



For immediate release

July is Make a Difference In a Child's Life

(Stillwater, OK) This month and throughout the year, Payne County Youth Services, Inc. encourages all individuals and organizations to play a role in making Payne County a better and safer place for children, youth and families. By ensuring that youth have supportive and caring people they can turn to, we can improve their quality of life.

Young people perform better in all areas of their lives when they have a supportive relationship with a caring adult. For at-risk youth, volunteer mentors can be an especially positive influence that helps them make good decisions, believe in their own strengths, and excel in school. Safe Place agencies and sites can connect youth to positive supportive caring adults and help influence youth when they are in crisis and need someone to talk to. Safe Place agencies can also connect youth to long term mentoring in their community which research has shown that youth with mentors are less likely to engage in at risk behaviors. (Big Brother's Big Sisters)

Communities across the country search for ways to keep youth safe and many have established Safe Place as a community collaboration making help readily available. Safe Place designates businesses, community buildings and mobile units as Safe Place sites that prominently display the Safe Place logo. Any youth in crisis can walk in and a trained representative will come to meet with them and together they will begin to determine what kind of help is needed. Safe Place connects children and their families with the supportive resources they need. In Payne County, Safe Place is operated by Payne County Youth Services, Inc.

The designated Safe Place sites of Payne County include:

Stillwater Safe Place Sites: All On-Cue locations, Anderson's Taekwondo, Carl's Jr., Cimarron Medical Services, Consumer's Grocery, CREC (Central Rural Electric Co-op), Family Resource Center –OSU, Food Pyramid, IHOP, Holiday Inn and Suites, Lincoln Academy, OSU Parking and Transit Services, Payne County Youth Services, Payne County Youth Shelter, Stillwater Designs, Inc., Stillwater Fire Departments, Stillwater Home Health, Stillwater Medical Center, Stillwater Middle School, Stillwater Junior High, Stillwater High School, Stillwater Police Department, Stillwater Public Library, Strode Funeral Home, Texas Roadhouse, Total Health, Walgreens and the YMCA; **Perkins Safe Place Sites:** Perkins Junior High, Perkins High School, Perkins Library, On-Cue locations, Christian Church of Perkins, Perkins Drug; **Cushing Safe Place Sites:** Cushing Middle School, Cushing High School, Cushing Fire Department, Cushing Youth Center, Escott's Foods; **Yale Safe Place Sites:** Yale Library, Yale Public Schools, Yale Maveric Mini Mart; **Glencoe Safe Place Sites:** Glencoe Maveric Mini Mart, Glencoe High School; **Ripley Safe Place Sites:** Ripley Maveric Mini Mart

The Safe Place sites display the Safe Place sign and employees are trained and prepared to assist any youth needing help. In Payne County, an estimated 2 to 4 youth receive help from the Safe Place program each month.

This national initiative operates in 40 states that serve over 1528 communities across the country. Safe Place has helped over 265,000 young people who have gone to a Safe Place and asked for help or contacted the youth serving agency after they learned about the program at school. For additional information, contact Angie Freeny, Safe Place Coordinator at Payne County Youth Services at (405) 377-3380.