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## National Safe Place Week Celebrates Safe Place Program for Youth Helps North Texas Teens in Crisis Jonathan's Place serves as Dallas County partner

Dallas, TX March 17, 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.

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 Jonathan's Place, partners with businesses and community organizations such as Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and QuikTrip Convenient Stores to provide immediate safety and support for local youth. There are currently 45 Safe Place site locations in DFW that partner with Jonathan's Place they include all QT's in Dallas County such as North Garland, Grand Prairie, Lancaster, Duncanville, Rowlett, Balch Springs, Terrell, Mesquite, just to name a few.

"Our Nation's runaway statistics are staggering. The National Runaway Switchboard estimates that every night there are approximately 1.3 million homeless youth living on the streets. Statistics show that one in seven teens will run away from home and within 48 hours begin engaging in survival sex, which can quickly lead to formal prostitution. Statistics also show that 43% of youth report being physically abused before running away from home. The Safe Place program, operated locally by Jonathan's Place, is thrilled to partner with business and community organizations such as Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and Quik Trip Convenient Stores (QT) in order to provide immediate safety and support to local area youth. There are currently 43 Safe Place site locations, in DFW, that partner with Jonathan's Place, which includes all of the QT stores throughout Dallas County. Together we are doing all we can to keep youth off the streets and safe." "We have helped over 15 youth within the past year and more than 18,000 youth have received information about the dangers of running away and how to get help if they are ever in a crisis." said Allicia Graham Frye, CEO for Jonathan's Place

The Safe Place program nationally 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.

In addition to Safe Place sites, youth may also access immediate help via **TXT 4 HELP**, a text-for-support service for youth in crisis. Teens can text the word “safe” and their current location (address, city, state) to 69866 and receive a message with the closest Safe Place location and the number for the local youth shelter. Users also have the option to text interactively with a mental health professional for more help.

### **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 (HTR<sup>3</sup>). To learn more, please visit [www.nspnetwork.org](http://www.nspnetwork.org) or [www.nationalsafeplace.org](http://www.nationalsafeplace.org).

### **About Jonathan's Place**

Jonathan's Place helps children who have been victims of abuse, abandonment or neglect. We offer a full continuum of care with specialized treatment for physical, mental and emotional healing. Our programs include (1) Dallas County's only emergency shelter that welcomes newborns to 17 year old victims of abuse; (2) a residential treatment program for girls 10 to 18 years old in need of therapeutic residential care; (3) recruiting, training and supporting foster and adoptive families; (4) an outreach program, National Safe Place, designed to educate youth about abuse and provide access to immediate help and safety to those in crisis; (5) and our new Transitional Living program for young women that are aging out of foster care and have nowhere to go and no one to turn to for help. For more information about Jonathan's Place call 972-303-5303 or visit [www.jpkids.org](http://www.jpkids.org).

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