



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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## **Gallagher Marine Systems and Members of the Golden Ray Response Team Take Aim at Silent Epidemic of Child Abuse**

***Collective Effort to Support Abused, Neglected, and Homeless Children and Youth in the Golden Isles***

**BRUNSWICK, GA – October 7, 2020** - Officials of Safe Harbor Children's Center announced today that Gallagher Marine Systems and members of the Golden Ray Response Team charged with removing the capsized Golden Ray from the St. Simons Sound are partnering together to raise awareness and urgently needed funds to support children and youth who have been abused, abandoned or neglected, and those experiencing homelessness.

"Child abuse, in all its forms, is far more prevalent than most people realize. Aptly dubbed a silent epidemic, child abuse is likely the most prevalent health problem children face with the most serious array of consequences," said Chris Graff, Director of Response Services for Gallagher Marine Systems and Incident Commander in the Unified Command. "Gallagher Marine Systems is grateful for the partnership and universal support of response contractors and individuals to collectively raise awareness and significant dollars to address these critical issues."

"The statistics are staggering. One in ten children will be the victim of abuse or neglect before the age of 18. Of those, three in ten are under the age of eleven," said Keith Fenton, Director of Development for Safe Harbor Children's Center. "Imagine, every day of the school year, nearly 2,900 school-aged children in Glynn County and surrounding school districts walk into a classroom weighted down by their backpack full of books and the trauma of their own abuse. Yet, all too often, it is a topic few want to discuss or even acknowledge."

"This special effort holds the promise to change lives". said Leslie Hartman, Executive Director of Safe Harbor. "Safe Harbor is tremendously grateful to Gallagher Marine Systems and the teams of the Golden Ray response for their investment in the health of our community and of our work and commitment to helping children and families in need."

As a nonprofit organization, Safe Harbor relies heavily upon the support of individuals and the philanthropic business community to support the ever-increasing demand for services. The funds raised will support seven core programs of Safe Harbor, including; Safe Harbor Children's Shelter, Zach's Place: Runaway & Homeless Youth Emergency Shelter, STRIVE Transitional Living Program, Street Beat, Safe Harbor Children's Advocacy Center, the Connie Smith Rape Crisis Center, and Family Preservation.

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“We are encouraging all members of our incident response as well as members of the public to join us in supporting the important work of Safe Harbor Children’s Center. Each dollar donated gets us one step closer to breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect among our community’s most vulnerable. Let’s see how much help we can generate for those in need,” added Graff.

To support this community-wide fundraising effort, call 912-267-6000 or visit [safeharborcenterinc.org](http://safeharborcenterinc.org)

#### **ABOUT SAFE HARBOR CENTER**

Founded in 1991, Safe Harbor Center serves children, families, and individuals who have been abused, abandoned or neglected; who are homeless or have run away from home, or who are otherwise at risk or feel threatened.

The mission of Safe Harbor Center is to provide services that promote security and stability for at risk families, children, and individuals. The mission is powered by seven unique programs: Safe Harbor Children’s Shelter, Zach’s Place: Runaway & Homeless Youth Emergency Shelter, STRIVE Transitional Living Program, Street Beat, Safe Harbor Children’s Advocacy Center, the Connie Smith Rape Crisis Center, and Family Preservation.

#### **ABOUT GALLAGHER MARINE SYSTEMS**

Gallagher Marine Systems LLC. (GMS), is a leading provider and the industry’s most comprehensive source of full-service, in-depth, marine pollution compliance and regulatory compliance support. GMS provides full-service U.S. Coast Guard and State compliance to terminals & pipelines along with services to more than 500 shipping companies world-wide representing over 4,500 ships that trade to the U.S., Panama, Canada and elsewhere.

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