

amaritans

RENEWAL AND RESILIENCE IN 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fiscal year 2023 has been a pivotal one for our organization, commencing with a significant transition in our leadership with the instatement of Joy + Casey as Co-Executive Directors. Their partnership harmonizes fresh, forward-thinking leadership with Samaritans' foundational ethos of consistency and reliability in suicide prevention service provision and advocacy.

In the face of challenging circumstances, the organization displayed extraordinary resilience, rebuilding from a historically low number of volunteers. At the lowest point the hotline, which is comfortably staffed at 80-100 volunteers, had just 24 volunteers. Despite, this the organization responded to 50,000 contacts from around 40,000 individual's in crisis.

Although this marks a reduction in overall call volume from FY22, this is still a remarkable feat. Ultimately it is a testament to the the relentless dedication of each and every member of our team, who worked tirelessly to bolster volunteer numbers, and, when necessary, stepped in to answer calls themselves.

A standout achievement this year was the substantial growth of our Safe Place program, facilitated by a key partnership with The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-NYC Metro). Notably, Samaritans successfully reinstated in-person meetings while sustaining virtual sessions, addressing the distinct preferences and necessities of our community members. This dual approach not only extended our reach but also ensured that diverse needs were met with equal care and expertise.

This year, Samaritans' Education Program made a profound impact by engaging 2,899 professionals. In addition to the program's traditional webinars, trainings, and consultations, this year saw the launch of a new virtual Resource Hub as well as a Provider Appreciation Initiative. All of these highlight the necessity of providing mental health professionals with the tools, education, and backing they require to serve their communities effectively and compassionately.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Samaritans' influence and responsibilities on the National Council for Suicide Prevention have expanded significantly this past year. We took on a more prominent position by joining the Education Committee and we were honored to have met with the US Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, to discuss critical issues surrounding suicide prevention.

This year, our national-level involvement complemented and strengthened Samaritans' ongoing local advocacy with the NYC Council. We amplified our presence and asserted our influence by enhancing our advisory capacity with City Council members. Our efforts featured regular testimonies and the provision of strategic counsel. Our input became a critical component in shaping significant mental health policies and initiatives throughout the city.

The trajectory of this fiscal year has been one of meaningful expansion across various dimensions of the organization.

Amidst leadership transitions and program expansions, Samaritans' voice has burgeoned, gaining traction and influence on both local and national stages.

Our message, unwavering and lucid, remains committed to our foundational mission and our vision of a world free from the tragedy of suicide.

As we look to the future, our voice is more than a medium—it's a pledge to keep speaking up, to keep advocating, and to keep striving for a world where hope outshines despair.

MISSION + VISION

SAMARITANS' MISSION

Working together to prevent suicide + help save lives.

WHAT WE DO

- 24/7, completely confidential support to individuals in crisis and their loved ones
- Solace to those impacted by suicide loss
- Education to caregivers + the public on effective suicide prevention strategies
- Advocate for suicide prevention at all levels (local, state, national and international)

OUR VISION

We envision a world free from the tragedy of suicide.

A world where every person has the same opportunity to live a fulfilling life, regardless of their background, history or personal circumstances.

A world without stigma, where individuals are empowered to seek help and support without fear or shame.

A world with proactive communities that are equipped with effective suicide prevention strategies, mental health resources, and compassionate support networks.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

This year, amidst unprecedented challenges, we intentionally rebuilt, stronger and more focused than ever. Our journey wasn't just about recovery; it was about transformation — stabilizing our core operations and reclaiming our voice in the realm of suicide prevention.

It has been a privilege to work alongside our volunteers, who consistently stand ready to answer the call, and our staff, who have expanded in number and skill to meet this year's challenges head-on. Their adaptability and readiness to embrace every task, no matter how small, underscore their unwavering commitment to our mission. We are humbled by their dedication.

As we transitioned into our roles, the board's guidance has also been invaluable; spending their weekends with us deep in discussion and their readiness to dive into the trenches with us reflects their deep commitment to Samaritans' enduring mission. We thank you.

This year, with its challenges and setbacks, unexpectedly nurtured growth in areas we hadn't foreseen. It peeled back layers, revealing a deeper truth: Samaritans isn't just a lifeline for those we help; it's also a sanctuary for those who serve. It's not just where we work; it's where our passion resides and our commitment deepens.

Looking ahead, we're ready for what's next, ready to use Samaritans' collective voice and leveraging this remarkable community we are honored to serve.

Joy + CASEY

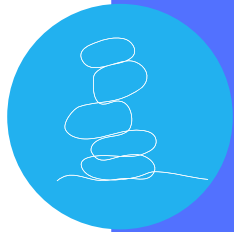


HIGHLIGHTS 2023



BEREAVEMENT SERVICES EXPANSION

Suicide loss survivor support programs saw significant growth driven by enriched resources, strategic partnerships, and the creation of a comprehensive training manual, with plans for national collaborations on the horizon



HOTLINE STABILIZATION + REBUILDING

This year focused on stabilizing and deliberately rebuilding our hotline, improving retention, filling roles, and ongoing training, marking a shift from recovery to sustainable growth.



RESOURCE HUB LAUNCH

Samaritans launched a new Resource Hub under the umbrella of education services. This virtual hub offers tailored, updated mental health information + tools helping to cement Samaritans role as a leader in the community for resource provision.



PRIORITIZING ADVOCACY

Samaritans enhanced its advocacy roles both nationally and locally, establishing key partnerships and influencing policy, highlighting our role in shaping city, state and federal suicide prevention and mental health initiatives.

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE



Always Here, Always Heard.

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE

This year, our hotline faced notable challenges, experiencing a dip in service numbers and grappling with staffing issues that required a thoughtful, structured response. Comfortably staffed at 80-100 volunteers pre-pandemic, we've been rebuilding from a base of 24 and currently maintain a steady group of 60 dedicated volunteers.

Rising to meet the challenges head-on, **the organization effectively responded to 50,000 contacts from around 40,000 individuals in crisis.**

Encouragingly, attrition has lessened, and our retention strategies are proving more effective. However, significant staffing challenges did emerge, demanding time not only to rectify but also to carefully select and train individuals to fill these roles.

We're now approaching a more stable state with fewer vacancies, but the training component remains an ongoing effort. This process is not a rapid recovery, but a slow and deliberate rebuild, affirming our commitment to maintaining the quality and reliability of our hotline services.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

This year, we strategically overhauled our volunteer recruitment process, recognizing the imperative to adapt and respond in real-time to potential volunteers as close to the time express their initial interest. By shifting recruitment to a dedicated staff function, we've ensured a more immediate, and effective response to volunteer inquiries and applications, streamlining the process.

Many former recruiters transitioned into Homeleaders, reducing the burden on the existing Homeleaders as well as on staff who were consistently covering gaps on the Homeleading calendar.

This operational shift also led us to reassess our recruitment channels. We ceased advertising in high-cost, low-return spaces, reallocating our resources instead to more fruitful avenues. This improved our budgetary efficiency, helped us attract more mission-aligned volunteers ultimately strengthened our the quality and commitment of Samaritans volunteer base.

EDUCATION SERVICES



Promoting confidence and skill through knowledge and compassion.

This year, Samaritans' Education Program made a profound impact by engaging 2,899 providers, a 47% increase from FY22. A significant contingent of those served work within the NYC Department of Education, which operates with a ratio of one mental health professional for every 231 students. This structure exponentially magnifies the program's reach.

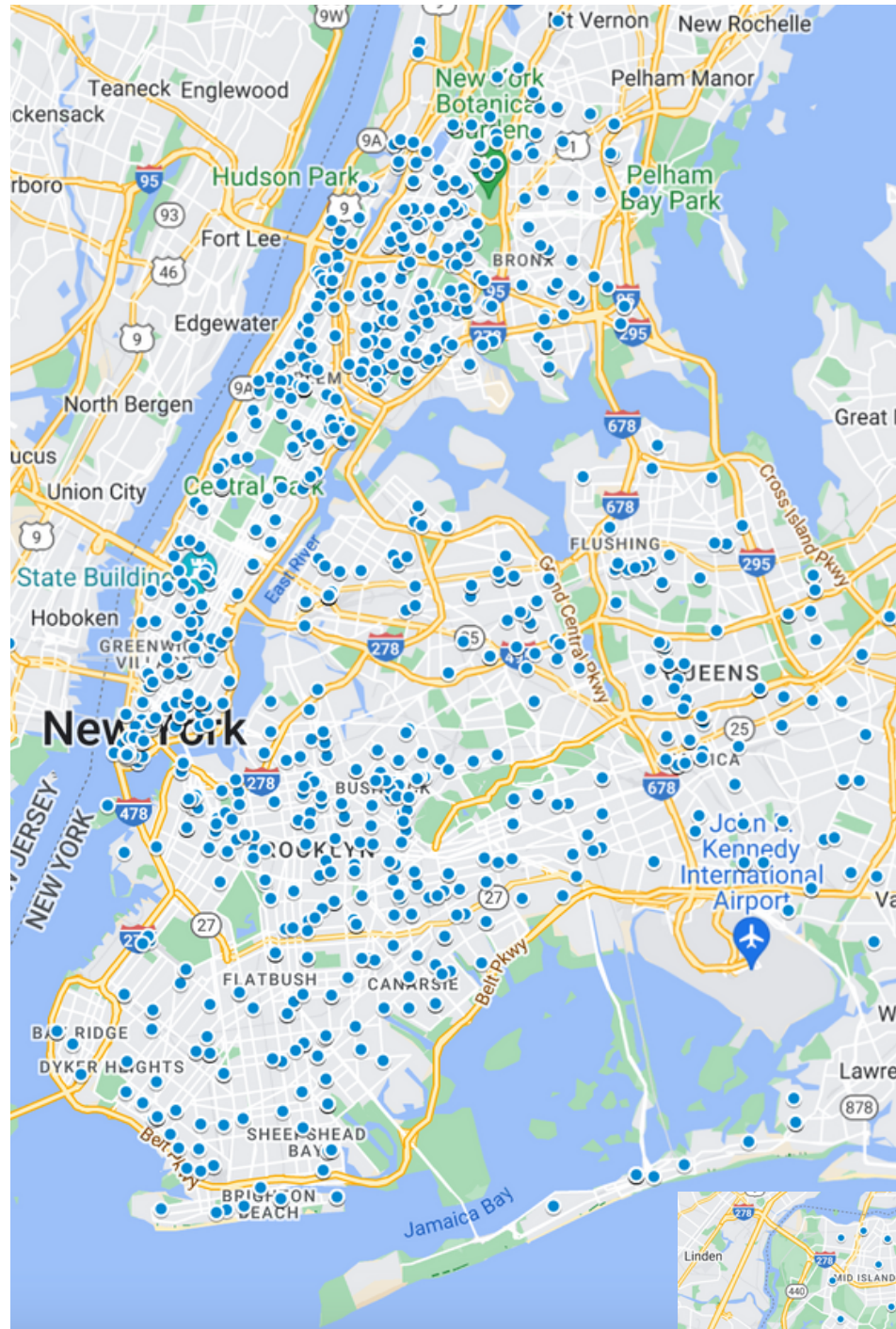
FY23 EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS INCLUDED:

- **Planning for Positive Mental Health Outcomes**
- **10 Things You Always Wanted to Know About Mental Health + Suicide (but are too afraid to ask)**
- **Demystifying the Data: Understanding Trends in Suicide & The Mental Health Crisis In NYC**
- **Building Suicide-Safer Communities: Suicide Prevention/Postvention Site Consultations**
- **Mental Health Provider Appreciation Project**
- **Community Health Fairs**
- **Suicide Awareness, Prevention, + Postvention Training**

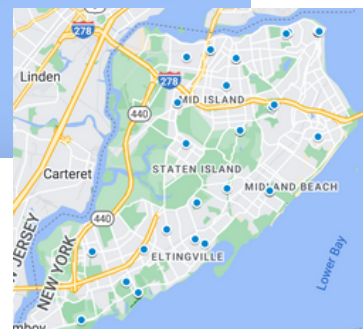
Samaritans' Education Services are particularly crucial given the alarming trends highlighted in the 2021 YRBS and other reports, which indicate that young people are experiencing record levels of depression, self-harm, and suicidal behavior. By empowering the mental health professionals who interact with these students, we aim to scaffold the existing supports available for young people in crisis.

Our culminating education initiative was the heartfelt Provider Appreciation Project, born directly from the candid feedback we received from the field. Professionals conveyed that they are encountering higher levels of trauma and an unprecedented demand for services, all while grappling with scarcer resources than ever before. This project underlines our commitment to sustaining the mental health ecosystem by nurturing its most fundamental asset: the providers themselves.

UNIQUE SITES RECEIVING EDUCATION SERVICES IN FY23



Samaritans provided educational services at **1,849 unique sites** located across all 5 boroughs.



SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES + TOOLS



*Comprehensive resources for
every situation and level of risk.*

THE LAUNCH OF SAMARITANS' RESOURCE HUB

This year, the launch of the Samaritans' Resource Hub marked a significant stride in our ongoing commitment to accessible mental health support. The hub has become an essential nexus of consolidated, up-to-date information, bridging the gap between community needs and reliable mental health resources.

Tailoring content to the specific requirements of various demographics has allowed us to extend our reach, not just as a service but as a comprehensive support system. Mental health professionals and community members alike have found value in the immediate access to current research, tools, and insights, reinforcing the role of Samaritans as a crucial connector within our community.

Reflecting on its impact, the Resource Hub stands as a testament to our adaptability and dedication to serving diverse needs with precision, especially in times where mental health awareness and support have never been more critical.



SCAN ME



bit.ly/SamsResourceHub

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT



The Safe Place program saw remarkable growth this year, expanding our reach to 646 survivors, up from last year's 432. This wasn't growth for the sake of numbers, but a deepened connection within the survivor community through initiatives like the expanded survivor resource pages and enhanced postvention support.

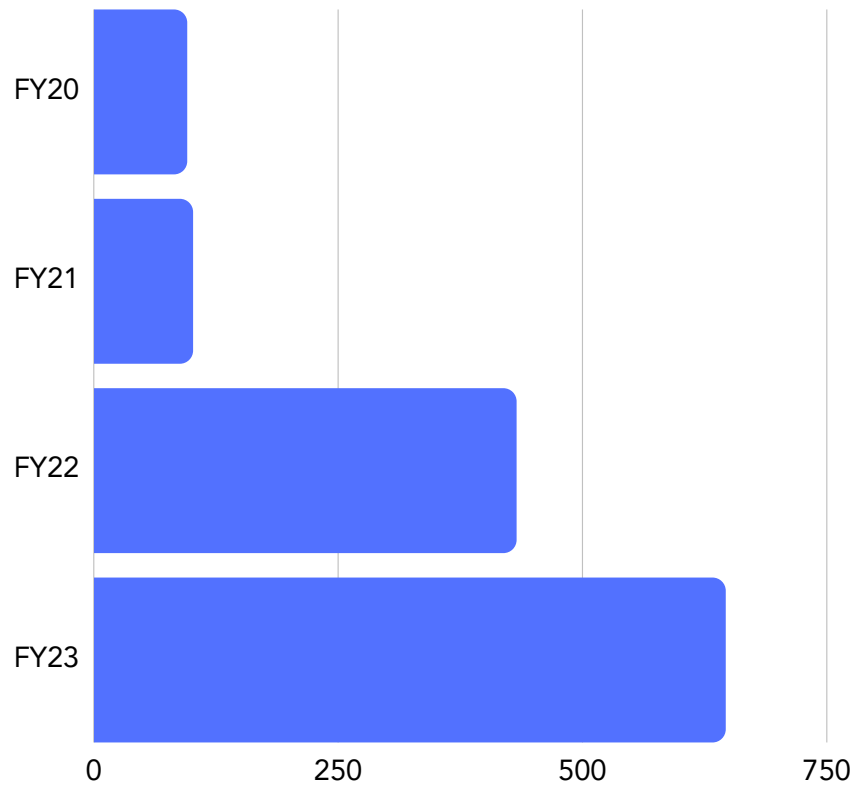
Integral to this evolution was our key partnership with NAMI-NYC Metro, which not only doubled our program offerings but also diversified the ways we meet community needs.*

A pivotal milestone was the development of a comprehensive training manual, a standalone achievement that underscores our commitment to the quality and continuity of support we offer. This resource enriches our own program, improves quality and consistency.

As we look to the future, our vision is set on transformative partnerships and initiatives. We're in talks with national entities like SAVE to develop and partner with their Midwest, survivor support programs, and we're exploring adding a "living with thoughts of suicide" group, in collaboration with NAMI, which signal our commitment to maintaining this forward momentum.

**Note: These meetings commenced in August 2023. As such these numbers will be reflected in FY24.*

SAFE PLACE PROGRAM GROWTH FY20-FY22



MONTHLY SCHEDULE SUICIDE LOSS SUPPORT



SAFE PLACE

1st Wednesday, 7-8:30pm

VIRTUAL

Meeting link: <https://bit.ly/SafePlace23>



SAMARITANS + NAMI-NYC METRO

2nd Thursday, 6-7:30pm

IN-PERSON

Location: 307 West 38th Street, 8th Floor,
New York, NY 10018, Program Room B



SAFE PLACE

3rd Tuesday, 7-9pm

IN-PERSON

Location: Grace Church School,
86 4th Ave, New York, NY, 10003

Pre-register at <https://bit.ly/SafePlace23>



SAMARITANS + NAMI-NYC METRO

4th Thursday, 6-7:30pm

VIRTUAL

Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/SAMSNAMIGROUP>

Meeting ID: 812 6663 7294

LOCAL + NATIONAL ADVOCACY



This year marked a significant expansion of Samaritans' role in both local and national advocacy efforts. At the national level, our responsibilities within the National Council for Suicide Prevention grew, evidenced by our active role on the Education Committee and a meaningful dialogue with US Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona. These engagements have firmly established Samaritans as a crucial stakeholder in suicide prevention.

Locally, our strategic partnership with the NYC Department of Education (DOE) was bolstered, thanks to Cheryl Hall's introduction to Mary Shamon, Director of Crisis, Office of Safety and Prevention Partnerships. Our Resource Hub and Resource Guide are now a standout feature on the DOE's mental health portal, marking us as one the only non-governmental resource actively promoted by the Department.

Additionally, through these conversations we've identified systemic gaps especially around student-focused services. This involvement has set the stage for future collaborations, including the potential for a Samaritans' Public Education/Advocacy program focusing on Youth with a complimentary mental health mobile app.

Simultaneously, our sustained advocacy with NYC council members, including Speaker Adrienne Adams as well as through consistent advisories to figures like Mental Health Committee Chair Linda Lee, has been instrumental.

For the first time Samaritans was invited to participate in closed-door legislative meetings, and our recommendations this year were directly reflected in passed mental health legislation. The weight of this achievement is evidenced by the full restoration of Samaritans' funding amidst citywide budget cuts.

This dual-front advancement, both nationally and locally, reflects Samaritans growing ability to not just be advisors, but to drive meaningful change in suicide prevention advocacy.



Keith Powers



Speaker Adrienne Adams



Inna Vernikov



Chi Osse

NYC COUNCIL FUNDERS (FY23)



Vickie Paladino



Linda Lee



Carlina Rivera



Mercedes Narcisse



Robert Holden



Carmen De La Rosa



Farah N.Louis

Samaritans

PRESENTS



New York's Nicest is awarded annually by Samaritans to an individual or group in recognition of their deep commitment to improving the quality of life for their fellow New Yorkers.

NEW YORK'S NICEST

CHAIR LINDA LEE



2023

NYC Council Chair of Mental Health, Disabilities + Addiction, Linda Lee, represents District 23 in Eastern Queens not far from where she grew up.

As a social worker herself, Chair Lee has been a staunch supporter of suicide prevention in NYC and a leading advocate of the many community-based organizations working in mental health like Samaritans.

Council Member Linda Lee represents District 23 in Eastern Queens. She is the first Korean-American ever elected to the New York City Council and serves as Chair of the Mental Health Committee. Under her leadership the city is developing a new Roadmap for Mental Health.

Prior to taking office, Linda was the President/CEO of Korean Community Services (KCS) of Metropolitan New York, Inc., New York's first community-based social service organization focused on the Korean community.

NEW YORK'S NICEST

DESMOND NATION



2023

Desmond is a retired NYPD officer + former Samaritans' Hotline Volunteer. Currently he serves as a Project Support Officer and Help Line Coordinator at Police Organization Providing Peer Assistance (POPPA).

Desmond's commitment to service goes beyond the call of duty. As a retired NYPD officer with over two decades of service, he's been consistently dedicated to helping others. After retirement, Desmond spent over 7 years as a volunteer answering calls on Samaritans' 24-hour, crisis hotline.

Desmond credits his training and experience with Samaritans as helping to pave the way for his current role providing support at POPPA.

Desmond also takes on the responsibility of being a Trainer for Crisis Intervention, Stress Management, and Traumatic Response, providing support to active and retired NYPD officers across the nation.

Desmond is the founder of the "22 Days Golf-athon for Suicide Awareness and Prevention," an annual event aimed at raising funds for both Samaritans and POPPA. This initiative is not just a fundraiser, but a sobering reminder of the tragic reality that 22 military veterans die by suicide daily.

MEET Jaxson



WINNER OF SAMARITANS' NEW YORK'S NICEST LOGO COMPETITION

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

You can call me Jax or Jaxson; either is fine. I live in New York, specifically in Queens, and I'm about to start 7th grade.

2. What got you interested in art and what are your favorite mediums to work with?

I've been drawing since I was five, and honestly, I can't remember what got me into it; I just started doing it. When it comes to art, I really like using paint markers and colored pencils. For this logo, I started with pencil for the outline, then went over it with pen, and used a paint that's easier to control.

3. What was the creative process you went through while designing the logo?

When designing the logo, I thought about the five boroughs of New York and chose symbols to represent each one. Some challenges I faced included figuring out what to draw but then I thought about the most iconic places in each borough and some places I've visited and enjoyed.

4. How do you feel about winning the logo competition?

I felt really good about my design being chosen as the logo because it can be shown to other people for such a good cause. I hope people look at it and see that it represents New York in a special way.

What advice do you have for any other young artists out there?

For other young artists who want to use their talents for good, I'd encourage them to use their art in the best way they can, in a way they enjoy, and to be creative with it. It's a great way to make a positive impact.

SUICIDE PREVENTION STARTS WITH ME

We all have a role to play in suicide prevention and you don't have to be an expert to make a difference; you just need to care enough to act.

Suicide prevention isn't only about big policies, it's about encouraging each one of us to educate ourselves about mental health, be open to having real conversations, and to check-in when we suspect someone might be struggling.

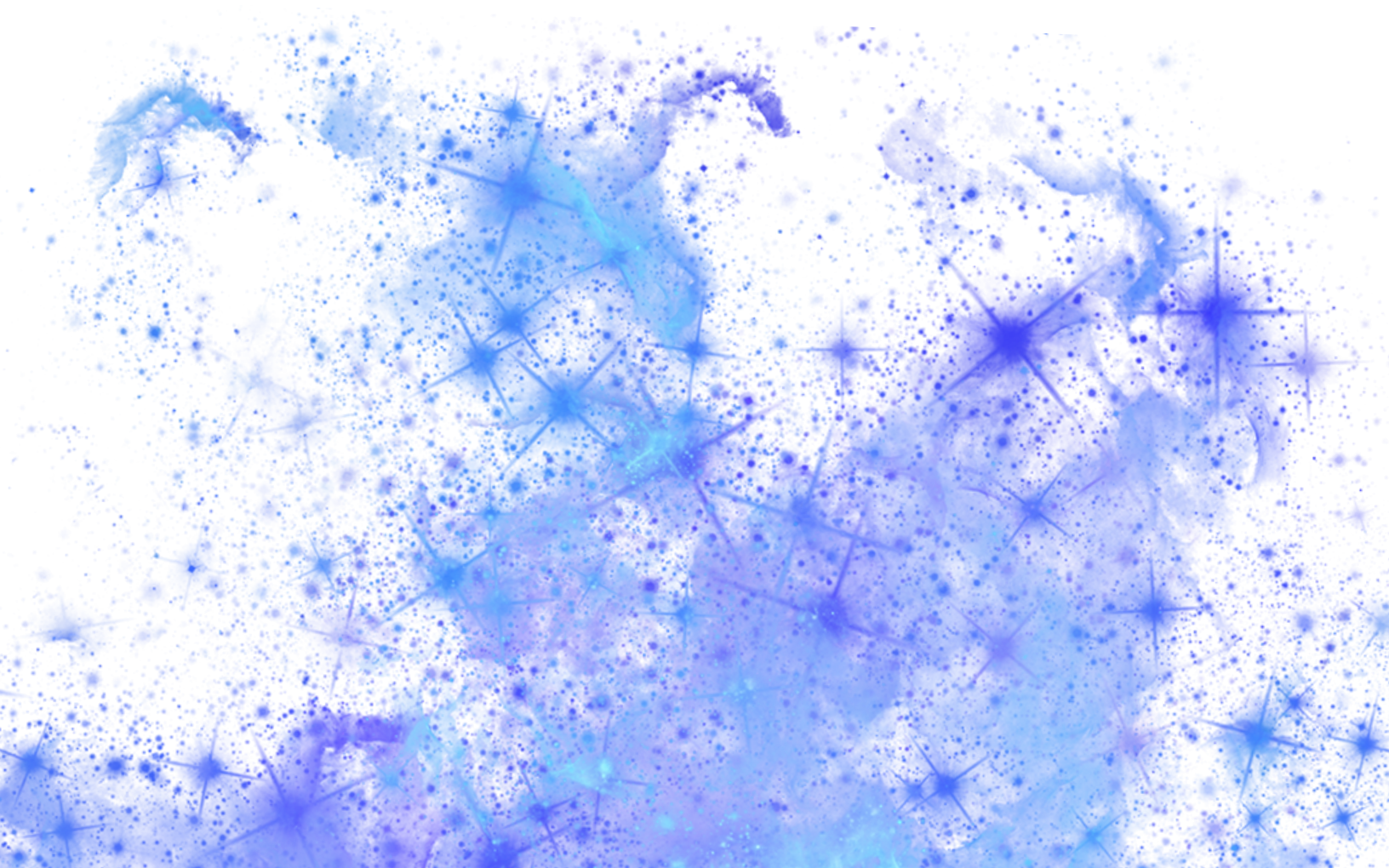
At Samaritans we recognize that small actions, such as asking someone how they're doing and really listening to their answer, can have profound impacts.



What will you do to
help stop suicide?



Working together to prevent
suicide + help save lives.



samaritansnyc.org