



**A CATALYST FOR CHANGE**  
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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# FROM THE CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear SafeSport Community,

The U.S. Center for SafeSport has worked tirelessly since 2017 to end abuse and misconduct across and beyond the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. In 2021 we accelerated our transition from an emerging entity confronting unprecedented challenges to a mature organization fortifying an athlete safety framework built to last for generations.

This past year, we established new benchmarks in every function of our work despite the COVID-19 pandemic uncertainty that lingered across sport and public life. We resolved more abuse and misconduct reports than in any of our previous four years. Conducted more audits. Trained more people. Delivered more courses. And produced more education and support resources to increase athlete safety know-how across sport.

Measures like these project progress we are proud of, but we know the work is just beginning. We have *had* to do more of everything, because the ingrained problems that necessitate our work are so persistent across sport culture.

Last year, we received more than 70 reports of abuse and misconduct per week—a testament that people are increasingly aware of our work and how we can help, but a clear sign that inappropriate and damaging behavior still pervades sport in high frequencies, at all levels.

Our regular dialogues with athletes, lawmakers, coaches, and other sport leaders remind us that our work is not about numbers, but about hearts and minds.

By reinforcing awareness, vigilance, and mutual respect, we build positive sport cultures in which abuse and misconduct cannot fester. By highlighting principles behind the athlete safety policies we enforce, we enlist organizations as allies in preventing inappropriate behavior. By building partnerships and inspiring conversations on once-taboo topics, we empower athletes to feel confident in settings where we play, compete, and thrive.

We entered 2022 better equipped than ever—with 40% more staff than we had at the start of 2021—to pursue our mission of making athlete well-being the centerpiece of our nation's sport culture through abuse prevention, education, and accountability. We are ready and resolute in our commitment to make sport a safe place for everyone.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRS'.

Ju'Riese Colón,  
Chief Executive Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica'.

Jessica Herrera-Flanigan,  
Board Chair

## OUR STORY

As reports of sexual abuse in amateur sport made headlines in the 2010s, it became clear that America needed an independent organization focused on preventing abuse and misconduct in sport, and on providing a fair and effective system to investigate cases and respond to allegations across the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport opened in March 2017 to fill this need. Less than a year later, Congress passed the [\*\*Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017\*\*](#), which codified the Center's authority to resolve abuse reports involving individuals in the Movement—encompassing millions of athletes and others at national, regional, and local levels.

The Act also charged the Center with developing policies and procedures to prevent emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct to keep the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, 50+ national governing bodies (NGBs), and their local affiliated organizations accountable to common foundations for abuse prevention and training.

While established to oversee these activities for Olympic and Paralympic organizations, the Center—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit—also conducts education, training, and outreach to sport and recreation organizations to help parents, coaches, athletes, and others prevent abuse in every community. By encouraging and promoting conversations across America about how to build better cultures in and around sport, the Center progresses toward its vision that every athlete will be safe, supported, and strengthened through sport.

[\*\*See our Impact Report\*\*](#) detailing the Center's progress since 2017.

# 2021 CENTER MILESTONES

 <p><b>2 MILLION<sup>TH</sup></b></p> <p>SAFESPORT COURSE DELIVERED</p>	 <p>1ST ATHLETE CLIMATE SURVEY RELEASED</p>
 <p>900 NON-MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS GOT LEARNERS SAFESPORT® TRAINED</p>	<p><b>10,000<sup>TH</sup></b> </p> <p><b>REPORT</b></p> <p>OF ABUSE OR MISCONDUCT RECEIVED</p>
 <p>SUPPORTED ATHLETES AT TOKYO OLYMPIC &amp; PARALYMPIC GAMES</p>	 <p>100TH CENTER EMPLOYEE HIRED</p>
<p><b>8,000<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>CASE</b> </p> <p>OF ABUSE OR MISCONDUCT RESOLVED</p>	 <p>100TH NGB AUDIT CONDUCTED</p>
<p>2021 <b>SUMMIT</b></p> <p>3RD SAFESPORT SUMMIT FOR NGBS HOSTED</p>	<p><b>MAAPP</b> MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES</p> <p>2022 MICROSITE LAUNCHED</p>

# OUR GOVERNANCE

The Center is overseen by a volunteer **Board of Directors** whose members reflect knowledge and experience on a variety of topics including child safety, ethics, compliance, law, health care, and sport administration.

More than one-third of directors also have competed as elite athletes, a ratio the Center will meet or exceed following 2021 bylaw revisions, and the board this year also formally designated a new vice chair (April Holmes) and executive committee.

Each board member participates on at least one board subcommittee—Audit, Finance, or Nominating & Governance—aided by **non-board committee members** with targeted expertise.

The Center's directors, each independent from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, champion our goal of ending abuse in sport.

# GUIDED BY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2021, the Center embarked on the first year of its 2021-23 Strategic Plan that outlines goals, initiatives, and measures to help assess progress in pursuit of its mission.

The Plan organizes strategic priorities along five themes:

- **Accountability:** Ensure consistent execution of investigations, audits, and prevention programs, and drive culture change through individual and organizational accountability throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Movement.
- **Prevention & Education Partnerships:** Identify collaborative partners to secure research opportunities, share best practices, policies, and resources, and generate awareness of the Center.
- **Reach:** Build trust with athletes and sport communities by delivering relevant messaging to athletes, coaches, participants, parents, and other core stakeholders.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Develop a diverse funding program to supplement support received from the Olympic and Paralympic Movement and the federal government.
- **People Development:** Build and develop the staff and Board of Directors to meet the growing needs of the Movement.

This Annual Report describes numerous activities and outcomes that reflect strong progress toward the Center's three-year strategic goals, which include the following by 2023:

- Delivering 5 million SafeSport trainings since inception
- Increasing trainings delivered by at least 10% each year
- Increasing case resolution by 25%
- Developing a sanctioning education program
- Auditing all NGBs and publishing findings on athlete safety policy adherence, ensuring 100% adoption and implementation of Center policies and procedures
- Increasing the rates of exercised jurisdiction over allegations of emotional and physical misconduct by 25% (compared with the rate over which the Center exercised jurisdiction from inception to May 2021)

This Strategic Plan is updated as circumstances and priorities evolve to ensure targets remain ambitious and relevant, yet achievable with hard work. As such, the Center has modified several goals since the Plan's 2020 introduction, including revising the number of SafeSport trainings delivered, and amending our goal (to 10%) for annual increases in training volume.

Find more Strategic Plan details and goals [here](#).

The message of *accountability* is reflected throughout the Strategic Plan, as the Center strives to meet its mandate to prevent and respond to abuse in sport effectively, transparently, and free of undue influence. Soon the Center will lay groundwork for its next Strategic Plan to begin in 2024, and will evolve priorities to confront the impediments that most threaten athlete safety at that time.

# CREATING CULTURE CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION

Preventing abuse begins with education and awareness. In 2021, the Center grew its prevention, training, and outreach footprint, bringing SafeSport principles and best practices to stakeholders across the United States.

To best address the issue, it's important to fully understand its scope and depth. In July the Center released results of its first Athlete Culture & Climate Survey—the most in-depth look ever at the Movement's athlete abuse and misconduct landscape—based on responses from nearly 4,000 athletes in over 50 sports. The survey's noteworthy findings helped establish data baselines we will use to pursue necessary reforms and gauge Movement progress toward safe environments. The next athlete survey will be conducted in 2023 for 2024 publication.

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## Key findings

**9%** of surveyed athletes experienced inappropriate sexual contact during their sports involvement

**93%** of those who experienced sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact did not submit a formal report/complaint of it

**18%** of those having unwanted sexual experiences also indicated they were retaliated against

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A 2021 highlight was the launch of new online courses for health professionals, volunteers, and individuals working with athletes with disabilities, adding to a fast-growing course roster that includes the flagship SafeSport® Core Trained and annual refresher courses required for certain adults in the Movement. To improve user training experiences, most NGBs in 2021 migrated to the Center's new training platform at SafeSportTrained.org (some NGBs access this through their own portal).

Along with delivering over 950,000 courses in 2021 (an increase of 28% over 2020 totals), the Center reached 4,963 people through 105 live trainings on topics such as mandatory reporting and bullying prevention. In Fall 2021, a multiday SafeSport Best Practices program was introduced to provide consistent, efficient, and effective athlete safety training for staff at NGBs.

Center trainings and policy guidance were presented in new and accessible formats. Animated primers were produced to train Team USA volunteers at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and a six-episode animated RoadMAAPP series was produced to concisely break down MAAPP policy fundamentals for general audiences. The Center's Champion in Every Corner podcast series produced nine new episodes on topics including grooming and creating inclusive environments. These were among 24 educational resources the Center produced in 2021 for audiences throughout and beyond the Movement.

By year's end, the Center was finalizing for 2022 launch a Sport Situational Prevention Approach that sport teams and organizations can use to identify and proactively address safety risks—reflecting the Center's perspective that abuse prevention is a community priority, and a collective responsibility.



# INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

As federal law has established, the Center has the authority and obligation to resolve abuse and misconduct reports and establish and enforce training and athlete safety policy requirements across the Movement.

The Center in 2021 received a record-high 3,708 reports of abuse and misconduct, over 60% more than in 2020. Despite the escalation in report volume, the Center significantly reduced the number of cases awaiting assignment year-over-year, and nearly doubled its resolutions of formal investigations, the most labor-intensive type of case resolution. The Center reduced resolution times for nearly all case types, and in total resolved 2,868 cases in 2021, 18% more than in 2020, while continuing to give cases the depth of investigation they require.

The productivity increases even in the face of escalating case volume were aided by substantial growth in staff capacity. The Response & Resolution team had 55 members as of December 2021 (up 47% from 2020), with investigators averaging over 15 years of relevant experience including roles in federal, military, and local law enforcement, as well as in crimes against children units, child protective services, or Title IX specializations.

The [SafeSport Code](#) guides Center response and resolution processes and defines prohibited conduct. The Center maintains a Centralized Disciplinary Database listing more than 1,600 Movement adults (as of Dec. 31, 2021) with restrictions that include suspension or prohibition from sport participation, as well as some historical sanctions assessed by NGBs.

Making it easy to report abuse and misconduct and to understand investigative processes is a cornerstone of our response and resolution activities. Anyone can make a report involving someone in the Movement through our [Report a Concern](#) portal and 833-5US-SAFE reporting line. Our Resource & Process Advisor, available to answer questions for individuals directly involved in a case, fielded over 2,000 inquiries in 2021.

To help trauma-affected individuals find support, we partner with anti-sexual-abuse nonprofit RAINN to maintain a 24/7 SafeSport Helpline that served over 1,800 individuals this year by call or chat. And we produced [several videos](#) breaking down key response and resolution process stages in easy-to-absorb ways.

While the SafeSport Code requires that instances of known or suspected emotional and physical abuse and misconduct be reported to the appropriate NGB or LAO, there has not been a consistent approach across the Movement for the handling of reports in these categories. The Center is collecting data and convening NGB personnel to gather input that can assist the Center going forward in shaping best practices and policies regarding emotional and physical abuse and misconduct.

This is among many ways the Center is working to ensure abuse and misconduct reports are expertly resolved, through consistent and neutral processes that lead to appropriate sanctions for those who violate the SafeSport Code.

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**“My family sleeps at night because SafeSport worked.”**

— **Carrie Kehring**, parent of survivor and founder, WeRideTogether

# ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Center audits NGBs and the USOPC to assess their adherence to abuse prevention standards articulated in the Center's Audit and Compliance Manual, and based on the SafeSport Code and the MAAPP. These regular and random audits help the Center ensure Olympic and Paralympic organizations comply with required abuse prevention and training policies, and identify process and operations gaps to better safeguard athletes.

COVID-19 curtailed most travel and on-site sport and administrative activities in 2020, but in 2021 the Center conducted in-person or virtual audits of the USOPC and 53 NGBs. The Center also refined its systems for consistently, fairly, and effectively executing annual audits.

Center audits fall into one of two categories:

- **Administrative audits** to assess an NGB's athlete safety structure and whether its relevant policies and procedures meet Center-sanctioned standards and requirements
- **Event audits**—first conducted in 2021—to determine how policies and procedures protecting athletes are applied in event settings ranging from practices to camps to competitions; a MAAPP Risk Assessment accompanies these audits and is provided to NGBs

The Center in 2021 initiated substantial outreach and guidance on an updated version of the MAAPP; among other requirements, these policies limit one-on-one adult/minor interactions in common settings in and around sport.

Since the MAAPP is a primary foundation for audits, the Center worked closely with NGBs to help them apply and communicate these standards to members and other stakeholders in advance of the required Jan. 1, 2022 implementation of the updated policies. By year's end, the Center had approved 51 NGB-tailored MAAPP policies that each met and often exceeded baseline requirements.

The Center's Compliance Development Team conducted 36 pre-audit event-site visits with NGBs to answer policy questions and provide feedback. In all, the team had over 350 direct communications to prepare organizations to implement updated policy requirements and address sport- and setting-specific scenarios.

Compared with the Center's initial audits in 2019, the 2021 audits reflect progress by NGBs to better educate, train, and communicate with stakeholders, though 43 NGBs had a total of 110 post-audit corrective actions to execute—ranging from ensuring abuse-reporting protocols are properly communicated to members, to effectively preventing banned or suspended individuals from participation. These corrective actions were continuing by year's end. Anyone now can review full NGB audit reports and corrective action statuses on [this webpage](#).

Going forward, the Center is preparing organizations to implement new Response & Resolution compliance standards by 2023, and to introduce a phased penalty system for NGBs who fail to sufficiently correct deficiencies in a timely manner, as the Center reinforces accountability for organizations across the Movement.

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**“No amount of gold medals is worth putting our athletes at risk. When the very body that Congress created to care for our athletes becomes more concerned about winning and protecting their brand rather than protecting the athletes themselves, it's time for a change.” — Congresswoman Diana DeGette, (D-CO)**

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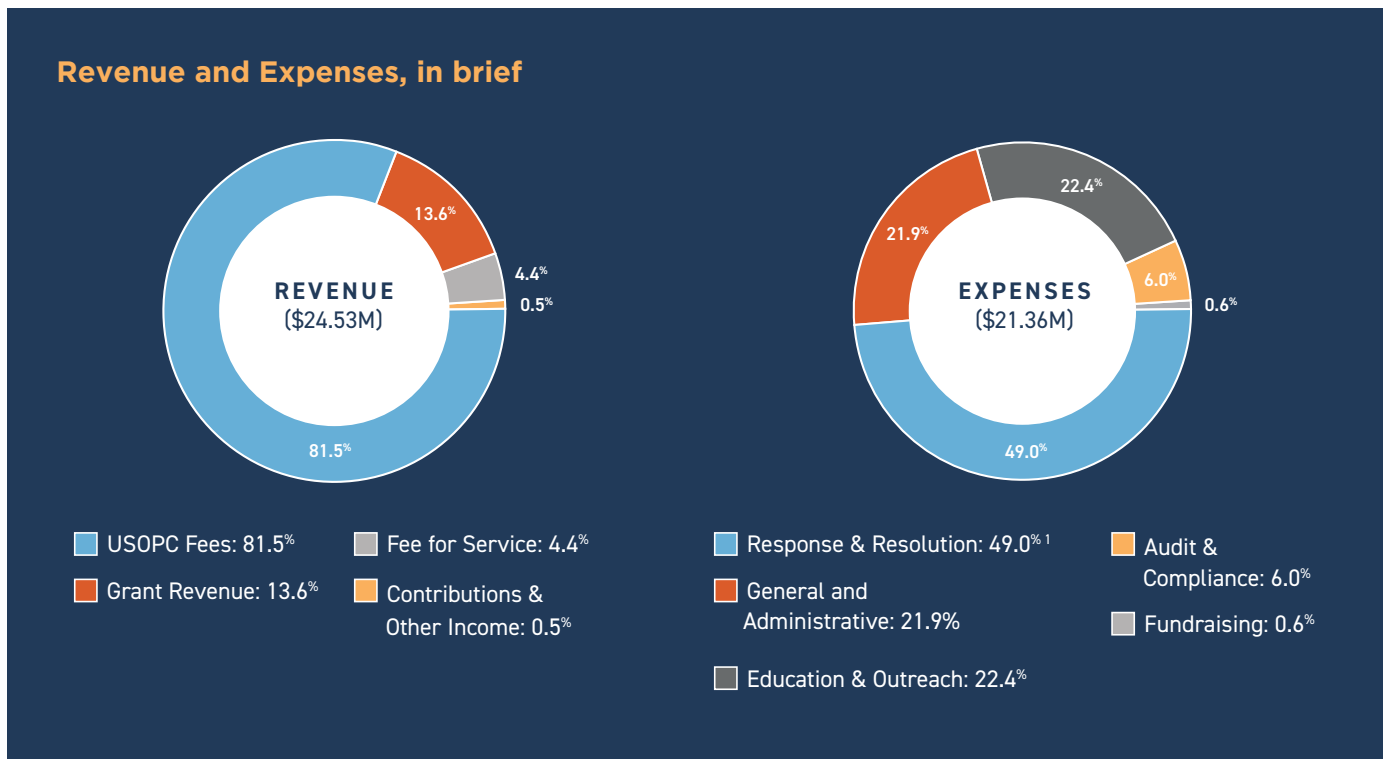
# FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW

The Center finished 2021 on strong financial footing as it fortifies its balance sheet to prepare for likely operating expense increases in the years ahead.

Much of the 2021 surplus has been allocated to operating reserves to support long-term financial sustainability, as the Center works toward the Center’s goal of establishing a reserve that would fund six months worth of Center operations. The Center’s prudent cost-side approach is reflected in several hires deferred until 2022 and a conservative approach to administrative and overhead fees, travel, and other expenses.

In 2021 the Center booked one-time, non-operating revenue that included the forgiveness of a PPP loan for \$838,000 and an approximately \$1 million increase in revenue from the Center’s Keep Young Athletes Safe grant due to one-time pandemic-related factors. To generate additional independent funding, the Center continued efforts to increase its fee-for-service revenue stream (which reached \$1,077,805 in 2021, up 155% from 2020), allowing the Center to train more stakeholders beyond the Movement.

The Center’s largest source of revenue—a Congressionally mandated annual payment from the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee—will remain static in upcoming years, unadjusted for inflation. Meanwhile, cost-of-living increases and staff growth to meet increasing report volumes will decrease spending power in the years to come. The Center’s building of operating reserves and diversification of revenue streams aim to mitigate the impact of this adverse financial trend.



<sup>1</sup> The Center’s Response & Resolution expenditures (\$10,474,044) represented 52.4% of the \$20 million in funding from the USOPC, to meet a statutory requirement related to funding for the resolution of cases.

## Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2021 and 2020

ASSETS	2021	2020
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$8,070,896	\$4,409,459
Receivables	\$617,906	\$838,769
Prepaid Expenses & Other Assets	\$ 486,847	\$661,564
Property, Equipment & Capitalized Software - Net	\$597,967	\$286,484
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$9,773,616</b>	<b>\$6,196,276</b>

## LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$586,227	\$717,750
Accrued Expenses	\$878,133	\$344,413
PPP Loan	—	\$838,000
Deferred Revenue	\$138,919	\$134,183
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,603,279</b>	<b>\$2,034,346</b>

## NET ASSETS

Undesignated	\$2,670,337	\$1,661,930
Board designated - Operating reserve	\$5,500,000	\$2,500,000
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$8,170,337</b>	<b>\$4,161,930</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$9,773,616</b>	<b>\$6,196,276</b>

## Statement of Activities

Years ending December 31, 2021 and 2020

REVENUE & SUPPORT	2021	2020
Fees (USOPC and NGBs <sup>1</sup> )	\$20,000,000	\$14,050,594
Grant Revenue	\$3,333,725	\$2,010,290
Fee-for-Service	\$1,077,805	\$423,142
Contributions & Other Income	\$115,949	\$33,514
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Support</b>	<b>\$24,527,479</b>	<b>\$16,517,540</b>

<sup>1</sup> Revenue in 2021 reflects fees from USOPC only.

## EXPENSES

### PROGRAM SERVICES

Response & Resolution	\$10,474,044	\$6,626,883
Education & Outreach	\$4,787,678	\$3,432,637
Audit & Compliance	\$1,289,675	\$1,152,412
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$16,551,398</b>	<b>\$11,211,932</b>

### SUPPORTING SERVICES

Fundraising	\$126,221	\$62,648
General & Administrative	\$4,679,453	\$3,768,971
<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>\$4,805,674</b>	<b>\$3,831,619</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$21,357,071</b>	<b>\$15,043,551</b>

### Increase in Net Assets

(before non-operating income)

	<b>\$ 3,170,408</b>	<b>\$1,473,989</b>
Non-Operating Income	\$838,000	—
<b>INCREASE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,008,408</b>	<b>\$1,473,989</b>

# CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

Everyone has a role to play in ending abuse in sport. The Center builds on expertise from thought-leaders and professionals in related fields to keep abuse prevention and education efforts anchored to today's sport realities, so that they have the greatest possible impact.

The Center in 2021 brought together advisory groups for athletes and youth, as well as coach listening sessions, to ensure voices of important stakeholders are heard.

In particular, athletes contributed centrally to the Center's Athlete Culture & Climate Survey administered by the Institute to Promote Athlete Health & Wellness at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Athletes also shared perspectives on abuse and misconduct, power imbalances, inclusivity, and mental health at the Center's October SafeSport Summit for NGBs, a two-day virtual event that brought together over 140 NGB leaders and staff for conversation and problem-solving.

The Center this year formalized a multi-year partnership with Los Angeles Recreation and Parks to connect their staff—and the kids and parents they serve—with SafeSport practices in community settings as the city expands its youth sport activities with a PlayLA program made possible with investment from the International Olympic Committee and the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games. And the Center is engaging in dialogues with sport leaders beyond our borders (representing 13 countries in 2021) to help other countries and international associations develop safe sport programs in their spheres of influence.

## SafeSport Training for All

More than 900 organizations beyond the Movement have partnered with the Center to provide SafeSport online training for staff, coaches, athletes, volunteers, and others that play important roles in sport. The Center works with recreational programs and sport leagues to reach new and large audiences not only through training, but also by connecting them with our library of free resources and featured content. A new Center partnership with NBC Sports Next's SportsEngine brings abuse prevention content to millions of parents, coaches, and kids.

Organizations can benefit from affordable training packages and convenient course delivery through the [SafeSportTrained.org](https://www.safe-sport.org/training) learning platform. Providing courses to stakeholders can bolster public confidence that an organization is taking proactive steps to reduce risk.

View the Center's [Course Catalog](#) and reach out today to learn more about audience-specific SafeSport courses for parents, adult athletes, youth athletes, athletes with disabilities, health professionals, volunteers, mandatory reporters, and more.

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**“What SafeSport provides, in terms of an educational component, is the heart and soul of how we keep our kids safe.” — Nate Becker, Colorado wrestling coach**

# PLEASE WORK AND ADVOCATE FOR ABUSE PREVENTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

1

Get trained through courses and resources available at [SafeSportTrained.org](https://www.safesporttrained.org).

2

Advocate for abuse prevention policies like the MAAPP in your (or your child's) sport or recreation organization.

3

Be a positive bystander and take prompt prudent action in settings where an athlete is at risk.

4

If you're in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, be certain you are familiar with the safety policies that govern your sport activity, be sure you and colleagues are SafeSport® Trained, and engage your athletes in meaningful dialogue on safety in sport.

5

**Make a gift today!**

Anyone can report abuse and misconduct involving one of 11+ million individuals in 50+ Olympic and Paralympic Sports at national, regional, and local levels.

**REPORT ONLINE HERE** or through our 833-5US-SAFE reporting line.