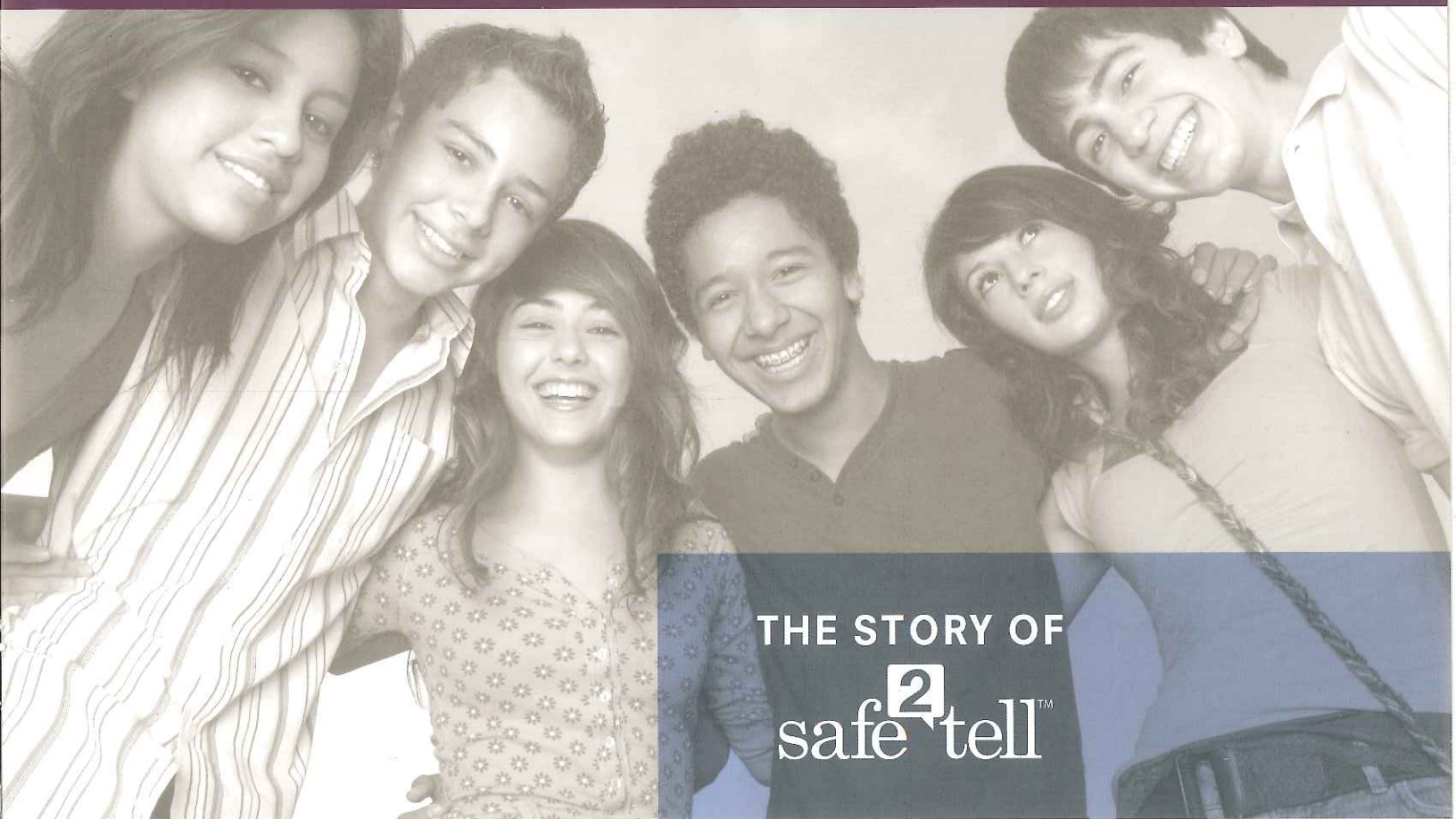




THE  
COLORADO  
TRUST

ACHIEVING ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR ALL COLORADANS



THE STORY OF  
safe<sup>2</sup>tell™



THE STORY OF  
safe<sup>2</sup>tell™

MAKE A CALL. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

» **1-877-542-SAFE**

The Safe2Tell program – developed in response to recommendations from the Columbine Commission’s report and The Colorado Trust’s Safe Communities~Safe Schools initiative – provides students in all Colorado schools an increased ability to both prevent and report violence by making anonymous calls to 1-877-542-SAFE.

» **SAFE2TELL, INC.**

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**SAFE2TELL™ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and operates as a public-private partnership. Calls are answered 24/7 by Colorado State Patrol dispatchers and all public safety functions are under government purview. Education programs succeed through private donations.**

» **THE COLORADO TRUST**

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## A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

### » STOPPING CRIMES BEFORE THEY HAPPEN.

Susan Payne had seen far too many crime scenes. As a police officer with 17 years' experience and training at the FBI academy – including hostage and crisis negotiation – she had solved her share of cases. She had worked with Crime Stoppers, done detective work and put criminals behind bars. But a question kept gnawing at her: "Why aren't we stopping crimes before they happen?"

In the early 1990s, Denver endured what became known as the "Summer of Violence." The crime spike began when an errant bullet from a gun fight in Denver's seemingly serene City Park struck a baby boy while he sat in his stroller watching the polar bears at the Denver Zoo. Throughout the summer, homicides, gang crimes, juvenile violence and gun possession soared, leaving law enforcement officers and policymakers mystified about how to stop the chaos.

In nearby Colorado Springs, where Payne was teaching children about ethics, drug abuse and school safety as a School Resource Officer – she had a revelation.

"I felt we were missing the boat, asking kids for information after the fact," Payne said. "Kids know long before adults what's going to happen – who has a weapon, who's cutting, who's suicidal, who's dealing drugs, who has a grudge against a teacher.

"It's a tragedy when kids call after a crime. **We need to stop it before it happens.**"

Payne found that young people were afraid to come forward with critical information. They needed a safe, confidential way to report their concerns.

"I was taught to do what's right," said Payne, who comes from a family of law enforcement officers. "But, we started to see a culture where it was life-threatening to do what's right. So, we put the preventive twist on it."

### IN 82% OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN U.S. SCHOOLS,

*someone other than the attacker knew it was going to happen, but failed to report it.*

U.S. SECRET SERVICE AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BYSTANDERS REPORT

### ACCORDING TO THE 2008 U.S. SECRET SERVICE AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPORT,

*PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF POTENTIAL SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE: Breaking the Code of Silence by opening lines of communication is imperative for preventing violent acts on school property.*

### "CHILDREN NEED TO LEARN TO 'TELL' WHEN IT'S ABOUT THEIR SAFETY, OR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.

*Fear of retaliation is common to student cultures, and often inhibits students from coming forward with information in advance of violent or criminal events. Safe2Tell provides an anonymous means of communications and helps break that cycle of fear."*

SUSAN PAYNE, SAFE2TELL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**And thus, a simple – but highly-effective – idea was born. Susan Payne created a local hotline where young people could call and prevent crimes. She tested her idea in Colorado Springs with excellent results. In 1999, she presented her crime prevention strategy to Colorado’s Attorney General and a group of Colorado leaders who recommended replicating the program statewide.**

Then, another watershed event occurred. On a beautiful spring day, two students at Columbine High School rampaged through their own upscale, suburban school, randomly killing 12 fellow students and a beloved teacher, spewing rage and trying to set off bombs that could have killed hundreds more before they killed themselves. The deadliest school shooting in American history left a gaping hole of sorrow and disbelief in Colorado.

#### » **COLUMBINE CHANGED EVERYTHING.**

Overnight, school officials had to change the way they thought about their own students. They had always

been cautious about potentially dangerous outsiders. Now, suicidal students might become vengeance killers. Around the country, fear surged about copycat attacks as troubled kids went online and learned how to set bombs, get weapons and create hit lists.

In Colorado, policymakers began studying the causes of violence and possible prevention programs. Colorado was already home to one of the most renowned violence prevention centers in the country – in Boulder, Del Elliott, Director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, had spent years studying scientifically-proven crime prevention programs. Elliott and U.S. Senator Ken Salazar, Colorado’s then-Attorney General, were working together on the Safe Communities–Safe Schools initiative. They traveled to every Colorado county on a “listening tour,” searching for answers to the elusive questions of how to make communities safer.

#### » **ANONYMITY QUICKLY EMERGED AS A VITAL COMPONENT OF ANY SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAM.**

“If anonymity wasn’t guaranteed, kids wouldn’t use the hotline,” Salazar said. “They would be afraid that their names would get out and that there would be retaliation.

“Anonymity means no caller ID, no call tracing. A caller’s anonymity has to be guaranteed by law.”

#### » **A COMMITMENT TO ANONYMITY**

According to researcher Del Elliott, solid data underscores Safe2Tell’s commitment to anonymity.

“Today, schools are coping with dramatic advancements in technology while troubled young people have access to deadlier weapons,” he explained, stating that guns started showing up in schools in significant numbers between 1983 and 1993. “Lethality is the major change which has taken place in violence by and among youth.”

Elliott attributes that spike to young people becoming armed as drug couriers, protecting themselves while they carried large sums of money. Some started bringing guns to schools. The Columbine tragedy then ushered in a new danger for schools: suicidal attackers who settled scores through violence.

In the wake of fear generated by such attacks, school officials and community members often consider turning schools into fortresses. But Elliott says that – for most schools – metal detectors, barbed-wire enclosures and security cameras don’t lead to a safer environment. “If somebody is suicidal and they are bent on attacking a school, a camera or metal detector is not going to stop them. Prevention programs like Safe2Tell are far more effective because they guarantee anonymity. It’s a very good sign that the norm around ‘snitching’ or being a tattle-tale is changing.”



Salazar also learned that safe schools help children succeed. “There is a direct relationship between how safe kids feel in school and how they do academically,” he said. “If you’re a young person afraid of what’s going to happen to you at school, or that you are going to be jumped after school, that’s where your mind is going to be – not on academic subjects.”

By 2001, Colorado Governor Bill Owens’ Columbine Review Commission, which had been studying the Columbine tragedy, released its final report. Among the key findings was an endorsement of Salazar’s push for a statewide hotline where anonymous callers could report concerns about any type of community violence. In 2003, The Colorado Trust awarded a \$375,000 grant to establish Safe2Tell; that year, a board had formed and Payne was appointed Program Director of Safe2Tell.

In 2006, The Trust’s second \$375,000 grant helped expand the program; Payne was named Executive Director of Safe2Tell and became the first Special Agent with the Colorado Department of Public Safety-Homeland Security to focus on school safety.

Safe2Tell’s founders knew that a 24/7 hotline – with live, well-trained operators – was critical to the program’s success. Colorado State Patrol Chief Mark Trostel immediately supported the program; he committed his dispatchers to answer all calls to the new hotline and arranged the Safe2Tell director’s salary to be covered by the patrol’s Homeland Security division. “The value of Safe2Tell is obvious,” Trostel said. “I was involved in Columbine. I was in the command post that day. Columbine was monumental for the nation, as well as for Colorado.”

### **“COLORADO NEEDS THIS PROGRAM.”**

MARK TROSTEL, CHIEF, COLORADO STATE PATROL

### **“IF I CAN GET A KID TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL,**

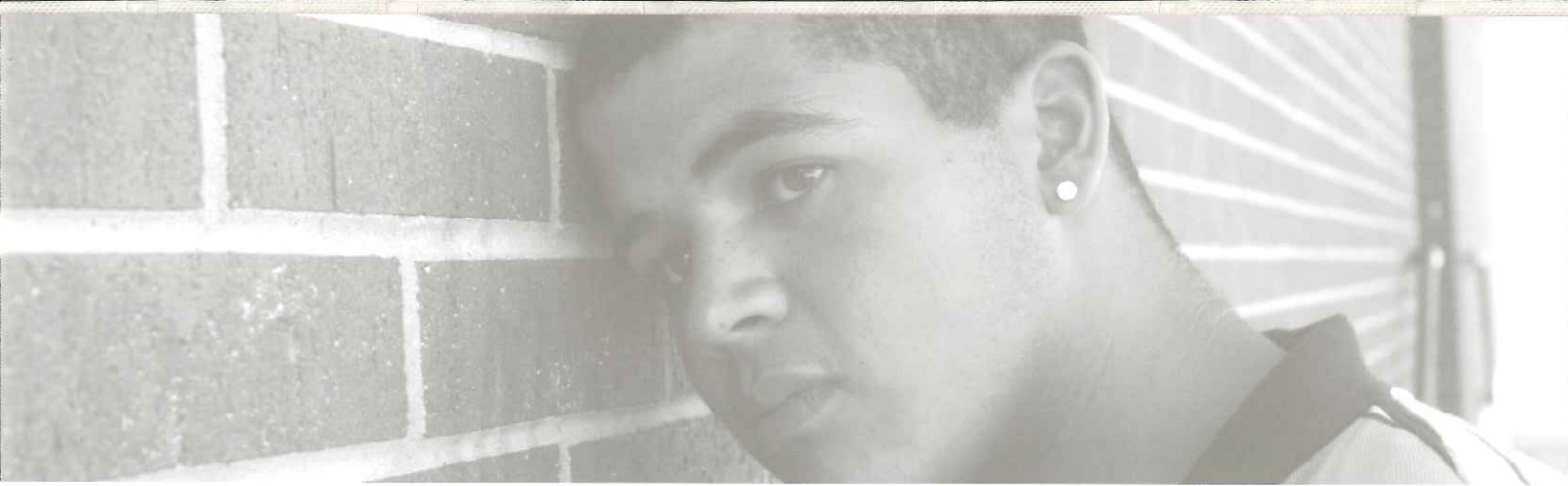
*I can reduce that student’s chance of going into the criminal justice system by 50%.*

*Let’s figure out how to intervene.”*

DON QUICK, ADAMS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND SAFE2TELL FOUNDING MEMBER

### **RESEARCH SHOWS THAT STUDENTS WHO FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL PERFORM SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER**

*on academics and that stopping young people from becoming violent during their formative years – between ages 12 and 20 – dramatically reduces violence in later life.*



## A SIMPLE SOLUTION

### » SAFE2TELL'S 24/7 CRIME PREVENTION HOTLINE IS A POWERFUL ENGINE FOR A SIMPLE IDEA.

Give children and teens a voice. Guarantee them safety and anonymity. Watch the seeds of a better community grow.

Prevention has made all the difference. No more waiting until after a crime has been committed. Safe2Tell gives everyone in the community a chance to be a hero, a life saver.

"We can spend years trying to prosecute and arrest our way out of criminal problems, and not make any progress," said Jeanne Smith, director of the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice and a Safe2Tell board member. "But if you prevent one suicide, or prevent a kid from getting bullied so he's willing to show up to school, you change lives for the better. Nothing can match that kind of success."

On September 14, 2004, the Safe2Tell hotline started taking calls. Since then, the number of calls and solid leads has grown exponentially. In each of the first two years, Safe2Tell received and followed up on about 100 tips. That number nearly tripled in the third year to 286, and in the fourth year grew to 531. Now, operators are receiving some 100 calls a month, nearly as many as they received in a single year when Safe2Tell was getting started.

The results are clear – between September 2004 to October 2008, more than 3,900 calls have netted 1,194 solid tips leading to better schools and safer communities.

Safe2Tell provides a lifeline for the youngest among us, thereby creating stronger, safer communities. "School safety is everybody's issue, every day. Because schools have such critical access to kids, they need to be a hub of violence prevention," said Don Quick, Adams County District Attorney and a Safe2Tell founding member.

### » SAFE2TELL HOTLINE OPERATORS FIELD CALLS ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES:

- *Bullying and physical threats*
- *Domestic violence and child abuse*
- *Assaults and harassment*
- *Sexual assault and misconduct*
- *Alcohol and drugs*
- *Suicide threats*
- *Gangs and fights*
- *Explosives, guns, knives and other weapons*
- *Stealing and vandalism*
- *Starting fires*
- *Internet misuse*
- *Ditching*
- *Animal cruelty*

In just over four years, the hotline has received more than 3,900 calls from people in 122 Colorado cities and 49 counties. Of those calls, 159 triggered an investigation, 23 resulted in an arrest and 127 interrupted a plan or triggered an intervention.



**SUSAN PAYNE**, Executive Director of Safe2Tell and Special Agent, Colorado Department of Public Safety.

In 2007, The Trust's first annual John R. Moran, Jr. Grantee Leadership Award was awarded to the Safe2Tell program. The \$25,000 award – created in honor of The Trust's former, long-time CEO – recognizes exemplary leadership by a current Trust grantee. The presentation of the award was made during a ceremony at the State Capitol when Governor Ritter signed into law Senate Bill 07-197, which guarantees the anonymity of callers to the Safe2Tell hotline.

## A STORY OF SUSTAINABILITY

### » STANDING UP TO VIOLENCE.

The middle school girls wear pale yellow elastic bracelets around their wrists with words that empower them: *Freedom, Courage, Honor, Respect, Trust.*

A phone number that can save lives is etched on the inside of the bracelets: 1-877-542-SAFE. As Safe2Tell spreads from school to school, these bracelets are turning up on wrist after wrist – a symbol that young people, parents, teachers, administrators and community members are standing up to violence.

Each community gives its own spin to Safe2Tell. Most schools hang posters. Some school districts give every student a wallet card that opens up to look like a cell phone, providing students the phone number and encouragement to call. Other districts put Safe2Tell stickers on every school bus, conduct trainings for teachers and principals, or sponsor safety nights for parents.

Through these efforts, Safe2Tell is becoming a cornerstone in Colorado schools with measures that guarantee the program will survive and thrive

in Colorado, and in pilot sites around the country. Factors that ensure Safe2Tell's sustainability include:

- Callers to the hotline are guaranteed anonymity under Colorado's Safe2Tell law, passed in 2007.
- Colorado lawmakers in 2008 enacted the School Safety Resources Bill which ensures that Colorado schools have the funds and resources to prevent and plan for emergencies.
- U.S. Senator Ken Salazar has introduced the national School Safety Enhancement Act which would set aside \$50 million in grants through the Department of Justice to support safety tip lines like Safe2Tell.
- Schools can also seek help from violence prevention experts at the University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. New federal funding has renewed Colorado's Safe Communities-Safe Schools initiative, which gives school leaders access to tested programs that halt violence.

### **"SAFE2TELL WORKS. I CAN SAY, WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION,**

*that if Safe2Tell had not been in place, we would have had other incidents of school violence. It's a huge success. It's a program that we need to replicate."*

KEN SALAZAR, U.S. SENATOR AND SAFE2TELL FOUNDING MEMBER



## » HOW TO START A SAFE2TELL PROGRAM OUTSIDE COLORADO:

- Call the Colorado Safe2Tell office to arrange trainings from program planning through implementation
- Identify or establish a 24/7 dispatch center to receive Safe2Tell tips
- Seek support of state and local law enforcement and education officials
- Engage community support and corporate sponsors.

## » INNOVATIVE IDEAS THAT COLORADO COMMUNITIES HAVE USED TO MAKE SAFE2TELL A PERMANENT PART OF THEIR SCHOOL CULTURES INCLUDE:

- Creating websites
- Staging skits
- Producing videos, posters and quick reference cards
- Writing articles for newspapers, newsletters and blogs
- Training bus drivers, as well as teachers, parents and students
- Engaging education and business leaders, and government agencies, to advocate for Safe2Tell.

In Loveland, the district trained more than 300 bus drivers and transportation supervisors. Officials realized that bus drivers are frontline adults who often witness alarming behavior, or overhear critical conversations that students might not intend for adult ears.

- To be accredited through Colorado's Department of Education, schools must demonstrate an active Safe2Tell program.
- To fully participate in Safe2Tell, schools commit to taking new training classes every three years.
  - During Safe2Tell's first four years, Payne conducted more than 1,000 training classes, keynotes, assemblies and workshops for about 25,000 Coloradans. In 2008 alone, trainers reached 8,200 students, staff and parents at 88 different schools, community groups or conferences.
- Every year, all public and private schools in Colorado, from pre-school through college and university – nearly 2,500 in all – receive Safe2Tell posters in both English and Spanish, along with access to training programs.

Communities across the country are creating their own Safe2Tell programs. So far, 27 states or cities have tapped Safe2Tell for information and assistance. Colorado experts are helping train leaders for pilot programs in Texas, Illinois and New Mexico.

**Building National Momentum.** As Safe2Tell changes the culture in Colorado schools and communities, the movement is spreading across the country with momentum building for a national Safe2Tell hotline. Other Safe2Tell goals include the ability to solicit calls from students when their input may be critical; establishing an anonymous two-way dialog through text messaging, enabling Safe2Tell operators to ask follow-up questions; and expanding the Safe2Tell program to colleges and universities to help avert tragedies like the school shootings at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 2007.

### "SAFE2TELL ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

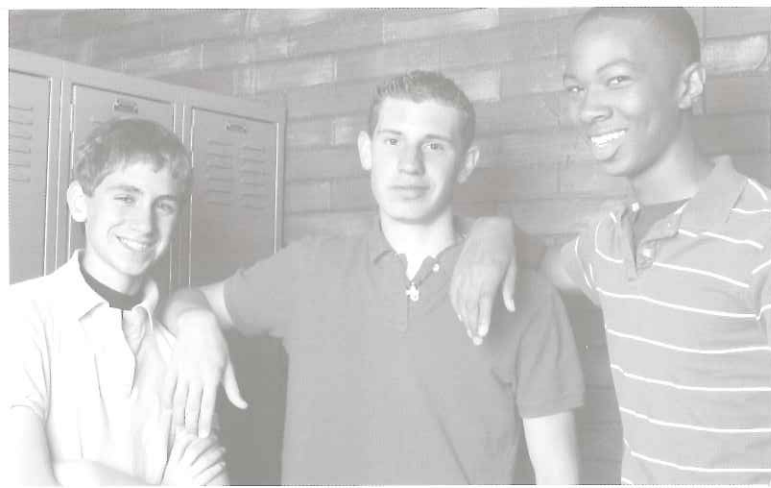
*for keeping themselves and others safe. The Office of the Attorney General is proud to partner with this important initiative."*

JOHN SUTHERS,  
COLORADO ATTORNEY GENERAL

**“IN SMALL COMMUNITIES,**

*Safe2Tell can give you an outsider’s view as someone who’s not involved, not related, not afraid to ruffle feathers.”*

DAWN CARVER, PTA MOM, PUEBLO



» **THE SAFE2TELL PROGRAM EVOLVES DIFFERENTLY IN EACH COMMUNITY.**

At Dunstan Middle School west of Denver, the girls wearing the yellow Safe2Tell bracelets and their school counselor have hatched an idea all their own. They turned a few empty lockers throughout their school into permanent promotions for Safe2Tell. They plan to cover the lockers with informational materials about Safe2Tell, and educate fellow students about the importance of taking a stand and making the call.

They have now learned one of the critical mantras of Safe2Tell, that it’s a betrayal of a friend *not* to tell when someone needs help. Said Noha Kikhia, an 8th-grader helping with the Dunstan project: “Safe2Tell is a good way to let people know what’s going on. Kids can prevent something bad from happening.”

At Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, a homeless man, armed with guns, took hostages on a September day in 2006. He molested female students before killing 16-year-old Emily Keyes as law enforcement officials stormed the school to end a four-hour standoff.

After the attack, school administrators saw more discipline referrals, as well as an increase in depressive behaviors and the inability to cope among students in all grade levels. Teachers and staff turned to Safe2Tell for help.

Executive Director Susan Payne and Program Manager Jo McGuire completed extensive training with staff members to reassure them about their security and help them brace for the future. Then, Platte Canyon leaders promoted healing and tried to give students a sense of their power by organizing an art contest for them to design new Safe2Tell posters.

Payne also urged the students to call Safe2Tell if they suspect anything is wrong – the homeless killer at Platte Canyon had staked out the school the day before his attack. Students noticed him in the parking lot, but told no one. Platte Canyon leaders want to make sure that should a threat arise again, students or teachers will call the hotline.

Safe2Tell’s solution-oriented approach helps raise awareness that all voices are important to ensure early intervention and prevent violence. In every urban, mountain, plains and rural region of Colorado – Fort Collins to Colorado Springs, Brush to Pueblo, Durango to Craig – more and more young people and adults are programming the Safe2Tell hotline into their phones so they can take an active step to stop violence.

**“ASKING A YOUNG PERSON TO STEP FORWARD, SOMETIMES IN OPPOSITION TO THEIR OWN FRIENDS OR CLASSMATES, CAN BE OVERWHELMING.**

*Safe2Tell provides the anonymous link for information to get to the appropriate authorities and ensures a prompt response. Safe2Tell teaches good citizenship, provides tools and saves lives.”*

JEANNE SMITH, DIRECTOR, COLORADO DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SAFE2TELL VICE-CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD



When **MEGAN BLACK**, 17, overcame the pain she suffered as a victim of bullying, she began speaking on behalf of Safe2Tell – sharing with parents, school officials and donors how the program saved her life.



» **A STORY OF PAYING IT FORWARD**

Megan Black knew she was doing the right thing when she told adults that a friend was washing down pills with alcohol at Brush High School. “I didn’t want to go to a friend’s funeral. So, I told on her. Then, everybody started turning against me,” said Megan, now a senior.

A gaggle of girls, who used to be her friends, shut her out. In the hallways, instead of greeting her warmly like they once had, they shot her stinging glances. Her cell phone rang constantly, but the callers always hung up.

Megan suffered alone for months, then finally told a school counselor that she was depressed and contemplating suicide because the bullying was so painful. The counselor linked Megan with Safe2Tell.

Megan eventually told her story to parents in Brush so they could rally behind the program. At first, she was nervous about speaking in public, but she soon found that the more she talked, the less she focused on her pain.

Now a spokeswoman for Safe2Tell, Megan lets parents, school officials and donors know how the program saved her life. “When you are going through bullying, you lose a lot of friends. It’s a relief to have someone to call, someone who will listen. They’re going to help you solve your problems and make it stop.”

**“IT TAKES COURAGE TO STEP FORWARD.**

*We’ve got to break the cycle of anxiety and fear. Integrity, honesty and forthrightness are part of a generation we’re trying to build.”*

STEVE WOOLLEY, SAFE2TELL CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

**160,000 CHILDREN MISS SCHOOL DAILY**

*because they are afraid of someone or something.*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS



## A STORY OF RESULTS

### » SCHOOL OFFICIALS ARE BUYING INTO SAFE2TELL FOR A SIMPLE REASON: THE PROGRAM WORKS.

As a direct result of Safe2Tell, school and law enforcement officers:

- Remove guns and other weapons from schools
- Stop cyber-bullies
- Decrease drug and alcohol abuse
- Prevent suicide
- Intervene in domestic violence cases among teens
- Stop “cutting,” an early sign of depression through self-mutilation
- Halt the “choking” game, a dangerous activity in which students take turns strangling each other to the point of getting light-headed.

### » SAFE2TELL PROVIDES SCHOOLS SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY – WITHOUT STIGMA.

Principals and superintendents don’t want a bad reputation that comes with reporting violent incidents to the public. Safe2Tell’s guaranteed anonymity provides a system for preventing violence without identifying communities, schools or individual tipsters.

“When a tip comes through Safe2Tell, we track it and act on it,” said Payne. “The results are public, but – under law – we don’t identify the tipster or the school.”

### “SAFE2TELL CREATES TRUST AND EMPOWERS STUDENTS,

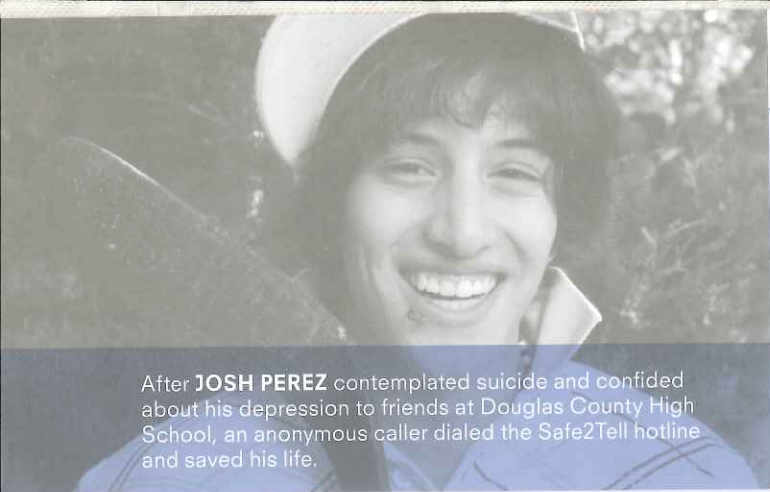
*teachers, parents, administrators and community members to take action against violence. Safe2Tell is a model for all communities and school districts to adopt and implement.”*

CARMEN VELASQUEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM FOUNDATION AND SAFE2TELL BOARD MEMBER

### “KIDS SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH SCHOOL WITHOUT FEAR.

*My goal is to get every superintendent of every school of every district to use Safe2Tell.”*

CHARLIE GRAFT, CEO, GH PHIPPS CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES AND SAFE2TELL BOARD MEMBER



After **JOSH PEREZ** contemplated suicide and confided about his depression to friends at Douglas County High School, an anonymous caller dialed the Safe2Tell hotline and saved his life.

## » A STORY OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

*Suicide is the second leading cause of death among children, teenagers and young adults in Colorado, second only to motor vehicle traffic related accidents (Colorado Violent Death Reporting System, 2007).*

Josh Perez watched the drops of blood ooze down his arms and thought he felt better. As stress from school and relationships mounted, Perez hid himself away in his Castle Rock home and made tiny cuts on his body – at first where his mom could see them, and later, after she discovered his destructive habit, where she couldn't.

"Cutting was an outlet. It got my mind off things."

Josh, 17, sometimes imagined inflicting more than surface wounds. Always a sensitive soul with a tendency toward depression, he had once swallowed too many Vicodin pills. He also had a girlfriend who spoke of committing suicide. Their conversations were seductive. Depression bonded them.

But Josh knew all too well that suicide devastates those left behind. He still blamed himself for an aunt who had killed herself years earlier, just after she had a baby.

"I take death really hard. I've always thought it was my fault. I felt I didn't see her enough."

Josh confided about his depression to friends at Douglas County High School. He broke up with his girlfriend and, once again, blamed himself. He was still playing hockey, his favorite sport. But he couldn't feel the joy that usually

propelled him on the ice. At school, he was hanging out with the "emo" crowd, kids who wear their depression on their bodies, dressing in black and basking in dark emotions.

"Why doesn't it end? Why can't I make anything better? Why is everything happening to me?" Josh said at school.

Then, one of his friends saved his life. An anonymous caller dialed 1-877-542-SAFE, the Safe2Tell hotline.

The next morning, school counselors pulled Josh in for an evaluation. They found he was a danger to himself and sent him to the hospital for a suicide evaluation. At first, Josh was angry. He felt betrayed by his friends. But his mom helped give him a new perspective. "I realized they actually cared enough to call," Josh said.

A nurse, his mom didn't know about Safe2Tell – but now, she hands out the phone number every day. She is eternally grateful to the young person who called to save her son.

"Absolutely make that call," said Melissa Perez. "I deal with depression myself and you've got to help these people. People are not in their right mind. They cannot make good decisions. If you are the least concerned, call the hotline."

After Josh's hospital stay, doctors prescribed antidepressants. Gradually, Josh began to feel better. He shed the dark clothes, began to enjoy skating and wanted to leave his room again.

"You've just got to live," Josh said. "I think if the hotline hadn't gotten the call, it could have gotten a lot worse. They saved my life."

**Who's at risk?** Children most at risk for violence include those who:

- Experience violence or neglect at home
- Witness violence perpetrated on a family member
- Are regularly exposed to violence in the media
- Are victims of bullying
- Have access to weapons.

Warning signs that an individual may attack a school include:

- Making plans to attack and sharing those plans with others
- Access to weapons
- Suicidal thoughts.

Yet experts say there is no consistent profile of school shooters, and attackers rarely act suddenly or impulsively – they can be rich or poor, and they can come from good homes. Attacks can take place in churches, in public or private schools, in urban or rural America.

**What should schools and communities do to ensure safety?**

- Create a climate in which students feel comfortable sharing information
- Teach young people to report all apparent threats or disturbing behaviors
- Provide several options for reporting threats, including the ability to report anonymously
  - Encourage kids to program 1-877-542-SAFE into their cell phones
  - Link to [www.safe2tell.org](http://www.safe2tell.org) from school websites
- Guarantee that tipsters will be respected and protected
- Guarantee an appropriate tip response – including law enforcement and school officials, and mental health professionals, if necessary.

Once violent behavior is interrupted, at-risk teens need access to quality, evidence-based intervention programs that have been proven to reduce a variety of violent behaviors, from bullying and gang involvement to drug abuse and bringing weapons to school. Additionally, Safe2Tell trainings teach students and community members that:

- It's okay to speak up anonymously
- State law requires schools and law enforcement agencies to share critical information about students who pose a threat to themselves or others
- Expulsion alone is not enough – follow-up and mental health treatment, as needed, are keys to reversing violence in young people
- An "Open Door Policy" is not enough – students need an anonymous way to report concerns so they can protect themselves from retribution.

Trainings also focus on how to recognize dangerous behaviors, as well as the importance of creating school safety plans and – like fire drills – practicing safe escape routes and lockdowns.

**"SAFE2TELL IS A VERY USEFUL NETWORK**

*to reach teens and young adults who may not be comfortable calling police or the FBI to report a crime."*

KATHY WRIGHT, SPECIAL AGENT,  
FBI DENVER DIVISION



## » A STORY OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

They are the stories you have never heard, the school attacks that never happened. Already, Safe2Tell has prevented 28 planned school attacks.

Vigilant young people, parents, teachers, administrators and community members all stood up to stop school violence and called Safe2Tell's 24/7 anonymous hotline with lifesaving information. Because of their courage, Colorado has taken a stand against Columbine-style attacks.

"Colorado had the responsibility to take a leadership role," said Adams County District Attorney Don Quick, who, in the wake of the Columbine tragedy, helped start Safe2Tell while working for Colorado's Attorney General.

Quick can't forget the images he saw at Columbine – bullets that had pierced simple school election posters and shattered glass everywhere. "There's no silver bullet for preventing another Columbine," he said. "But that doesn't mean you don't try."

Columbine High School Principal Frank DeAngelis, who lived through the horror of the attacks in 1999, reclaimed his school. He became more determined than ever that schools should be safe harbors and positive learning environments, where friendship – not fear – rules school culture. "The killers wanted to drive us out of our school. We refused to let them do that," he said. "We will never forget the 13 people who died here. But Columbine was

a wakeup call. We used to think that if kids didn't share information with us, everything was all right."

Not now.

Parents, school administrators and policymakers no longer assume that silence from children means everything is okay. Safe2Tell and tip boxes now help keep students at Columbine and countless other schools safe. "Kids are more aware," DeAngelis said. "If a kid says he's going to blow up a school, everyone around the world takes them seriously."

Planned school attacks prevented through Safe2Tell include:

- A 16-year-old boy who attended a high school in the foothills west of Denver was arrested and convicted of illegal gun possession after a tipster reported that his MySpace page showed photos of the teen posing with numerous guns, including rifles and handguns. The student had also written that "people deserve to die." The school expelled the teen and he served time in a detention facility.
- A high school student from a small community on Colorado's eastern plains told students he planned to "pull a Columbine." He gave the name of two fellow students whom he planned to "take out," and disseminated a cell phone video of himself with a shotgun and saying he "wanted to kill some people." Because the report came from a small

town, numerous callers told Safe2Tell operators that they were grateful for an anonymous way to report their concerns; they feared that if the student or his well-known family knew who had reported the teen, they could face retaliation.

- A message on a boys' bathroom stall at a middle school south of Denver warned: "School Shooting, November 21st." Thanks to the tip, police beefed up security that day and intercepted the student who had made the threats. A handwriting expert helped police prosecute the student.
- A 17-year-old boy in a suburb outside of Boulder wrote "teachers should die" on his MySpace page. The student also told others, "One day, the world is going to know who I am. I swear it." School officials expelled the student and referred the case to police.
- A private school in Denver got a restraining order against a 14-year-old freshman after he threatened to push fellow students off a cliff during a field trip; vowed to put another student in a pot of boiling oil; and created a hit list, threatening to kill various people – including President George Bush. School officials found the hit list and turned it over to Secret Service officials who investigate all threats

against the president. The student bragged that he "knew where to get guns and bomb-making materials." Multiple tipsters called Safe2Tell saying the student was "another Columbine waiting to happen."

- A boy in a suburb north of Denver repeatedly said he planned to kill his ex-girlfriend and go on a killing spree on Halloween. He planned to wear a mask and stab the girl. The student was expelled and arrested, also based on additional threatening writings found in his notebook. The girl and her family obtained a restraining order.
- Another threatened attack was prevented in Ontario, Canada when the tipster found the Safe2Tell hotline through a web search. A student was riding a bus and overheard a 19-year-old telling friends that he planned to get a gun and "go on a rampage." The suspect said he planned to "take out others before killing himself." Police arrested the man, and charged him with threatening death and violating probation. Police credited the tip with "preventing a very probable school attack."

**"SCHOOL SAFETY IS EVERYBODY'S ISSUE, EVERY DAY.**

*Schools have such critical access to kids. Schools need to be a hub of violence prevention."*

DON QUICK, ADAMS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND SAFE2TELL FOUNDING MEMBER

**"DON'T EVER GET COMPLACENT –**

*the last thing we need is another life lost."*

FRANK DEANGELIS, PRINCIPAL, COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL



## STORIES OF EMPOWERMENT

### » YOUTHS ARE KEEPING THEIR OWN SCHOOLS SAFE.

Children and teenagers have tremendous power to keep their schools safe, boost learning and change the landscape of their future communities. Safe2Tell gives young people a chance to stop crimes before they happen, create a better learning environment and help prevent classmates from leaping off a precipice of violence or despair.

A young girl was pregnant and living on the streets of Montrose in western Colorado. Then a call came in to Safe2Tell operators who were able to change the girl's life. "They found her, took her in and got her help," said Scot Brown, an assistant principal at Olathe Middle and High School in Olathe, near Montrose.

### "WE DON'T JUDGE. WE DON'T PREACH.

*We get the information where it needs to go."*

DANA SHARP, COMMUNICATION  
OFFICER, COLORADO STATE PATROL  
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Brown said students sometimes trust him enough to relay critical information like the tip about the pregnant girl. Other times, they want the anonymity and follow-up that Safe2Tell guarantees. "I don't care who has the power, as long as our school is safe," he said. "If students want to talk to me, that's great. If they don't know me or don't trust me, I want them to call Safe2Tell."

In Pueblo, in southern Colorado, a 16-year-old girl experienced unrelenting bullying from another girl. The bully once held up her fist through a car window and said, "I'm going to kill you." The girl's mother reported the incident to a teacher, then to a vice principal at their high school, then to a school board member. But nothing changed and the bullying persisted.



Finally, Dawn Carver, a friend of the family, called Safe2Tell. Within 48 hours, the school principal investigated the bullying, reported the incident to police and let the victim know that someone was there to protect her.

Carver, who learned about Safe2Tell at a PTA convention, is spreading the word about the program – especially to her own children. "When my boy is in 5th grade, he's going to have that number in his wallet.

"It's too easy for bullies to fly under the radar," she said. "You've got to try to work within the system – but if that doesn't work, Safe2tell gives students and families an alternative."

"Safe2Tell is literally saving the lives of young people," said Ed Lucero, Senior Program Officer at The Colorado Trust who oversaw the development of Safe2Tell. "The calls involve all sorts of scenarios where the health and well-being of a young person is at stake. Safe2Tell gives young people a voice. They can call someone to help tackle problems and know that they are not alone."

In addition to safeguarding young people and giving parents a potent voice, Safe2Tell also gives teachers and administrators protection from out-of-control students or law enforcement officers who fail to take appropriate action.

## RESOURCES

### » SAFE2TELL

[www.safe2tell.org](http://www.safe2tell.org)

### » ANIMAL ABUSE

**American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**

[www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org)

### » BULLYING

**Bullying Prevention Resource Guide**

[www.bullyingprevention.org](http://www.bullyingprevention.org)

**Stop Bullying Now Campaign**

[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp)

### » CHILD ABUSE

**National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information**

[www.happinessonline.org/LoveAndHelpChildren/p7.htm](http://www.happinessonline.org/LoveAndHelpChildren/p7.htm)

### » DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Colorado Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

[www.ccadv.org/index.htm](http://www.ccadv.org/index.htm)

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

[www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org)

### » DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

**Colorado Alliance for Drug Endangered Children**

<http://colodec.org>

**Colorado Department of Human Services – Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division**

[www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad)

**National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

[www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

### » GANGS

**Denver Crime Prevention and Control Commission**

[www.denvergov.org/Boards\\_and\\_Commissions/BoardsandCommissions/BoardsandCommissions21/tabid/378964/Default.aspx](http://www.denvergov.org/Boards_and_Commissions/BoardsandCommissions/BoardsandCommissions21/tabid/378964/Default.aspx)

**National Gang Crime Research Center**

[www.ngcrc.com](http://www.ngcrc.com)

**National Youth Gang Center, Institute for Intergovernmental Research**

[www.iir.com/nygc](http://www.iir.com/nygc)

### » ILLEGAL FIREARMS

**Project Safe Neighborhoods**

[www.psn.gov](http://www.psn.gov)

### » MISSING CHILDREN

**National Center for Missing & Exploited Children**

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

### » SCHOOL VIOLENCE

**Safe Communities~Safe Schools, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence**

[www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools)

**School Safety Resource Center, Colorado Department of Public Safety**

<http://cdpsweb.state.co.us/cssrc>

**Prevention and Response to School Violence, International Association of Chiefs of Police**

[www.theiacp.org/PublicationsGuides/ResearchCenter/Projects/PreventionandResponsetoSchooViolence/tabid/378/Default.aspx](http://www.theiacp.org/PublicationsGuides/ResearchCenter/Projects/PreventionandResponsetoSchooViolence/tabid/378/Default.aspx)

### » SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

**Convicted Sex Offenders, Colorado Bureau of Investigation**

<http://sor.state.co.us>

### » SEXUAL ABUSE/RAPE

**Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

[www.ccasaa.org](http://www.ccasaa.org)

**Front Range Center for Assault Prevention**

[www.frontrangecap.org/index.html](http://www.frontrangecap.org/index.html)

**Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network**

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

### » SUICIDE

**Mental Health Center of Denver**

[www.mhcd.org](http://www.mhcd.org)

**Office of Suicide Prevention, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**

[www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/Suicide/index.html](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/Suicide/index.html)

**Suicide Prevention Resource Center**

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

**Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program**

[www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)

## » RELATED LAWS

- 2008: Colorado Senate Bill 01 creates School Safety Resource Centers
- 2007: Colorado Senate Bill 197 guarantees anonymity to Safe2Tell callers
- 2000: Colorado Senate Bill 133 and House Bill 1119 require information sharing between schools and law enforcement agencies to help prevent school attacks.

## » RELATED STATUTES (2002)

- Information Sharing  
Section 22-32-109.1(3), C.R.S.
- Safe School Plans  
Section 22-32-109.9(1),(2)(b), C.R.S.
- Bullying Prevention  
Section 22-32-109.1(2)(a)(X), C.R.S.

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## SAFE2TELL PARTNERS

**Associated General Contractors of Colorado**

[www.agccolorado.org](http://www.agccolorado.org)

**Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence**

[www.colorado.edu/cspv](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv)

**Colorado Association of School Boards**

[www.casb.org](http://www.casb.org)

**Colorado Association of School Executives**

[www.co-case.org](http://www.co-case.org)

**Colorado Attorney General – Safe Communities**

[www.ago.state.co.us/safe\\_communities.cfmMenuPage=True.html](http://www.ago.state.co.us/safe_communities.cfmMenuPage=True.html)

**Colorado Department of Corrections**

[www.doc.state.co.us](http://www.doc.state.co.us)

**Colorado Department of Education**

[www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)

**Colorado Department of Public Safety**

[www.cdpsweb.state.co.us](http://www.cdpsweb.state.co.us)

**Colorado District Attorneys' Council**

<http://cdacweb.org>

**Colorado Parent Teacher Association**

[www.copta.org](http://www.copta.org)

**Colorado Springs District Attorney**

[www.4thjudicialda.com](http://www.4thjudicialda.com)

**Colorado Springs Police Department**

[www.springsgov.com/sectionindex.asp?SectionID=7](http://www.springsgov.com/sectionindex.asp?SectionID=7)

**The Colorado Trust**

[www.coloradotrust.org](http://www.coloradotrust.org)



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