



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Snoqualmie joins Safe Place King County partnership

For the first time in King County, an entire municipal administration has been designated as part of the Safe Place network. Snoqualmie City Hall, Fire Station and Police Station, as well as all city Public Works and Parks & Recreation vehicles, now will be Safe Places for youth ages 12 to 17 to ask for help when they experience a crisis.

Officials from Safe Place partner agencies celebrated the second anniversary of the Safe Place program in King County at a morning press conference today while announcing the addition of Snoqualmie as a new partner to the collaborative effort to improve youth safety and prevent teen homelessness.

“The City of Snoqualmie is committed to providing resources and support for the growth and development of our young people,” said Snoqualmie Mayor Matt Larson. “Our city staff have demonstrated incredible caring and initiative in embracing the Safe Place method of reaching out to help youth experiencing a crisis.”

Mayor Larson unveiled the distinctive yellow diamond Safe Place logo that is displayed prominently at the entrance to Snoqualmie City Hall and other city facilities. Logo decals also have been added to all city maintenance and utility vehicles, and all city staff have been trained to respond to young people who approach them and ask for help. Joining Mayor Larson for the announcement were the three non-profit youth service agencies that serve as Safe Place responders in different areas of the county – Friends of Youth, YouthCare and Auburn Youth Resources.

“After two years, the Safe Place program here has proven to be an effective way to extend the front doors of youth shelters and counseling services into the community,” said Terry Pottmeyer, CEO of Friends of Youth in Kirkland. “Thanks to the leadership of the City of Snoqualmie, a whole city is embracing the Safe Place concept and reaching out to those youth who need help in a crisis.”

“Over its two years of operation, King County Safe Place has been able to help more than 100 young people, helping them find housing options, or reconcile with family, and most of all, letting them know that someone cares,” said Jim Blanchard, Executive Director of Auburn Youth Resources. “Safe Place now is available at many sites all over King County, including schools, community centers, municipal buildings and non-profit organizations.”

“Two years after its launch, King County Safe Place is one of the busiest networks in the nation,” said Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director of YouthCare in Seattle. “This partnership has been a great way to reach out and help youth because of the unique way it connects and coordinates existing resources, and provides a truly regional response to the issues facing our young people.”

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. As youth enter the designated Safe Places and ask for help, trained staff members connect them with the resources to help them stay safe and resolve the crisis. Within 45 minutes, a youth counselor will meet the young person and assess his or her needs, helping the youth get to shelter, return home or find an alternative safe placement.

“Ending youth and young adult homelessness is a priority this year for King County, and the innovative partnerships established by Safe Place are making great progress, all without spending taxpayer dollars,” said King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert, who represents the Snoqualmie Valley. “We may never know how many young lives have been saved or changed by Safe Place, but we know this approach works. Public entities becoming Safe Places gives more clarity that we want kids to be safe, and Snoqualmie being the first city to declare all its public facilities safe places shows great leadership and commitment.”

The King County Safe Place network was launched in August 2011 in partnership with Metro Transit and has since expanded to include King County libraries, YMCA facilities, Compass Housing and several schools and community centers. A significant investment by United Way of King County has allowed outreach and engagement of additional partners as well as training for volunteers and public awareness efforts.

About the Partner Agencies

Auburn Youth Resources was established in 1973 by a group of concerned parents, educators, and governmental leaders to address the growing problem of drug abuse among South King County youth. Since then, AYR has grown into a regional provider of mental health, homeless youth outreach, shelter, and housing, as well as substance abuse services, serving children, youth, and families of King and Pierce Counties. For more information, please visit www.ayr4kids.org.

Founded in 1951, **Friends of Youth** delivers a comprehensive range of therapeutic services for youth and young adults encompassing 20 program sites to provide safe places to live and emotional support for youth in challenging circumstances. Serving youth ages 12-24, Friends of Youth’s Homeless Services stretch from Snohomish County south to Renton and east to Duvall, Snoqualmie, and other east King County cities. For more information, please visit www.friendsofyouth.org.

Since 1974, **YouthCare** has been a leader in providing effective services to homeless youth in Seattle/King County. From a three-bed shelter, our programs have expanded to include a continuum of services including

outreach, basic needs, case management, emergency shelter, transitional housing, education, and employment training programs serving young people ages 12-24. For more information, please visit www.youthcare.org.

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