



## Find a Safe Haven at SafeSpot

### Director's Message

Dear SafeSpot Advocates,

I hope this edition of our newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and in good spirits. As I write to you today, I am in my fourth week as SafeSpot's Managing Director, and the critical role SafeSpot plays within our community is already clearly apparent. It has been a humbling and inspiring experience to learn the many ways in which our Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) creates happier outcomes and healthier futures for children and families impacted by abuse.

While new to SafeSpot and the CAC model, I have rapidly come to appreciate SafeSpot's unique partnerships and collaborations. The commitment of our Multi-disciplinarian team (MDT)\* is the foundation on which we ensure justice, safety, and healing for our most vulnerable children. I am grateful for the strength and dedication displayed by every one of our partners.

My gratitude also extends to the SafeSpot staff, which is comprised of passionate and highly skilled professionals, all deeply dedicated to serving children victims and their families. One of these such individuals is Michele Thames, SafeSpot's Executive Director. Her leadership and vision are to be commended and I feel very fortunate to be partnering with such an experienced advocate as we lead SafeSpot into the future. When I reflect on all of the amazing individuals, who make SafeSpot's vital community response possible, I am reminded of the well known quote by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Speaking of the world, the last few months have been tumultuous. Like everyone else, SafeSpot adjusted to the "new normal" way of living and operating in the presence of COVID-19. As an essential service, our Center remained open and our team continued to serve children and families in need. While conducting up to five forensic interviews per day, we have taken extra steps to ensure the safety and health of

clients, staff, and partners, such as requiring face masks, conducting health questionnaires, and mandating temperature checks. Our Family Advocate is meeting both in-person and virtually with family members to listen, support, and connect them to resources. To ensure that every child continues to receive personalized, trauma-focused therapy, we have temporarily transitioned to a telehealth model. I encourage you to take a few moments to familiarize yourself with this communication mode, by reading the article below on Telehealth, co-written by our Clinical Director, Lindsey Kerber, LCSW.

We know that the only constant in life is change. While these unprecedented times will require continued flexibility in *how* we deliver services to children and families impacted by abuse, the *why* we deliver such services will never change. Our commitment to helping child victims of abuse move toward healing with resilience and stability has never been stronger or needed more. Thank you for being our partner in that commitment.

With Appreciation,  
Heather O'Malley  
Managing Director

\*MDT Partners = Fairfax County and City Police, Herndon Police, Child Protective Services, Victims Services, the Commonwealth's Attorney Office, INOVA Hospital, and Fairfax County Public Schools

## News of Note

### The Show Must Go On! 2020 Champions for Children Tournament & Dinner Monday, October 26th



We plan to hold the 2020 Champions for Children golf tournament, tennis round robin and early evening festivities, while staying mindful of the protocols needed to ensure participant safety! So please mark your calendars for Monday, October 26th, at the Westwood Country Club. There is no doubt that tournament committee will create a good time for every participant at all commitment levels!

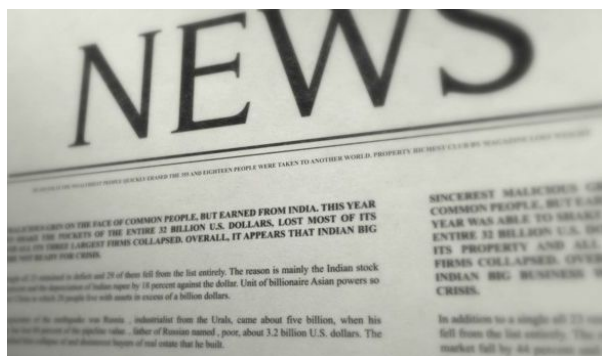
[More Detail & Registration](#)

If you would like to volunteer for the Champions for Children event, please contact Meghan Molinini by using the below link.

[Event Volunteer](#)

### Maintaining Therapy Via Telehealth Sessions

### SafeSpot in The News! Look out for Pinwheels!!



While healthcare workers struggled to save patients who suffered from the COVID19 virus, SafeSpot feared that our society was also suffering from an increase in child abuse. Unfortunately, gathering accurate abuse statistics during this particular time frame is near impossible. Yes, the rise in broken bones and head traumas took a notable jump, but it is highly unlikely that the guardians accompanying the injured children to the hospitals reported abuse as the cause.

*"The physical abuse cases that we are seeing are kids that are being severely physically abused and needing medical treatment. Kids with broken bones, kids with visible bruises, kids with head injuries," said SafeSpot's Forensic Interviewer, Angela Haslett in Fairfax, Virginia.*

What we do know, is that without extra eyes on Fairfax County's children and with added financial pressures and increased time spent at home, children are at risk. What happens at home, is more likely to stay at home during isolation.

The one fortunate outcome was the rise in publicity for the child abuse epidemic. Broadened awareness for such a serious problem will hopefully lead to more aid, more information, and less tolerance for abusive behaviors. In April, SafeSpot's Michele Thames helped to expand this

## Reaching Clients Online!



Telehealth is the distribution of health-related services and information via electronic, online technology. It allows for long-distance patient and clinician communication, care, advice, reminders, education, intervention, and monitoring.

Telehealth was an ideal answer to a less than ideal situation - the COVID19 pandemic. Although in-person restrictions were in place, telehealth allowed the Virginia CAC's to continue delivering integral evidence-based, trauma-focused treatment services. However, if the telehealth therapy was truly going to work, the SafeSpot CAC insisted on the following: keep fidelity to the Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) model, maintain client privacy, and create ways to maintain connection and engagement despite being physically separated. The therapists engaged in careful conversations with each caregiver to identify and plan for sessions in which the child felt that their privacy was being respected. With altered therapy protocols and reassurances in place, therapeutic work from home continued to pave a healthier pathway for CAC clients.

Please enjoy the following article, which illustrates the telehealth program in more detail. Spotlights written by: Lindsey Kerber, LCSW with SafeSpot CAC, Lisa Wright, LCSW, RPT-S with GRSCAN CAC and Kristina Golden, PsyD with CHKD CAC. Edited by: Charlotte Eure, MSW, GRSCAN

[Telehealth Article](#)

## Board of Director's Update

*Thank You Essential SafeSpot Employees!*

Jim Burns, Vice President on the SafeSpot Board of Directors, happily joined the SafeSpot Staff Retreat to thank everyone for their dedication and flexibility throughout the last few COVID19 pandemic months. Sustaining a safe haven for so many young victims of abuse, despite the involved health risks, was indeed a selfless act. One of which was driven by pure compassion. He noted that the measures taken to ensure access to SafeSpot's Children's Advocacy Center, were greatly appreciated by all members of the Board.

awareness by submitting a letter to the Editor, outlining the necessity of Children Advocacy Centers. This letter was published by the Fairfax Connection and within it she wrote,

*"Fortunately, SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) of Fairfax County provides critical recovery services to these young victims (of abuse) while safeguarding their rights, and SafeSpot's presence is especially vital during this COVID-19 pandemic."*

Several professionals across the country, echoed this sentiment and more as they were quoted by news organizations, such as CBS News and The Washington Post. These caring individuals all delivered the same message, **"Stay-at-home orders amid pandemics create a perfect storm for child abuse."**

[CBS News](#)

[Washington Post](#)

[Fairfax Connection](#)

## The Junior Board: Always Active! *Be a Part of The Solution!*



Join other young professional adults, who are giving back to the community and supporting the fight against child abuse.

[Inquire or Join us!](#)

[Visit our website](#)

## A Simple Way to Provide a Smile



Amazon Smile is an easy and automatic way for you to support SafeSpot as you shop on Amazon.

After you designate SafeSpot as your charity choice, via [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation to SafeSpot!!

### Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

### How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?

On your first visit to AmazonSmile [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation.

### Can I change my charity?

Yes, you can change your charity any time. To change your charity, sign in to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) on your desktop or mobile phone browser and simply select "Change your Charity" in "Your Account."

Smile Amazon

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## OUR MISSION:

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.

## STAY CONNECTED

