



Safe Inc. OF SCHENECTADY

"WHERE HOPE SHAPES THE FUTURE"

A newsletter for staff, friends and supporters of Safe Inc.

Fall 2021

....From the desk of the Executive Director



November is National Homeless Youth Awareness month which is an opportunity to acknowledge those children and families experiencing homelessness. Here are some national and local data to consider: The *Voices of Youth Count* notes that nationally, 1 in 30 youth ages 13-17 endures some form of homelessness in a year. The NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services reports that Schenectady County had the second highest rate of missing child cases in the State at 10.9 per 1,000 children (364) in 2019. In comparison the statewide rate was 3.6 per 1,000 children for the same year. Virtually all children reported missing are in fact runaways, and this figure is commonly used as the indicator of the number of runaway and homeless youth in the State. These are the children and families we seek to serve who are living among us right here in Schenectady.

Safe engages these youth through our outreach efforts and we encourage them to stay with us and become part of our family. For the first 8 months of 2021 we've seen a 60% increase of homeless youth staying in our shelter compared to the same period last year. As you can imagine

our youth bring with them many issues and uncertainties. When youth arrive, they are immediately greeted with warmth and welcome so their stay can be as comfortable as possible. They will receive meals, clean clothes, some youth type activities, and a homelike environment. However, there is hard work to be done to create hope, aspiration, and a positive outcome. Our youth will spend time researching employment opportunities, seeking out educational opportunities, and working with staff towards either reunification with their family or a longer-term housing solution.

As we approach the winter season our services become more critical, and your assistance is just as critical. Please consider donating to Safe Inc. (see last page on how to donate). We are truly thankful for your support.



About our programs: Project Safe and Safe House

Project Safe is an outpatient treatment and referral program designed to serve individuals between the ages of 12 and 35 who have been sexually exploited/human trafficked or at risk of sexual exploitation/human trafficking. The program is tailored to meet **ALL** the needs of each individual through a network of services and referrals.

Safe House is a temporary 30-day emergency shelter that serves homeless and runaway youth ages 16 to 20 in a home like environment. A youth may come to Safe House through self-referral or through referral sources. Admission to Safe House is solely voluntary. Limited space is available for youth 14 and 15 for respite. The program is tailored to meet **ALL** the needs of each youth through a network of services and referrals.

October is....



November is....



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Preventing Suicide Among Runaway, Homeless and Trafficked Youth, *written by Melanie Puerto-Conte*

According to the Federal Administration of Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, Trafficked, homeless and runaway youth are at heightened risk for developing serious behavioral, emotional, and general health problems. Research from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation suggests that trafficked, homeless youth are more likely to experience mental health disorders such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), and suicidal ideation (2017). In addition, a 2014 National Health Care for Homeless Council (NHCH) study of homeless youth revealed the prevalence of having at least one psychiatric disorder may be up to 4 times greater than that of the national average of youth in the same age group, 82% and 19% respectively.

The prevalence of suicide attempts was indicated through a smaller study in 2008, which found that at 44 % of all homeless youth reported attempting suicide. A larger study also conducted in 2008 reported that 52% of the participants had multiple lifetime suicide attempts and two thirds had thoughts about suicide within the year prior to the survey (NHCH 2015).

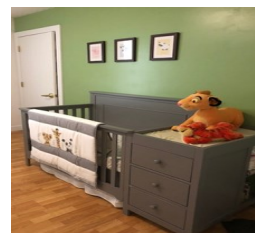
A 2019 study of 16–25-year old's found that 53% of homeless youth queried via the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) reported experiencing suicidal ideation during their lifetime. Sex trafficked, homeless youth were 3.87 times higher in reporting suicidal ideation. Of those trafficked youth reporting suicidal, 84.4 % has attempted suicide in their lifetime*.

Several protective factors can be put in place to help our youth to be safe from suicidal ideation: having a close, caring adult; good peer relationships; general connectedness; safe school and safe environments; reduced access to fire arms, alcohol, substances and prescription medications; heightened self- esteem; spirituality / faith/ strong belief systems; and Resources like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline : 1-800- 273-8255 (TALK)

•Frey, L.M, Middleton J., Gattis M.N. & Fulginiti, A (2019) Suicidal Ideation and behavior among youth victims of sex trafficking in Kentuckiana, The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Preven-



A great big **THANK YOU** to the **Carlilian Foundation** for providing a grant to Safe Inc. to purchase new furnishings for the youth shelter. Pictured below are a few of the items that were purchased . Thank you again Carlilian Foundation for your support of Safe Inc. and its Mission.



Getting to know our Community Partners



Fifteen years ago, Working Group on Girls (WGGs) of Schenectady founding Mothers saw a need to serve middle and high school girls in Schenectady. They were guided by the belief that every girl has the inherent strengths and abilities to succeed. Today, WGGs continues its journey, responding to girls' needs, creating a safe space for them to succeed, and growing a community that cares about girls. WGGs exists because girls need to build meaningful connections for healthy relationships and a successful future. We give social and emotional support to middle and high school girls in Schenectady by providing safe spaces and meaningful connections for them to develop their own voices.

Our community supporters and partners are numerous and active. The list includes the following: The Schenectady City School District, The City of Schenectady, Captain Community Human Services Schenectady County Safe Harbour Anti-Trafficking program, Safe Inc. of Schenectady Youth Shelter, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girls Inc., The League of Women's Voters, Schenectady County Public Library, Social Enterprise and Training Center, Hamilton Hill Arts, The Pride Center/ In Our Voices Center, All of Us , Black Lives Matter, Union College and Russell Sage College Women's Institute

For more information please contact: Simone Miranda: mirandasi@schenectady.k12.ny.us; Pam Carter-pcarter@nycap.rr.com or Laura LaFontaine- lalafontaine13@gmail.com



Getting to know our Community Partners



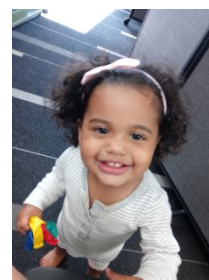
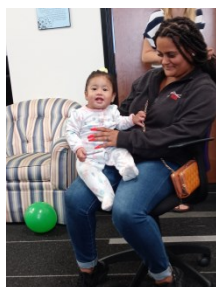
Young Parents United Inc.

Young Parents United, Inc. is a nonprofit organization supporting teen parents in the Capital Region. Located at 34 Jay Street and at 251 State Street in Schenectady, New York.

Young Parents United offers support services, advocacy and resource coordination designed to meet the unique needs of teen parents and their children. We look to break destructive cycles, open the doors for growth, and create opportunities to achieve successful outcomes for struggling teen parents here in our community. The impact is far reaching as we implement programs that build independence and teach life and parenting skills resulting in improved parenting, stability and self-sufficiency. When a parenting teen is in our care we also provide extensive case management, mentoring, basic needs and food support, laundry assistance, transportation, child development, educational programs, assistance with housing stability, educational assistance, employment assistance, childcare planning, a safety network, seasonal and holiday support, and much more. We also work with other organizations in the community to provide direction and support positive change for adolescent parents, their children and our community for generations to come.

Some highlights for 2021: we remained open and served our families all throughout the pandemic with safety protocols in place; we opened new location at 251 State Street; we implemented a *Relationship Skills Program* with YWCA; we implemented a *Managing Stress without Substances* with New Choices Counseling; we initiated a tablet loaner program to assist parents who are working remotely to achieve HS equivalency or college and; we continued developing the architectural design and plans for Transitional Housing Project for teen parents

Please visit the website for program information and more details at <https://www.youngparentunited.org> or email with any questions to info@youngparentsunited.org



Fostering Hope at Safe Inc.

CLIENT STORY *(Editor's Note: This is a former Project Safe client who used our services. Recently they stopped the office so we asked for an update. This is their story and their name is not being used for confidentiality reasons)*

I came to Safe House on a day when I felt that my life could not possibly get any worse; I left home because my father was emotionally and physically abusive. Sometimes I used to think that I was put on this earth to be abused because I have been hurt physically, emotionally, and sexually by people who I was supposed to be able to trust. I did not think that I would ever find a place where I would be able to get back on my feet due to my traumatic history and serious mental health diagnoses of Schizoaffective Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; then I found Safe House.

I truly appreciated the support that I received while at Safe House and all of the staff were so nice, encouraging and caring. While at Safe House I was able to work with staff on entering Mental Health Housing which was a huge step for me in admitting that it's okay to need support with mental health struggles. I spent some time at the Mental Health Housing and continued working with Safe Staff who helped make my transition easier. Eventually I decided that this housing program was not the best fit for me and began to fall into a pattern of making dangerous choices for myself; due to these choices I temporarily lost touch with Safe.

One day I found myself in an extremely dangerous situation and knew that if I wanted to live, I needed to get out of the environment I was in. I returned to Safe House and staff made me feel welcome even though it had been many months since we had last talked. Staff helped me re-unite with a family member temporarily so that I could save my money while I worked at a fast food restaurant.

Fast forward to today I am now living in a beautiful apartment, received my GED, and went onto college for human services. I met a wonderful man and have been together for many years now and I also have a beautiful daughter. Sometimes my current life seems too good to be true but I have come to realize that sometimes all you need to do is believe in yourself and you can accomplish anything. Thank you Safe for following up on me and remaining such a great resource for the youth in the community.



Did you know... October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, *written by Alex Boswell*

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of coercive behaviors used to get and keep power and control over a current or former intimate partner. Domestic violence shelters, in confidential locations, exist throughout New York State for individuals of all genders, ages 16 and older, and their dependent children. While Safe House is not a domestic violence shelter, we do work to remain cognizant and informed of the supportive services and safety planning necessary for the youth we serve who are navigating their safety without the need for a confidential location. In addition, we refer clients who identify as being in imminent danger due to intimate partner violence and/or commercial sexual exploitation to domestic violence shelters in order to access greater resources and safety planning.

Safety planning always entails mental/emotional, physical, sexual, financial, and cyber safety, with the goal of empowerment and autonomy for survivors. Many of our youth who experience intimate partner violence can identify with the safety concerns or control tactics shown via the Power and Control Wheel created and distributed by the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence. (<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/powercontrolwheelnoshading.pdf>) The first power and control wheel was initially created in 1984 by survivors who came together and identified the most common tactics of abusive partners. This marked the beginning of defining abusive relationships as a pattern of behaviors used for power and control and not only as the presence of physical violence.

At Safe House, we see how heightened vulnerability and homelessness among youth intersects with intimate partner violence. There is no issue that stands alone, so being aware of such intersections is pertinent in providing the best support possible. For example, some controlling partners may use the threat of homelessness or being kicked out as a control tactic. Other survivors may be running from an abusive partner and have nowhere else to go. Some runaway and homeless youth may have been preyed upon by an older and controlling dating partner and/or sex trafficker posing as a romantic partner to groom a young person for exploitation.

As we support youth in defining their boundaries, having a voice, and increasing access to resources, our goal is to work alongside youth to help decrease their vulnerability. For more information regarding Domestic Violence, the following websites are recommended: <http://www.ndvh.org/>, <https://www.dayoneny.org/>, <https://www.loveisrespect.org/>, and www.breakthecycle.org. To locate contact information for a shelter in your area, please visit <https://www.domesticshelters.org/>.

Community Support

Safe Inc. would like to extend a big **THANK YOU** to our community members, local businesses, foundations, and grant funders who continue to support Safe's Mission and allow our staff to continue to help those in need.

Amazon Smiles ▪ SUNY's Got Your Back ▪ BFF Fund of The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region

Bruce & Lisa Finkle ▪ RHYA ▪ Emergency Shelter Grant ▪ Community Development Block Grant ▪ Bagel's and Bakes ▪ Niskayuna Coop Market



Scott Brady, Tanasia Young, Nettie Crossman



A great big THANK YOU to Brian and Elizabeth Epstein for opening their summer home in Lake George, NY for An Evening by the Shore, fundraiser on September 2, 2021. It was a spectacular event enjoyed by all who attended.



Nettie Crossman, Elizabeth & Brian Epstein, Herb Crossman

THANK YOU

A special **THANK YOU** to **Meier Law Firm, PLLC** for donating their event space at Oktoberfest in Glenville, NY to Safe Inc. of Schenectady. Staff offered literature on Safe's services and made tie-dye masks with youth who stopped by our table. It was a great day with wonderful weather.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to the BOYS SCOUTS OF AMERICA, Twin Rivers Council/Mohawk District Scout Troop 3357G....



...for their donation of Chicken BBQ Dinners this past July. Scouts are known for doing good and as such, they delivered about 50 meals to help feed the homeless of Schenectady, including 12 dinners to Safe House (Safe Inc.'s Emergency Youth Shelter). Safe Inc. looks forward to partnering with you in the future.

How can YOU help?

Safe Inc. is always in need of clothing for our emergency youth shelter, Safe House. When a youth comes to Safe House, sometimes they come with only the clothes on their back. During the intake process staff provide a new, clean outfit for the youth.

Currently we are in need of these items for the youth that are here at Safe House:

MEN:

Boxers- S, M, L, XL

Tee-Shirts- S, M, L, XL

Sweat Pants- S, M, L, XL

Ankle socks

Deodorant

WOMEN:

Underwear: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Sport Bras: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Tee Shirts: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Sweat Pants/Yoga Pants: S, M, L, XL, XXL

Deodorant, conditioner, & hair ties

Brushes, picks, combs for all types of hair (Men & Women)

Duffle bags/travel bags/book bags (Men & Women)

You can also find a full wish list for the shelter at Amazon Wish List on Amazon.com. If you would like us to shop for this items you can donate three different ways: You can mail a check to Safe Inc., go to Safe Inc.'s website (www.safeincfschenectady.org) or use this QR code on your smart phone and you will be connected to PayPal.



Thank you to everyone that has donated to Safe Inc. Your donations have helped our youth and for that we are truly grateful.