



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Stephanie Lyons, Executive Director Lisa Bellamy, Safe Place & Host Homes
Coordinator Hamilton Centers Youth Service Bureau, Inc Hamilton Centers Youth Service
Bureau, Inc

317-773-6342

slyons@hcysb.org

317-773-6342

1-877-723-3550

lbellamy@hcysb.org

Hamilton Centers Youth Service Bureau, Inc and National Safe Place Launches New Safety Program “Txt 4 Help” to Get Immediate Help to Youth in Crisis

New program will connect youth with a Safe Place via text message to 69866

Noblesville, IN., Oct. 15, 2009 –National Safe Place (NSP) in partnership with Hamilton Centers Youth Service Bureau, Inc. is launching the “Txt 4 Help” program, a 24-hour text-for-support service for youth in crisis. The “Txt 4 Help” program, announced today at a news conference in Washington, D.C., hosted by Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Ky., will make it easier for teens to get help. Youth in crisis can text the word SAFE and their current location to the number 69866 and they will receive an address of the nearest Safe Place site and contact number for the local youth shelter. In cities that don’t have a Safe Place program, the youth will receive the name and number of the youth shelter or, if there is no local shelter, a national-hotline number. The text service will be available nationwide on Oct. 15.

The “Txt 4 Help” program will allow NSP to reach even more youth in crisis. Nearly 90 percent of teens have regular access to a mobile phone and 66 percent of those say they prefer text-messaging to calling. “We strongly believe that by communicating to youth in a way that they’re comfortable with, we will reach thousands more youth needing help than we have in the past,” said Linda Rutherford, chair of the National Safe Place board of directors. “We are hopeful that this program will encourage teens to ask for help and discourage them from running away.”

Safe Place was established in 1983 to provide easy access to help for young people in dangerous, threatening or vulnerable situations. Since then, more than 240,000 youth have accessed help at a Safe Place site or contacted their local youth shelter after learning about Safe Place at a school presentation. Close to 17,000 businesses and community buildings across the nation currently display the distinctive Safe Place sign.

Hamilton Centers Youth Service Bureau, Inc became a Safe Place agency in 1995 and is serving Hamilton and Tipton Counties. Help just got faster for teens in our community, in the past year we have helped 45 teens with homelessness, family crisis and respite.

Currently there are 58 sites in these two counties, if you would like to help these teens in our community please, call Lisa, at 317-773-6342.