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August 10, 2016

DART Vehicles Help Victimized Youth Get to a 'Safe Place'

North Texas youth in crisis have a new fleet of safe places, thanks to DART's participation in the national "Safe Place" program. Safe Place is a national youth outreach and prevention program for young people needing immediate help and safety.

DART is working with the Safe Place program to transport youth escaping dangerous situations to the nearest QuikTrip convenience store, which is a designated "safe place." Once inside the store, runaways and at-risk youth can wait for a Safe Place agency partner to connect them with professional help. The convenience store chain has been part of the national effort since 1991.

"Working with a well-established organization like Safe Place helps us to protect our most vulnerable riders and make our community safer for everyone," said Tim Newby, DART vice president of transportation.

The transit agency began the collaboration with Safe Place as part of its ongoing effort to address human trafficking. Runaways and other youth in danger are often targets for traffickers. DART began working to raise awareness of human trafficking in 2015 through a series of posters and public service announcements on buses, trains and stations. All DART buses and Light Rail trains will have a Safe Place decal prominently displayed on the exterior and interior of the vehicle. Minors who see the decal will know DART can help get them to safety. Once a minor notifies the operator that he or she is in need of help, the operator - who has received training on handling these situations - will alert DART's Bus Control Center, who in turn will initiate steps to transport the minor to a Safe Place facility.

Learn more about the Safe Place program at NationalSafePlace.org.

