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10-Year Community Collaboration Makes Rochester a “Safe Place” for Youth in Crisis

*Center for Youth celebrates Safe Place program’s anniversary with partners
at Tops Friendly Markets during National Safe Place Week (March 20-26)*

Thousands of young people reached each year through Safe Place education, awareness efforts

Rochester, N.Y., March 22, 2016 – Community partners joined at the Tops Friendly Markets in Irondequoit this morning to celebrate the 10-year anniversary and impact of Safe Place, a national outreach program The Center for Youth has delivered locally since 2006. A young person in crisis can go to any Safe Place site, marked by a diamond-shaped yellow and black sign, to get immediate help.

In 2015, 11 young people accessed services through Safe Place, including one young man who called The Center from a payphone after being kicked out of his home. He explained he had no place to stay and he wanted to access Safe Place. The Center’s Street Outreach team responded and brought the young man to the agency’s emergency shelter.

“For 10 years, we have been able to provide this safety net to children and teenagers and educate them on the importance of seeking safety at times when they are at risk or afraid or when they have no place else to go,” said Elaine Spaul, Executive Director of The Center. “Thousands of young people know we, as a community and through our multiple partnerships, have their backs if they ever need help. This program truly is a powerful collaborative effort.”

Representatives from Tops Friendly Markets, the Regional Transit Service, Monroe County Youth Bureau, City of Rochester, Rochester Fire Department and Rochester Public Library were among the partners who gathered this morning.

"It is our pleasure to have initiated this program with the Center for Youth Services 10 years ago, and we are glad it has sustained over this long period of time," said Andrew Brocato, Director of



Community and Public Relations at Tops. "Most importantly, we feel it is our responsibility as the neighborhood grocery store to work with agencies looking out for the best interests of our youth."

"We are happy to work with the Center for Youth and organizations like Tops to support the Safe Place program in Rochester," said Bill Carpenter, CEO of RTS. "If any youth is in a moment of crisis, they can get on any RTS bus, tell the bus operator they need help, and we will get them to a safe place so they can get the help they need."

There are 80 stationary and 230 mobile Safe Place sites, including Tops locations, RTS buses, McDonald's locations, Neighborhood Service Centers, libraries, recreation centers, YMCA locations, churches, faith-based organizations and other local shops and businesses.

Since 2006:

- an average of 500 youth each month have received information about Safe Place, so young people know where to turn in cases of crisis and understand the dangers of trying to resolve difficult, threatening situations on their own;
- and dozens of youth have accessed a Safe Place site.
- In 2015 alone, more than 3,800 young people were educated about Safe Place through presentations at schools and community events as well as nightly street outreach.

This week (March 20-26) marks National Safe Place Week. For more information, visit www.nationalsafeplace.org.

About The Center for Youth

Started by youth for youth in 1971, The Center for Youth delivers a continuum of services to homeless and runaway youth and families in crisis, including emergency shelter, transitional housing programs and Crisis Nursery, which provides temporary childcare during emergencies. The Center's school-based, counseling and community awareness programs aim to educate, engage and empower young people. All services are delivered with the knowledge that youth want to and can take responsibility for their life choices. For more information, visit www.centerforyouth.net or find us on social media: Facebook (Center for Youth) and Twitter (@center4youth).