended. It was brought home to me this week as I read a story about a woman who used a Safe Place site ten years ago and it changed her life. It was the point at which she became connected to

a local agency and as she says in her story, "It was the first time I had felt truly safe in a long time." While she credits many individuals and organizations with the success of her journey, she relates it all back to that first interaction with Safe Place. This is the inspiration for all of us to continue the important work of growing the Safe Place program across the country and educating youth about this option for accessing safety. Many things about Safe Place inspire safety; it could be walking into a site where employees are welcoming and ready to assist; the volunteer who arrives and says, "I am here to listen, to help, what do you need"; the staff and environment once the youth arrives at the agency; or the young person who used the program, received assistance and then referred a friend who needed help.

Last month, Safe Place was celebrated across the country during National Safe Place Week. As you will read in this newsletter, a variety of activities occurred to promote and recognize Safe Place, volunteers and sites. Activities ranged from breakfast celebrations, scavenger hunts, and volunteer appreciation events to community service days, proclamations and much more. Congressman John Yarmuth entered into the Congressional Record information on

Safe Place and the value of the program to communities across the country. National Safe Place also launched the TXT 4 HELP Interactive program during this week. It is a wonderful service available to youth across the country and has been a great success so far. National Safe Place Week ended for our office with a large Service Day project by CSX and City Year. I hope you enjoy the story about this event, which can be found on page four.

As we move into April and May, it is also the busy federal grant time of year. The federal funding announcements for runaway and homeless youth programs should be coming out soon. These include Basic Center, Street Outreach and, for the first time in a few years, Transitional Living. As a reminder, if you would like a support letter from National Safe Place for your application please get the request to our office as soon as possible. In other federal news, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act is again up for reauthorization this year. National Safe Place will be sharing information about this process as we become aware of it. We continue to partner with other national organizations in this effort.

It only takes one. One word, one interaction, one time of providing for and meeting the needs of youth wanting safety. You, our member agencies, sites and volunteers make many of those "one times" happen. Thank you for changing the lives of young people and families across the country – one at a time.

Laurie Jackson

National Safe Place

Mission Our mission is to provide access to immediate help and supportive resources for all young people in crisis through a network of sites sustained by qualified agencies, trained volunteers and businesses.

Vision Safe Place will be universally recognized and used by youth across America as the place to go for immediate help and safety.

Board of Directors

Howard "Skip" Elliott, Board Chair
CSX
Jacksonville, FL

Jed Alpert
Mobile Commons
Brooklyn, NY

J. Barry Barker
TARC
Louisville, KY

Sue Barton
Barton Phillips & Associates
Tulsa, OK

James Braun
Youth In Need
St. Charles, MO

Gary Colen
AMP Agency
Boston, MA

Joe Diamond
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Gina Digioia
Alloy Media Marketing, Inc.
New York, NY

Michael Fitz
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Debra Friggel
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Chris Hackett
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New York, NY

Tom Patania
Youth Crisis Center Foundation
Jacksonville, FL

Linda Rutherford
Southwest Airlines
Dallas, TX

CSX & City Year Service Day During NSP Week

Danielle White, AmeriCorps VISTA

CSX and City Year hosted a service day at National Safe Place on March 24 as part of CSX's Beyond Our Rails program, an initiative designed to engage employees and non-profit organizations in projects to help better the communities where CSX employees live and work.

The event was a result of the partnership between CSX and Care Force, a division of City Year that engages corporate partners and their employees in community service events across the country. The City Year prep team arrived at National Safe Place on March 21 and spent the next three days preparing the buildings and grounds for the projects.



CSX volunteers landscaping

More than 100 volunteers gathered at National Safe Place on Saturday morning to help paint offices, construct furniture, repaint the gym floor, plant trees, build raised beds and stain the deck. Work was done both at the National Safe Place office and on the YMCA Safe Place Services campus next door. The event was originally planned for approximately 75 volunteers, but so many additional people registered that CSX had to start turning volunteers away.

“The turnout was truly inspiring and people were enthusiastic about their various projects,” said Laurie Jackson, National Safe Place Executive Director. “In just a few short hours, the volunteers made improvements that will have a positive community impact for years to come.”

In a recent post on the Care Force blog, Ted Marquis, Vice President of Care Force, had this to say about CSX volunteers: “CSX volunteers are some of the hardest working



NSP Executive Director Laurie Jackson and CSX Corporate Citizenship Manager John Kitchens having fun in front of the camera

volunteers you'll find. They not only want to provide great service, but they want to leave behind a sustainable impact. They expect nothing but the highest quality of service of themselves, and they want to know that what they are doing is making a big difference.”

CSX has been a sponsor of National Safe Place since 2007. In addition to the service day, CSX has provided grants, donations and volunteer support to National Safe Place as well as member agencies. Skip Elliott, CSX Vice President of Public Safety and Environment, also serves as the chairman of the National Safe Place Board of Directors.

Volunteers came in from all around the region, hailing from places like Cincinnati, Nashville and Columbus. Two volunteers even traveled all the way from Orlando, Fla. to be a part of the event.

During his closing comments, YMCA Safe Place Services Executive Director Matt Reed said, “I know painting offices and some of the work you did...you may not get to realize what you've really done to help our kids out and to help our families out. I thank you from the bottom of my heart on behalf of the families and the youth we serve.”



CSX volunteer painting stairs



Photo by
Timeless Memories, Inc.

North Myrtle Beach
City Councilman
Greg Duckworth
presents a NSP
Week proclama-
tion to Sea Haven
Executive Director
Christina Jackson.

2012 NATIONAL SAFE PLACE WEEK PHOTOS



NSP Executive Director Laurie Jackson
speaking with Miss America 2012 Laura
Kaeppler at the YMCA Safe Place Services
“Together 4 Teens Breakfast.”



Angie Freeny, Payne County Youth Services
Safe Place Coordinator, with Stillwater,
OK Mayor John Bartley after reading the
NSP Week proclamation.



Fresno County EOC Sanctuary Youth
Services held a youth resource fair.



Waterbury Youth Service System, Inc. staff wearing yellow
Safe Place t-shirts and sharing information about the program
during NSP Week.



Jillian Hill, YouthCar's
Safe Place Coordinator,
shows off a beautiful poster
that was entered into
their poster contest. The
winner was announced
during NSP Week.



A 6th grade student council
designed this “Don’t Get Boxed In”
display and showcased it at school.
This photo was shared by the Center
For Family Connections.

New Face at NSP - Amy Sanders



Amy Sanders is the Grants Coordinator for National Safe Place and is responsible for researching, writing and reporting on grant opportunities at the national level. She has worked with Safe Place at the community level in the past before joining National Safe Place in March 2012. Sanders credits her program management and grants administration experience from her time with agencies such as Girls Inc., YMCA and United Way. Sanders received her Bachelor of Science in Arts Administration from Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana.

NSP Honors...

National Safe Place would like to recognize the following City Year Team Care Force volunteers for their incredible service to the organization: Hugh Harlow, Susan Bensen, Yila Wilson, Johana Muriel-Chandler, Niki Kraska, Peter Christophersen, and Edmond Batikha. These young men and women worked diligently to prepare for and lead the CSX Service Day on March 24. We are truly inspired by their work and their commitment to service.



Board of Directors member J. Barry Barker was selected as the recipient of the Transportation Research Board's 2012 Sharon D. Banks Award for Humanitarian Leadership in Transportation. The award recognizes Barker for his career-long commitment and contributions to improving transportation access and the quality of life for the poor, elderly, and people with disabilities. Barker is the Executive Director of the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) in Louisville, Ky.



Long-standing Board member Mark Giuffre is stepping down from the NSP Board of Directors. Giuffre was recruited to the National Safe Place Board of Directors because of his outstanding reputation as an executive with United Parcel Service (UPS) based in Louisville, Ky.

From the beginning Giuffre injected his passion and energy into the Board and staff's work. He has always kept Safe Place top-of-mind, helping to grow and build the Board of Directors by recruiting additional members from major corporations such as Southwest Airlines. National Safe Place has been fortunate to be the beneficiary of Giuffre's support service and we are grateful for all that he has done.

National Safe Place would like to recognize three former Advisory Board members for their dedication and service to the organization:

- Matt Reed, 2008-2012
- Dennis Avery, 2009-2011
- Chrissy Marzano, 2011

in the News

Safe Place Program Gives Kids a Home and Hope

Written by Mike Averill, Tulsa World staff writer

Two years ago, Amanda Jordan walked away from her foster home and was placed in a respite home only to find herself in another bad situation.

So she went to a QuikTrip store, where a police officer picked her up and took her to Youth Services of Tulsa.

The organization's Safe Place program is a collaborative effort to provide 24-hour easy access to young people in dangerous, threatening or vulnerable situations.

"Having a Safe Place is like going home but not your real home," Jordan said.

"You know nothing is going to happen to you and you know you're going to be safe."

There are now 108 Safe Place sites in the Tulsa area, including all area QuikTrip stores and fire stations, and about 100 volunteers are on call to pick up youths from Safe Place locations and take them to the shelter.

All EMSA ambulances and Tulsa Transit buses also are Safe Place sites and will transport youths to the shelter, as well.

Last year, 237 youths ages 12 to 18 were picked up at Safe Place sites.

Jordan learned about Safe Place as a young teenager in foster care when she was temporarily placed in Youth Services of Tulsa's shelter by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

"You can feel it when you walk in," she said. "They welcome you with open arms. They really do care about you."

Jim Walker, executive director of Youth Services of Tulsa, said the agency doesn't hide kids from their parents when they are transported to its shelter through the Safe Place program.

"Our goal is to reunify families," he said. "We immediately call DHS or their parents and talk to them about it. If the parents are willing, we set up a counseling session."

"Sometimes the young person will stay with us for several days as a cooling off period," Walker said.

Youth Services of Tulsa implemented its Safe Place program in 1991.

Last year, 6,804 middle and high school students learned about the program through presentations at their schools.

"Many kids who come in have kept their cards they got in middle school," Walker said.

"Some kids live on the fringe, and we help them set up a safety plan."

Jordan has aged out of foster care and has a job in radio broadcasting and her own apartment.

But she doesn't believe that would be the case if it hadn't been for the Safe Place program.

"I'd probably be on the streets," she said. "If I wouldn't have come here, I would have run away. I wouldn't have a job or be independent."

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NSP Launches TXT 4 HELP Interactive

The preferred form of communication among teenagers has changed over the last ten years. Research in teen communication demonstrates that youth seeking help for difficult situations are more prone to access electronic information and help than direct intervention. National Safe Place (NSP) is proud to announce TXT 4 HELP "Interactive," an additional service to the established TXT 4 HELP program that allows youth in crisis to text live with a mental health professional.

"Texting is a popular communication strategy among teens and the more we strive to connect with them in a way that they're comfortable with, the more assistance we can provide," said Laurie Jackson, NSP Executive Director. "With TXT 4 HELP Interactive we hope to reach thousands more youth in crisis and inform them that immediate help is just a text away."



Any youth can text the word "SAFE" and their current location (e.g. safe 101 main st. Chicago IL) to 69866 and receive the address for the closest Safe Place site and contact number for the local youth shelter. This auto-

ated response will also prompt users to "reply with 2CHAT for more help." Once a user replies, he/she will be connected with a Master's level mental health professional.

The TXT 4 HELP Interactive service has the ability to reach even more youth in crisis than NSP has reached in the past. Several studies over the last few years have determined that 75 percent of American teens carry a mobile phone and 88 percent of teen cell phone users are text messaging daily (Lenhart et. Al, 2010; Subrahmanyam and Greenfield, 2008; Grinter and Eldridge, 2003, 2001). NSP believes the TXT 4 HELP Interactive program will impact many lives and encourage teens to ask for help when dealing with tough issues.

"Too often we hear stories about abuse, neglect, bullying and crisis situations that impact children and youth. Now, more than ever, we must create opportunities for connecting teens in crisis to safety and assistance," said Jackson.

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www.nationalsafeplace.org



Save The Date!

