Our Mission

Making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day.

The Helpline Center began serving South Dakota in 1974 and serves thousands of people each year by connecting individuals to resources and support, providing referrals, building local agency’s volunteers, offering hope to individuals with thoughts of suicide, and supporting families bereaved by a suicide loss.

The Helpline Center is generously supported by United Way, government funding, grants, corporate support, and private donations.

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Dear friends,

It is a privilege to reflect upon the previous year and share our 2022 Annual Report. With sincere thanks to our compassionate staff and the generous support we receive, we are able to live out our mission of, “making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day.”

With the launch of 988 on July 16, 2022, the way South Dakotans can access support has transformed. When people call, text, or chat 988, they are connected to skilled crisis counselors at the Helpline Center who listen to concerns, provide support, connect to additional resources, and provide follow up care. Since the beginning, more than 7,500 people have called, texted, or chatted with us.

Last year we were honored to be chosen as the benefactor of The 437 Project. Born out of a passion to raise awareness for mental health and suicide prevention, 12 runners ran relay style across South Dakota, all while raising awareness and funds for the Helpline Center. With the funds raised, we were able to release a new suicide loss survivor website filled with additional valuable resources to support those bereaved by suicide loss.

The Helpline Center 211 staff continue to provide support to South Dakotans when it’s needed most. Our staff responded to 77,661 calls, emails, and texts in 2022. With more than 5,000 programs and agencies in our database, 211 provides a quick and easy way to connect individuals to the resources they need, when they are needed most.

With our Volunteer Connections staff in Sioux Falls and Rapid City, we continue to work collaboratively with nonprofits who need volunteers and assist in connecting them with individuals and groups who want to help. We were honored to celebrate nearly 200 very deserving individual and group volunteers who were nominated for their extraordinary volunteer efforts.

It’s an honor to share the highlights of this past year in our 2022 Annual Report. To each of you, I extend my deepest thanks.

Janet Kittams, Chief Executive Officer

Helpline Center

The Helpline Center incurred $4,354,649 in expenses in 2022. Expenses include salaries, employee benefits and taxes, occupancy, professional fees, supplies, and miscellaneous expenses.

The Helpline Center received revenue in the amount of $4,711,496 during 2022 to support its programs and services. The revenue resources included Contract Services/Grants, United Ways, Contributions, Special Events, and Government Entities.
988 Lifeline

988 launched on July 16, 2022, and since then more than 7,500 people have called, texted, and chatted with 988 Mental Health Counselors. When South Dakotans call, text or chat 988, they are connected to trained crisis counselors at the Helpline Center who listen to concerns, provide support, connect to additional resources and provide follow up care. 988 is available 24/7 to provide help and hope for people having thoughts of suicide, a mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

In South Dakota, 988 is a partnership between the Helpline Center and the South Dakota Department of Social Services – Division of Behavioral Health.

A Few Highlights from the Last Year

• 988 counselors have connected with a wide range of people from across the age spectrum from 12 years to 80 years and have talked with people from every county in the state.

• We’ve supported people struggling with deep grief, addictions and those in need of a comforting and listening ear, along with folks who are struggling to just get through the day.

• One of our callers recently said, “Thank you for being here to listen when it feels like nobody else would be”.

• We recently heard back from one of our callers through a friend that described the 988 service, “They are my angels. They saved my life and now I’m getting help. They really do care.”
211 Helpline

No matter how simple or complex, the Helpline Center staff is here for South Dakota, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With more than 5,000 programs and agencies in our database, 211 makes it quick and easy to connect individuals to the resources they need, when they are needed the most.

Each day, the compassionate and committed Helpline Center staff provide help and support to people from across the state. Sometimes, the support is a simple question like, “where do I renew my driver’s license?”, or “where can I volunteer?” Other times our calls are more complex, “I recently lost my job and I’m struggling to pay rent, is there anywhere I can get help?” or “My family needs groceries, where is the nearest food pantry?”

In 2022, the 211 Helpline staff responded to 77,661 calls/emails/texts connecting people with important resources at critical times in their lives.

How We Helped

We received a call from someone asking for bus fare. As staff talked with her, they learned that she had just been evicted from her home along with her infant son. She literally had nothing; no transportation, no job, no support. She even had to walk in the middle of the night to the shelter with her infant. The initial request for bus fare ended up with our staff providing her with referrals for job search assistance, low income housing, diapers, baby clothing and formula, parenting mentoring, and childcare.

Our staff spoke with someone seeking rental assistance. As the conversation began, she became tearful talking about a recent divorce and sharing that her hours at work decreased significantly, and a great deal of worry about her 4 children. At a point in our call, she talked about feeling shame at having to ask for help. Our staff reminded her that most everyone needs help sometimes and with the world the way it is, she is certainly not alone needing additional support and resources. After we discussed options for rent assistance our specialist asked about food. We reminded her of our conversation about how most people need help at some point in their life and she accepted referrals for food as well.
Suicide Grief Support

Each year more than 48,000 people die in the United States by suicide, leaving thousands of parents, siblings, wives, husbands, sons, daughters and friends to survive the tragic loss.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in South Dakota and it is the 2nd leading cause among ages 10 to 19. The grief experienced by survivors of suicide loss is unique and those left behind often struggle with guilt, shame and confusion. Losing a loved one to suicide can create a sense of isolation, which can often lead to depression and suicidal thoughts. The Helpline Center provides a point of connection for survivors, creating a safe space to share their pain through a support group or class, or as a Survivor Voices volunteer.

Step Forward 2022

2022 Suicide Grief Support Impact

Step Forward 2022

600+ Participants

65 Teams

$66,477 Donations Raised

Top 5 Teams include Tom’s Team, Team Stefani, Team Brad, Brian’s Stormtroopers, and Morning Air.

2024 Date: Saturday, June 8

Helpline Open 2022

Helpline Open 2022

128 Golfers

35 Teams

$39,000 Donations Raised

All funds raised through these events support the Helpline Center’s suicide prevention and suicide survivor support programs.

2024 Date: Monday, July 15

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Volunteer Connections

For more than four decades, the Helpline Center Volunteer Connections program has continued to be one of the largest and most active volunteer centers in the region. Over the last several years, our staff has worked tirelessly to connect an incredible number of volunteers with people across the state who needed help.

With staff in Sioux Falls and Rapid City, we work collaboratively with nonprofits who need volunteers and assist in connecting them with individuals and groups who want to help. The Helpline Center organizes an annual recognition event in Sioux Falls and Rapid City called the Spirit of Volunteerism Awards. In 2022, 193 very deserving individual and group volunteers were nominated for their extraordinary volunteer efforts. Each honoree received a recognition package and we recognized all of the nominations by delivering each person or group a yard sign.

The Volunteer Connections program communicates throughout each year in a variety of ways. Each week an email is sent to 5,200 contacts in the Rapid City and Sioux Falls communities. There are 508 nonprofits registered in our volunteer database and over 1,100 volunteer opportunities available through the Volunteer Connections website, volunteer.helplinecenter.org.

2022 Volunteer Connections Impact

**Sioux Empire**

- **3,791** Contacts receive weekly emails and text messages regarding volunteer opportunities.
- **290** Nonprofit agencies supported.
- **17,408** Referrals to volunteers seeking opportunities.

**Black Hills**

- **1,438** Contacts receive weekly emails and text messages regarding volunteer opportunities.
- **218** Nonprofit agencies supported.
- **3,891** Referrals to volunteers seeking opportunities.

For additional information on Volunteer Connections, please call 211 and ask for Jennie Marks, Volunteer Connections Manager or email her at jennie.marks@helplinecenter.org.
In September 2022, a group of 12 runners ran across the state of South Dakota raising awareness and funds for mental health and suicide prevention. With a mission to bolster both physical and mental wellness, The 437 Project, 12 runners ran 437 miles relay-style across the state of South Dakota, raising funds and awareness for suicide prevention.

The run began September 23 in Belle Fourche and came to a finish on September 25 in Sioux Falls. This event raised more than $120,000 and the Helpline Center was honored to be the fortunate recipient.

With funds raised through The 437 Project, we launched a new website designed with the goal of providing help and hope to even more suicide loss survivors. There are many new features to the site including a resource guide entitled, “Healing After a Suicide Loss”, an “In Remembrance” page for people to honor their loved ones, and additional valuable resources to engage with. We’ve helped hundreds of people through our support group and support class sessions and we’ve mailed thousands of support packets and caring cards and we look forward to continuing to connect with individuals across South Dakota on their healing journey.
2022 Helpline Center Donors

$10,000 and Above

AARP South Dakota
Avera
Brookings Area United Way
Bush Foundation
City of Sioux Falls
Corp for National & Community Service
First Bank & Trust
John T Vucurevich Foundation
Lincoln County
Olson Oil Co.
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Serci Family Fund
Sioux Empire United Way
Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation
South Dakota Community Foundation
South Dakota Department of Health
South Dakota Department of Social Services
South Dakota Housing Development Authority
United Way of the Black Hills
United Way Worldwide
Wellmark Foundation

$9,999 to $5,000

Miles & Lisa Beacom
Black Hills Energy
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GreatLIFE Cares Foundation
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$4,999 to $2,500

AARP South Dakota
Black Hills Community Bank
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Black Hills Urgent Care
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Midwest Communications - KELO Radio
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Michael John Anderson
Stefani Cline
Diana Lee's Birthday
Our Community of Survivors of Suicide Loss
Betsy Schuster
Brenda Vehle
Willow

This report honors and recognizes the generous friends of the Helpline Center. Our intent is to be inclusive and accurate. As a matter of good stewardship, we keep the size and cost of this publication to a minimum. There is a very lengthy list of $1-$99 gifts that are not printed.