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## **Family Service's Helpline Volunteer Answers Call and Saves a Life**

A young teenage boy recently called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) after his summer school teacher had given him the number and suggested he call. One of Family Service Association of Bucks County's volunteer listeners answered the phone. The boy told the listener that he was home by himself and that he had been thinking about cutting and suicide a lot lately.

The boy said he had shared his feelings of overwhelming sadness and thoughts of cutting with a friend, but his friend didn't seem to care. His plan now was to leave a note for his parents and go find a place to kill himself.

Family Service's volunteer listener learned that the boy has a good relationship with both of his parents and that he regularly sees a mental health professional. The listener helped the boy see that he has people around him who care, and that perhaps his friend just didn't know how to respond.

The boy agreed to call his mother who immediately came back home. He then called the Lifeline back to let the volunteer listener know that he was safe. Later that week, the boy called the Lifeline yet again to share that the listener had made a real difference his life. He thanked the volunteer for caring about him and for talking the time to talk.

Family Service's volunteer listener helped save a life that day. Unfortunately, this type of call is not unique. Each and every day, Family Service receives calls from people in distress via their CONTACT Helpline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Family Service needs additional volunteers to answer the nearly 1,000 calls for help they receive each month.

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.

Right now, Family Service has approximately 50 volunteer listeners. Ideally, they need 120 volunteers to adequately staff all shifts and answer as many calls as possible. You can make a difference in our community. Become a volunteer and help restore hope and save lives.

The next series of training classes will take place on Tuesdays from September 13<sup>th</sup> through October 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM at Family Service's Langhorne office. To register for training, contact Ellen

Vinson, Director of Volunteer Services, at [volunteer@fsabc.org](mailto:volunteer@fsabc.org) or (215) 757-6916, ext. 202 or complete the online application at [www.fsabc.org/volunteer](http://www.fsabc.org/volunteer).

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*Family Service Association of Bucks County is a nonprofit social service organization with locations throughout Bucks County, Pennsylvania. For more than 60 years, Family Service has been improving the lives of children and their families, doing whatever it takes to help them overcome obstacles and reach their full potential. Visit [www.fsabc.org](http://www.fsabc.org) to donate, volunteer and learn more about how Family Service helped more than 24,000 children, teens and adults last year.*