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Family Service's Helpline Volunteer Saves a Life

Each and every day, Family Service Association of Bucks County receives calls from people in distress via their CONTACT Helpline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

A few weeks ago, a man was walking along the road feeling suicidal, and he was planning to jump in front of a car. As a final thought, he called the Lifeline and a volunteer listener answered the phone. The volunteer kept the man on the line and simultaneously contacted emergency responders who were able to find the suicidal man based on the location and description provided by the volunteer.

A life was saved that day thanks to the volunteer listener.

Volunteers are everyday citizens who undergo classroom and on-the-job training until they're comfortable answering calls on their own. They give a minimum of 8 hours a month answering the phones in call centers located in Bucks and Montgomery counties. The call centers are open from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, 7 days a week.

Not all calls are from suicidal individuals. Some callers have limited social interactions and just want someone to hear their voice. Others are struggling with anxiety or depression and don't know where to turn for help.

Family Service staff and volunteers answer nearly 1000 calls for help each month. Right now, Family Service has approximately 35 volunteer listeners. Ideally, they need 120 volunteers to adequately staff all shifts. You can make a difference in our community. Become a volunteer and help save lives.

The next series of training classes will begin on Monday, September 28th. 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.

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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 helped more than 22,000 children, adults and seniors last year.