



Contact: Nicki Bedesem, Communications Coordinator
Phone: (215) 757-6916, ext. 214
Email: nbedesem@fsabc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Family Service and SEPTA Partner to Prevent Suicide

In February, Audrey J. Tucker, CEO of Family Service Association of Bucks County, joined Scott Sauer, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) Chief Officer of System Safety, and other participants at the Langhorne train station for the unveiling of new National Suicide Prevention Lifeline signs posted on the platform. The installation of the signs at the Langhorne station marks the completion of this initiative that began in September 2014; the Lifeline number is now posted at all SEPTA locations including rail, trolley and subway stations.

The transportation agency began discussing the signs in 2011 after seeing a rise in suicides on its rail system. "Approximately 50 percent of the fatalities on SEPTA's rail system each year are ruled suicides," said Sauer. "By placing the Lifeline signs at our stations, we believe that people who might think suicide is their only option will see that help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year."

Family Service and SEPTA are now working together to further their suicide prevention efforts. Family Service now has the Transit Police Emergency telephone number posted in their Richboro and Wynnewood phone rooms where staff and trained volunteers answer CONTACT Helpline and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline calls. This partnership enables direct access from the Lifeline to the train dispatcher, should the need ever arise. "Never before have we had the ability to stop a train," shared Tucker. "Now, if one of our volunteers is on the phone with a caller who's on the tracks, he or she can go one step further to help that person."

According to Bucks County Coroner Dr. Joseph Campbell, there have been 15 suicides involving trains or other vehicles since 2010 in our county alone. If the Lifeline signs or access to SEPTA's dispatcher can help just one person, then the effort is worth it.

Each and every day, Family Service receives calls from people in crisis via their CONTACT Helpline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Call volumes have steadily increased over the past few months; in March, phone room staff and volunteers answered 1000 calls for help. Right now, Family Service has approximately 40 volunteer listeners. Ideally, they need 120 volunteers to adequately staff all shifts.

If you'd like to help prevent suicide in our community, consider becoming a volunteer listener for Family Service's CONTACT Helpline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Volunteers are everyday citizens who undergo classroom and on-the-job training until they're comfortable answering calls on their own.

Training classes will begin on April 28th and again on July 8th. For more information or to register for training, contact Ellen Vinson, Director of Volunteer Services, at volunteer@fsabc.org or (215) 757-6916, ext. 202. Volunteer applications are also available online at www.fsabc.org/volunteer.

The mission of Family Service Association of Bucks County is to protect, maintain, strengthen and enhance individuals, families and children and their social and psychological functioning. Visit www.fsabc.org to donate, volunteer and learn more about how Family Service helps more than 22,000 children, adults and seniors each year.