



COMMITTED TO
PREVENTING SEXUAL ABUSE
& SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
LANCASTER, PA



Spring 2023 Newsletter

A Word from the Director...

Resistance, Renewal and Re-Emergence!

"Although at one time I did not know my story had value, I am learning to use my story of resilience to encourage others to speak out!" – "Janice" a survivor of child sexual abuse

After a cold, dark, and dreary winter seeing signs of new life springing forth fills us with hope. Daffodils popping up from yet-frozen ground. Grass is starting to green. And, as Alyssa Swartz, our Office manager reminds us, baby goats being born on her family's farm! (See a cute baby goat picture later on in this newsletter!)

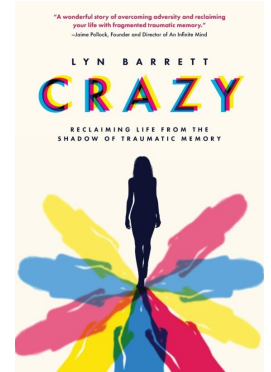
The theme of our retreat for trauma survivors and their friends at the beautiful Hurst BnB in Ephrata on April 22 is **Resistance, Renewal and Re-emergence**. Which is in many ways an apt descriptor of the cycle of seasons, as well as our lives. We find ways to resist what threatens and devastate our lives; we build our resilience muscles as we push back against despair and loneliness to make space for life; and we re-emerge not as we once were, but as someone who has been made strong at the broken places and moves into a different stage of life.



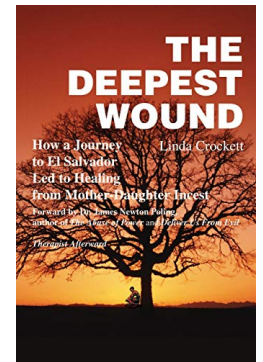
We know from extensive research that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as living with a mentally ill parent, witnessing domestic violence, being sexually or physically abused, are not only traumatic, but embedded deeply in our bodies and minds, impacting the way we respond as adults to challenging and stressful experiences. Healing is not linear and is often cyclical like the seasons.

Millions of us are ACEs children, walking around in adult bodies, bearing a cumulative burden as adults of the additional traumas we experienced. Befriending a survivor is not an easy thing, as many of those who have tried to walk with us can attest. We can break their hearts as we react to seemingly intractable pain that just won't go away.

Our Resistance, Renewal and Re-Emergence retreat will combine reflective space, trauma education, and group discussion. Special guest Rev. Lyn Barrett will join us from her home in New Mexico by Zoom to lead our discussion about **Resistance**: How do we resist the internal forces that drives us toward isolation, and harmful behavior? How do we resist the external forces that deny our reality and shame us? Rev. Barrett is the author of [Crazy, Reclaiming Life from the Shadow of Traumatic Memory](#) (2022, Koehlerbooks), for which I had the privilege of writing the forward.



Lyn and I became friends during her studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary shortly after my book [The Deepest Wound](#) (2001, Writers Showcase) was published and through her years of pastoring in Lancaster County and beyond. We were both professional women and survivors of child sexual abuse with a keen interest in theology. During those years, it was a real risk for a professional woman to disclose to anyone you were a survivor. Disclosure is still risky, but over the years, more professional women are leading with their full selves – survivorship included. For a full description of the retreat, leadership, and registration, visit the Events page on our website or click the button below.



We invite you to journey with us and other survivors and friends on April 22 as we explore the life-giving ways that we resist, renew and re-emerge.

Linda Crockett
Executive Director
April 10, 2023



Swartz's Roadside Stand



www.swartzroadsidestand.com

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- Retreat: 4/22/2023
- Free Workshop: Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse
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- Challenges of Being a Male Survivor

SAVE THE DATE! April 22nd, 2023

Retreat: Resistance, Resilience, And Re-emergence: A Retreat for Survivors of Childhood Trauma and Their Friends



Retreat

RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, & RE-EMERGENCE: A RETREAT FOR SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND THEIR FRIENDS

**APRIL 22, 2023
8AM-4PM**

\$75 per person
Registration required
*Scholarships available

**HURST HOME
BED & BREAKFAST**

154 E Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

 **SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
LYN BARRETT**
*Author of Crazy: Reclaiming
Life from the Shadow of
Traumatic Memory*

Register your spot today by visiting
our website at
www.safecommunitiespa.org
Questions? Email us at
info@safecommunitiespa.org

Date/Time: Saturday, April 22nd from 8AM-4PM
Location: Hurst Home Bed and Breakfast
154 E Farmersville Road Ephrata, PA 17522

Our Spring retreat will combine reflective space, outdoor time, trauma education, and group discussion.

Resistance, Renewal and Re-emergence is an apt descriptor of the cycle of seasons, as well as our lives as we heal from trauma. We find ways to resist what threatens devastate our lives; we build our resilience muscles as we push back against despair and loneliness to make space for life; and we re-emerge not as we once were, but as someone who has been made strong at the broken places and moves into a different stage of life.

We know that many survivors find resilience and a sense of peace in nature, so we searched for a space that could help fill our resilience wells. The location of our gathering is the beautiful and spacious Hurst Home near Ephrata, PA, where the outdoors comes indoors as you step from the ground level retreat space directly onto the patio with a spectacular view of gently rolling hillsides and farms. A winding path leading down to the pond on a slope below invites you to find stillness in the reflective waters.

The home is equipped with an elevator and can accommodate those with difficulty in walking.

We invite you to journey with us on April 22 as we explore the life-giving ways that we resist, renew and re-emerge. Register by selecting the button below. You will receive an email confirming your registration. The cost is \$75 and includes a meal. Limited scholarships available for those who need assistance; contact MHarris@safecommunitiespa.org

You may also register by calling Mark directly at 717-560-9989 and pay cash or check at the door.

Want to purchase a retreat gift certificate for someone in your life or a survivor you don't know who needs a hand? Contact us at 717-560-9989 or email info@safecommunitiespa.org



Free Workshop: Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse

Is Your Child Safe at Church, Summer Camp, and School?

Most prevention safety practices focus on adults molesting children. Yet research indicates that over 40% of children are sexually harmed by other children. A 2017 investigation by the Associated Press uncovered about 17,000 reported sexual assaults of students by other students - including in elementary school. And reported assaults are only the tip of the iceberg. Most abuse, including by siblings, goes unreported.

This workshop will focus on children under age 12. It will help participants understand the long-lasting impact of this type of abuse on the victim; why some children develop problematic sexual behavior; how to recognize signs that a child may be at risk for harming another child, and how to effectively intervene. We'll discuss some prevention practices any organization caring for children should have in place, and what a safety plan looks like for a child at risk for sexually harming others.

Facilitator: Linda Crockett, Ex. Director



CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: IS YOUR CHILD SAFE AT CHURCH, SUMMER CAMP, AND SCHOOL?

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DATE
TUESDAY, APRIL 25TH

TIME
6:30PM-7:45PM

**HELD ON ZOOM,
PLEASE REGISTER TO
RECEIVE THE LINK**

SIGN UP TODAY

www.safecommunitiespa.org



HOSTED BY SAFE COMMUNITIES
SPONSORED BY LANCASTER CO.
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE



Board Member Profile Highlight

Robin Moulfair- Treasurer

Robin Moulfair is the Treasurer of the Safe Communities Board of Directors. She is the principal and owner of [Peak Performance Tax and Business](#) Service in Elizabethville, PA. Robin has over 22 years of experience in the tax and accounting field. A U.S. Army Veteran, she is also a Spiritual Director and Youth Pastor and is currently completing a master's degree in spiritual formation at Evangelical Seminary (Myerstown). She is a member of the National Association of Tax Professionals and has served on the Board for the Pennsylvania chapter. She is also a member of the National Association of Christian Women Entrepreneurs.



Robin was trained as a Safe Church facilitator in our program several years ago. She is a survivor of domestic violence and has a particular interest in the work we do, bringing what she has learned into her work as a part time youth pastor at a small independent church.

Here is a little bit about why Robin is so passionate about working with Safe Communities:

1. Why is working with Safe Communities meaningful to you?

There are a number of reasons that working with Safe Communities is meaningful and important to me. First, I am a survivor of domestic abuse. My former husband was both emotionally and physically abusive. For years I was the typical victim – I made excuses about how clumsy I was to explain the bruises and black eyes that couldn't be covered up. I was too scared and embarrassed to talk about it. We were both in the Army at the time and I went to his commanding officer for help, which landed us both in counseling. The beatings were worse after counseling sessions, so I quit those quickly. It wasn't until we had our first child and he threw me out of the house one day and was alone with our son that I finally took a stand and got myself out of that situation with the help of friends. So, while I am not a sexual abuse survivor, I do understand the survivor's journey. Secondly, as a former youth pastor I saw a number of sexual abuse situations. It was while working as a youth pastor that I first learned about Safe Communities. Children are so vulnerable, and it is our role, as a community, to keep them safe from harm. The statistics of child sexual abuse are heart-breaking. The work of protecting them, becoming their advocate, and helping to ensure justice is vitally important work. As a spiritual director, I seem to draw clients who are survivors. The work of healing is also vital. SC understands that all of these things are part of the mission, none can be left out.

2. What do you most value about Safe Communities and its work?

The goal of ending child sexual abuse is one worth fighting for and I appreciate all the work that Safe Communities does to prevent CSA within churches and as the organization has expanded to working beyond just the walls of the church. However, I think that I most value the work that Safe Communities does with trauma survivors. Only those who are survivors understand how far-reaching the impact of abuse can be. To this day, I still carry many emotional and behavioral responses. During one of the first Safe Church sessions I attended as a youth pastor, I discovered several of these in myself that I had never before associated with my own past experiences. I love that SC not only gives survivors a voice but also gives them opportunities to find continued healing with others who have been through similar experiences and that SC brings together both those who are survivors and those who support them.

3. Why do you believe that child sexual abuse prevention; and healing and justice making for survivors, are critical social issues to address?

We live in a society where justice is often difficult to find. Most of us believe in the need for justice and yet laws and practices abound that seem to thwart justice on every side. We can place the blame for that on many things, but the bottom line is simply that we live in a fallen world that is not and never will be perfect. Even Christ's death for us is not perfect justice because He did not deserve the punishment. At the same time, God is both a God of love and mercy as well as justice. He wants us to work for justice in this world, as much as is possible. While justice alone isn't enough for healing, it is a part of the healing process. Additionally, only justice makes others safe. When a perpetrator does not get the punishment deserved and is able to continue to live in society without the needed boundaries and safeguards in place in churches and other gathering places, those in that community are less safe – and they don't even know it. We all know that CSA and other forms of abuse are wrong, but our legal system often seems to protect the perpetrator rather than the victims and that makes our communities and our people vulnerable. And then the cycle continues. It is our duty as Christians, as humans, as a civilization, as others who have been hurt or know those who have been hurt, to work towards a more just society.



4. How do you see your role as a Board member in helping Safe Communities to grow and flourish?

We as a Board have several roles and responsibilities. It is our role to ensure the organization of Safe Communities is effectively organized – legally, financially, and ethically. It is also our job as a board is to ensure the organization, and its people, has what it needs to do the work. If something is missing, it is our responsibility to figure out what it is and make it available. Additionally, as board members, we are ambassadors for SC. As a board member, I should be talking about SC, promoting the mission and the importance of the work that we do, whenever I can, both through casual conversation and more intentional sharing. This is important to find future donors, volunteers, and connections that can help move this work forward.

I am also an encourager, cheerleader for our employees and volunteers. As a board, we should provide not only the physical needs of the organization, but the emotional ones as well. This is not easy work, and it can take its toll. We have the privilege of celebrating the wins but also the responsibility and privilege of lifting our people up when the difficult moments of the work hit hard. As both a pastor (and I love that we have several pastors on the board) and a spiritual director, I want to be sure SC's employees and volunteers have a safe place to share and release tension when the work takes its toll. Because we know that it will. I believe it is our responsibility to ensure that our people take the needed time for self-care and to provide opportunities for it whenever possible.

Finally, as the board member who lives and works the furthest away from Lancaster, it is my hope to help broaden the reach of SC, to bring this vital mission into my area and other surrounding counties. The work of SC is needed everywhere.

Our System Often Fails Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence

Lancaster Sunday News February 26, 2023

By Linda Crockett, Executive Director

The [brutal rape and criminal homicide of 12-year-old Elaina Smith](#), allegedly by a registered sex offender who had previously assaulted her mother, is a sobering reminder that justice for victims of sexual and domestic violence often comes too late, if at all.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who loved Elaina as they mourn. Her death reminds us of the urgent need to work together as concerned citizens to improve the responses of our criminal justice and child protective service systems to sexual abuse and domestic violence.

To work effectively for change, we need to become better educated about the issue. There seem to be multiple issues — such as domestic violence and its intersections with child abuse — involved in Elaina’s case. But let’s start with registered sex offenders.

Most cases involving sexual crimes against an adult or child do not get a jury trial. Charges are often reduced (pleaded down) to obtain a guilty plea, as was the case with the man charged with raping and killing Elaina.

In August 2021, Jason Shackelford pleaded guilty under a negotiated plea agreement to indecent assault, terroristic threats and a firearms violation for crimes he committed in December 2019 and January 2020. His victim in these crimes was Elaina’s mother.

This plea agreement was negotiated despite the fact that she told police she had been sexually assaulted repeatedly by Shackelford, and had been punched and choked in an assault that resulted in her needing stitches. According to court records, Shackelford violated a protection from abuse order and threatened Elaina’s mother with a handgun he could not legally possess because of an earlier felony conviction.

Even a victim who wants her day in court likely will not see it unless the prosecutor believes her case can be won. In part, this is due to juries not being well informed about delayed and fragmented disclosure by victims — which is common, because the brain processes and stores traumatic memories differently. Juries often don’t understand trauma bonding, the attachment sometimes formed between a victim of trauma and the perpetrator. And then there’s the stark reality that many offenders appear to be trustworthy individuals to those who are not their victims.

Some (not all) of the convictions listed for offenders on Pennsylvania Megan’s Law registry are a result of this plea process, leading to a public misperception of the dangerous nature of offenders.

Such was the case with Shackelford, whose acts of violence included the choking of Elaina’s mother. According to the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, an “abuser’s attempt to strangle the victim can be a dramatic predictor of future lethality in intimate partner violence cases.”

Offenders go unchecked

Notification by law enforcement to those living near a registered offender only takes place when the offender is adjudicated a sexually violent predator. Such offenders represent a small portion of those on the state registry, so it is up to the public to use the tool provided by the registry to inform themselves. In Pennsylvania, sex offenders are classified by three tiers, with Tier I requiring registration for 15 years, Tier II for 25 years and Tier III for life.

And while the tiers are helpful classifications, many people erroneously believe that once a person is off the registry or released from prison, they are no longer a danger to children. **Research indicates that sexual recidivism rates for child sexual offenders increase over time**, rising from 5% after three years, to 23% after 15 years, to 52% after 25 years, according to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative.

In addition, if an offender serves a full prison sentence, he (and sex offenders are overwhelmingly male) can be released without parole, even though they may still appear on the registry. This means they lack any meaningful supervision by the court.

Finally, the cases of the youngest victims of sexual abuse seldom make it into the criminal justice system. The 4-year-old who has been raped by his grandfather does not typically make the kind of disclosure that is considered compelling and detailed enough to stand up in court. At best — and usually only if there is medical evidence, a detailed disclosure, a credible witness to the act, or an admission by the perpetrator — the offender will be placed on the child abuse registry, which is not accessible to the general public.

Most offenders are not listed on a registry or serve time in prison because they never get caught, charged and prosecuted.

Protecting the vulnerable

Despite adult retrospective studies showing that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experienced contact sexual abuse before age 18, the vast majority of child sexual abuse cases are never reported to authorities.

Fewer than 1 in 5 child sexual abuse cases are prosecuted, and only half of those prosecutions result in a conviction or guilty plea, according to the Office of Justice Programs' National Criminal Justice Reference Service.

Medical evidence is available in less than 5% of these cases. Even with penetration of some kind, young children heal very quickly. It's important to note that false allegations by children are uncommon, averaging less than 5% for younger children.

Child sex offenders come from all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups. While men are the majority of offenders and the focus of most research, women also sexually abuse children and often fly under the radar because people tend to believe a child is safe with a female caregiver.

Consider that 90% of children who are sexually abused know, live with or are related to the offender. Many offenders are married and have children, and many gravitate toward professions or volunteer in places that give them regular access to children. **In a large 2001 study of incarcerated child sexual offenders, 93% described themselves as religious and spoke of churches as being easy to operate within.**

Unfortunately, the religious impulse to forgive can overtake the need for careful consideration of whether or not a sex offender can safely integrate into a congregation. Even with stringent boundary provisions and supervision, some sex offenders are simply too dangerous to risk contact with vulnerable children.

Many people also assume that an offender who rapes an adult is not a danger around children. Elaina Smith was allegedly raped and killed by a man who also sexually assaulted her mother, a classic example of crossover offending, in which offenders choose victims from multiple age, gender and relationship categories. Research indicates that about 20% of offenders had a prior victim of a different gender and 40% crossed over in age categories.

There is no excuse for our systemic failures to protect children and to provide justice to survivors of sexual violence. And there is no excuse for those in charge of our schools, places of worship and other organizations to not educate adults and children about safety from sexual abuse. Too many focus exclusively on background checks and mandated reporting after a child may have been abused. This does little to build the guardrails needed to stop abuse before it happens.

It seems that Elaina Smith had no guardrails to protect her. To honor her memory, let's start building some now. Lancaster County is a long way from being a "safe community" for children. We can change that.

24-hour sexual assault hotline: 717-392-7273

Report suspected child abuse to ChildLine: 1-800-932-0313

PA Dutch Interpreter Training

Scenario #1: Imagine you are a little Amish girl who speaks only PA Dutch in the dialect of your local church community, and you've been sexually abused. You are taken to a Child Advocacy Center where a man who does not speak the kind of PA Dutch you know interviews you. In your culture, a girl or woman would never talk to a man about sexual things, and this particular man is of an ethnicity you have never seen before; he is dressed in clothes that look very strange to you; and PA Dutch is not his native tongue. When you get out of the interview, you tell your mom you could not understand his PA Dutch, and you were very scared.



Your case is not going to move forward – because you did not disclose. You will go back to the farm, and the uncle or brother or grandfather who molested you will likely do it again. And your mom will be in trouble with the church for going to outsiders.

Scenario #2: Imagine what the outcome might have been if you had been interviewed by an interpreter who is an Amish woman. She speaks your language, and she looks like other women in your life. She understands your idiomatic expressions and you feel safe with her.

Scenario #1 is happening all too often in counties across PA with Amish populations. To shift to Scenario #2, we need to get Amish women trained as certified court interpreters. Which is why we are partnering with the Administrative Office of PA Courts to create pathways for Plain women who are native PA Dutch speakers to become interpreters. If you know someone who might be interested – spread the word!

This Introductory Workshop will provide information on how to become a PA Court Certified Interpreter. There will be forms available to sign up to begin the process, if you would like to do serve your community in this way, as well as people to answer your questions. A light lunch will be available by 10:45 AM thanks to several Plain women who have volunteered to help. There is no cost to attend the workshop, but you must RSVP. Space is limited.

To RSVP for the Workshop, we need your contact information: name, address, phone number and email (if you have an email)

Please call us at 717-560 -989. You may leave a message to let us know you want to attend the workshop and give us your contact information;

OR RSVP by email with your contact information to info@safecommunitiespa.org. Please include Interpreter Workshop on the subject line; OR RSVP on-line by clicking the button below.

Challenges of Being a Male Survivor

By Mark Harris, Assistant Director

With good reason, many women in our world today are not very interested in hearing from men how difficult it is to be male in our society, so I will begin with an apology. But know that the nature of my challenge is probably not what you might think.

I became the Assistant Director here at Safe Communities in May of last year. Before that time, I was featured in our Survivors Voices series, took part in a government panel on Trauma Informed Care with Linda Crockett and others, and contributed to the Guide to Creating Safe Environments for Survivors of Sexual Abuse in the Congregation. I have attended Tamar Speaks Retreats, Circles of Hope, and have found incredible value in the community building that these events provide.

That said, I often found myself either one of the few, or the only man in the room. I am quite comfortable with this. I have three older sisters, and I have four daughters. The females in my life have given me invaluable perspective, taught me precious lessons in how to bend and not break, and rooted me in respect for everyone's experience.

I am a public, male survivor of child sexual abuse. While I am certainly not the only one, there are not exactly a lot of us. This means, among other things, that the community I have had as a survivor in my life has been made up predominantly of women.

A word on the rarity of public male survivors: it's not because they're not out there. With the CDC's statistic that one in six boys are sexually assaulted before their 18th birthday, we know this to be true.



But, many of the ways of being male in our culture do not allow for the vulnerability and openness that comes with sharing about our abuse. Society has a tendency to push men to be strong, unaffected by difficulty, and monolithic. These are truths that I continue to struggle to change, for the sake of other male survivors.



The challenge that I am having currently is not one I have experienced before. As a male, and, to have it said, a big, tall, deep-voiced male, I happen to fit the demographic characteristics of the abusers of many women who are survivors. I am very aware that many female survivors walk through life having little or no choice but to be in spaces where men of these demographic characteristics are in charge, or at least ever-present. It is completely understandable to me that when considering whether or not to take part in a group for healing from abuse and its legacies, many women hesitate to share their stories in a space where men are present.

Meanwhile, in an unpleasant twist of fate, I, myself, have grown up into a person who is within the demographic of my own abusers. The perpetrators who bought and sold me were nearly all charismatic men who were leaders in their communities. This reality has ramifications not only for me leading or participating in healing groups for survivors, but even for the simple act of looking in the mirror every morning.

I don't have a neat solution to end this article with. Healing in community involves quiet, slow, and deliberate searching for new ways forward, and doing so together.

In that spirit of community, I invite comments and reflections about the significance gender plays in creating safe space. What is the role of male survivors in the movement to end child sexual abuse? How and in what spaces can we be most effective? Does a male group facilitator or a male therapist present a barrier to healing for most women? Are you a male survivor who experiences similar concerns? If you are a woman whose abuser was female, what does a safe space look like to you?



Please reach out to me at MHarris@safecommunitiespa.org or to Linda at LCrockett@safecommunitiespa.org and share your thoughts!

Ultimately, I am deeply grateful to be a part of a community of survivors who strive for healing for themselves, and prevention and understanding for the rest of our world.

Your Donations Are What Make this Work Possible



We are THANKFUL for the valuable support of our individual donors, gifts from business such as Clark Associates, and key foundations including Touchstone Foundation, LMC Legacy Foundation, The Alpern Family Foundation, Tecumseh Milestone Foundation, Lancaster County Community Foundation, and the High Foundation.

Your partnership enables us to continue this work! Thank you!

Safe Communities needs everyday items to keep our programs running. We have created a wish list of our most needed items on Amazon.com. Your aid will help us in continuing our work of educating people about Child Sexual Abuse and assisting Survivors. Please click on the link below to view our wish list.

If you have not already done it, please check out our storefront for some cool merchandise. Your purchase will help Survivors of child sexual abuse move forward in their healing journeys and lead more fulfilling lives.

If you would rather support us directly, you can click below to give online, or send a check payable to our Fiscal Sponsor, Humanitarian Social Innovations (please write Safe Communities in Memo line only)
- 313 W. Liberty St., Suite 242, Lancaster, PA 17603.

Our core values: **Respect:** Recognizing the worth and dignity of each person of every race, culture, and socioeconomic status. **Integrity:** Adhering to moral and ethical principles, keeping commitments, doing the “right thing”. **Social Impact:** Eliminating root causes of systemic social problems so that individuals and communities can flourish. **Equality:** Embracing non-hierarchical models within our organization, and our work. **Accountability:** Being transparent and accountable to those we serve and the donors who support us.

Please share this newsletter with your friends, family, clients, colleagues, organizations, and faith communities to help spread the word that prevention and healing are possible.

www.safecommunitiespa.org

**We welcome your questions about any of these programs.
Contact info@safecommunitiespa.org or 717.560.9989**



