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## **INITIATIVE TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AIMS TO REACH A TIPPING POINT IN COLORADO**

Nearly 150 Coloradans Sign Up for Training to Create Safe Communities Opening Weekend

DENVER, CO (Monday, June 22, 2020) [Illuminate Colorado](#) (Illuminate) aims to train more than 200,000 Coloradans in order to reach a tipping point in the state where children grow up happy, healthy and safe in communities that prevent children from experiencing sexual abuse. The statewide nonprofit dedicated to strengthening families, organizations and communities to prevent child maltreatment received an extraordinary response to a [new initiative](#) launched last week focused on preventing child sexual abuse.

“When a community reaches a tipping point, the cultural starts to change and that is what needs to happen to eliminate child sexual abuse in Colorado. This initiative is built around the idea that **if enough adults get educated, then together, a new standard of child safety will be created in the community and ultimately throughout Colorado.**” said **Anne Auld** director of education for Illuminate Colorado.

The Tipping Point Initiative encourages all Coloradans to take the **Darkness to Light Stewards of Children® training**, the only evidence-informed, adult-focused child sexual abuse prevention program in the United States proven to increase knowledge and change behavior. Adults learn how to **prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse** and feel empowered to spread their knowledge within the community.

**Over the last five years, the number of children in Colorado experiencing sexual abuse has steadily risen.** Seven percent of the 286,534 allegations of child maltreatment in Colorado over the last five years involved concerns of sexual abuse; 28 percent of those concerns involved male children and 72 percent female children. However, it is also believed that **child sexual abuse is significantly underreported.** National experts estimate that **one in 10 children will be sexually abused before the age of 18 and 90 percent of children who experience sexual abuse know their abuser.**

Thanks in large part to support from the **Colorado Children's Trust Fund** in the Office of Early Childhood at the Colorado Department of Human Services, this interactive prevention training is available anywhere in Colorado **FREE of charge.** The 2-hour training **includes simple, effective prevention strategies** for adults to use to protect children from sexual abuse including **how to reduce one on one situations** when sexual abuse can occur and **the importance of using anatomically correct terms for genital with children** to prevent child sexual abuse. The training also includes education on topics like recognizing signs of abuse,

as well as practical guidance on how to respond in the moment when a child discloses abuse to you.

**Illuminate, along with more than 80 local authorized facilitators throughout Colorado,** have been promoting this training for several years with **more than 7,000 people in Colorado trained today.** This is no small feat, but it is a far cry from reaching the necessary critical milestone in child protection that is needed to effectively prevent child sexual abuse in Colorado. **Nearly 150 Coloradans signed up for the training to create safe communities over just one weekend** and the nonprofit is asking for help to raise awareness to reach the goal.

“While it may take many years to reach the tipping point in Colorado, **smaller communities and individual counties may get there relatively quickly** if families, organizations, neighborhoods and community leaders make the prevention of child sexual abuse a priority. We are definitely encouraged by the initial response we’ve seen in this first week” said Auld. **“We created TipColorado.org to monitor and share our progress** toward achieving the tipping point **in Colorado, as well as in each county** of the state. We want to let everyone know how many people have taken the training in their community and empower local partners to prevent child abuse in every neighborhood and workplace.”

The training is available both **online and in-person,** depending on local public health guidance. **Available in English and Spanish** and approved nationally for two hours of continuing education for many professionals including nurses, social workers, dentists and dental hygienists.

**Sign up online to learn more at TipColorado.org** to create a new standard of child safety in your community and throughout Colorado.

**Illuminate Colorado,** the lead organizer of the Tipping Point Initiative in Colorado, is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization working to strengthen families, organizations and communities to prevent child maltreatment in Colorado. With a research-based approach that emphasizes building protective factors in families, Illuminate works to address systemic and multi-sector issues affecting the well-being of children, collaborating with partners at local, state and national levels to develop powerful programs, policies and initiatives that keep kids safe.

Certified prevention experts offer multiple educational programs and ongoing support to local organizations and facilitators to increase Colorado’s capacity to create safe spaces where children can thrive. The organization is the state intermediary & an authorized facilitator of the Darkness to Light Stewards of Children® Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program.

**Darkness to Light** is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 with the mission to empower adults to prevent child sexual abuse. Through education and awareness, the organization seeks to create a safer world for children to grow and thrive. Darkness to Light’s flagship program, “Stewards of Children®,” is an award-winning training that teaches adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. To date, over one million educators, youth serving professionals, organization volunteers, and community members

have been trained. "Stewards of Children" is the largest training program of its kind, with the largest network of child protection advocates in the world.

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Visit [TipColorado.org](http://TipColorado.org) to:

- Listen and share testimonials from Coloradans in support of the training
- Learn more about child sexual abuse in Colorado
- Find out what the tipping point is in every Colorado county

For more information about this initiative contact:

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