



Safe Place Where Kids Get Help...FAST

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SAFE PLACE CAMPAIGN TARGETS 2.5 MILLION YOUTH ON THEIR TURF – ONLINE AND AT THE MOVIES – DURING ORGANIZATION’S 25th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

‘Building A Safety Net For Youth’ Launches in Advance of ‘National Safe Place Week’

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (March 13, 2008) – For a quarter century, Safe Place has provided local sites where youth from across the country could access immediate help and safety. Now, National Safe Place (NSP) is taking that message directly to kids.

As part of its “Building A Safety Net For Youth” awareness campaign, NSP will now meld its traditional school-based youth outreach efforts with an increased emphasis on reaching young people outside the classroom through the Internet, text messaging and other emerging technologies.

“The world in which young people live has changed in the 25 years since Safe Place began,” said Sandy Bowen, executive director of NSP. “To reach them in today’s society, Safe Place must change to continue to be an innovative leader in serving youth.”

Safe Place programs are managed by 144 youth-serving agencies in 41 states. More than 105,000 youth nationally have received help through a business or community location displaying the Safe Place sign since the program’s inception 25 years ago in Louisville.

Now that effort has expanded to movie theaters and to the Internet through social networking Web sites [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#) and [YouTube](#). Collectively, Safe Place programs across the country are seeking to educate more than 2.5 million young people in 2008 about the dangers of running away and tell them that Safe Place is an outlet for help in their own neighborhoods.

Safe Place’s presence on the social networking sites will now link to a new youth-focused Web site, www.safeplaceforteens.com, which contains information about teen issues such as running away from home, problems at school, drug and alcohol abuse and eating disorders. Also, movie theaters in 25 Safe Place markets will show a new public service announcement March 14-27 directing youth and their families to the new site.

Youth and interested adults can also now learn about Safe Place via text messaging. Mobile phone users may text “safeplace” to the phone number “41411” to receive a message about the program. The message gives Safe Place’s tagline, “Where Kids Get Help...FAST,” and then the phone number if users need immediate help to the National Runaway Switchboard, a partner of NSP. The message closes with the Web address to www.safeplaceforteens.com. Safe Place coordinators across the country have also

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been outfitted with new T-shirts that display the text messaging information to wear during school and community presentations.

The launch of the “Building A Safety Net For Youth” campaign comes before “National Safe Place Week,” March 16-22. More than 1,100 communities nationwide will celebrate their commitment to keeping youth safe during the week.

The U.S. Senate has designated the third week of March as “National Safe Place Week” each year since 2001.



National Safe Place, headquartered in Louisville, Ky., provides training and technical assistance for youth service agencies and businesses interested in developing a Safe Place program. Safe Places provide access to immediate help and safety for all young people in crisis. A public-private network of more than 16,000 sites across the country extends the doors of local youth shelters by displaying the Safe Place sign. Business partners and community locations that appeal to youth – such as fast food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, public buses and libraries – connect kids looking for help with the youth service agency. In 2007, 8,263 youth received immediate help at a Safe Place site. Another 9,124 youth contacted a Safe Place site or shelter for help after learning about the program through school and community education. The Safe Place program was created by the YMCA of Greater Louisville in 1983. For additional information, visit www.nationalsafeplace.org.

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