

Young people eagerly promote National Safe Place Week

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Farm Fun Day

For the second year in a row, SOFLA Real Estate Group hosted a winter event for the residential clients of Youth Crisis Center - The Safe Place.

"Farm Fun Day" gave the 17 youths staying at the shelter an opportunity to pet and play with sheep, goats, chickens, pigs and rabbits. Pony and horseback rides took place in the parking lot.

For most, the experience was a first.

"I initially expected younger children when we planned the first event. I was concerned that teenagers wouldn't enjoy the activity as much," said Louis Ordonez Jr., president of SOFLA.

One of the youth care workers explained to him that many of the teens never had the opportunity to experience events like these as children.

"I was relieved to hear this and able to relate, having come from a somewhat similar background myself," Ordonez said.

In an effort to reach out to more children from troubled backgrounds, Ordonez has incorporated a Volunteers' Division within SOFLA Real Estate Group, and his South Florida office has held similar events for the children of Fort Lauderdale's Kids in Distress. SOFLA is planning a summer event for YCC's youths.

"These children need to see examples of others who have overcome difficult childhoods and gone on to be successful with the community. This helps them to be hopeful about their own futures."

The Youth Crisis Center and its Project Safe Place program provide Northeast Florida youths and families services to mend relationships and protect children who feel threatened, as well as a safe haven for troubled teens. For more information, call (904) 720-0002 or visit www.youthcrisiscenter.org.

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