

Hello...



# Contact CARE Line

Building  
Connections,  
Fostering Care



2023 Annual  
Report

[www.contactlistens.org](http://www.contactlistens.org)



I am pleased to share CONTACT Care Line's Annual Report for 2023. This report provides a comprehensive overview of CONTACT's achievements, milestones, and progress over the past year.

Today, CONTACT Care Line provides 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline services in multiple formats. CONTACT is the 988 Lifeline provider for the greater Knoxville region and Tennessee's primary 988 Lifeline Crisis Text and Chat provider. Additionally, CONTACT is one of twenty U.S. crisis centers comprising the national 988 Lifeline Crisis Text and Chat backup infrastructure. Our newest program is service as one of six U.S. crisis centers comprising the Spanish language phone sub-network of the 988 Lifeline. CONTACT now has over 100 hundred employees and, in 2023, responded to nearly 50,000 people in crisis.

CONTACT's relentless pursuit of excellence in crisis intervention and suicide prevention has defined our year. We have worked diligently to establish and adhere to best practices, ensuring that our services remain at the forefront of the industry. A complete reorganization of the structure of our crisis service programs and services improves support for our front-line crisis counselors. Adding crisis services managers and additional supervisors gave crisis counselors immediate support and guidance when needed.

In 2023, we celebrated our 50th anniversary of service. The hope we offer is a beacon of light in the darkest of moments. The focus of our 988 crisis lines is crisis intervention. But, we have expanded our community outreach in suicide prevention and postvention. Work is underway to revitalize the Reassurance program to live up to its potential of keeping our senior citizens who live alone without sufficient caregiver support safe and socially connected in their homes as long as possible.

As we move forward into the future, I want to emphasize that our commitment to our core values, the success of our mission, and our financial stability remain unwavering. I extend an open invitation for all stakeholders to reach out should you have any questions or need further information.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the incredible team at CONTACT, our valued donors, grantors, and all stakeholders for your ongoing support. Together, we are making a profound and lasting impact on the world.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce".

Bruce Marshall, MSSW, M.Div  
Executive Director

# About Us

CONTACT Care Line, established in 1973, has been East Tennessee's trusted crisis hotline for over five decades. Our mission has evolved to meet the growing need for immediate crisis support, serving as a national backup center for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Chat and Text program and as the primary Lifeline Crisis Chat and Text center for the state of Tennessee. We also operate as the primary 988 Lifeline phone center for 15 East Tennessee counties and one of six centers providing Spanish phone service as a national backup center. Beyond crisis intervention, our Reassurance Program offers daily social and safety calls to seniors with little or no caregiver support, helping them maintain their independence. We're committed to community well-being and offer essential training programs like ASIST, QPR, and 988 training, empowering individuals to recognize and respond to crises effectively. Through extensive community outreach, we foster a supportive network that reaches far and wide. CONTACT Care Line remains a steadfast source of hope and assistance, dedicated to making a positive impact in East Tennessee and beyond for generations to come.



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# The Need

Suicide is a global public health concern, and its impact reverberates across communities, families, and individuals. It's a complex issue influenced by various factors, such as mental health conditions, socio-economic disparities, and access to mental health services. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's statistics are stark:

Suicide is the  
**2nd leading cause of death**  
among young people.

The suicide rate has  
**risen by nearly 33%**  
over the past two decades.

**48,183 people**  
died by suicide in the United States in 2021. That's  
**1 death every 11 minutes.**

Suicide deaths  
**increased 2.6%**  
between 2021 and 2022.

In this challenging landscape, CONTACT Care Line plays a pivotal role in providing immediate, confidential, and compassionate support. The need for CONTACT Care Line is underscored by the sobering reality of the suicide crisis today. We believe that through empathy, connection, and support, we can make a difference. By reaching out to those in crisis and breaking down the barriers that prevent them from seeking help, we aim to create a safer and more supportive world for everyone.



# Our Vision

Building a world where everyone has someone who really listens.



# Our Mission

CONTACT Care Line's mission is to provide free and compassionate emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress through confidential telephone, internet chat, and text services.

# Our Values



- **We Value People.** We treat all people with respect and courtesy and create an environment of acceptance that supports the attainment of each individual's personal and professional aspirations. We actively promote respect for the confidentiality and dignity of individuals.
- **We Value Excellence.** We value the dedication of all members of our organization to establish and adhere to best practices in the fields of crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
- **We Value Diversity.** We recognize that diversity creates a breadth of perspectives and strengthens our organization.
- **We Value Communication.** We actively promote open communication in a safe and non-judgmental environment.
- **We Value Integrity.** We adhere to the highest ethical standards.
- **We Value Hope.** We believe in helping those who may be considering suicide through prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts.



# Building Connections, Fostering Care: *Year in Review*

As we look back on the year that has passed, it's with a sense of pride and gratitude for the strides we've made in the realm of mental health and suicide prevention. This year marks a significant milestone as we celebrate the one-year anniversary of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, a vital resource for those in need. We've also expanded our horizons by joining the Spanish Phone 988 Subnetwork, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for diverse communities. Our commitment to community involvement and training opportunities has grown, equipping more individuals with the skills to make a positive impact. Furthermore, our CONTACT Care Line family has expanded, welcoming new staff members who share our dedication to creating a world where mental health is valued and hope prevails. This year has been a testament to the power of collective effort and compassion, and we look forward to building an even brighter future together.



CONTACT Care Line partnered with UTK Sources of Strength as a parent-organization to sustain the peer-support and student-led organization on The University of Tennessee's campus.

In the year following the roll out of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, the Lifeline answered nearly

**5 million**

contacts

## CONTACT CARE LINE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



UTK Psychology 399 class  
upon completion of their  
Applied Suicide Intervention  
Skills Training (ASIST) course.



Bruce Marshall,  
CONTACT Care  
Line Executive  
Director,  
presented at the  
statewide Crisis  
Services & Suicide  
Prevention  
Conference on  
988 Chat & Text  
Services -  
Innovation in Crisis  
Services.



Staff and  
volunteers  
represented  
CONTACT Care  
Line at the first  
annual Youth &  
Young Adult  
Suicide Prevention  
Summit.



# Building Connections, Fostering Care:

## 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Over the past year, our Crisis Services program continued to expand following the launch of the new three-digit dialing code, 988, for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. This life-affirming initiative has not only deepened our commitment to mental health and suicide prevention but has also significantly expanded our reach and impact. The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is not just a number; it's a lifeline of compassion and support, and its journey has only just begun.



CONTACT Care Line 2023 Data

Following SAMHSA and Vibrant Emotional Health's Fall 2023 request for proposals, CONTACT Care Line was selected as 1 of 6 centers to comprise the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Spanish Phone Subnetwork for the fiscal year of 2024. We are committed to this language expansion and eradicating barriers to support.

Within the same Fall 2023 request for proposals, CONTACT was selected as 1 of 20 centers to comprise the National Backup Chat and Text Subnetwork, allowing CONTACT to continue providing Lifeline Crisis Chat and Text services for Fiscal Year 2024.

# 2023 Visitor Profile

AGE:	TOTAL VISITORS:
Under 13	3%
13 - 24	16%
25 - 45	38%
46 - 64	30%
Over 64	5%
Unknown	8%

GENDER:	TOTAL VISITORS:
Female	52%
Male	42%
Non-Binary	1%
Unknown	5%

# Building Connections, Fostering Care: The Hope Ambassador Award

*The Spiffy Spud*



*Gypsy Kitchen*



*Magpies Bakery*



*The United Way of Anderson County*



The "Hope Ambassador Award" is a distinction that recognizes individuals or organizations for their exceptional support of CONTACT Care Line. This award acknowledges their dedication to spreading hope and awareness surrounding suicide prevention through their essential role in fostering a compassionate and supportive community, ultimately making a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by suicide.

This year, we had the honor of awarding The Spiffy Spud and Gypsy Kitchen food trucks for their support of the 2023 Youth & Young Adult Suicide Prevention Summit, as well as Magpies Bakery for their support of CONTACT Care Line, especially throughout Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The United Way of Anderson County was also recognized with the Hope Ambassador Award for their support of CONTACT Care Line over the past five decades.

## Building Connections, Fostering Care:

# Recognizing Our Foundational Pillars

The "Pioneer of Empathy & Support" award recognizes an individual who has played a pioneering role in fostering empathy and providing unwavering support within the community. This esteemed honor celebrates their commitment to nurturing a culture of understanding, compassion, and inclusivity, and acknowledges their transformative contributions to enhancing the well-being of those in need. Their trailblazing efforts have set a precedent for fostering meaningful connections and creating a supportive environment where individuals feel heard, valued, and empowered. This award serves as a tribute to their visionary leadership and their dedication to building a more empathetic and resilient community.

The "Pioneer of Empathy & Support" Awarded to  
Doris Jolley and Roy Vandermeer



Presented as CONTACT Care Line's highest award, The Robert Meacham "Beyond the Call" Award recognizes those who reach out to their community with compassion, acceptance, and a sense of humor.

The Robert Meacham "Beyond the Call" awarded to Kathy Olsen



## Building Connections, Fostering Care:

# Community Training & Support Services

In a world where mental health issues and suicide rates are on the rise, creating a community that is well-versed in mental health first-aid and support is vital. Through community training opportunities, local outreach, and creating supportive spaces, we are building a compassionate, understanding, and hopeful society. These initiatives empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to recognize the signs of distress, to reach out to those in need, and to provide immediate support. CONTACT Care Line is invested in breaking down the barriers of stigma, fostering a safe environment for open conversations, and ensuring that individuals do not suffer in silence. These programs not only save lives but also contribute to a world where empathy and compassion are at the forefront, and where the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a lifeline of hope for all, available when people need it most.

103

Individuals ASIST trained

538

Question, Persuade, Refer  
(QPR) Participants

250

988 Lifeline Awareness  
Training Participants

*Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Proclamation*

*Dak Ridge Youth Pride*



The CONTACT Care Line Suicide Loss Survivor Support Group serves as a crucial sanctuary for individuals navigating the difficult journey of loss due to suicide. It is a vital resource, as it provides a safe, empathetic space for those who have experienced the profound pain of losing a loved one to suicide. Suicide loss survivors often grapple with intense emotions, stigma, and isolation. The group offers an environment where individuals can openly share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings without judgment, fostering connection and healing. In these sessions, we emphasize the importance of offering validation, empathy, and support to one another, as they navigate the complex process of grief. We also address the unique risks and challenges faced by suicide loss survivors, offering coping strategies and resources for resilience. Together, we embark on a path of understanding and recovery, creating a space where hope can begin to mend the wounds left by suicide.

**24**

Survivors of Suicide Loss  
Supported through  
Postvention and CONTACT's  
Survivor Support Group

“Allow yourself to  
grieve. We all grieve  
in our own time in our  
own way.”

- Sally, Survivor of Suicide Loss



## Building Connections, Fostering Care:

### Events

CONTACT Care Line's dedication extends beyond crisis intervention, encompassing a broader commitment to raising awareness, strengthening community support, breaking stigma, and expanding our reach. Our events are instrumental in achieving these goals. These gatherings not only highlight the importance of mental health and suicide prevention but also engage the community in open discussions, where stigma is challenged, and understanding is fostered. By uniting in our mission to break stigma, we build a network of compassion and resilience that envelops those in need. These events serve as platforms for empowering individuals and communities to become active advocates for mental health. Simultaneously, they contribute to the expansion of CONTACT, enabling us to reach even more individuals, providing them with hope and support when they need it most. Together, we forge a path towards a more compassionate and empathetic world, where mental health is valued, and no one feels alone in their struggle.



Did you miss the 2023 Listen for Life 5k? We're gathering again for the 2024 event, and you can sign up here!





## CONTACT CARE LINE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CONTACT Care Line hosted its first annual Youth & Young Adult Suicide Prevention Summit in commemoration of Suicide Prevention Month. This empowering and impactful event raises awareness, fosters understanding, and promotes dialogue surrounding youth and young adult suicide prevention. Together, we are committed to creating a supportive community that offers hope, resources, and connections for those in need.



Half a century ago, CONTACT Care Line answered its first phone call, and since then, we've been dedicated to providing support, compassion, and connection to our community. We gathered with those who have journeyed with us to celebrate this momentous anniversary.





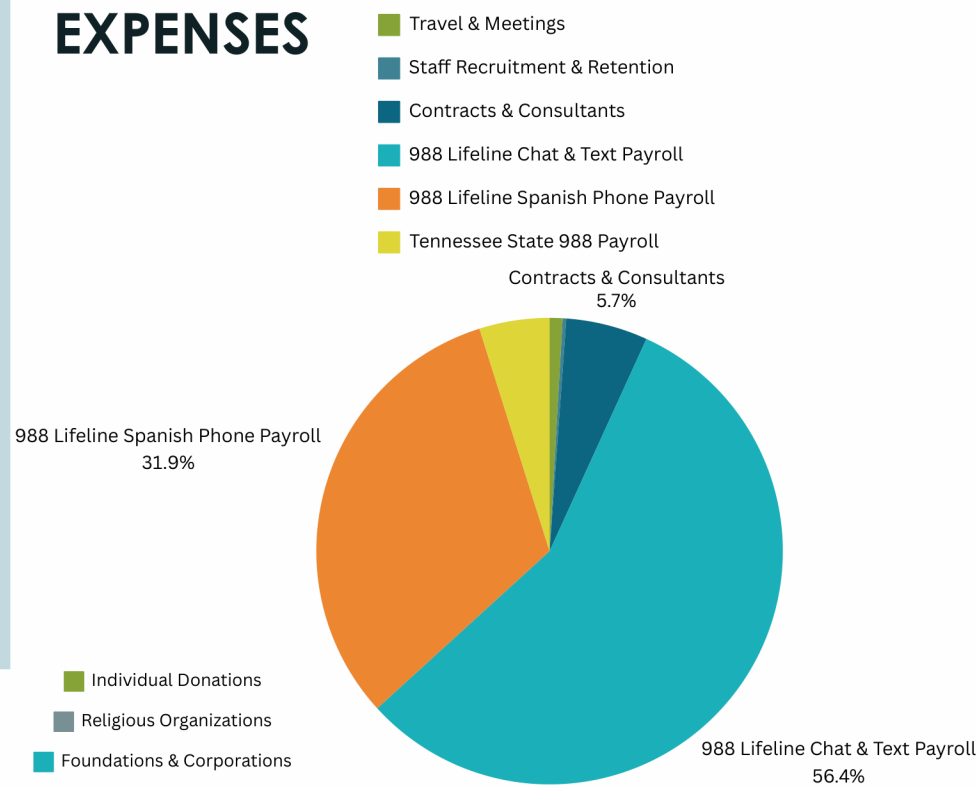
# Building Connections, Fostering Care:

## Statement of Activities

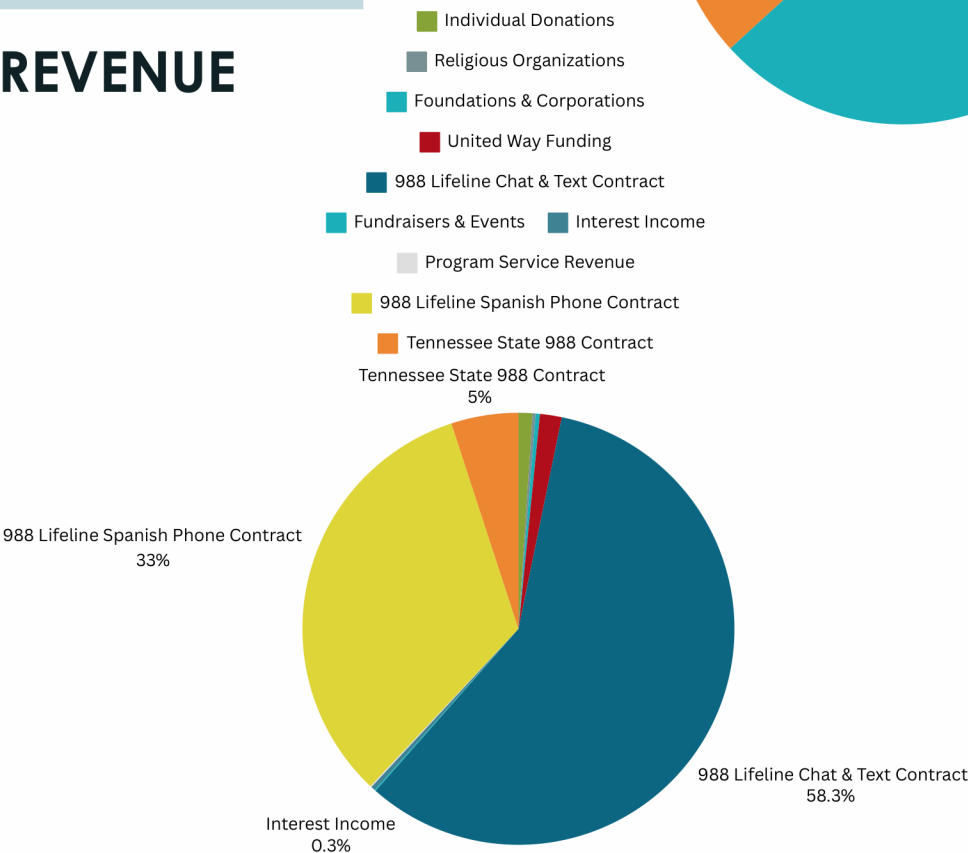
### Making Every Dollar Count

95.5% of our income goes directly to payroll and staffing for the 24/7 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Service, ensuring a continuous lifeline of support. In 2024, we aim to diversify funding to create more sustainable revenue streams and expand our impact.

### EXPENSES



### REVENUE



# Building Connections, Fostering Care:

## Looking Ahead

Before you go, we want you to get as excited as we are about what's in store for 2024.

### Sources of Strength

Sources of Strength is a best practice mental health promotion and suicide prevention program designed to harness the power of peer social networks to create healthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, violence, bullying, and substance misuse among youth and young adults. The mission of Sources of Strength is to prevent adverse outcomes by increasing wellbeing, help-seeking, resiliency, healthy coping, and belonging. CONTACT Care Line aims to grow Sources of Strength programming in East Tennessee, starting with the existing student organization at UTK.

### Survivors of Suicide Loss Support Group

CONTACT Care Line hosts weekly group meetings offering a safe and supportive setting to share our stories and gain an understanding of grief following the death of a loved one by suicide.

The group goals include reducing stigma and normalizing bereavement through sharing experiences and exploring healthy coping strategies. The group follows guidelines set by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

### Annual Events

As always, connect with us on social media to stay up-to-date on all things CONTACT Care Line, including our annual events: The Listen for Life 5k and The Youth & Young Adult Suicide Prevention Summit.

## Building Connections, Fostering Care:

### *Make Your Mark*

There are several ways to get involved to help build a world where everyone has someone who listens. We would like to invite you to join us in our work. Here are just a few ways you can make your mark:

#### **Spread the word: 988 is here!**

988 is here as your lifeline of hope, available 24/7, to provide immediate support when you need it most. Share with others that this resource is free and accessible by calling, texting, and online chatting.

#### **DONATE**

Donations throughout the year support our life-saving listening and make our work possible. There are so many ways to support us in our mission:

- Host a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser
- Donate to our annual 5k or Summit
- Give in memory of a loved one lost

#### **Be a Hope Ambassador**

Support suicide prevention through your own creativity! Organize your own event or participate in an existing one to benefit CONTACT Care Line. When you organize your own campaign, you help spread the word and break the stigma. If interested, reach out to us at [office@contactlistens.org](mailto:office@contactlistens.org) to bring your plans to life!

#### **The Big Give Knox**

Throughout the years, we have participated in the Big Give Knox, Knoxville's 24-hour online fundraising initiative. Mark your calendar for November 2024 and encourage others to support CONTACT Care Line.

# Thank you

Your support is making a real difference. With your dedication, you're helping foster a more compassionate and understanding world for mental health and suicide prevention. Together, we bring hope to many. Your kindness inspires us, and we look forward to continuing this journey, hand in hand, to make a significant impact in the years to come.





Call or Text 988

Subscribe to our monthly  
newsletter, Caring Connections:



Stay in Touch!



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