



## SafeSpot Speaks! Spring '23

Dear SafeSpot Friend,

I hope this message finds you healthy and in good spirits! This year marks **SafeSpot's ten year anniversary**, and we are elated to celebrate the impact we have made in the lives of children and their families since opening our doors in 2013. As you will read below, the SafeSpot story is one of people coming together to prioritize the needs of children and caregivers as they navigate the confusing and frightening aftermath of abuse. Each of us - from our staff and volunteers, to our donors and partners - shares a fierce determination to reduce trauma, coordinate care, and build a safer community for our children. As we enter our second decade of service to the Fairfax community, I can guarantee that fierce determination remains stronger than ever!



I am excited to share that we have many opportunities to engage with SafeSpot and raise awareness about child abuse this Spring. April 1st marks the beginning of **Child Abuse Prevention Month**, a time to recognize the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. I hope you will follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) as we share facts, stories, and prevention tips throughout the month. I also hope to see you at one or more of our upcoming events, such as **Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day**, or the **9th Annual Passion for Fashion Show & Fundraiser**, both of which are highlighted below. I also want to draw your attention to the message below from our **new Board President, Jessica Greis Edwardson**. As an experienced prosecuting attorney who has been a leading advocate for child survivors in our community, Jessica brings an abundance of expertise, tenacity, and enthusiasm with her!

Finally, I want to share a special message of gratitude for **Denise Balzano** who ended her ten-year term as SafeSpot's Board President this past December (though she remains an integral member of the Board and SafeSpot community). For those who know Denise, you know what a strong, passionate advocate she is for SafeSpot and the children and families we serve. Under her leadership, SafeSpot grew from a volunteer-led organization serving less than a hundred children per year, to a 14 person, professional staff that served over 630 children last year. Hers is a legacy of love and compassion that we will celebrate at SafeSpot for decades to come!

With Appreciation,

**H. L. O'Malley**

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

**SafeSpot Celebrates 10 Years of Impact!**



Ten years ago, SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax County opened our doors to children and families impacted by the pain and trauma of sexual abuse. **Since that time, we have served more than 4,100 children and their nonoffending caregivers in their pursuit of safety, justice, hope, and healing.** But we did not achieve this alone. The impact SafeSpot has had on the lives of so many in our community is the direct result of the countless "helping hands" who joined with us to prioritize the needs of child survivors and their families. In honor of SafeSpot's ten year anniversary, we would like to thank the many individuals and groups who help us achieve our mission each and every day.

Thank you to the member agencies of our **Multidisciplinary Team** for ten years of successfully partnering to coordinate care and advocacy for children and caregivers. This includes Fairfax City and County Police, Herndon Police, Vienna Police, Victim Services, Fairfax County Child Protective Services, Fairfax County Public Schools, the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, and the INOVA Hospital Forensic Assessment and Consultation Team.

**Our gratitude also goes out to all of the generous individuals, foundations, and corporations that have invested in our work over the years.** Whether you sponsored an event, bought a ticket, secured a grant, or engaged your employer or community group to collect snacks and drinks for the Center - you are the catalyst for every healthy, happy future born at SafeSpot. Your support has never wavered, allowing us introduce new programs and serve more children and families each year.

To our tireless **Board of Directors, Junior Board, event Chair's and volunteers** thank you for your gifts of time, talent, passion, and creativity. Each of you is a force for good that multiplies our reach and impact in the community, and we are so appreciative.

Finally, a very special thanks the three dynamic women who, more than a decade ago, saw a gap in our community for vulnerable children and stepped up to found SafeSpot. Thanks to their dedication, commitment, and hard work, Fairfax County children have a safe place where they are heard, believed, and supported. **Thank you, Denise Balzano, Bootsie Humenansky, and Bridget Rainey for your fearless leadership and vision.**

As we look back in celebration on all that we have achieved in the past ten years for children and families impacted by abuse, we also look to the future and our next ten years of impact. And we hope that each of you will continue the journey with us, for together, we can achieve anything!

## A Message from SafeSpot's New Board President

I am honored to serve as SafeSpot's new Board President and am excited to continue to work alongside our dedicated board members and amazing staff. As a former prosecutor in Fairfax County, I had the pleasure of working with SafeSpot's forensic interviewers, family advocates and therapists for many years. To say that SafeSpot makes a difference in the lives of the children and the caregivers they assist is an understatement. SafeSpot's impact is beyond measure.

Joining the board has been one of the most rewarding opportunities I have ever had. I am proud of our board's commitment and advocacy for children, which has been unwavering for ten years. Ten years! Denise, Bootsie, and Bridget founded SafeSpot a decade ago, and it is incredible to see how this organization has grown and how the community, from the children to our multi-disciplinary team partners, has benefited from the vision and



efforts of our board, our donors, and the staff at SafeSpot. I look forward to continuing the legacy of our founders.

– Jessica L. Greis Edwardson

## Did We Say Free Ice Cream? You Bet!



SafeSpot is proud to be partnering with the **Fairfax Corner Ben & Jerry's** to spread love and awareness through free ice cream!

Join us anytime between **12-8pm on Monday, April 3rd** for your free cone (or cup). Even better, bring your colleagues, friends, and family to learn more about SafeSpot's programs and services while enjoying a sweet treat. Donations will be gratefully accepted, though they are not required.

**Ben & Jerry's @ Fairfax Corner**  
4205 Fairfax Cor Ave E  
Fairfax, VA 22030

If you are interested in joining the volunteer team, please email Nolan Dee at [nolan.dee@bonaventure.com](mailto:nolan.dee@bonaventure.com).

## Mark Your Calendar's for the 2023 Passion for Fashion Show & Fundraiser

**Tickets Go On Sale**  
**Monday, April 3rd!**

Now in its' 9<sup>th</sup> year, the **Passion for Fashion Show & Fundraiser** will be returning on Friday, **June 2nd** to the **Tysons Corner Center** **Bloomingtondale's**.

Guests will enjoy an evening of cocktails, passed hors d'oeuvres, exciting silent and LIVE auction items, and a curated shopping experience based on the newest trends shown on the runway.

Last year, this impactful event raised more than \$160,000 to support SafeSpot's programs for children and families impacted by abuse. We hope you will join us this year as we raise even more for the children and families who need our help in the days, weeks, and months to come.

Learn how to become a 2023 Passion for Fashion Sponsor, donate a item or service to our silent or LIVE auction, or volunteer by visiting our website at [www.safespotfairfax.org/passion-for-fashion](http://www.safespotfairfax.org/passion-for-fashion), or reach out to Heather O'Malley at [homalley@SafeSpotFairfax.org](mailto:homalley@SafeSpotFairfax.org).



## Did you Know? SafeSpot Has A Wish List

**SafeSpot's Amazon Wish List** provides an easy way to support the children and families



visiting our Center. Simply add one or more of the items on our Wish List to your cart before you check out, and Amazon does the rest. From healthy snacks and drinks to art and play therapy supplies, you can trust that your donation will make a difference in the life of a child or family!



[Shop SafeSpot's Amazon Wish List](#)

## SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center of Fairfax

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

