

Chair Williams and members of the Committee,

As you can imagine, this is a difficult subject for us to discuss, but my daughter Karlyn and I are very grateful for our experience with the Safe Place shelter so we wanted to briefly share our story. Last summer our family went through a hard season which was amplified by the quarantine. Karlyn ran away in July, and she ended up in a local hospital but didn't want to return home. A friend told us about Safe Place, and they welcomed her there. The staff communicated with me every day while Karlyn was gone so I knew she was safe, and they provided a place for her to take a deep breath and reevaluate her future.

Karlyn and I spent almost a month working with Andie at Safe Place, and she was a tremendous advocate for our whole family. This shelter was a key piece in saving my daughter's life, and I will always be grateful for a truly safe place for her to land. Karlyn has returned home, and she is in the process of finishing her high school diploma and plans to complete a course in June to become a nursing assistant.

(From Karlyn) I want to say thank you as well. Safe Place was a calming place for me to paint and think and plan again for the future. I have started volunteering with my mom at another homeless shelter near our home, and I like encouraging others who are having a hard time. I hope other teenagers who need it will be able to find Safe Place too.

Thank you

Melanie & Karlyn Dobson