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# Monthly Message: Streams shares why safe spaces still matter

In a world that's noisier, faster, and more overwhelming than ever, kids are feeling it.

Especially teens. The pressure to perform, to conform, to keep up ? it's constant. Anxiety is rising. Friendships feel fragile. And finding places to just be is harder than it should be.

That's why safe spaces still matter.

And not just physically safe, but emotionally and socially safe too ? spaces where young people don't have to hide parts of themselves or pretend they're ne. Where they can laugh without looking over their shoulders. Where they don't have to change who they are to fit in.

At Streams Community Hub, we've created that kind of space ? not by accident, but by design. Our arts-based programs are structured, yes, but they're also soft around the edges. They leave room for big feelings, silly moments, quiet voices, and emerging confidence.

We hear things like:?This is the only place I can really be myself.?

?I feel safe here.?

And those quiet truths mean everything.

Prevention over repair

When people talk about youth mental health, the focus often lands on what happens after the crisis ? therapy, emergency care, school accommodations. All important. But at Streams, we sit earlier on the timeline. We do the work that helps prevent things from spiraling in the rst place.

That doesn't mean kids don't come in with hard stuff ? they do. But in a space that consistently offers connection, creativity, structure, and belonging, we've seen what's possible. Con dence grows. Anxiety lessens.

Emotional language develops. And kids begin to believe, sometimes for the first time, that they're not alone.

It's quiet work. Unflashy. But absolutely critical.

And it needs support to continue.

Let's keep it going May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It's a reminder to care for one another, speak up, and invest in real solutions.

At Streams, we believe that means sowing into the places and spaces that are doing proactive, preventive work with care and consistency.

Streams is a homegrown, charitable, safe space right here in Shelburne. Through arts based programs, mentorship, and a strong sense of community, we've walked alongside hundreds of children and youth ? not just as they discover new skills, but as they discover who they are.

If you believe safe community spaces are vital and you want to help us keep this space available for generations to come, we'd love

it if you would consider becoming One of 1000.

A small monthly gift ? just $10 ? helps ensure that what we've built together continues.

You can learn more and join us at streamshub.org/oneof1000.

And looking ahead: June is Streams Month ? a time when our young people take the spotlight and share the talents they've been nurturing all year. Find out more about all the events lined up for June at streamshub.org. We invite you to come out, cheer them on, and see firsthand what safe, supported creativity looks like.

Because safe spaces still matter.

This article was written by Juli-Anne James, the executive director of Streams Community Hub.