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National Safe Place Week Celebrates Safe Place Program for Youth

Crisis Center operates local Safe Place program

GARY, IND. MARCH 19, 2017 – National Safe Place Network (NSPN) is pleased to announce March 19-25, 2017 as National Safe Place Week. The nationally recognized week serves to raise awareness about the Safe Place program, which brings together businesses and volunteers to provide help and safety for youth facing abuse, neglect, bullying or serious family problems.

“Unfortunately, young people face troubling issues in today’s world and it’s up to all of us to offer solutions, places where youth can go to get help,” said Laurie Jackson, President / CEO for NSPN. “National Safe Place Week is the perfect opportunity for communities across the country to assess and strengthen their safety net for youth.”

It is estimated that more than one million youth run away from home each year due to abuse, neglect, family conflicts and other issues. The Safe Place program is an option for young people who feel they have nowhere to turn or who feel endangered by their situation. In 2015, Lake and Porter county police reported 1,371 youth had run or been pushed out of their home.

Safe Place consists of a national network of more than 20,000 partnering businesses and community locations, such as fast-food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, public buses and libraries, which display the Safe Place sign in their windows. As youth enter the designated Safe Places and ask for help, trained staff members connect them to the appropriate youth shelter for assistance. National Safe Place Week recognizes participating Safe Place locations, community supporters and volunteers for their unwavering dedication to the safety and well being of at-risk youth.

The Safe Place program, operated locally by Crisis Center, Inc. in Gary’s Miller Beach Community. They partner with businesses and community organizations to provide immediate safety and support for local youth. Safe Place site locations include stationary and mobile locations spanning all of Lake and Porter counties.

“Screens are the new streets,” said Gavin Mariano, LSW, Program Manager of Safe Place. “That’s why we want to emphasize that young people who need help from a crisis can text the word, “SAFE” to 69866 to get the nearest site information, as well as having the option to text interactively with a mental health professional.” Nevertheless, Mariano has recently visited dozens of schools and police stations on a face-to-face tour. Recently, schools in Portage, Merrillville, Lake Station, and Hobart have invited Mariano to distribute Safe Place wrist bands

and cards. Law enforcement from both counties also continue to help youth by transporting them to the shelter during a crisis via the Center's 'Safely Home' ongoing partnership with police.

The Safe Place program has helped more than 344,000 youth since its inception in 1983 and currently serves more than 1,400 communities across the country. It is managed by 139 youth agencies in 37 states and the District of Columbia.

There are 160 stationary sites, and 189 mobile sites in Lake and Porter County. Last year, over 110 youth were sheltered via Safe Place / Safely Home.

About National Safe Place Network

National Safe Place Network (NSPN) provides quality training and technical support for youth and family service organizations across the country. Along with being a leading membership organization offering tailored organizational development, training and professional development packages, NSPN also operates the nationally recognized programs Safe Place, Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC) and Human Trafficking: Recognition, Respect, Response (HTR³). To learn more, please visit www.nspnetwork.org or www.nationalsafeplace.org.

About Crisis Center, Inc.

The Crisis Center is a multi-faceted crisis intervention & prevention agency for youth, adults & families. The Center, incorporated in 1974, has helped tens of thousands of individuals with programs & services such as emergency & long-term shelter for youth, counseling services, juvenile delinquency prevention, crisis hotline referrals, and runaway & homeless youth outreach. The Center is a 501 C 3 organization servicing youth and individuals primarily in Lake and Porter counties. To learn more, please visit www.crisiscenterysb.org or www.facebook.com/crisiscenterwi or call (219) 938-7070 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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