



Governor Jared Polis visits Safe Passage

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Colorado Governor Jared Polis toured Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center on April 9th.

As the only co-located children's advocacy center in the state of Colorado, Governor Polis visited with each partner agency, including Colorado Springs Police Department's Child Crimes Unit, El Paso County Sheriff's Office, El Paso County Department of Human Services, UCHHealth, and Kidpower Colorado.

Governor Polis also spoke to Safe Passage's new Clinical Director, Nicole Eckles, about the importance of mental health support in dealing with trauma from child abuse and that every child deserves the opportunity to move beyond the situation and into their true potential.

"No child deserves to endure abuse or mistreatment, which is why in Colorado, we are working to increase public safety and invest in more resources for victims and survivors. The caretakers at Safe Passage are doing incredible work to support victims and guide them through the healing process to a brighter future," said Governor Polis.

[HERE is a KOAA News 5 clip from Governor Polis's visit.](#)

New Legislation Increases Penalties on Deepfakes



On June 12, Mo Basenberg, Executive Director, Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center joined Marc Snyder, Colorado Senate District 12, and Commander Dan Thompson, Colorado Springs Police Department, to celebrate the passage of [SB25-288 - Intimate Digital Depictions Criminal & Civil Actions](#), which amplifies penalties on explicit nonconsensual AI generated images also known as deepfakes.

The legislation expands existing laws on the disclosure of intimate images to include digitally created or altered depictions, particularly those using generative AI or image editing software. It introduces new legal definitions and penalties to address emerging technologies and harms.

AI-generated child sexual abuse materials introduce a new dimension to online threats – the potential to amplify sextortion. Predators, or peers, can exploit these AI-generated images to threaten or coerce children into meeting their demands, whether it be sending money, complying with threats, or engaging in sexual acts to prevent the release of fake content.

These sophisticated tools are harming the mental and emotional well-being of children. It is only by working together that we can ensure the safety of every child in our community.

[View clip from the press conference on Fox21 News.](#)

SUMMER BREAK ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

When we think about keeping kids safe during summer break, we often are referring to outdoor activities—applying sunscreen, wearing helmets while biking, staying hydrated, and using caution at the pool.

But in today's world, keeping children safe goes far beyond physical activity. With increased free time and greater access to technology, summer is also a peak time for children and teens to be active online.

Parents need to play offense and get tech-savvy themselves. Even if you are not an Instagram fan, become familiar with the tools and social media platforms your kids are using. Follow their activity and know who their connections are.

Children require clear boundaries and an understanding of the appropriate use of technology. Parents need to be not only vigilant about their kids' online behaviors, but also consistent when it comes to enforcing the rules, like taking the phone at bedtime or restricting access to certain websites.

Set a good example for your child by celebrating privacy and avoiding the temptation to post every picture from family vacations and pool parties, and put your phone away at 5 p.m. and don't access it again until after your kid's bedtime.

More great summer break online safety tips [HERE](#).





ANNUAL LUNCHEON

raises \$75,000 for Kids, Families

Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center's annual spring luncheon, The Thread Throughout, was standing room only as the nonprofit set a fundraising record of \$75,000 from sponsors and attendees.

The event included a video from childhood sexual abuse survivor, Sasha Joseph Neulinger, and a spotlight on new in-house mental health services provided free of charge to any child who visits Safe Passage.

The Iuppa Award, named for late Judge Barney Iuppa, who helped establish the Children's Advocacy Center in 1994, was presented to representatives from the UCHHealth forensic nursing team, Sarah Hagedorn and Megan Lechner, for their outstanding service to children in our community.

The luncheon was hosted by KOAA News 5's Brie Groves, a longtime champion of Safe Passage. Big thanks to Russell Grinnell Memorial Trust for a matching grant of \$25,000 to incentivize attendees' generosity - we were thrilled to meet the match at the event!

With VOCA funds decreasing and visitations increasing (in 2024, we saw 52 more children than in 2023), funding is vital. Thank you to sponsors, donors, and attendees who are the lifeblood of our mission.

Interested in supporting Safe Passage? Click [HERE](#) to donate.

A photograph of three women standing together and smiling. The woman on the left has reddish-brown hair and is wearing a grey and white patterned jacket. The woman in the middle has long blonde hair and is wearing a red top. The woman on the right has blonde hair, wears glasses, and is holding a microphone; she is wearing a pinkish-brown top. They are all holding a wooden geometric sculpture made of sticks and string. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

BIG THANKS TO ENT CREDIT UNION, FOR BEING THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON PRESENTING SPONSOR.

We appreciate Ent's commitment to investing in the next generation. Annie Snead, Executive Director of Philanthropy and Community Relations with Ent Credit Union is pictured here between Emily Bowker and Mo Basenberg of Safe Passage.

A graphic logo for the 'Clay Shoot' event. It features a stylized target with a bullseye in the center. The text 'It's' is written in a script font above the target, followed by 'CLAY TIME' in large, bold, block letters. Below the target, a banner reads 'SHOOTING FOR SAFE PASSAGE'. At the bottom of the graphic is a small illustration of a clay target.

It's
**CLAY
TIME**

SHOOTING FOR SAFE PASSAGE

Take aim this November and sign up today for the Annual Clay Shoot on Friday, November 7, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Pikes Peak Gun Club, to raise money for Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center.

For Information visit www.safepassagecac.org/clayshoot