

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

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Austin Children's Shelter and SafePlace Merge to become SAFE **Together, we can Stop Abuse For Everyone**

Austin, TX— Effective Jan. 1, 2017, Austin Children's Shelter (ACS) and SafePlace officially merged to become one agency – The SAFE Alliance, or SAFE, stop abuse for everyone. ACS and SafePlace are long-standing and respected human services agencies that have together or separately provided services for those experiencing sexual assault and exploitation, child abuse, and domestic violence. All programs and services previously offered and facilitated by ACS or SafePlace are continuing as programs of SAFE.

Operating with an annual projected budget of \$20 million, employing 350+, maintaining a 1,000+ volunteer force, and serving tens of thousands annually, SAFE represents a powerful voice for changing the dialogue, policies and beliefs around violence and abuse. Our vision is a just and safe community free from violence and abuse.

Why SAFE

Children who experience violence in the home are two-to-three times more likely to experience and/or perpetrate violence later in life. Children who witness intimate partner violence are six times more likely than their peers to experience violence as adults.¹ While this does not mean that violence and victimization are inevitable, it does strongly reinforce the importance of understanding the interconnectedness of the multiple forms of violence and abuse. That interconnectedness requires unified capacity, resources, and expertise.

"We are committed to never again seeing an abused child that is victimized as an adult; a little boy who watched his dad beat his mother and then later hurts his girlfriend; a battered woman who loses custody of her children because of abuse by their father; or all the other myriad examples of the epidemic of violence that is transferred person to person and generation to generation," explains Kelly White, CEO of SAFE.

By merging complementary organizations into something greater than the sum of its parts, SAFE can address violence and abuse in an efficient, holistic, effective way

How SAFE benefits the community

As the partnership that would become SAFE progressed, the organization saw increased opportunities for ending the cycle of violence across future generations, increased efficacy of crisis intervention services, and an amplification of our voice for social justice and social change.

"Becoming SAFE has allowed us to expand preventative programs like Expect Respect which works with teens and youths on understanding and building healthy relationships. It's helped us improve our Strong Start program by increasing staff's understanding of the interconnectedness domestic violence and child abuse, and increased their ability to respond most effectively." –Julia Spann, President of SAFE.

SAFE Campuses & Locations of Services

Housing, healing, and support services will continue to be offered at the Austin Children's Shelter Campus and at the SafePlace Campus. SAFE staff are also co-located or providing services at various sites including Planet SAFE, the Travis County and District Attorney's Offices, hospitals, AISD, Manor ISD, in homes and in several related courts.

For more information about services for abuse survivors, please visit safeaustin.org/help. If you need help, please call our 24/7 Hotline at 512.267.SAFE (7233). All calls are confidential and anonymous upon request.

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^{i i} Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016