

SafeSpace filling void on Treasure Coast

Supported living option available for victims of domestic violence

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STUART — For 35 years, SafeSpace has served victims of domestic violence on the Treasure Coast. As the area's only certified domestic violence shelter, SafeSpace has been able to offer emergency support to women and their children in life-threatening situations.

Their programs have helped to heal and elevate victims of abuse, both men and women, as well as their families.

Now the organization is proud to add supported living to the services that it can provide to women as they evolve from victim to survivor. Using a State Capital Improvement Grant of \$440,000.00 as a springboard to launch a capital campaign, SafeSpace has invested the early proceeds into their buildings in Indian River and Martin counties.

In Indian River, the shelter has been transformed to make supported living available for women without children. These women, who generally will have come to SafeSpace through



Supportive Living Program Manager Susan Masaitis and Youth Services Coordinator Kimberley Williams are pictured at the Indian River SafeSpace facility. The facility can now support as many as 12 women in the supportive living program.

the emergency shelters in both counties, will be able to reside in the supported living program for up to 18 months while they take steps toward independence through programs offered as well as seek employment if needed.

"Too often victims of abuse who come to domestic violence shelters like SafeSpace will return to their former home and find themselves victims again at

the hands of their abuser," said Jill Borowicz, CEO of SafeSpace.

"Financial dependence often plays a role in that decision, so supported living services will help many survivors get a fresh start, have a safe and affordable place to live, and continue to take advantage of our life-changing programs."

The Indian River facility will continue to offer emergency support to victims of domestic violence

24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The full line of programs also remains available to victims and their families, as well as the outreach and education programs that focus on prevention and awareness.

But now the facility can house up to 12 women in the supported living program, helping to fill a serious void in this type of service on the Treasure Coast.

The Martin County facility has also received an upgrade. An addition to that shelter has raised the capacity to 48 beds for women and their children that face life-threatening abuse and require emergency support. All of the other programs previously offered in Martin County remain available for victims and their families as well.

"These physical changes to both of our facilities will enable us to

elevate the level of support and the blanket of safety that we provide to victims throughout the Treasure Coast. Emergency services, our wide range of programs for victims and their families, our new supported living services, and our efforts around prevention and education enable us to have even greater impact as we help victims of domestic violence become survivors," said Borowicz.

About SafeSpace

SafeSpace is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that operates programs in Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties where families can escape to a safe environment. SafeSpace offers victims of domestic violence safety, support and education, empowering them to create an independent life free from violence. Emergency shelter, supportive living, and outreach programs and services are available for victims throughout the Treasure Coast.

SafeSpace offers services to all victims of domestic violence and their dependents regardless of race, gender, age, religion, political belief, national origin, immigration status, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation or language spoken.

To learn more about SafeSpace, please visit <http://www.safespacefl.org>, call 772-223-2399 or connect with SafeSpace on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/safespacefl>.