



News Release

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Friends of Youth Celebrates Addition of EvergreenHealth Emergency Rooms as New King County Safe Places



Friends of Youth recently welcomed its newest partner, EvergreenHealth, as a new King County Safe Place. In keeping with Safe Place's mission, EvergreenHealth's Kirkland and Redmond emergency departments now will be available to connect youth in crisis with immediate help. The new partnership was announced recently with the assistance of Friends of Youth at the Healthiest Best Fair at EvergreenHealth, which serves the same Eastside population as Friends of Youth programs.

King County Safe Place is part of a national network of more than 20,000 partnering businesses and community locations that display the yellow diamond Safe Place sign. When youth enter the designated Safe Places and ask for help, trained staff members are able to connect them with resources to help them stay safe and resolve the crisis.

Safe Place was launched in King County in August 2011 as a collaboration among three non-profit agencies serving the county's children and teens:

- Friends of Youth in north and east King County,
- Auburn Youth Resources in south King County, and
- YouthCare in Seattle.

As awareness of the program and the number of Safe Place sites has grown, requests for help are increasing, said Friends of Youth CEO Terry Pottmeyer.

"It is critical that young people in crisis have a safe way to seek help, instead of turning to the streets where they are vulnerable to predators," Pottmeyer said. "We are pleased to welcome EvergreenHealth to the Safe Place

collaboration to increase outreach into the community. The King County program has become one of the largest Safe Place networks in the country.”

“This new partnership with Friends of Youth is an incredibly important one for our organization and the community,” said Barbara Jensen, Trauma and Preparedness Program Manager for EvergreenHealth. “We are proud to join many of the other businesses and groups in King County to extend the Safe Place program and connect teens with resources when they need them most.”

Since launching, more than 170 young people have accessed services through Safe Place King County partners and agencies. Expansion of the program to include additional partners such as EvergreenHealth is made possible by a generous grant from United Way of King County to fund outreach. Additional Safe Place sites on the Eastside help get children and teens off the street and linked to shelter, counseling and services:

- Metro Transit buses
- King County Library System libraries
- YMCA of Greater Seattle facilities
- Kirkland Teen Union Building
- Redmond Old Firehouse Teen Center

Friends of Youth provides a comprehensive range of therapeutic services for youth, young adults and families on the road to self-sufficiency. With more than 60 years of experience, national accreditation, 20 sites, and programs serving 17 cities, the agency provides safe places to live and emotional support for youth and families in challenging circumstances. For more information, please visit www.friendsofyouth.org.

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