

**Submission Number:** 7

**Organization Name:** Ralston House

**Organization Address:** 10795 West 58th Avenue, Arvada, CO 80003 and 1875 Wadsworth Blvd.,  
Lakewood, CO 80214

**Organization Contact:** Don Moseley 720-898-6745 or **Phone:** Kathy Pettit 720-898-6738



**About the Organization:** Ralston House provides services for some of Colorado's most vulnerable citizens . . . innocent children and adolescents who have been sexually assaulted. One in three girls and one in seven boys will be sexually assaulted before they reach the age of 18. Ninety percent of child victims are assaulted by someone they know - a betrayal of innocence by a person they trusted. Sexual assault is a horrific crime.

At Ralston House, our goals are to reduce the trauma experienced by children involved in sexual and physical abuse investigations or who are witnesses to a crime; start the healing process for children and families; and assist the legal system in holding offenders accountable. Ralston House (two locations - Arvada and Lakewood) is a child-friendly, safe and neutral environment where police detectives, social workers, mental health and medical and professionals can talk with children and their families in surroundings that lessen the anxiety if a child who has been assaulted.

When a child makes an outcry of abuse, the police are called. After the initial report, the police or social services call Ralston House to conduct a forensic interview of the child. When the child arrives at Ralston House, trained victim/family support advocates provide crisis intervention and counseling for both the child and non-offending parent or caregiver. The interviews, victim support services and pediatric sexual assault medical exams are conducted in a safe, comfortable and private environment by uniquely-trained staff. Picture a child sitting in a comfy, child-friendly decorated room, coloring pictures and talking to the interviewer in a relaxed atmosphere (in contrast to a scary police department.) The interview is digitally recorded, with investigators observing behind the glass or via closed-circuit television.

The child is not re-traumatized as she talks in intimate details about what happened to her. Investigators talk with parents before and after the interview while the child plays in the playroom and enjoys snacks, under the supervision of a victim/family support advocate. Teens have a separate waiting room, with age-appropriate games and magazines, and access to the kitchen snacks, while they wait. All services are free to families.

In addition to interviews and medical exams, Ralston House offers parent support groups for non-offending parents of child sex assault victims. Staff also conduct presentations for businesses, civic and religious groups and school personnel to educate the community about the dangers of child abuse and how to protect our children. We would be glad to do a presentation for Office Liquidators.

Ralston House is the only center of its kind in Jefferson County and is the only facility in the entire Denver metro area, other than The Children's Hospital in Aurora, which provides pediatric sexual assault medical exams. The environment we create for children and families must be spot on. As a nationally accredited member of the National Children's Alliance, Ralston House follows certain standards, one of which is to have a child-focused setting. The appearance of our child advocacy center helps to facilitate participation by the child and family in the investigative process, mainly by helping to alleviate anxiety and instill confidence and comfort in the intervention system. We must be able to communicate to the child and family, through our center's décor, design and materials, that it is a



Ralston House

