



**SAFESPOT**

Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax County



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT

# Letter from the CEO



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we end 2023 and reflect on this year's triumph, I couldn't help but look to the future. One quote came to mind by award-winning author Richie Norton, who said, "Every sunset is an opportunity to reset. Every sunrise begins with new eyes." We will celebrate the success of 2023 and look to 2024 refreshed and in a new light, knowing the future will be even brighter. We know that none of this would be possible without the support and commitment from our donors and volunteers.

2023 marked the second year of our strategic plan, which focuses on strengthening our services and reaching even more children and families impacted by abuse in Fairfax County. This past year, our programs served 650 children and 558 caregivers. SafeSpot facilitated 2 new support groups for our caregivers and teens. The Caregiver Support Group provides nonoffending caregivers with a forum to network, gain education about the effects of abuse and trauma on their child/ren, and process their own complex feelings and emotions. The Teen Support Group provides teen girls with a safe place to discuss their experiences and participate in activities promoting self-care, positive thinking, and healthy relationships.

In an effort to grow our multidisciplinary team, SafeSpot built partnerships with the Criminal Investigation Division and Family Advocacy Program at Ft. Belvoir to ensure children living on the military base have direct access to SafeSpot. This partnership resulted in a 200% increase in forensic interview referrals from Ft. Belvoir from 2022 to 2023.

Our therapy team had a busy year as SafeSpot therapists were trained and certified in a new, evidence-based therapy treatment called Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI). The treatment, developed by the Yale Center for Traumatic Stress and Recovery, is an early, short-term intervention for children and adolescents aged 7-18 in the wake of disclosure of physical and sexual abuse with the goal of reducing symptoms and preventing the onset of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Over the course of 5-8 sessions, therapists work with the child and their caregiver to raise awareness of trauma symptoms, improve communication, and develop skills to help master trauma reactions. By adding this treatment option to our menu of therapeutic services, we can better adapt to the differing needs of the children we serve so they have the best possible outcomes.

Finally, SafeSpot received our 5-year reaccreditation from the National Children's Alliance (NCA). The NCA ensures that all Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the U.S. provide consistent, evidence-based services to help children heal from abuse. SafeSpot's reaccreditation demonstrates that our programs and services meet the rigorous standards as developed by more than 130 child abuse intervention professionals and experts following the latest evidence. We are proud to have renewed this accreditation for the next 5 years!

This year's success wouldn't have been possible without your support and generosity. On behalf of myself, our Board of Directors, staff, and everyone we serve, I thank you for your gifts of compassion, continued dedication to our mission, and the positive impact you make on the lives of children and families in Fairfax County. I look forward to another exceptional year ahead!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H. O'Malley".

Heather Lyn O'Malley  
CEO, SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax

## MISSION

*The mission of SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center is to provide a safe environment and support services for child abuse victims and their families as they navigate the investigation and aftermath of abuse.*

## VISION

*To reduce the trauma and improve the lives of child sexual abuse victims as they navigate the investigative, legal, and post-trauma treatment systems following an allegation of abuse.*

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jessica L. Greis Edwardson, *President*  
Denise Balzano, *Immediate Past President*  
Pat Harrison, *Vice President*  
Lauren Kushin, *Secretary*  
Phil Odeen, *Treasurer*  
Jessica Bourgeois  
Jim Burns\*  
Brook Carlon  
Debby Cochran  
Bryan Gibson  
Bootsie Humenansky  
Annette Kerlin  
Michelle Kingsley  
Andrew Klaff  
Armen Manoogian  
Claudia Manoogian  
Ralph Masino  
Tina Mather  
Jacqui McVey  
Marge Odeen  
Catie Price  
Charlie Price  
Clishia Taylor  
Randy Turk  
Jamie Weber\*  
TJ Weber\*

*\*Our most sincere gratitude to Jim Burns, Jamie Weber, and TJ Weber for their many years of board service!*

## 2023 JUNIOR BOARD

Nick DiChiara, *President*  
Paige Barger, *Vice President*  
Rick Gibson, *Secretary*  
Monica Cogo  
Nolan Dee  
Austin Diamond-Jones\*  
Austin High  
Robert Kang  
Ryan Klaff  
Cole McCarthy  
Andrew McClellan  
Christina Quint  
Emily Robinson

*\*Thank you Austin for your service on our Junior Board!*

GATE  
TICKETS  
ON SALE  
NOW

# CASINO ROYALE

*All-In for Children*

JUNE 1, 2024

FALLS CHURCH VA



For more information on  
purchasing tickets, scan the  
QR code!



# SAVE THE DATE

2024 CHAMPION'S FOR  
CHILDREN TOURNAMENT,  
COCKTAILS AND DINNER



MONDAY

**OCTOBER 21ST**

AT WESTWOOD  
COUNTRY CLUB



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*We believe that every child in Fairfax County has the right to receive prompt, thorough, and complete child-focused attention when abuse has been reported, using a best practices model that puts the needs of the child first. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for our clients, staff, multi-disciplinary team partners, volunteers, and vendors. We strive to fully integrate best practices in diversity and inclusivity in programs, human resources, and organizational governance, and we encourage our partners to do the same. We recognize that our team members are our most important asset, and we strive to ensure an environment for their growth and development in line with SafeSpot's business needs.*

## CORE VALUES

**Empathy**  
**Teamwork**  
**Respect**  
**Integrity**  
**Accountability**  
**Excellence**

## SAFESPOT STAFF

Heather O'Malley, Chief Executive Officer  
Michele Thames, Executive Director  
Carla Claudio-Silva, Forensic Interviewer  
Leannah Farbotko, Therapist  
Angela Haslett, Manager of Forensic Services  
Jazmin Jackson, Forensic Interviewer  
Lindsey Kerber, Clinical Director  
Shanice Madera, Forensic Interviewer  
Nesi Mahuiztl, Office Assistant  
Angela Niblett, Therapist  
Emily Perez, Therapist  
Artimis Silva, Program Coordinator  
Julia Stewart, Manager of MDT Advancement  
Jhareeze Villalba, Family Advocate  
Valeria Zanetti, Office Assistant  
Virgil, Facility Dog

## Our Impact

January 2023 - December 2023

**650** Children and families were served at SafeSpot.

### FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

**662** Forensic Interviews were conducted by a highly trained child interview specialists to assess safety, gather evidence, and support justice and community safety.

**94%** of children surveyed reported that Center staff were helpful, or very helpful in making them feel safe.

**99%** of children surveyed reported that Center staff were good or very good at listening to them.

### FAMILY ADVOCACY

**558** Nonoffending caregivers received advocacy services including crisis counseling, community resource referrals, and guidance on how best to support their child(ren).

**94%** of caregivers surveyed agreed that they knew what to expect with the situation facing their child and family after visiting SafeSpot.

**100%** of caregivers surveyed reported that SafeSpot staff provided them with resources to support their child and respond to their needs in the days and weeks ahead.

**95%** of caregivers surveyed agreed that SafeSpot did everything it could to help their child and themselves.

# Our Impact

January 2023 - December 2023

## MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY

102

Children received trauma-focused therapy to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, address negative behaviors, build coping strategies, and regain the ability to form trusting, healthy relationships.

89%

of children who completed therapy in 2023 demonstrated a decrease in trauma-related symptoms.

51

booster sessions were provided to children who needed additional support post-graduation.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

10

Member agencies of the Fairfax County Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). Close coordination with our partners ensures each child and family receives wrap-around services that reduce trauma and prioritize safety and healing.



Office of the Fairfax  
Commonwealth's  
Attorney



VSD  
VICTIM SERVICES DIVISION



*"I have the utmost trust for the leadership SafeSpot provides, the environment they take great effort to create, and the continuous improvements in the process they bring about. They are an indispensable benefit to our community and help our system better serve children and families." -MDT Partner*

# ***Kayla's Journey of Courage and Healing***



10-year-old Kayla lives with her 6-year-old sister Tiffany and their mother Carly. She loves art, video games, and playing with her German Shepherd Pizza. This year, Kayla joined the school band and is learning to play the clarinet. But her absolute favorite thing, by far, is being a big sister to Tiffany.

In fall of 2023, Kayla was brought to SafeSpot for a forensic interview after confiding to her mother that her father was touching her in a way that made her feel uncomfortable.

While talking to the forensic interviewer, Kayla disclosed that her father had been physically and sexually abusing her for over a year. She was only able to overcome her fear and tell her mother because she was worried that Tiffany would become his next victim. After learning of the abuse Kayla faced, Tiffany was brought to SafeSpot for a precautionary forensic interview, though no indication of abuse was found. While observing both interviews, law enforcement was able to gather enough information to successfully petition the court for an emergency protective order to keep Kayla and Tiffany safe, and to begin the criminal investigation.

When Carly met with the SafeSpot family advocate, she expressed feelings of anger and sorrow, as well as guilt for allowing Kayla and Tiffany to have unsupervised visitations with their father. Carly had been struggling since divorcing their father the previous year, and now felt like their world was falling apart. While she wanted to be strong for her girls, she didn't have the resources to know how. Immediately, the SafeSpot family advocate began working on a plan to support Carly so she could support Kayla and Tiffany. Carly's first concern was finding safe after-school care for the girls as her work schedule prevented her from being home and she was fearful their father would defy the protective order if they were left with a babysitter. While working with our partners in the school system, the advocate was able to get Kayla and Tiffany enrolled in the School Age Child Care (SACC) Program where they could enjoy painting and other activities while Carly was at work.

Carly was placed in SafeSpot's new Caregiver Support Group where she was able to express her own feelings, connect with parents going through similar situations, and learn skills and strategies to best support Kayla and Tiffany. The entire family also received numerous holiday gifts, thanks to our generous donors, by participating in SafeSpot's Winter Wishes program.



As Carly was working with the advocate, Kayla began meeting with a SafeSpot therapist. The therapist began by conducting a mental health assessment, which showed that Kayla was demonstrating very high trauma-related symptoms and would therefore most benefit from trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT). Over the course of several months, Kayla and her therapist worked to address the invasive thoughts of guilt, fear, and anger that were dominating her waking and sleeping mind, and to re-organize her thinking in a healthier and happier way. Kayla loved starting each session with a cup of hot chocolate, practicing deep breathing with her therapist to the comforting smells of mint and cocoa. As the sessions progressed, Kayla learned that the abuse was not her fault, nor had she been powerless; in fact, she had been powerful by coming forward to help herself and her sister.



Carly has been an active participant in her daughter's care, checking in with the therapist after each session and practicing the new skills and communication techniques she has built through the support group. Together with their therapist, Carly and Kayla have also been learning how to talk with Tiffany about what happened in a way that makes her feel safe and loved. While they continue to work on their path of healing, their future looks hopeful and bright.

# Meet Our New Junior Board President Nolan Dee!



Nolan Dee, originally from Kings Mountain, North Carolina, graduated with a Bachelor's in Finance from Wofford College back in 2020. He was first introduced to SafeSpot by Ryan Klaff, another member of the Junior Board, in 2021. As he starts his new role as Junior Board President, he reflects on his first thoughts of SafeSpot. "What stood out to me the most about the organization is its strict and local presence to Fairfax County. All the work and funds channeled through SafeSpot make a difference to families in our backyard."

When asked what led to the decision to take on this role he said, "Stepping into the role as Junior Board President will allow me to push the Junior Board to the best version of itself by helping families in the Fairfax community and supporting executive board initiatives."

Nolan's priorities for the Junior Board this upcoming year are to work with the Board of Directors and provide support for SafeSpot's Casino Royale and Champions for Children Golf Tournament.

We are so grateful for his leadership on the Junior Board and look forward to seeing all the success from this team in the upcoming year!

## What our Families are Saying About SafeSpot:

"It's very welcoming and makes you feel like you can tell them anything."

-Child served at SafeSpot

"They reassure you that everything is ok."

-Child served at SafeSpot

"Everyone's energy did not feel like their job was a burden. All smiles even when my boys were misbehaving."

-Caregiver served at SafeSpot

"We are so grateful for the help SafeSpot gave our child. There is still work to be done, but I have no doubt that our child's story would be very different if SafeSpot had not been there to help us right away."

-Caregiver served at SafeSpot



# 2023 Financial Overview

It is only through the generous support of our community that we are able to provide comprehensive services to children and families touched by the trauma of abuse, all at no cost to the family. We are grateful to have earned the confidence of our donors, and we strive to be good stewards of the financial contributions with which we have been entrusted. Below is look at our financials from 2023.\*

*SafeSpot is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Our federal tax identification number is 46-1358388. If you would like to make a donation, visit our website at [www.SafeSpotFairfax.org](http://www.SafeSpotFairfax.org), or mail you donation to P.O. Box 148, Fairfax, Virginia 22038.*

*\*Financials listed below are unaudited.*

## Revenue: \$1,798,100.44

Government Grants   Contributions   Special Events and Other Income



## Expenses: \$1,544,261.37

Salaries & Benefits   Programs & Services   Management & Fundraising



SafeSpot is proud to have earned the recognition of national and regional charity reviewers



As well as the endorsement of the National Children's Alliance and Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia





# SafeSpot in the Community

SafeSpot staff, volunteers, and supporters were out and about the community throughout 2023. From the **Passion for Fashion Fundraiser** to our annual **Champion's for Children Golf Tournament**, we are always grateful for the opportunity to bring attention, resources, and awareness to our community's most vulnerable children and families. 2023 was a particularly special year as SafeSpot celebrated 10 years of providing service!



*First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin to our Center, along with Chief of Staff Colleen Messick and Commissioner Nelson Smith of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.*

including the presentation of a proclamation recognizing SafeSpot for 10 years of service to Fairfax County's children and the community. "SafeSpot has been an exceptional partner to the County for the past 10 years. The organization provides valuable resources and services that put the County in the best position."

SafeSpot celebrated 10 years of providing services to child victims of abuse and their families. On Thursday, April 20, 2024, with the theme of "Helping Hands, Healing Hearts", SafeSpot showed its gratitude to all the people who have helped them bring safety, justice, and healing to more than 4,100 children and families in Fairfax County. April, being Child Abuse Prevention Month, was the ideal timing for the celebration.

SafeSpot's 10th Anniversary Celebration included remarks by Jeffrey McKay, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors,



*Board President Jessica L. Greis Edwardson and CEO Heather O'Malley celebrated SafeSpot's 10th Anniversary with members of the Board Directors and donors.*

# PASSION FOR Fashion

...and the children we serve

**SafeSpot's Passion for Fashion Show and Fundraiser** returned to the Tyson's Corner Bloomingdale's in 2023! Guests enjoyed the latest Spring styles, delicious bites and drinks, and exciting silent and live auction items - all in support of the children and families served by SafeSpot.

**Special thanks to event Co-Chair's Kathy Dominguez and Jennings Johnston** for their tireless energy and commitment. **A special thank you to our Mistress of Ceremonies, News4 Melissa Mollet and Auctioneer Phil Simonides!** Because of these incredible people, and all of the dedicated members of the Fashion Show Volunteer Committee, we raised \$215,000 for abused children in our community. Thank you to all our sponsors, guests, and models, as well as the amazing team at Bloomingdale's!



## SafeSpot Says Good to Michele and Virgil



Michele Thames joined SafeSpot at a pivotal time in the agency's early growth, leading the development and expansion of our multidisciplinary team, the establishment of our mental health and family advocacy programs, and the addition of facility dog program. The contributions she made to SafeSpot and the Fairfax community will be felt for years and generations to come.

We wish her the best of luck in her new role as a Child Forensic Interview Specialist with the FBI, where she continues advocating for the safety and well-being of children.

# Champion's for Children



The 2023 Champions For Children Eagles n' Aces Tournament was another success!

With 29 foursomes, 37 sponsors and more than 200 dinner guests, it was a day and night to remember! With the support from all of our sponsors, golfers, dinner guests, and volunteers, we raised more than \$309,000 for children and families impacted by abuse. *Special thanks to our event chair Bobby Johnson, Sponsorship Chair Andy Klaff, Auctioneer Phil Simonides, Guest Emcee Storm Team 4 Chief Meteorologist Doug Kammerer, Auction Chairs Jill Feeko and Jenny Johnson, Volunteer Lead Ruth Franke and our Pickleball Co-Chairs Jenny Johnson and Angelique Bennet!*



## Snacks, Supplies, and Seasonal Gifts

With another year of record numbers of children and families served in 2023, there was an increased demand for healthy snacks, art supplies, and therapeutic toys and books. Thankfully, our caring community met the need for us. Through our **Amazon Wishlist**, and the new **Winter Wishes** program, our supporters donated hundreds of items to make our Center successful and to help our families celebrate the holidays.

If you would like to purchase a much-needed item from our Amazon Wish list, please visit our website at [www.SafeSpotFairfax.org](http://www.SafeSpotFairfax.org) or scan the QR code to learn how.





*"They helped me feel comfortable when opening up to them and everyone was very kind. I loved my experience with them."*

*-Child served at SafeSpot*

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**[www.SafeSpotFairfax.org](http://www.SafeSpotFairfax.org)**