

The logo for Safe Passage, featuring the word "safe" in white on a dark blue square background, followed by "passage" in blue. Below it is the tagline "Helping abused children begin to heal" in a smaller, dark blue font.

safepassage

Helping abused children begin to heal

SUMMER 2026

A photograph of a group of people sitting around a table at a luncheon. They are engaged in conversation, eating, and drinking. There are blue informational brochures on the table. The background shows other people standing and talking in a well-lit room.

LUNCHEON HITS MILESTONE

Because of you, Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center's annual fundraising luncheon soared to new heights for kids by raising a record-breaking amount for the families we serve.

When we ask, this community steps up. And the timing could not be better. Due to Federal funding cuts, the nonprofit hunt for grants and foundation dollars is at a record high, making it more competitive than ever to support nonprofits doing life changing work in El Paso and Teller counties.

Event speaker Wendy Oliver shared her family's story of childhood sexual abuse impacting her three children, by their father, in 2011. At a time of confusion and shock, the family was directed to Safe Passage.

"Safe Passage made a difference in giving my family a voice, someone to vindicate us, to walk a very treacherous dark path that we didn't know what was ahead of us," said the younger son.

Awaiting sentencing this May on their father's appeal case, the kids, now adults, found themselves back in court, where they relived the trauma, but this time with confidence and conviction. A second jury also delivered a conviction, almost 13 years after their original disclosure.

Safe Passage is a consistent presence in victims' lives, here to offer hope and healing for the long haul. Thank you to those who helped us reach, and surpass our goal, so families like the Olivers are never alone on this journey.

If you are interested in supporting Safe Passage, email ebowker@safepassagecac.org.

Talking to kids about digital images



According to a recent study in the *Journal Sexual Abuse*, youth victims are producing the images that fuel the creation of sexual abuse materials - it is their own photos being used against them. And, it's peer to peer versus adult to peer when it comes to distributing images without consent. The perpetrator is not a stranger, it is usually a friend.

From selfies to .5s, TikTok to sexting, it is critical to talk to your kids about the dangers of distributing digital images.

Parents play an important role in teaching kids to practice consent and safeguarding their privacy and digital footprint. Not just as rules, but as values and behavior based on empathy, respect, and personal boundaries.

Talking to kids about digital consent, setting boundaries and respecting privacy should be an

open discussion. Digital consent is the practice of respecting ownership in online spaces. This means understanding appropriate images to post and asking permission to post images or videos of others.

Teaching children that it is okay to say "no," to leave a conversation, or to block and report someone provides them with tools to stay safe. Parents should model this behavior themselves, by respecting kids' boundaries and asking if they want to be in our social media posts, or if they are okay being recorded in a private moment.

Children may avoid disclosing a situation or incident out of fear their phone will be taken away. Parents should consider alternative methods to set boundaries without taking away the child's phone like disabling WiFi during certain times or blocking the device during specific hours.

Teller County Connections

Steffani Meier, Director of Partner Relations and Outreach, and Nicole Eckles, Clinical Director, at Safe Passage, have made great strides this year in connecting to the Teller County community.

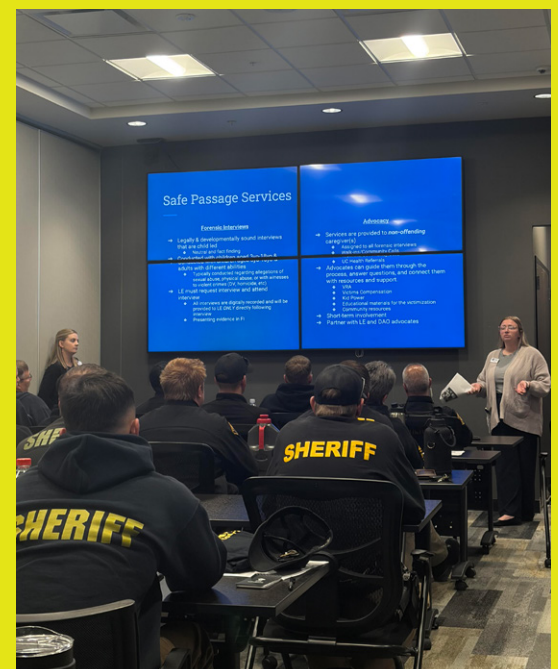
In the last twelve months, Safe Passage has visited police patrol briefings in Woodland Park and hosted training for the Teller County Sheriff's Office, highlighting the services Safe Passage offers and facilitating discussions around victim and offender dynamics.

It is critical that law enforcement investigators are equipped with a wide range of strategies and skills they can employ to conduct compassionate and effective victim-centered investigations into childhood sexual assaults.

The team has participated in site visits to Woodland Park Public Schools, Bloom Counseling Collaborative and Community Partnership Family Resource Center to share information on Safe Passage services and supports.

Safe Passage is committed to raising awareness of our work, not because we suspect child abuse in a specific community, but we want all Colorado neighbors to know about child safety and resources that are available, especially in rural communities.

Interested in Safe Passage visiting your organization? Email Steffani Meier smeier@safepassagecac.org.



CACS SEE SUCCESS AT 2026 SESSION



We are pleased to report that children's advocacy center (CAC)-focused legislation passed both houses and the Governor's desk this session, including:

- **HB26-1142: Strengthening Colorado's Definition of Child Advocacy Centers** updates the definition of CACs, adding language on the importance of these programs, expectations for operations, clarifies how information can be shared and adds limited civil immunity for CAC staff operating within their duties.
- **HB26-1103: Report Child Sexual Abuse and Remote Testimony** ensures children who are victims of child sexual abuse have access to critical intervention services by clarifying when law enforcement should refer cases to CACs. The bill also expands remote testimony to all minors to reduce the traumatic impact of testifying in front of their abusers.

Thank you to the Colorado Children's Alliance and the southern Colorado delegation for support of those bills.



CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING

To kick off National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, Mo Basenberg, executive director, Safe Passage, and CSPD Commander Dan Thompson, briefed Colorado Springs City Council on child abuse statistics in our community as well as the unique workings of Safe Passage's co-located model. Commander Thompson was also recognized for his longtime service to the Crimes Against Children Unit.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS



Mark your calendars for the Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center's **2026 ANNUAL CLAY SHOOT FUNDRAISER**

Friday, Nov. 6, 2026 at Pikes Peak Gun Club from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Last year we hosted 18 teams with 75 participants.

SCAN TO REGISTER AS A TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL





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Pictured here: Three of our four interns for the semester



Ent/Wings Steps Up For Kids

We are grateful to be one of many local organizations awarded an Ent/Wings Youth Endowment Series (YES) grant this year. YES grants support programs focused on wellbeing, safety, and development, including mentoring, mental health services, after-school programs, food security, and outdoor experiences.