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CITY OF CHULA VISTA

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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Spotlighting Community Partners: Our Safe Place



Our Safe Place, is a countywide program that provides safe, affirming spaces, and critical services for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The South Bay drop-in center, located at 746 Ada Street in Chula Vista, offers a vital community resource to local LGBTQ+ youth under the age of 20.

Our Safe Place is open during after-school hours and weekends, providing youth with a welcoming environment where they can connect with peers, access mental health and services, and build life skills. The South Bay location also offers resources such as a food pantry and community closet. In a climate in which LGBTQ+ youth often face rejection and isolation, the center offers a safe "third place"—a space beyond home and school where young people are free to be themselves.

At the City's recent Pride Flag Raising Ceremony, Casey Taitano, Youth Support Partner at SBCS' Our Safe Place South, shared the importance of programs like this.

"Our purpose is to provide LGBTQ+ youth with somewhere safe to identify as themselves openly in a world that too often rejects them for embracing who they are," Taitano said. "We provide many youth with what is known as a 'third place', somewhere besides home and school or work to connect with and feel comfortable in."

LGBTQ+ youth remain one of the most vulnerable populations in the region, often experiencing higher rates of mental health challenges, substance use, and family conflict. By offering a certified outpatient mental health clinic and drop-in support, Our Safe Place addresses these challenges head-on. Services include individual and family therapy, psychiatric care, and support for issues such as coming out, transitioning, safe dating, and a variety of mental health conditions.

Our Safe Place is a collaborative program with San Diego Youth Services, SBCS (formerly South Bay Community Services), and the YMCA of San Diego County. Each partner provides a drop-in center, and San Diego Youth Services also provides a mental health clinic. The program is funded by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency.