



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

***“It is your road, and yours alone. Others may walk it with you,
but no one can walk it for you.” – Rumi***

This quote is exemplified by the experiences of the abused children—and their caregivers—who come through our doors at SafeSpot. The act of abusing a child has a domino effect on the people and events in the child’s world.

The person to whom the child first discloses the abuse is impacted. Oftentimes, the caregiver who is responsible for the child is devastated. However, occasionally family advocates listen to caregivers who question and even sometimes disbelieve a child. Meanwhile, forensic interviewers ask questions that cause the child to relive the abuse. Detectives must listen to each detail of the abuse to put together a solid case. Social workers hear the disclosure to make sure a child is safe. Prosecutors review case details over and over to prepare for trial. Finally, jurors must listen to all aspects of the case and decide an outcome based on facts. When child abuse is not investigated properly, any of the steps above can go horribly wrong.

SafeSpot was created to ensure both that investigations are collaborative, and that healing begins for everyone involved. SafeSpot provides a neutral forensic interview space for children to share their experience. Detectives and social workers watch the interview live, which limits the number of times a child must recall the abuse. Family advocates speak with the caregivers, both to help them process their emotions and to provide referrals to more resources in our community. Additionally, SafeSpot provides expert training opportunities for every investigator in order to ensure that their work follows a trauma-informed and evidence-based method.

SafeSpot has grown exponentially since our inception in 2012. We have provided services to thousands of Fairfax County children of abuse and their families. In 2019 alone, 479 children walked through our doors for a forensic interview. We hired a second full-time forensic interviewer, and we now conduct forensic interviews outside our normal business hours. 849 therapy sessions took place, and of the children who graduated from our therapy program, 100% exhibited decreased trauma symptoms.

SafeSpot successfully hosted numerous child-abuse-investigation training sessions for detectives, social workers, medical providers, prosecutors, and therapists.

By ensuring that child abuse investigations and recovery efforts are conducted collaboratively, we hope to provide children the strength and resilience to resume walking their road of life. Thank you for all you do to ensure that children are safe and healthy in Fairfax County.

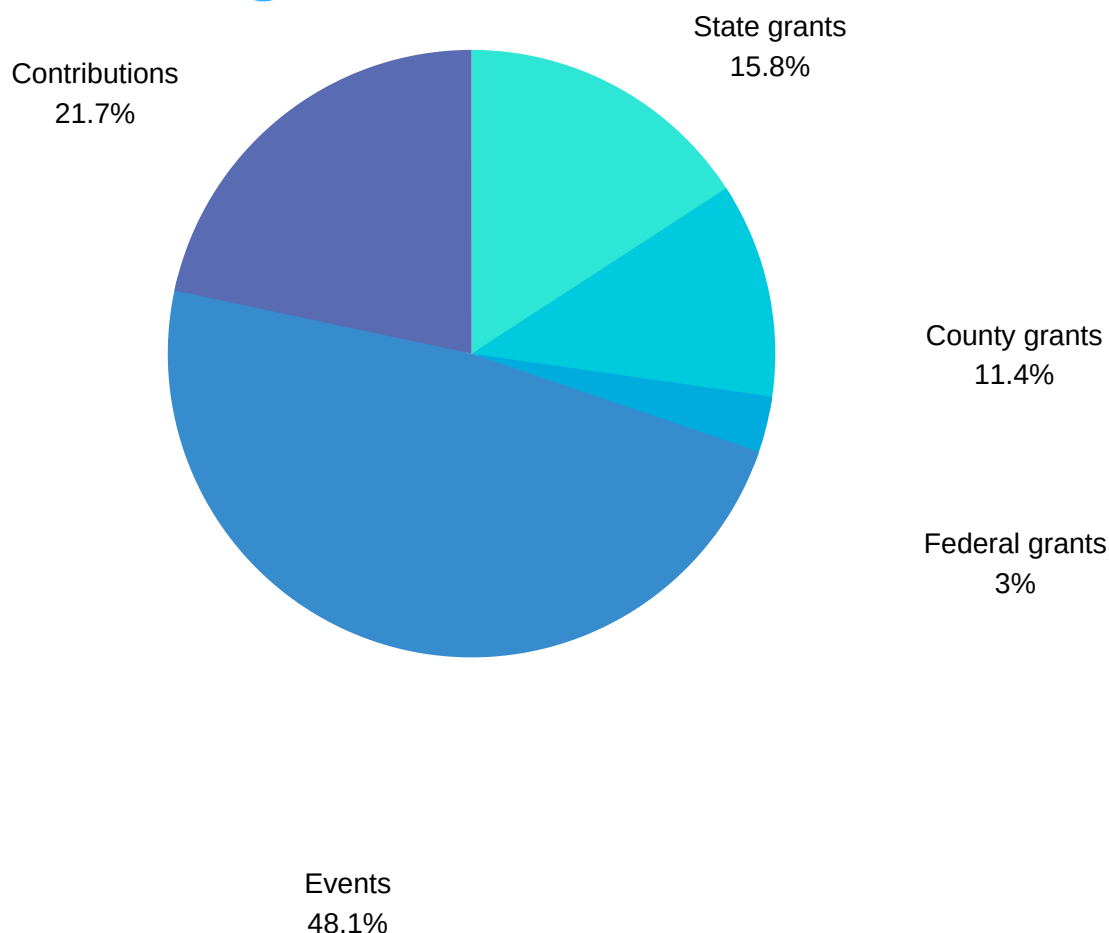
MICHELE THAMES

Executive Director

Key Accomplishments of 2019

- 479 **Forensic interviews** conducted by a trained professional
- 479 **Family advocacy** sessions where immediate support and crisis intervention were provided to caregivers
- Hired third, full-time forensic interviewer that provides interviews outside of normal business hours
- Hired third, full-time therapist which increased mental health services by 50%
- 848 individual therapy sessions with children
- 23 children graduated from our therapy program
- 100% of clients that completed **TF-CBT** reported a decrease in trauma symptoms

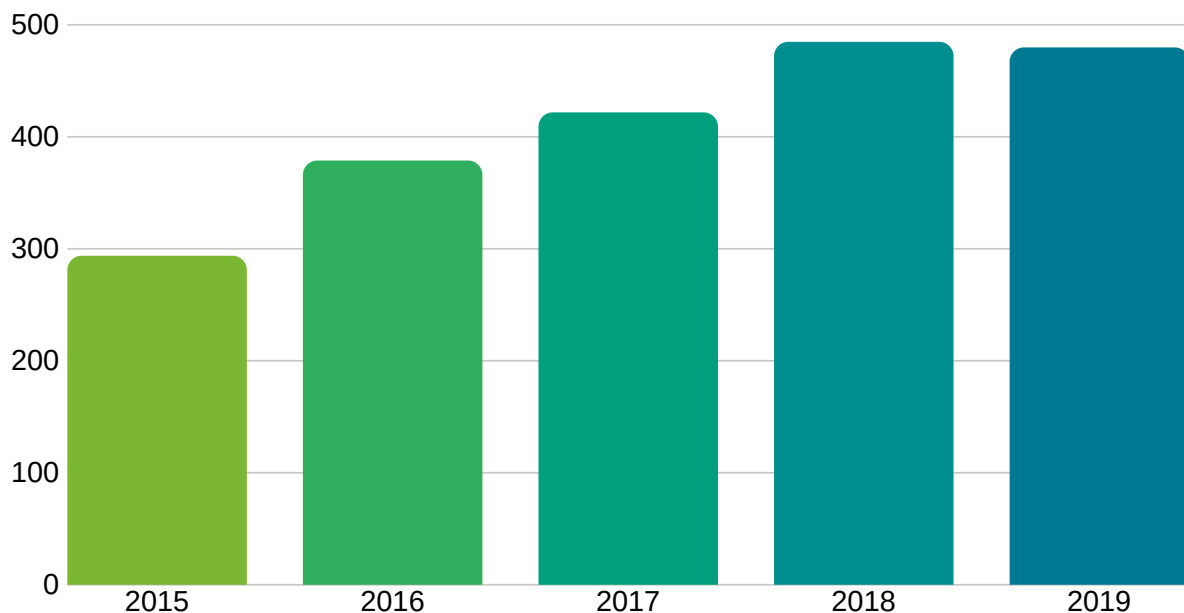
Funding Sources



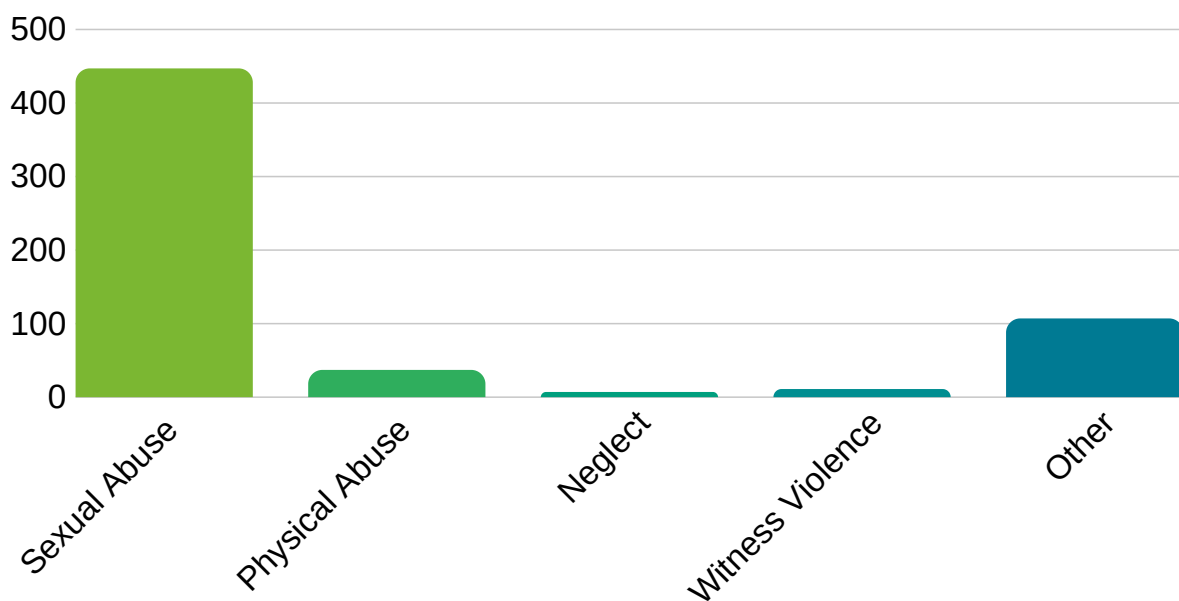
TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

The mission of SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax County is to provide a child-friendly, culturally sensitive environment that promotes the safety and well-being of child victims of abuse while facilitating a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team approach to the intervention, investigation, prosecution and treatment of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse.

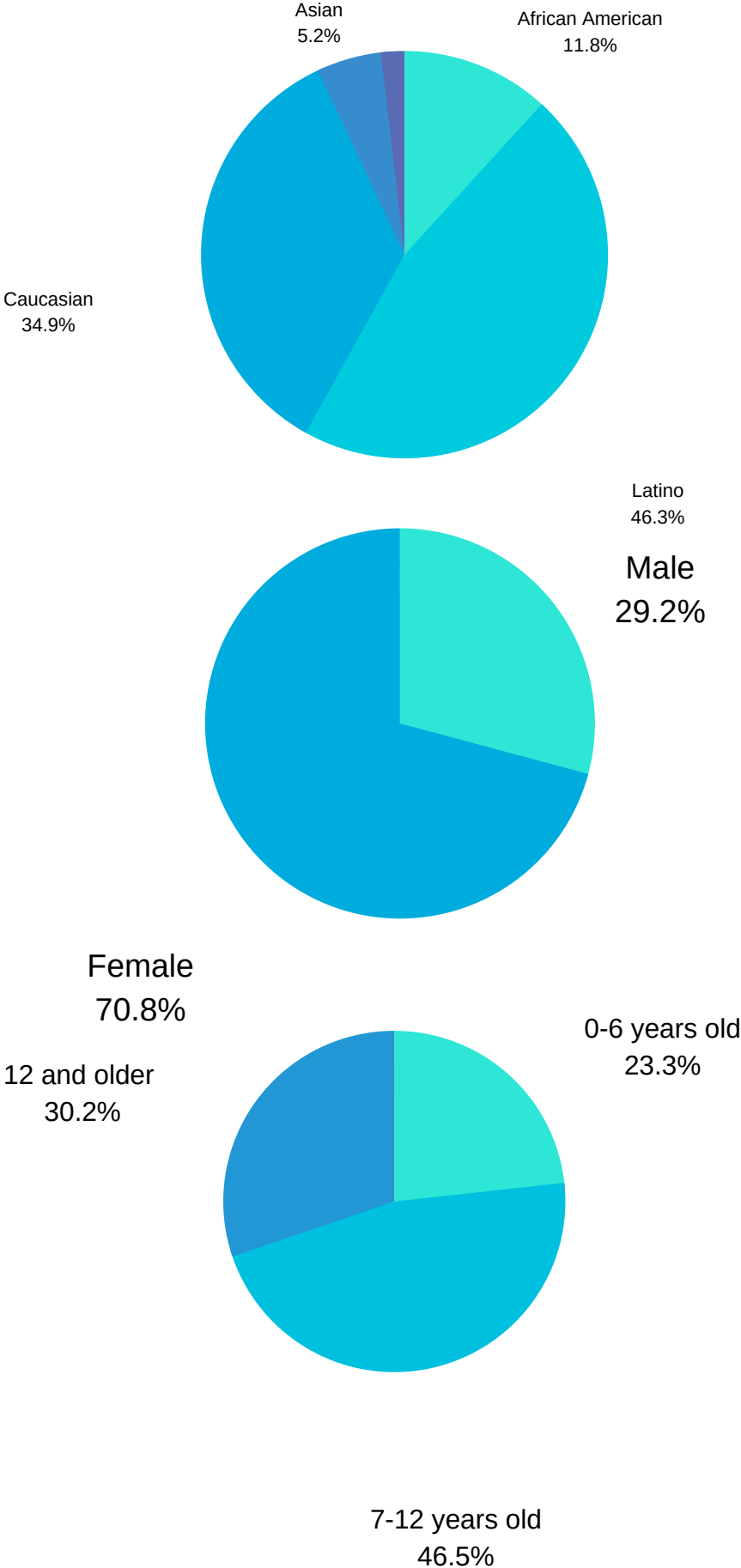
Children Served at SafeSpot



Type of Abuse Reported



Demographics



Cultural Competency



SafeSpot hired a bilingual staff member to ensure communication between families and multidisciplinary team members. Providing culturally competent services for our clients eases the investigative process for families.

Meaningful Masks



The use of masks in therapy has been used for years, especially as they can convey powerful emotion, and are representative of one's self. Here at SafeSpot, our art therapist on staff uses them as part of children's graduation from Trauma Focused-Cognitive Therapy (TF-CBT) services! Child survivors create their masks with a base of plaster bandages, like those used in hospitals for broken bones. This symbolic process empowers children to take charge of their own healing. Once the foundation is set, children reflect on their growth, and decorate the masks to symbolize their stronger, resilient selves!

How To Help

SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax County depends on the support of generous individuals, community groups, corporations, grants, foundations and local government funding to provide critical intervention to children who have been abused.

SafeSpot is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, and donations are tax deductible. Our federal tax identification number is 46-1358388.

Our mailing address is P.O. Box 148, Fairfax, Virginia 22038.

Or, visit our website at **www.safespotfairfax.org** and click the "**Donate**" button to quickly and easily donate online.

