

Youth services adds new 'safe place'

Days Inn joins 5 other sites for teens in crisis

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GREENFIELD — Young people in the community who feel scared, confused, unsafe or lost have another "safe place" to go to.

The Days Inn in Greenfield, located at 21 Colrain Road, is the first business to partner with DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services to offer the Safe Place program to area youth.

DIAL/SELF, in partnership with Baystate Franklin Medical Center and the Greenfield Police Department, launched the national program last year.

The Safe Place program provides immediate access to support for young people who are in crisis by offering multiple sites in the community at

which a youth can go to.

The sites are located in Greenfield and Montague and are distinguishable by the large yellow and black diamond-shaped signs outside of partnering establishments.

The other Safe Places are the Greenfield Police Department, the Greenfield Fire Department, BFM, Montague Police Department and DIAL/SELF's office on Abbott Street.

A person under 21 who feels scared, unsafe, or confused can show up at any site and request help. Staff members at all Safe Place sites are trained to make the young person feel comfortable and welcome while they contact DIAL/SELF. Trained staff and volunteers will respond to the Safe Place site and provide help and support to the young person.

Since DIAL/SELF started the Safe Place program in October 2009, 40 youth have been helped over the phone using our 24-hour hotline number and 24 youth have been helped at Safe Place locations, according to Safe Place director Kelsey Wessels.

Wessels said most youth

who have used the Safe Place program have been homeless and have presented at a Safe Place site in need of a place to stay that day. DIAL/SELF was then able, in some cases, to connect these young people to a housing option.

She said one young woman utilized the Safe Place program because she was not getting along with her parents.

"She presented at the Safe Place site, we responded and picked her up and after having a conversation with her and speaking with the parents," she said, "we were able to reunite her with her family."

DIAL/SELF provides a broad range of services that foster youth empowerment by meeting basic needs, by creating opportunities for youth, by advocating for youth interests, and by encouraging both youth and adults to volunteer in their communities.

Further information about DIAL/SELF is available at: www.dialself.org.

Right: A "Safe Place" sign denotes a site where teens can show up and request help.

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