



3900 Meadows Ln, Las Vegas, NV 89107

safenest.org

November 8, 2024

Dear SafeNest Community,

We would like to address and correct reports made by Darcy Spears of KTNV during her recent coverage of SafeNest. Darcy's reports demonstrate a clear lack of understanding around domestic violence, a horrendous and complicated issue, and operating a 24/7 crisis shelter.

Since SafeNest first became aware of Darcy's report on September 12, 2024, the agency has been 100% transparent with her providing timely responses to numerous emails and text messages. Our CEO, Liz Ortenburger, gave Darcy an on-camera interview one day before leaving for a bone marrow transplant.

As an investigative journalist, Darcy should research all aspects of a story to provide viewers with a fair and balanced report. In her reporting, Darcy failed to do so and, based on the Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics, she demonstrated a lack of journalistic ethics.

Below, we correct and address Darcy's report. We want to address these concerns transparently, reassure our community, and highlight the positive impact that we continue to make together.

Ensuring Safety and Cleanliness at the SafeNest Shelter

Since 1977, SafeNest's mission has been to end the epidemic of domestic and sexual violence in our community. In the past 47 years, we've supported over **500,000** survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In 2023, we supported **11,150** survivors, **750** at shelter alone.

The SafeNest shelter is a communal living situation with, at times, over 100 residents. All of the residents are fleeing life-threatening situations. Domestic and sexual violence



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survivors come from all walks of life and include women, men, children, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The interviews and video clips shown in Darcy's reports are distressing. Unfortunately for victims of domestic and sexual abuse, the trauma, violence, and co-occurring drug addiction and mental health conditions do not end the moment they walk through our shelter doors. Our goal is to provide a space where survivors can develop coping mechanisms to lead healthy and productive lives safe from abuse.

What Darcy failed to show are the moments SafeNest shelter staff arrive on scene after an altercation and provide counseling, safety, and support. This is something CEO Liz Ortenburger reminded Darcy of several times during their interview along with the fact that we have policies and procedures in place to handle these issues.

What Darcy failed to mention are the **7,723** therapy sessions SafeNest staff provided in 2023, both in and outside of shelter. In 2023, over **1,100** group and individual sessions were provided to clients at shelter including de-escalation procedures after any altercation. SafeNest has therapists available, including an on-site therapist specifically for shelter residents, and we provide therapists that run group sessions. Clients can schedule in-person or virtual appointments with their Hope Advocate. Although all clients are provided the opportunity to engage in services such as counseling, not all clients choose to do so.

SafeNest staff undergoes **40 hours** of comprehensive Domestic Violence Hope Advocacy Training through the University of Nevada, Reno Extension. In addition, SafeNest works with experts in the fields of domestic and sexual violence and trauma-informed care including the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa Hope Research Center, Alliance for HOPE International, End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI), among others.

SafeNest purchases food directly from US Foods including ready to eat meals and frozen and microwaveable items. These foods are not donated to SafeNest. Clients may request food that meet their dietary and religious needs. The refrigerators and freezers with shared meals are open and restocked regularly. SafeNest conducts cleaning of all the common



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areas seven days a week. A deep cleaning of the kitchen by a professional cleaning company is conducted once a month. When SafeNest receives donated bottled water, which is infrequently, it is available for clients in the shelter refrigerator.

On October 30, 2024, the Nevada Bureau of Healthcare Quality and Compliance conducted a surprise investigation at the SafeNest shelter. The inspection was conducted on the authority of the Nevada Chief Medical Officer and based on a complaint or allegation of a public health hazard. SafeNest fully cooperated with the Bureau. Based on the investigation, **the Bureau found no evidence of crimes that would warrant a report to law enforcement agencies and found no evidence of a public health hazard to warrant further investigation regarding public health.**

Financial Integrity and Accountability

SafeNest takes financial accountability seriously, ensuring that every dollar entrusted to us is used to maximize impact. Our [2023 Impact Report](#), [financial statements](#), and [Form 990s](#) all of which can be viewed on our website, reflect our dedication to maintaining transparency and responsibly managing the funds that fuel our mission.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we undergo an annual independent financial audit. Our most recent financial audit dated July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, **found no findings/a clean audit.** In addition, we hold a Platinum Seal with [Candid](#) (formerly GuideStar), the highest level of recognition for fiscal transparency with the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. **Only 15% of all nonprofits nationwide receive this recognition.**

SafeNest does not receive state-level tax-payer funding. The majority of our government funding comes from Marriage License Funding, where a portion of the cost of a Nevada marriage license is distributed to the state's Aid for Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence Fund and through federal funding with the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA), which is funded



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by white collar crime court fees. This documentation can be found in our [Impact Report](#) and the current [Form 990](#).

Community Donations at Work

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, SafeNest receives almost **2 million pounds** in new, gently used, and extremely used donated goods annually. Keeping 10% of those donations means that we distribute almost **200,000 pounds annually to survivors**. SafeNest prioritizes donations based on client needs. Appropriate donations are distributed to our shelters in Mesquite and Las Vegas, through the courts to survivors in need of appropriate court clothing, and to Cora's Boutique, a no-cost shop for adults and children located at our Las Vegas shelter that is open four days a week or as needed. The money we receive from our nearly 30-year partnership with Savers funds critical initiatives each year to support SafeNest's mission.

Darcy's report stated that SafeNest received "1,000 pairs of shoes". In 2023, SafeNest received a financial donation from a holiday giving program which was used to purchase waterproof shoes provided to youth participating in our Camp Hope summer program. In addition, very few bikes are donated to SafeNest due to a lack of space to ride and store them at shelter and the difficulty parents have transporting them once they leave our shelter.

Our Impact

In 2023, SafeNest provided nearly 170,000 services to adult survivors, children, and abusive partners suffering in the space of domestic and sexual violence. Since 1977, we have served over 500,000 individuals in Clark County. Outside of our direct work with clients, we passed legislation to make our community safer.

Thanks to your belief in our mission, SafeNest:



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- Launched the [PS417 response program](#) in collaboration with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. SafeNest advocates respond, alongside LVMPD officers, to scenes of 911 calls related to domestic and sexual violence and provide immediate support to survivors. Since 2017, **PS417 has supported over 11,000 survivors.**
- Introduced [Camp Hope](#) to SafeNest's programming, focusing on youth most at risk of perpetuating cycles of violence. Camp Hope is a preventive program aimed at breaking the cycle of violence by empowering young people impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Since 2019, **nearly 500 youth** have participated in Camp Hope.
- Leads the education efforts in Clark County on strangulation and the wider implications related to homicide. In 2024, SafeNest held "Strangulation: A Red Flag for Homicide", a no-cost workshop on identifying, investigating, and prosecuting domestic violence strangulation cases to **over 500 participants and over 100 community partners.**
- Advocated for and passed [Assembly Bill 257](#) strangulation legislation, making Nevada the fourth state in the U.S. to fund exams for strangulation survivors. This initiative has raised public awareness around the dangers of strangulation in domestic and sexual violence situations.
- Launched a transitional housing program for shelter residents in 2017.



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Moving Forward Together

What Darcy's report gets right is the importance of increased awareness, funding, and support of domestic and sexual violence prevention. At SafeNest, we are in a continuous learning environment from our clients and other shelters across the country. We continue to grow and improve our services to all those fleeing domestic and sexual violence.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a vital part of our mission to break the cycle.

If you or someone you know needs help, SafeNest is here for you. Call our 24/7 confidential hotline: 702-646-4981 or visit safenest.org for more resources.

Liz Ortenburger
CEO