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SAFE SPACE TO LAUNCH “REDIRECTIONS,”
A COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

Safe Space, an agency that has served children, young adults, and families in New York City for close to a century, will launch a unique treatment program to help caretakers of at-risk youth (ages 12-17) who have serious behavioral issues make better life choices and achieve better futures. Set to begin on Dec. 8, 2010, the program, entitled “Redirections,” will be operated out of Safe Space’s new headquarters at 89-74 162nd St. in Jamaica, Queens.

Using the evidence-based Multisystemic Therapy (MST) model, Redirections will work with caretakers of at-risk youth referred from the NYC Administration for Children’s Services. The goal will be to engage, support and work collaboratively with significant natural support systems in the young people’s lives -- extended families, churches, neighbors -- in ways to promote positive social behavior and eliminate anti-social behaviors. Specially trained clinicians will provide everything from family therapy to behavior management to drug-testing.

A 14-year follow-up study of adults who were involved in MST as youth demonstrates the following results as compared to a control group: 59% fewer arrests; 68% fewer drug-related felonies; 57% fewer days in adult confinement; and 43% fewer days on adult probation.

Safe Space opted to operate Redirections in Jamaica because, according to city statistics, Queens Community Board 12, which is based in Jamaica, had more youth felony arrests than any community district in New York City in 2009.

“This program can make a real difference in this community, giving hope and a second chance to the many youth who are drawn to violent and criminal activity,” Safe Space President & CEO Christine Molnar said.

“Every parent wants the best for their children, and this program will really help caregivers help their children in meaningful ways,” said Gabrielle Hamilton, director of Safe Space’s Mental Health Services Division. “We are very happy to be able to offer these services in Queens.”

“Our program is strengths-focused, facilitating better communication between caregivers and youth, and encouraging caregivers to utilize their community supports to promote positive behavior in their youths’ lives,” said MST Director Kamini Pierre.

With the strong belief that everybody deserves to live in a healthy and secure environment, Safe Space offers a wide array of services focusing on mental health, community health, at-risk youth, violence prevention and school-based education enrichment. Based in Southeastern Queens with a strong presence in Jamaica, Far Rockaway and Richmond Hill, Safe Space annually works for more than 10,000 individuals, including some of the most disadvantaged children and families in New York State.

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