



# Safe2Tell—A Multifaceted Safety Program

by Donald S. Quick

Because of school shootings at Columbine and Platte Canyon High Schools, Colorado is focusing on improving school safety. Discussions continue about which strategies are the best to keep kids safe; however, there is one initiative that has been implemented in ninety-five communities across Colorado. That initiative is called Safe2Tell.

## Safe2Tell Program History

Safe2Tell received its initial funding from The Colorado Trust, "an independent grantmaking foundation dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of the people of Colorado."<sup>1</sup> It was first partnered with the Colorado Attorney General's Office under former Attorney General Ken Salazar. Current Colorado Attorney General John Suthers continues to support the program.

In 2007, the Colorado Department of Public Safety created a staff position for Safe2Tell Director Susan Payne. Susan is a Special Agent with a background in hostage/crisis negotiation, major crimes prevention, and school resource officer programs, and served seventeen years with the Colorado Springs Police Department.

## The Safe2Tell Call Center

Safe2Tell is more than an anonymous telephone hotline. It is a multifaceted program that is instrumental in keeping our kids, schools, and communities safe. Safe2Tell is a prevention initiative focusing on: (1) awareness and education; (2) early intervention and prevention; and (3) accountability and follow-up.

Here are a few of the components of the Safe2Tell program:

1. An anonymous call line is answered by trained staff at the Colorado State Patrol twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Trained communications officers create a report on specially designed software. Tip information is forwarded to the designated local school personnel and law enforcement officer.
3. Through software, the staff at Safe2Tell later receives a message as to the school's and/or law enforcement's response to the tip. If no response is received within five days, a follow-up message is sent requesting a response.
4. Training is provided to school staff and law enforcement and community members.
5. Marketing materials that outline the Safe2Tell program and hotline number are provided. These include school posters, student cards, pencils, and refrigerator magnets.

Although the statewide call center is not yet three years old, more than 2,500 calls concerning hundreds of children at risk of being hurt or killed have been received. Many of these calls involved potential crimes or dangerous situations. Here is a breakdown of fielded calls:

24 Planned School Attacks	12 Sexual Assaults
199 Bullying at School	100 Threats to Life
31 Assaults	92 Drugs/Alcohol
50 Suicide Interventions	24 Fights
60 Guns or Other Weapons	10 Gang-Related Calls

Other calls concerned kids who were "cutting themselves" or playing the "choking game." There also were calls about kids who were starting fires and kids at risk from improper use of the Internet. Due to the nature of these calls, it is critical to receive this important information early and intervene as quickly as possible.

## The Importance of Safe2Tell

As anyone with teenagers knows, our kids often have the most information about dangerous situations in their schools and communities. However, they are frequently reluctant to share the information with adults who can make a positive and safe intervention. Safe2Tell provides an anonymous and safe way for kids and their families to pass this information along to someone who can help.

## The Legal Community Can Help

Safe2Tell should be in every school district in Colorado. Members of the legal community and profession can play a key role in making Safe2Tell available to every child.

The members of the Colorado District Attorney's Council unanimously voted to support Safe2Tell. Colorado Bar Association members throughout the state also can become Safe2Tell partners in their local schools.

Here are just three ways to participate in this effort:

1. Speak with your school principal or district superintendent; find out if Safe2Tell is already in your schools.
2. If the program is not in effect, urge school officials to learn about Safe2Tell by visiting [www.Safe2Tell.org](http://www.Safe2Tell.org) and then implement Safe2Tell measures in their district.
3. If money is needed for the cost of materials, help raise the funds by sponsoring a school or hosting a school fundraiser.

As attorneys, we play an important role in the justice system. With Safe2Tell, attorneys also can play an important role in preventing violence in our schools and communities.

To learn more about the Safe2Tell program, visit [www.Safe2Tell.org](http://www.Safe2Tell.org) or call us at (719) 520-7435. Make a call and make a difference.

### Note

1. See The Colorado Trust website at [www.coloradotrust.org/index.cfm?fuseAction=AboutTheTrust.WhoWeAre](http://www.coloradotrust.org/index.cfm?fuseAction=AboutTheTrust.WhoWeAre).

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