

Together, saving lives.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



Angela Drake lost her daughter, Brittany, to suicide in 2016. She channeled her grief into fierce determination to help others by educating them about suicide prevention.

Angela presented our Talk Saves Lives™ program to her local high school in South Dakota. Several days later, a student approached her at the mall. “Thank you,” she said. “If you hadn’t come to my school that day, I wouldn’t be here.”

Education programs are just one of the ways we are **raising awareness**. Our Out of the Darkness™ Walks bring visibility to the cause while creating a sense of community and raising funds to support the fight.

Learn more about
AFSP awareness
programs starting
on page 14

After losing her mother to suicide, Dimple Patel was at first reluctant to confront what had happened. Participation in an Out of the Darkness Walk in 2014 helped her begin a journey toward deeper understanding, including pursuing a doctorate in clinical psychology, which she received in 2019.





Learn more about
our prevention
efforts starting on
page 28

Our efforts to raise awareness complement our drive to [#StopSuicide](#). James Purvis was inspired to volunteer after losing a loved one to suicide and struggling with his own suicidal ideation. Today, he is chairman of the board of our Greater San Francisco Bay Area chapter. He talks to men about the need to confront tough emotions. Compassionate leaders like James inspire AFSP's bold Project 2025, a nationwide initiative to reduce the annual rate of suicide in the U.S. 20% by 2025.

Reducing the rate of suicide takes time. But **support** for those affected by suicide is something AFSP provides every day in communities across the country.

Learn more about our support programs on page 42

When Wykisha McKinney lost her brother in 2004, she fell into depression as she struggled to understand his death. Support from AFSP helped her to cope with her grief and enlightened her about the causes of suicide. She also learned about the importance of human connection in preventing suicide and comforting those affected by it. She continues to volunteer with AFSP to support others in her Houston community.





In addition to completing Talk Saves Lives training, student Victoria Gonzalez (left) created the first Campus Walk at New York's Pace University.

**Many programs.
Many places.
Many milestones.**

**It's all due to
one thing.**

Community.

View the 2019 Annual Report, including
videos from these volunteers, online at
afsp.org/2019report.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer and Chair, Board of Directors

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is a driving force behind what we do as a nation to prevent suicide. We know we can't do this alone, so we actively engage with partners from many communities, such as businesses, schools, healthcare, faith, government, non-profit organizations, social and traditional media, entertainment and more.

We engage directly with the public through our chapters in all 50 states, tens of thousands of volunteers, the delivery of community-based programs, grassroots advocacy, public service campaigns, and our Out of the Darkness™ Walks.

AFSP's expanding community engagement is creating greater awareness of the cause and the financial resources that make it possible for us to fund innovative research; advocate for policies and legislation that advance our mission; educate the public about suicide; and provide support to those affected. Together, through this growing engagement, we are creating a movement built on hope, which will save lives.

This past year, we remained hopeful about a future fueled by the involvement and support of millions of people across the country. This allowed us to:

- increase our investment in research by \$1 million, to \$6.3 million, which funded 26 new studies
- reach 300,000 people with prevention and Loss & Healing programs in schools, workplaces and community settings
- empower teens and young adults to help friends who may be at risk through the Seize the Awkward ad campaign, which has had 20 million views
- advocate for The National Hotline Improvement Act, which was signed into law and will strengthen crisis services for those in distress
- educate gun owners about suicide and the need for safe storage, and to support Red Flag Laws as a way to remove a firearm from someone who is at risk
- work with health care systems, emergency departments and corrections to improve care for those who struggle

While it was an inspiring and impactful year in the fight to prevent suicide, we were saddened by lives lost, as well as by the CDC's report showing the suicide rate continues to increase in the U.S. These are vivid reminders of the importance of our work.

Therefore, we took steps to ensure AFSP continues to make a measurable impact by creating a Three Year Strategic Plan that will guide us in the work we do through 2022. The plan strengthens our bold project to reduce the U.S. suicide rate 20 percent by 2025. You can read more about our new strategic plan, including Project 2025, in this report.

Everything AFSP is doing to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide is a direct result of millions of people getting involved in our community. Whether you're a longtime supporter of AFSP, or are new to our cause, we thank you for sharing your dedication, expertise, passion and generosity with us.

We raised more than **\$41.1 million** this past year, keeping our combined administrative costs and fundraising costs below the industry standard 25%, at only **18%**. We have also earned a top rating of four stars from Charity Navigator, the nation's largest independent charity evaluator, thanks to sound fiscal management and the strength of our programs and other activities.

Please look through the following pages to learn more about our important work. We invite you to join us as we continue to lead the fight against suicide.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Gebbia".

Robert Gebbia
Chief Executive Officer



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steve Siple".

Steve Siple
Chair, Board of Directors

Contents

Awareness

14

Out of the Darkness Walks	16
Volunteer Spotlight: Amy Reed	20
Education: Let's Talk	21
Volunteer Spotlight: Natalia Chimbo-Andrade	24
The Movement to #StopSuicide	25

Prevention

28

Research: Changing the Course, Together	30
Focus Grants	31
Volunteer Spotlight: Markita Madden-Puckett	32
Advocacy: It Takes a Community	33
Volunteer Spotlight: Steve Moore	37
Volunteer Spotlight: Dan Bielenberg	40
Project 2025	41

Support Programs

42

The Interactive Screening Program	44
Volunteer Spotlight: Tom Steen	45
Loss and Healing: Supporting Each Other	46
Volunteer Spotlight: Nikki Scott	47

2019 and Beyond

48

Innovation Grants	50
Our Three Year Strategic Plan	59
Lifesavers Gala	60
Honoring Our Chapters	63
Financials	64


Our Community

68

Leadership	70
National Donors	77
Chapter Donors	80
AFSP North Stars	86

The background is a solid dark blue. It is decorated with several thick, bright red curved lines and segments of varying lengths and curvatures, creating a dynamic, abstract pattern. One large arc starts from the top left and curves towards the center. Another arc is on the right side, curving inwards. A third arc is at the bottom, curving upwards. There are also smaller segments scattered throughout.

Awareness

The background is a solid blue color. There are several large, thick, red curved shapes scattered across the page. One large arc is in the upper left, another is in the upper right, and a third is in the lower left. There are also smaller red shapes at the bottom center and bottom right.

Community is at the heart of everything we do at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. It is through community efforts, made possible by our local chapters across the country, that we are building momentum, and a movement, to #StopSuicide.

Walks

Bringing Communities Together

Throughout the year, Out of the Darkness Walks bring communities together in solidarity, encouraging powerful moments of support and togetherness across towns, campuses and cities nationwide, while raising funds and awareness for the cause.



This year, **nearly 360,000 people** across the U.S. raised awareness and funds for suicide prevention by participating in one of **600 Out of the Darkness Walks**. Our walks are how many people learn about our organization for the first time, welcoming them into a supportive and loving community, and mobilizing them in the movement to #StopSuicide.

We kicked off our 15th year of **Community Walks**, which began in 2004. Our Chicagoland Walk recognized its 15th consecutive year with a major milestone—becoming our first Community Walk ever to raise \$1 million.

\$29m
raised in
total

360k
Walkers



Walk to
Fight Suicide



Walk to
Fight Suicide



OUT OF THE
DARKNESS
End Stigmatizing Words



The spring marked the 10th year of **Campus Walks**, with teens, young adults, faculty, and family members from **160 campuses** spreading the message that mental health is just as important as physical health, and that suicide can be prevented. Students at Colorado's Arapahoe High School rallied to support their first walk, which became the top Campus Walk in the country with more than **\$77,000 raised** and **1,200 participants**.





In June, participants gathered in host cities San Francisco and Boston to walk from dusk till dawn in our flagship event, **The Overnight**. Nearly **4,000 people** participated in an Overnight Walk this year, raising **\$4.4 million**.

Special thanks to this year's sponsors, Boston Bruins Foundation, Sunovion, and San Jose Behavioral Health.

The vast majority of our organization's funding comes from our Out of the Darkness Community, Campus, and Overnight Walks. More importantly, the friendships formed by the people who walk are deeply personal, and can last a lifetime.

Amy Reed

“I knew from my first Walk that the people I met were my family.”



Amy Reed had never heard of AFSP until she lost her best friend Terri in 2011. In Fall 2011, she volunteered in the Omaha Out of the Darkness Community Walk. The interactions Amy had with people had a profound effect on her. Amy then joined the chapter's board and helped grow the Omaha Walk from just over 1,500 participants to nearly 5,000 in 2019.

Organizing walks are not without challenges. Due to a renovation, a new location had to be found for upcoming events, with Amy leading the way in organizing logistics, toiling over maps, parking, and other details. But that wasn't all. Three weeks prior to a recent walk, just as Amy's daughter, who lives with quadriplegia, had to be hospitalized, the company supplying tents, tables, chairs, the stage, and truck rental went out of business. With the help of family and other volunteers, Amy not only conquered these obstacles, but boosted the scale of business donations by creating a fundraising partnership committee, helping the walk to raise almost \$200,000, which will go toward our many programs and efforts.

“I knew from my first Community Walk that the people I met were my family, my tribe, my source of inspiration. The walks give people a space to feel safe—to openly grieve, while fighting for the cause. Organizing the walk is an absolute honor. It's not only healing for the now thousands of people who attend, but it's also healing for me. There's a strength in being open and vulnerable in our grief. Loss isn't something we get over, but we can grow within it and around it, allow it to be a part of our lives, and inspire and teach other people with our experiences.”

Education

Let's Talk

The more people in our communities know about mental health and suicide prevention, the better equipped we are — as families, friends, neighbors and coworkers — to connect those who are struggling to help. Our education programs are evidence-informed, using the latest science to inform suicide prevention programs.

Daring to Stop Suicide in Schools

The need for further suicide prevention education in schools for young people is very real. Suicide is currently the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24 years old.

D.A.R.E. presents AFSP's **More Than Sad: Teen Depression** prevention education program for teens is designed to engage teens in recognizing the signs of depression in themselves and others; address and remove the sense of shame some people associate with mental health; demystify the treatment process; and encourage students to talk to a trusted adult about mental health.

Implemented in schools throughout the United States, D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) teaches students good decision-making skills designed to help them lead safe and healthy lives and cope with high risk circumstances including drugs, alcohol, violence and bullying.

By collaborating with D.A.R.E to present More Than Sad, we can help further spread potentially lifesaving education and resources to young people, and reinforce the understanding that their mental health is as real as their physical health: a lesson that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

3k+
education
programs

200k+
attendees
nationwide

Learning to Talk About It

Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention helps communities learn together what they can do to save lives. The program covers the latest research on suicide prevention, showing participants how to recognize the risks and warning signs, and how to take action when someone needs help.

Since launching in 2015, Talk Saves Lives has reached **nearly 110,000 people**. This program has been presented to a wide range of community audiences including police officers, senior center staff, construction workers, and others who wish to learn more about suicide prevention.

This year, through a partnership with Aetna, AFSP equipped several Aetna employee trainers with the knowledge to deliver Talk Saves Lives to their employee network.

**Nearly
110k
reached through
Talk Saves
Lives**

Raising Awareness About LGBTQ Suicide Risk

Since 2011, AFSP chapters across the country have been hosting regional conferences to provide training for mental health professionals and community leaders on LGBTQ suicide risk and prevention. These one-day events feature nationally recognized, innovative researchers and highlight local resources and programs working to prevent suicide at the community level.

This year, our **Stronger Communities** conference series was brought to five states—North Dakota, South Carolina, New York, California and Indiana—increasing awareness for LGBTQ suicide prevention with nearly 400 attendees.

Reaching People Through Faith Communities

Many people go to their religious leader when they are grieving the loss of a loved one by suicide, or are struggling themselves. That's why we've partnered with Soul Shop™ to provide one-day training workshops to equip clergy, staff, lay pastors, and faith-based clinicians with resources and guidance to foster hope and healing—part of an ongoing, strategic effort to shift the way faith communities address mental health and suicide prevention.

Supporting Those Who Struggle

Those who care for a loved one at risk for suicide often have many questions about how best to support the individual and their recovery. “Lived experience” is a term we use for people who have made a suicide attempt or struggle with suicidal thoughts. AFSP’s new program, piloted by seven chapters—San Diego, Arkansas, Virginia, Montana, Long Island, Illinois, and Central Florida—is designed for those supporting someone at risk for suicide and helps participants understand what we know about suicide, providing them with strategies to help them support the individual’s well-being.

When someone is at risk for suicide, it can be a difficult time for both the individual as well as those who want to be there for them. By developing this important, evidence-informed program, our goal is to provide guidance, encouragement and hope for everyone involved.

Updating the Model School Policy

In collaboration with the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and The Trevor Project, this year we updated the **Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention**, a comprehensive guidebook for school administrators and policy makers containing best practices in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention policies for K-12 schools.

When the first Model School Policy was released in 2014, only five states required suicide prevention procedures for their school districts. Today, thanks to the work of our volunteer Field Advocates and other mental health organizations, there are now 22 states with laws that require K-12 school districts to have a suicide prevention policy in place. The Model School Policy provides a template for school districts to use as a guide when developing their own policies. The document is free and available to the public through afsp.org/modelschoolpolicy. We also worked with education technology company GoGuardian to guide them in their own efforts, and to help bring the Model School Policy, and our More Than Sad teacher education program, to more schools.

“We know that teachers and others who interact with students daily are in a prime position to recognize the signs of suicide risk, and to make appropriate referrals. This document was created to provide further guidance to schools on how to best address suicide attempts and to support students who may be experiencing suicidal ideation,” said Dr. Doreen Marshall, AFSP Vice President of Programs.

Natalia Chimbo-Andrade

“I am a firm believer that education is power.”



As a suicide attempt survivor who has also lost friends and family, Natalia Chimbo-Andrade's personal story is what motivates her as a board member of our Arizona chapter. This year, Natalia was instrumental in spreading education to diverse audiences in her community, through programs like Talk Saves Lives, It's Real: College Students and Mental Health, and More Than Sad, including Spanish language presentations, in school, hospital and workplace settings, as well as to state political representatives, to better inform them so they are equipped to help their constituents.

"It's important to inform the public about warning signs and risk factors, as well as the impact suicide leaves on a community. I hope to inspire and motivate others to create a suicide-safer community. Hearing how our efforts impact others gives me hope that we are getting closer to putting an end to suicide!"

Campaigns

Building Momentum

The movement to #StopSuicide, within communities and across the world, is growing. Each day, more and more people affected by suicide—and those who recognize it as the public health crisis it is—are speaking out, sharing personal stories as well as life-saving resources.



Mental Health Awareness Month

We are building on this momentum to spread awareness and understanding. For Mental Health Awareness Month in May, we partnered with Instagram to create a series of video stories featuring top social influencers encouraging people to be more open and honest about mental health. We hosted a live panel discussion with Instagram, Teen Vogue and SELF magazine on how to have a **#RealConvo** about mental health with your friends and loved ones. Our efforts made us a **finalist for PRNews' Digital Awards Best Instagram Campaign**.



We also collaborated with 20 illustrators to create #RealConvo artwork. Our Mental Health Month Toolkit web page provided a single location for visitors to find videos, sharable graphics, blogs and other ways to get involved in the AFSP community. During May, the toolkit received nearly **9,000 visits** and resulted in over **25,000 interactions** with the content on that page. It was our seventh most visited page for the month.

Our follower count went up **7,000** over the course of the month. By the end of May, we had nearly **37,000 followers** on Instagram.





SEIZE THE AWKWARD

Seize the Awkward Campaign


As part of our **Seize the Awkward** campaign with the Ad Council and The Jed Foundation, pop stars Billie Eilish and Ava Max spoke to young people, openly discussing their own experiences with mental health and the need to reach out for help. Thanks to our efforts, we're reaching millions of people worldwide, sparking a much-needed conversation about suicide prevention and mental health.

Our Seize the Awkward campaign continued into National Suicide Prevention Week in September, when we launched new videos by musicians Aminé, Hayley Kiyoko, Christina Perri and Lindsey Stirling. We used the month as an opportunity to spread information about suicide prevention, creating social media graphics, blogs and videos providing people the guidance they need to have a #RealConvo about mental health. We also took part in events including Twitter chats in partnership with the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; a webinar with Dr. Christine Moutier and members of our Scientific Council on implementing new health system standards for preventing suicide; and a briefing on Capitol Hill presented by AFSP and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

22k+
new social media
followers in
September



Prevention



Our innovative research program helps reveal how we can save lives and informs our bold Project 2025 goal of reducing the annual suicide rate in the U.S. 20% by 2025. At the same time, our volunteers advocate for mental health and suicide prevention laws that affect communities everywhere.

Research

Changing the Course, Together

Our state-of-the-art research portfolio helps to address suicide, which is currently the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. By working with other national research organizations and sharing the findings of our researchers through conferences and Research Connection Programs, we spread knowledge, and help to shape the agenda for future suicide prevention research.

AFSP was founded as a research organization dedicated to exploring how to save lives. Over 30 years later, AFSP remains the largest private funder of suicide prevention research, shaping suicide prevention strategies around the world in collaboration with our Scientific Council, Scientific Advisors, and research grantees.

This year, AFSP funded **26 new research grants**, totaling over **\$6.27 million**. Of the new grants funded this year, three **Focus Grants** explore a range of exciting areas of research, totaling **almost \$4 million**.

Focus Grants

Focus Grants are targeted, novel and potentially high-impact studies focusing on designated areas of study. This year, AFSP has funded two new Blue Sky Focus Grants, and one Short-Term Risk Focus Grant.

For information on the Innovation Grants funded by AFSP this year, see page 50

Blue Sky Focus Grants are those which are open to all fields, supporting innovative and potentially impactful novel areas of suicide prevention research that are beyond the scope of our Innovation Grants.

Short-Term Risk Focus Grants are concentrated on assessment and/or interventions to identify and reduce short-term risk for suicide in clinical settings.

\$6.27m
invested in
2019

\$19.8m
for current
studies



Opiate Suicide Study in Patients with Major Depression

Alan Schatzberg, M.D. of Stanford University was awarded a **Blue Sky Focus Grant** totaling over **\$1.4 million** for a study on ketamine, a pain relief medicine that has been shown to rapidly reduce severe suicidal ideation. The study examines how we might sustain this anti-suicidal effect over time.



An Integrated Approach to Understanding the Biology of Suicidal Behavior

Virginia Willour, Ph.D. of the University of Iowa was awarded a **Blue Sky Focus Grant** totaling almost **\$1.5 million** towards her research examining how genetics, and brain structure and function, are related to suicide through the study of individuals with bipolar disorder and suicidal behavior.



Inpatient Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to Reduce Suicide Risk Post-Discharge

David Tolin, Ph.D. of the Institute of Living/Hartford Hospital was awarded a **Short-Term Risk Focus Grant** of over **\$1 million**, studying the effects of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy on patients managing suicidal ideation and behavior post-discharge from the hospital, when they are at particularly high-risk.



Markita Madden-Puckett



“I feel the impact of unspoken beliefs rooted deeply within my community.”

Markita Madden-Puckett made a significant contribution to suicide prevention this year by creating an important dialogue with the black and international community (largely Hispanic-Latino) in the rural area of Virginia in which she lives. Markita sought out opportunities to engage with diverse audiences by partnering with the NAACP, and through events such as the African American Festival, Pride Festivals, and International Festival in the Shenandoah Valley.

Markita, who lost her father and two brothers to suicide, sees her mission as breaking down barriers, and starting and keeping conversations going in communities that do not readily discuss suicide and mental health.

“As a volunteer for AFSP, I feel the impact of unspoken beliefs rooted deeply within my community, in which many feel they cannot openly admit that mental health struggles are real. Our message of prevention has to be both culturally aware and culturally sensitive. I’ve found that having one-on-one interactions in which I share my personal story can lead to wonderful moments of connection.”

Advocacy

It Takes a Community

By organizing events like State Capitol Days and the Annual Advocacy Forum in Washington, D.C., we empower a network of volunteers across the country to urge public officials at all levels of government to prioritize suicide prevention and mental health.

It takes a community of people across the nation to educate federal, state and local leaders about suicide prevention and mental health. This year, thousands of our volunteers urged public officials at all levels of government to prioritize this important cause, sending **over 30,000 emails** to members of Congress and **over 3,000 emails** to state legislators.

Our chapters hosted **45 State Capitol Day events** in Spring 2019, bringing our advocates together to meet with public officials and discuss how to help reduce suicide in their states and communities. This year, they urged legislators to support bills that would impact suicide prevention in K-12 schools, training for health professionals, mental health parity enforcement, prohibitions on conversion therapy, and suicide prevention planning and infrastructure at the state level, among other state priority issues.

24k
volunteer Field
Advocates

20+
bills passed
into law



At our **10th Annual Advocacy Forum**, 225 Field Advocates, chapter leaders and staff assembled in Washington, D.C. to advocate for our federal policy priorities:

- increased funding for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- increased investment in suicide prevention research within the National Institute of Mental Health
- funding for suicide prevention education and programs at SAMHSA & CDC
- investment in mental health care for service members, veterans, and their families
- full enforcement of the Federal Mental Health Parity Law
- passage of legislation that supports suicide prevention and increased access to mental health and substance use disorder resources

Visted all
535
Congressional
offices

50k+
people joined
the Virtual
Forum



afsp.org

American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention



Keynote speakers at our Advocacy Forum included **U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilke**, former **U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy**, **U.S. Representative Paul Tonko**, and former **U.S. Representative Charles Boustany**.

It is vitally important our elected officials make access to mental health care a major priority. With this in mind, this year we partnered with **Mental Health for US**—a nonpartisan, educational initiative focused on improving candidate's and policymaker's understanding and knowledge of mental health and making the topic a vibrant part of national policy conversations.

The partnership, co-chaired by former **Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR)** and former **U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI)**, was launched at our Annual Advocacy Forum. Other coalition leaders in addition to AFSP include The Kennedy Forum, The Jed Foundation, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Council for Behavioral Health, Mental Health America, One Mind, and Thomas Scattergood Behavioral Health Foundation.

Sign up to receive Action Alerts and become a volunteer Field Advocate at afsp.org/advocate.



“AFSP Advocacy can transform hope into reality.”

Steve Moore lost his son, Paul, to suicide in 2006. He has since devoted himself to the cause of suicide prevention, particularly in the form of advocacy, as the co-chair and public policy chair of our Illinois chapter, as well as serving on AFSP's National Public Policy Council.

This year, Steve drafted a bill that made suicide prevention the responsibility of the Illinois Department of Public Health, and added the Zero Suicide model for health care to the state's suicide prevention plan. In addition to testifying before Senate and House committees and leading a letter-writing campaign to legislators, Steve organized the chapter's State Capitol Day around the bill. Visitors to the State Capitol Building placed rose petals in memory of those who died by suicide on a large board with the word HOPE that was set up on the first floor. "The HOPE board was a positive way to raise awareness and encourage public participation in our cause," said Steve.

The bill passed both houses unanimously and was signed by the Governor. Steve concluded, "Because suicide prevention will now be a line item in the state budget, our future advocacy can focus on increasing state funding for suicide prevention."

Recognizing Our Field Advocates

The Sandy Martin Grassroots Award recognizes our volunteer Field Advocates who have devoted their time and energy working to build relationships with public officials, network with state and local agencies and organizations, recruit others to work for the cause, and further the public policy priorities we know will save lives.



Jessica Foard, AFSP Utah Chapter

Jessica Foard works tirelessly on suicide prevention in Utah, successfully advocating in her home state for increased mental health and suicide prevention services for all Utah residents. As a board member for the Utah Chapter, Jessica represented her chapter this year at both the Chapter Leadership Conference and the National Advocacy Forum in Washington, D.C., where she brought her passion for advocating locally to the national stage, meeting with members of Congress.



Corbin Standley, AFSP Michigan Chapter

Currently serving as the Chapter Board Secretary for the AFSP Michigan Chapter, Corbin Standley is heavily involved in public policy efforts in his home state, helping to lead State Capitol Day events, preparing and providing testimony, and working directly with legislators to draft critical suicide prevention legislation. As a Ph.D. student studying youth suicide, Corbin traveled to Northern Ireland to present his master's thesis research at the 30th World Congress of the International Association for Suicide Prevention.



**Che Hernandez,
AFSP San Diego Chapter**

Che Hernandez is well known in his local community for his efforts regarding suicide prevention advocacy due to his strong leadership skills and drive to make a difference. As the San Diego Chapter's chairman of the board of directors, he has served in almost every role within the chapter, including walk chair and Survivor Day organizer. He is a certified trainer of ASIST and safeTALK, and currently serves on the Behavioral Health Advisory Board for his county. Che is also a member of AFSP's National Public Policy Council.



**Nancy Farrell,
Perspicacity Award**

Perspicacity is the quality of keen understanding, of uncommon insight into the world we live in and the issues at hand. Nancy Farrell has demonstrated this insight and more on advocacy and policy at all levels of government to promote suicide prevention and mental health, putting her heart and soul into preventing suicide in her community and across the country. In her many years with AFSP, Nancy's leadership impact has been immeasurable. Her vision, guidance, and perspicacity have been invaluable, and she has set the example for the decades to come.

Dan Bielenberg



“Why wait to make a difference?”

As the Programs Coordinator at Santiam Correctional Institution, Dan Bielenberg knew that both his co-workers as well as the incarcerated people are particularly vulnerable to suicide, and that suicide is the leading cause of death in jails and prisons. He had also attended a Community Walk held in Salem, Oregon in 2016, and was moved by the experience of seeing so many people walking to bring suicide out of the darkness.

Describing the event to George Skurtu, a trusted adult in custody serving as a prison clerk, he inspired George to respond, “I want to do that when I get out.” Dan’s response to George was, “Why not do it now?”

Under Dan’s guidance, the first ever Out of the Darkness Walk to take place inside a state prison was held at Santiam Correctional Institution. Thanks to Dan’s initiative, six prison walks were held this year in Oregon, each one accompanied by a presentation of the Talk Saves Lives program. Building on this momentum, Dan now speaks at correctional facilities in other states, inspiring others to do the same.

Project 2025

Saving the Most Lives in the Shortest Amount of Time

Our research serves as the catalyst for Project 2025, with the bold goal of reducing the annual suicide rate in the U.S. 20% by 2025.

PROJECT
2025

[AFSP.ORG/PROJECT2025](https://afsp.org/project2025)

By partnering with organizations in communities across the U.S. to deliver evidence-informed programs, policies and interventions, we know we can and will save lives. This year we entered a new phase of the initiative, including the debut of a new interactive website and the announcement of several exciting partnerships, each aligned with the four critical areas that have been identified to save the most lives in the shortest amount of time: firearms, healthcare systems, emergency departments and correctional institutions.

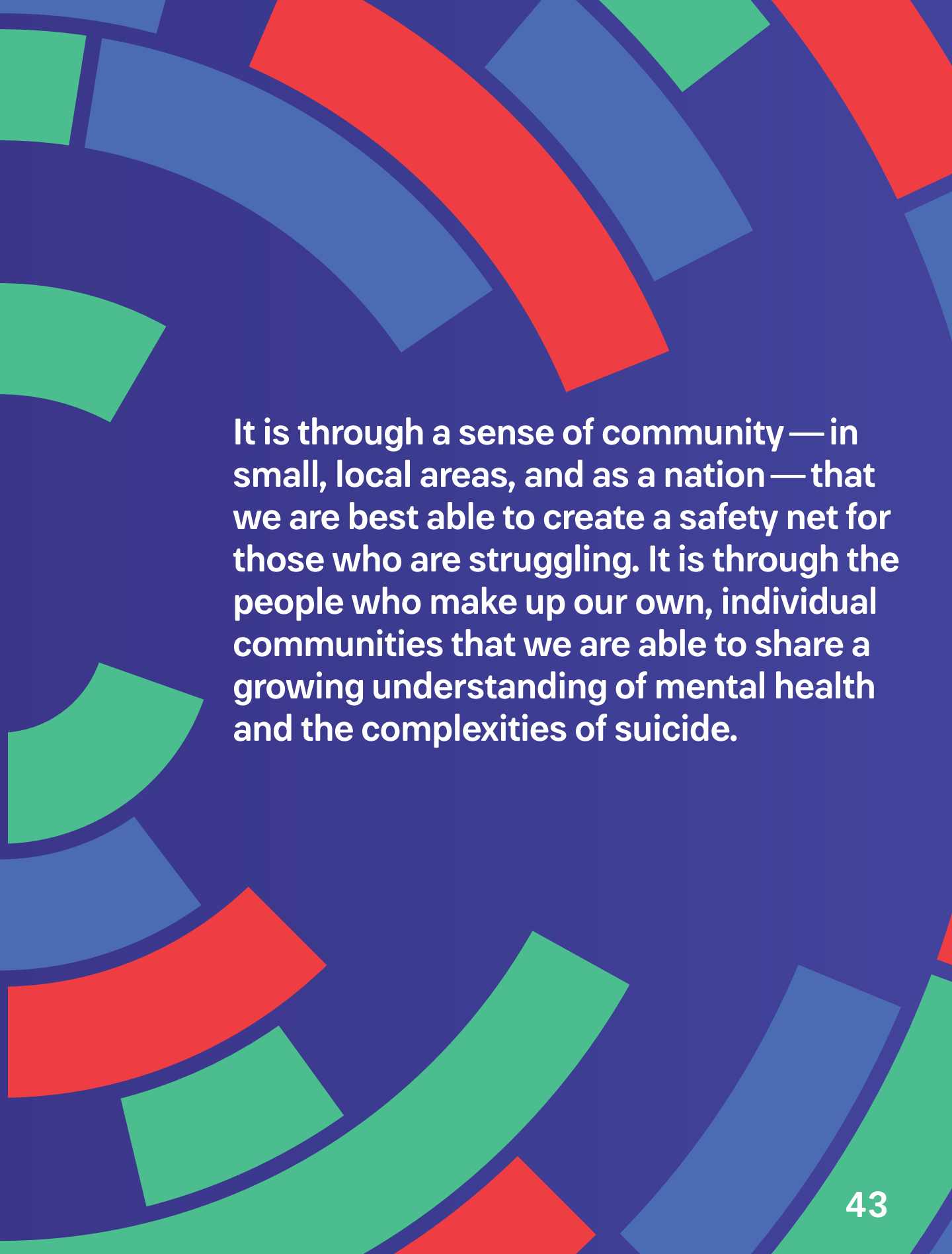
- 51% of all suicides in the U.S. are by firearm, which is why we've partnered with the **National Shooting Sports Foundation** to help distribute suicide prevention materials to its national network of retailers and ranges. Our chapters have presented our firearms-specific suicide prevention education program in their communities over 100 times since its development. We're also partnering with **Everytown for Gun Safety** and **The Well-Armed Woman** to promote suicide prevention in relation to firearms

- up to 45% of people who die by suicide visit their primary care physician in the month prior. We've collaborated with **SafeSide Prevention** to provide video-based suicide prevention training for doctors across the country
- 39% of people who die by suicide visit an ER in the year prior. Together with the **American College of Emergency Physicians**, we've developed ICAR2E, an online suicide prevention tool designed to assist with assessment and treatment of at-risk patients in emergency care settings
- suicide is the leading cause of death in jails, and has increased 30% in prisons the past several years. Our partnership with the **National Commission on Correctional Health Care** allows us to offer the tools and guidance needed in correctional facilities

To learn more about Project 2025, visit afsp.org/project2025.



Support Programs



It is through a sense of community—in small, local areas, and as a nation—that we are best able to create a safety net for those who are struggling. It is through the people who make up our own, individual communities that we are able to share a growing understanding of mental health and the complexities of suicide.

Interactive Screening Program

Our Interactive Screening Program provides individual members of school and workplace communities with a safe and anonymous way to connect with help when they need support and resources.

Individuals in need of help are not always ready to connect to mental health services. The Interactive Screening Program's web-based platform offers a screening for stress, depression, and other mental health concerns, followed by the opportunity to connect with a program counselor within the mental health services available to them, and have an anonymous electronic dialogue. Individuals can decide to connect with available mental health services.

The program is utilized by mental health services at institutions of higher education, including medical and professional degree schools, hospitals and health systems, law enforcement agencies, and other workplace settings through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

ISP used by
125+
schools and
organizations

160k
people connected
to professional
help

Tom Steen



“I’m still healing.”

Tom Steen had been involved in nonprofit work for 30 years before losing his son Tyler to suicide in 2009. Soon after that, he returned from retirement to become Executive Director of the Capital Area Substance Abuse Council (CASAC), where he found his work dovetailing with mental health, and joined Connecticut’s Suicide Prevention Advisory Board. He then became involved with AFSP, recruiting and mobilizing a team of volunteers to found our Northern Connecticut Chapter.

This past year, in addition to overseeing the merger of two chapters, Tom provided suicide prevention training at schools and workplaces, including our More Than Sad program for young adults, and Talk Saves Lives modules addressing firearms safety, and the LGBTQ community.

“I’m still healing,” Tom says of his loss. “If I had just known a little more about suicide prevention when Tyler died, he might still be alive today. My journey of healing has allowed me to speak openly about my loss and offer a message of hope for those who struggle.”

Loss and Healing

Supporting Each Other

One by one, throughout our communities, people are sharing and spreading their knowledge and experiences of how we can all — as members of our home, work, friend, family, school, and faith networks — support ourselves and one another.



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Thousands of suicide loss survivors gathered at events around the world on November 17th for **International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day**. The events are an opportunity for suicide loss survivors to find comfort and gain understanding, while being supported by others in their community as they share stories of hope and healing from a loss.

400
Survivor Day
events

19
countries



Healing Conversations

Healing Conversations, formerly known as the Survivor Outreach Program, gives those who have lost loved ones to suicide the opportunity to talk with our experienced volunteers, who are themselves survivors of suicide loss.

Available in person, on the phone or by video chat following a suicide death, these Healing Conversations provide connection and understanding in the moments people need it most.

Nearly **800 people** from every corner of the country requested a connection through our Healing Conversations Program this past year—an increase of **22% over the previous year**. We currently have over **500 trained Healing Conversations volunteers**.

Supporting Those Who Support Others

Grief following a death by suicide requires a specific type of support. Over **450** mental health professionals participated in our **Suicide Bereavement Clinician Training Program** this year, and over **240** people attended the Support Group Facilitator Training program. These programs educate those in helping roles about how to better support suicide loss survivors.

Volunteer Spotlight

Nikki Scott

“Sitting with someone in their loss, holding space, has been deeply healing for them and for myself.”

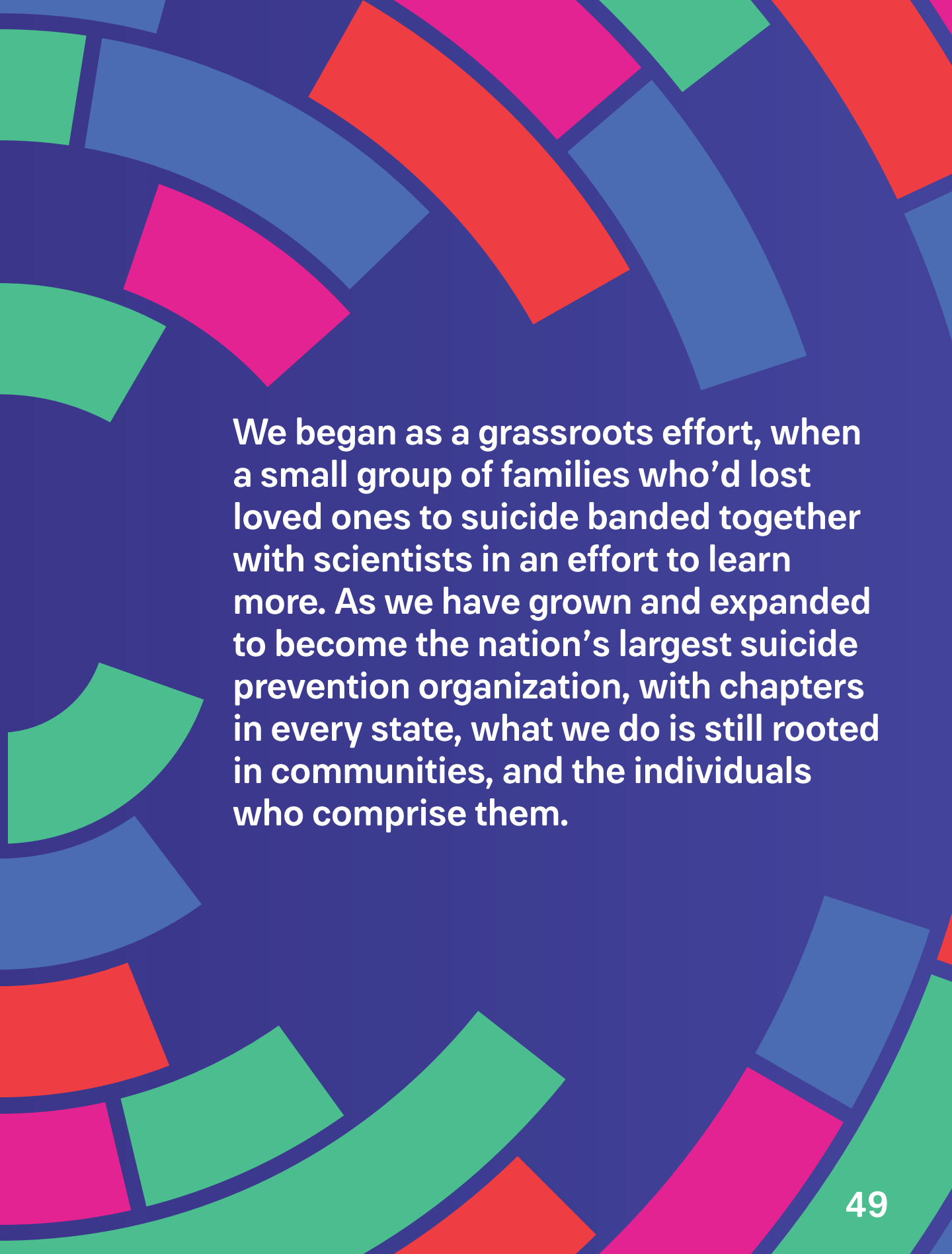


Nikki Scott lost her mother Viola to suicide in December 1999. Moving to Tennessee nine years later, she attended the Music Row Out of the Darkness Community Walk in Nashville, where she met those from her local chapter. Before long, she started the chapter's Healing Conversations program, then known as the Survivor Outreach Program. She now serves on the Tennessee Board of Directors and the national Loss & Healing Council, as well as co-facilitating a support group for suicide loss survivors. Her efforts in supporting other survivors of suicide loss helped lead the chapter to receive an AFSP award for their International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day work.

“Survivors of suicide loss are where my heart is. When I talk to survivors, it's like I can hear an unspoken message between all the words: one that only fellow survivors can understand. Every minute I spend working with AFSP is healing for me. The work I do with AFSP, helping others, is part of my mom's legacy. I do the work in her honor.”



2019 and Beyond



We began as a grassroots effort, when a small group of families who'd lost loved ones to suicide banded together with scientists in an effort to learn more. As we have grown and expanded to become the nation's largest suicide prevention organization, with chapters in every state, what we do is still rooted in communities, and the individuals who comprise them.

Innovation Grants

Through the funding of Innovation Grants, AFSP supports pioneering work that will increase our understanding of suicide with an array of promising new areas of research.

Our 2019 Innovation Grants each take a unique approach, across the following six categories:

- N Neurobiological** How do brain structure and neurochemical function contribute to suicide?
- P Psychological** What are the risk factors and warning signs for suicide?
- G Genetic** What genetic pathways are associated with suicide risk, and can we develop biological interventions and treatments?
- T Treatment** What treatments—like therapies and medications—are effective at reducing suicide?
- C Community** What universal prevention programs—like hotlines, gatekeeper training, and community-based programs—are the most effective?
- L Loss Survivors** What is the impact of suicide loss, and what helps the healing process?

Virtual Interaction Training in Emotional Self-Awareness for Working with Suicidal Patients

\$300,000

GRANT TYPE: Linked Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **T**

Training involves more than just knowledge; it also involves increasing self-awareness and empathy. Improved and increased training is needed for mental health clinicians who work with individuals at risk for suicide. Creating and testing the feasibility of the first multimodal virtual human interaction training program for clinicians working with suicidal patients provides a highly efficient way of improving clinicians' therapeutic skills, and potentially reducing patients' overall risk of suicide.



Igor Galynker M.D., Ph.D.

Icahn School of Medicine
at Mount Sinai



Adriana Foster, M.D.

Florida International University

MicroRNA Mediators of Early-Life Stress Vulnerability in Suicidal Behavior

\$125,000

GRANT TYPE: Distinguished Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **G**

Early life stress has been shown to contribute to suicide risk, but the mechanisms are unknown. Genetics play a role in brain function, and alterations in expression of specific microRNAs—the parts of genes that are responsive to environmental cues—may have an effect. Understanding the relationship between microRNAs, stress, and suicide has implications for developing novel treatments and suicide prevention strategies.



Yogesh Dwivedi, Ph.D.

University of Alabama at
Birmingham

The Gut-Brain Axis and Suicide Attempts: New Markers for Assessment and Prevention

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N**

The gut and the brain are connected, and gastrointestinal inflammation has been found to be related to depression and risk for suicidal behavior. Contributors such as life stress, aggression, and impulsiveness also play a role in suicide risk. Comparing people hospitalized for a suicide attempt with those psychiatrically hospitalized for other reasons, and following them over time, will allow for the study of how these factors change and associate over time. The availability of dietary interventions offers the possibility of innovative and effective treatment.



Faith Dickerson, Ph.D., MPH

Sheppard Pratt Health System

Post-Hospital Suicide Prevention Intervention for Patients with Schizophrenia-Spectrum Disorders

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **T**

The risk for suicide and suicide attempts among people with schizophrenia is increased, especially during the transition from inpatient to outpatient treatment. The Coping Long-Term with Active Suicide Program (CLASP) is an intervention that has helped people with suicide risk and other mental health conditions with the transition. With adaptation, CLASP may be helpful to people with schizophrenia.



Brandon Gaudiano, Ph.D.

Butler Hospital/Alpert Medical
School of Brown University

Validating the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) for Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Neurodevelopmental Disability

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ASD/NDD), including Intellectual Disability (ID) are at elevated risk for suicide. Currently, there are no suicide-risk screening instruments designed specifically for individuals with ASD/NDD. This study will investigate whether it is possible to use the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ), a validated suicide-risk screening tool originally designed for typically developing youth, for assessing suicide risk in youth with ASD/NDD.



Paul Lipkin, M.D.

Hugo W. Moser Research Institute
at Kennedy Krieger, Inc.

Improving Prevention of Youth Suicide Clusters: A Systems Approach

\$99,368

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P, C**

Better understanding of youth suicide and its impact within the school community is needed. In-depth study of social and cultural environments of schools with and without a recent cluster of suicides may provide insights into how to best facilitate students' well-being, develop suicide prevention strategies, and address loss if a suicide occurs.



Anna Mueller, Ph.D.

Indiana University

Pilot Study to Identify Modifiable Transdiagnostic Suicide Attempt Risk Factors

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N**

Cognitive control, which enables people to flexibly switch between thought and action and to regulate perseverative thoughts, is related to suicide risk. It is important to test cognitive function over time among people who have made suicide attempts and those who have not, to learn more about thought processes that may be related to risk. It is possible to increase flexibility in thinking which could reduce risk for suicide.



Carolyn Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D.

Stanford University

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Preliminary Efficacy of a Novel Personalized Mobile Intervention for Suicide

\$97,684

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **T**

Technology can be used to provide personalized suicide prevention interventions based on an individual's reported thoughts and mood. Coping strategies and resources can be delivered in times of increased distress. If the Mobile Application to Prevent Suicide (MAPS) is found to be an effective tool, it is easy to distribute to young adults with recent suicidal ideation during care transitions and beyond.



Heather Schatten, Ph.D.

Butler Hospital/Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Comparison of Brain and Blood Suicide Signatures: From Mechanisms to Biomarkers

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N, G**

We learn about the neurobiology and genetics of suicide by studying the brains of people who died by suicide. Gene expression and biomarkers in the brains of those with major depressive disorder (MDD) who died by suicide will be studied alongside biomarkers in blood samples of people with MDD who have engaged in suicidal behavior to identify suicide-specific biomarkers for assessing risk.



Adolfo Sequeira, Ph.D.

University of California Irvine

**Pain-Based Catastrophic Thinking and Suicidality:
A Cognitive-Interpersonal Examination**

\$99,990

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

Chronic pain is one of many potential contributors to suicidal ideation and behavior. It is not clear if risk is related to the pain itself, how the pain is perceived, or factors such as lack of social support and feeling like a burden. Measuring how people feel, think, and experience their pain and their social support over time may provide information about the relationship between chronic pain and suicide.



Golan Shahar, Ph.D.
Ben-Gurion University
of the Negev (Israel)

GABA-related Mechanisms of Suicidality Reduction

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N**

When people are at risk for suicidal behavior, they often have difficulty thinking flexibly, and experience their options as limited. The neurotransmitter, or brain chemical, GABA, may play a role. This cognitive inflexibility can be modeled in animals, providing an opportunity to test various medication treatments. Learning about the impact of specific medications on cognitive inflexibility may reveal options for treating a person thinking of suicide.



Etienne Sibille, Ph.D.
Centre for Addiction and
Mental Health (Canada)

**Risk of Suicide Mortality Among One Million
Handgun Purchasers: A Cohort Study**

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **C**

The rate of suicides in households that have a firearm is higher than non-gun owning households. This is not a matter of differences in mental health or other known factors. To better understand this, comparing one million gun owners with nineteen million who do not own guns and analyses with linked data from voting and death records may shed some light. Lessons for community interventions and prevention strategies will be identified.



David Studdert, Sc.D., MPH
Stanford University

Suicidality in Depressed Adolescents: A Study of Neural Changes with a Mind-Body Intervention

\$100,000

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N, T**

Training for Awareness, Resilience, and Action (TARA) is an intervention for reducing depression using a combination of mindfulness, yoga, and psychotherapy. The question of whether TARA can reduce suicidal ideation and change brain connections may be examined through the use of brain imaging techniques at the beginning and end of treatment.



Olga Tymofiyeva, Ph.D.

University of California,
San Francisco

Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence to Reduce the Risk of Death by Suicide

\$99,468

GRANT TYPE: Standard Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **T**

There is a 13-times higher rate of death by suicide in people with opioid use disorder (OUD) as compared to the general population. Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid dependence is a standard part of treatment. By examining medical records and pharmacy data linked with death records of a large group of patients treated with MAT in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), this study will examine whether MAT is associated with reduced suicide deaths among opioid users.



Bradley Watts, M.D., MPH

Dartmouth College

Elucidating the Polygenic Architecture Underlying Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors

\$68,761

GRANT TYPE: Young Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **G**

Genes play a role in suicide, though it is not the whole story and there are many contributors. Understanding how genes combine to explain suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and death by suicide, especially in combination with genes related to depression, risk-taking, cognitive function, and individual and family alcohol use, will help deepen our understanding of the paths to suicidal behavior and possible interventions.



Emma Johnson, Ph.D.

Washington University
School of Medicine

Evaluation of Suicide Risk, Opioid, and Pain Screening Protocols in West Virginia Primary Care

\$89,276

GRANT TYPE: Young Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

Most people visit their primary care physician at least once a year. This provides an opportunity to screen for suicide risk. The first step is to determine the best screening tool for suicidal ideation and behavior. The next step is to determine the added value of assessing for pain, opioid misuse, and other factors. Identifying individuals at risk is a first step in preventing suicide.



Mary LeCloux, Ph.D.

MENTOR: John Campo, MD
West Virginia University

Characterizing Suicides Among Opioid-Related Deaths

\$90,000

GRANT TYPE: Young Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

The rapidly increasing number of opioid-overdose deaths have largely been treated as accidents. However, a significant proportion of these deaths are likely suicides. By conducting psychological autopsies with family and friends of those who have died by suicide, it may be possible to measure the magnitude of misclassification and characterize factors associated with suicide and accidental deaths. This has important consequences for targeting prevention efforts.



Paul Nestadt, M.D.

MENTOR: Holly Wilcox, Ph.D.
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School
of Public Health

Neural Markers of NSSI and Suicide Risk: Acute Physical Pain Modulation of Neural Processing of Social Rejection

\$80,000

GRANT TYPE: Young Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **N, P**

Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) in adolescents often precedes a shift to suicidal ideation and suicide attempt. Understanding this process is critical for interfering with that transition. Theory suggests that NSSI and the transition to suicidal behavior is related to one's experience of physical pain and social rejection. Brain imaging during tasks that evoke these experiences and follow-up assessments can reveal how brain function underlies NSSI and subsequent suicidal behavior.



Caroline Oppenheimer, Ph.D.

MENTOR: David Brent, M.D.
University of Pittsburgh

Examining the Association Between Social Cognitive Deficits and Suicidal Ideation in Eating Disorders

\$90,000

GRANT TYPE: Young Investigator Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

Social cognition, the way people process social information, may underlie the risk for suicide among people with eating disorders. Assessing women with eating disorders in terms of how they process facial communication and attribute others' intention, as well as other factors associated with suicide and measuring suicidal ideation and behavior over the next year, may improve our understanding and capacity to help prevent suicidal behavior in this group with increased risk.



Emily Pisetsky, Ph.D.

MENTOR: Scott Crow, M.D.
University of Minnesota

Characterization of Rare Genetic Variants Involved in Risk of Death by Suicide

\$112,000

GRANT TYPE: Postdoctoral Fellowship

RESEARCH AREA: **G**

The Utah Suicide Research Study, with its more than 4,300 individuals who died by suicide and a matched comparison group, provides a unique opportunity to identify rare genes that contribute to suicide and may not be identified in smaller studies. Knowledge about the contribution of genes to suicide can inform the development of medications that may aid in suicide prevention.



Emily DiBlasi, Ph.D.

MENTOR: Hilary Coon, Ph.D.
University of Utah

Individual and Contextual Level Correlates of Suicide in Rural Areas of the United States

\$112,000

GRANT TYPE: Postdoctoral Fellowship

RESEARCH AREA: **P**

Potential risk factors for suicide among rural residents include social isolation and loneliness, access to lethal means, and lack of mental health care. Individual and community factors associated with suicide risk within rural areas can be identified by combining and analyzing large data sets, such as the American Community Survey, Area Health Resource File, Community Business Patterns, and mortality files. With the high rate of suicide in rural areas, we need more research.



Danielle Steelesmith Ph.D., M.S.W.

MENTOR: Cynthia Fontanella, Ph.D.
Ohio State University

Identifying Molecular, Cellular, and Synaptic Changes Associated with Suicide

\$30,000

GRANT TYPE: Pilot Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **G**

By studying the brains of people who died by suicide and comparing them with those who died from other causes, we can examine changes in genes and differences in the brain cells, called neurons, and the spaces between neurons, the synapses, where information is exchanged. Neurons can be generated from skin cells and compared to brain neurons. Learning about the difference between skin and brain neurons presents an opportunity for learning about the biology of suicide.



Sujan Chandra Das, Ph.D.
University of California, Irvine

Using Genomic and Clinical Data to Distinguish Child Psychiatry Outpatients at High Risk for Suicide

\$29,989

GRANT TYPE: Pilot Research Grant

RESEARCH AREA: **P, G**

We need to learn more about youth suicide. Closely examining 1,400 youths receiving treatment at a psychiatric clinic with regard to diagnosis, depression, aggression, genetic samples, and other factors provides a unique opportunity. Given that youth with attention deficit disorder and major depression have higher rates of suicide, taking a multifactorial approach will increase our capacity to develop targeted interventions to prevent this second leading cause of death in youth.



Alysa Doyle, Ph.D.
Massachusetts General Hospital/
Harvard Medical School

Three Year Strategic Plan

Planning for the Future

Together, we know we can save lives. Our new Three Year AFSP Strategic Plan has been created to ensure the effectiveness and reach in our efforts through 2022, helping us to measure the impact of all we do, through our programs, chapters, volunteers and partners.

With your help, over the next three years we will:

- 🐦 accelerate progress in suicide research to save more lives by driving discovery and innovation
- 🐦 engage stakeholders and the public in awareness, advocacy, and bold actions to save lives
- 🐦 reach more people at risk for suicide and survivors of suicide loss with effective programs
- 🐦 optimize our capacity to better advance our mission

Everything we do is designed to create a world in which we save as many people as possible, and ensure we all have the support we need. We are proud to enact this exciting and ambitious plan.



The 31st Annual Lifesavers Gala

Held last May at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Appel Room, the 31st Annual Lifesavers Gala was a truly inspiring night. Hosted by musician Alex Boyé, the event honored those making an impact through their dedication and passion to the cause.

This year's Gala, chaired by **Husseini Manji, M.D.** Global Therapeutic Head, Neuroscience, Janssen Research & Development, LLC, raised over **\$600,000** for the fight against suicide.

Honorees included decorated CNN reporter **Anderson Cooper**, Senior National Correspondent and NBC Nightly News Anchor **Kate Snow**, San Francisco 49ers football star **Solomon Thomas and the Thomas family**, and researchers **Gregory Simon, M.D., MPH**, and **John Mann, M.D.**

Research Award

Gregory Simon, M.D., MPH, investigator at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, psychiatrist in Kaiser Permanente's Behavioral Health Service, research professor at the University of Washington

Dr. Simon's research is focused on improving access and quality of mental health care, with a particular concentration towards mood disorders. He currently leads the Mental Health Research Network.





Research Lifetime Achievement Award

John Mann, M.D., Paul Janssen Professor of Translational Neuroscience in psychiatry and radiology at Columbia University, and Director of Molecular Imaging and Neuropathology Division (M.I.N.D.) at New York State Psychiatric Institute

Dr. Mann's research utilizes brain imaging, neurochemistry and molecular genetics to further learn about depression, suicide and their causes.

Survivor of Loss Award

In 2018, **the Thomas Family** – San Francisco 49ers football star Solomon Thomas and his parents, Chris and Martha – lost beloved sister and daughter, Ella, to suicide. They've since used their own platform and that of the NFL to spread the message that suicide is preventable and that help is always available, including an interview with ESPN which aired during "Monday Night Football." The Thomas family has participated in both the 2018 Overnight Walk in Dallas, and the 2019 Overnight Walk in San Francisco.





Public Awareness Award

Kate Snow, Senior National Correspondent and Anchor, NBC Nightly News, Sunday

Kate Snow is a weekday anchor for MSNBC Live and an Emmy-winning National Correspondent for NBC News, as well as the anchor of NBC Nightly News, Sunday editions. Snow's dedication to coverage of mental health and suicide has been apparent throughout her journalistic career. After the deaths of Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain last June, Snow spoke intimately about the impact her father-in-law's death by suicide had on her family, and discussed the importance of safe reporting on this sensitive topic.



Public Awareness Award

Anderson Cooper, Journalist and Anchor, CNN

Anderson Cooper is the anchor of CNN's "Anderson Cooper 360°," a regular correspondent for CBS's "60 Minutes," and the recipient of 17 Emmy Awards. Cooper lost his brother Carter to suicide in 1988. He has continuously elevated the conversation around suicide and prevention, particularly following the deaths of his friend, Anthony Bourdain, and Kate Spade. In June of last year, Cooper hosted a town hall-style report on CNN, *Finding Hope: Battling America's Suicide Crisis*, which featured AFSP's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Christine Moutier, and won an Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding News Discussion & Analysis. AFSP worked behind the scenes to provide guidance, and helped fill the audience with some of our local volunteers.

Honoring Our Chapters



AFSP South Carolina, Overall Chapter of the Year

In January, volunteers and staff from across the country gathered in Dallas for the **14th Annual Chapter Leadership Conference**. Focusing on the theme “Community Connections to Save Lives,” the event was an inspiring look ahead, as well as an opportunity to applaud the amazing work of our chapters nationwide.

The AFSP South Carolina Chapter was awarded **Overall Chapter of the Year** at the annual Chapter Awards Banquet. The chapter held seven Out of the Darkness Community Walks, and six Campus Walks, overseeing a significant increase in both participation and fundraising efforts for

both events. They helped to present 60 education and prevention programs, including more than 20 Talk Saves Lives, More Than Sad, and It’s Real presentations across the state. They have also been a driving force in the relaunch of the State Suicide Prevention Coalition and became the first AFSP chapter to form a partnership with a state agency, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, through the South Carolina Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative.

Financials

This past year has been one of remarkable growth, which has made it possible to increase the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's investment across all areas of its work. AFSP also continues to manage its funds wisely, which has earned AFSP Charity Navigator's highest rating of 4-stars.

Here are some highlights from AFSP's most recent audit:

Total net revenue grew by more than \$4.6 million in fiscal year 2019, from \$37.06 million to \$41.7 million, a 12.5% increase.

Expenses for research, advocacy, prevention and education, and support to people affected by suicide increased from \$21.5 million in fiscal year 2018 to \$25 million in fiscal year 2019, which represents a 16.3% increase in the investment in AFSP's mission.

In spite of its rapid growth, AFSP's fundraising and administration cost stayed approximately constant at 17.7% of total expense, allowing 82.3% of our expense to support research and programs.

For the complete audited financial statement, including auditor's notes, please visit AFSP's website at afsp.org/financials.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Gretchen Haas".

Gretchen Haas, Ph.D.

AFSP Treasurer, Board of Directors

Statement of Financial Position (Year Ended June 30, 2019)

Assets	
Current assets	
Cash	\$13,434,304
Investments	18,286,268
Unconditional promises to give and other receivables	868,661
Prepaid walk material	3,844,383
Other prepaid expenses	1,536,660
Total current assets	37,970,276
Equipment, at cost	
Furniture, fixtures and computer equipment	3,229,975
Less accumulated depreciation	563,923
Equipment, at cost less depreciation	2,666,052
Other assets	
Restricted investments	1,550,848
Investments - board-designated	2,403,466
Educational films, net	85,583
Security deposits	34,768
Total other assets	4,074,665
Total assets	\$44,710,993
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Current liabilities	
Grants payable	\$4,050,304
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	2,360,377
Deferred event revenue	2,072,920
Total current liabilities	8,483,601
Noncurrent liabilities and deferred credits:	
Grants payable	2,137,521
Deferred rent credit	2,257,268
Total liabilities	12,878,390
Net assets without donor restrictions:	
General operating	27,095,614
Board-designated	2,403,466
	29,499,080
Net assets with donor restrictions	2,333,523
Total net assets	31,832,603
Total liabilities and net assets	\$44,710,993

Statement of Activities (Year Ended June 30, 2019)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues, gains and other support			
Functions			
Revenues	\$33,107,225	–	\$33,107,225
Direct expenses	(6,632,083)	–	(6,632,083)
Net function income	26,475,142	–	26,475,142
Donations	13,118,890	8,537	13,127,427
Other revenues, net	516,033	27,445	543,478
Investment income	790,671	75,233	865,904
Net assets released from restrictions	179,993	(179,993)	–
Total revenues, gains and other support	41,080,729	(68,778)	41,011,951
Expenses			
Program services	25,083,665	–	25,083,665
Management and general	1,537,575	–	1,537,575
Fundraising	3,864,393	–	3,864,393
Total expenses	30,485,633	–	30,485,633
Change in net assets	10,595,096	(68,778)	10,526,318
Net assets			
Beginning	18,903,984	2,402,301	21,306,285
Ending	\$29,499,080	\$2,333,523	\$31,832,603

Statement of Functional Expenses (Year Ended June 30, 2019)

	Program Services					Supporting Services		Total Expenses
	Research	Prevention and Education	Loss and Bereavement Programs	Advocacy Programs	Total Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	
Grants	\$5,204,072	–	–	–	\$5,204,072	–	–	\$5,204,072
Salaries and Wages	567,341	3,191,948	1,908,995	1,007,754	6,676,038	841,479	1,800,755	9,318,272
Employee Health & Retirement Benefits	111,926	629,711	376,609	198,811	1,317,057	166,008	355,255	1,838,320
Research, Educational and Survivor Conferences and Programs	132,706	2,173,516	777,511	325,585	3,409,318	–	153,988	3,563,306
Out of Darkness Programs	–	921,540	1,105,847	–	2,027,387	–	811,955	2,839,342
Office	38,601	863,296	313,854	175,015	1,390,766	25,194	126,398	1,542,358
Occupancy	41,205	231,824	138,646	73,191	484,866	61,115	130,785	676,766
Telecommunications and Internet	4,716	50,091	36,080	17,447	108,334	3,407	17,086	128,827
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	19,079	152,483	96,636	84,090	352,288	25,066	66,716	444,070
Travel	61,480	620,544	339,409	421,100	1,442,533	112,769	90,132	1,645,434
Consultants	182,925	1,644,121	611,925	232,035	2,671,006	115,352	311,323	3,097,681
Professional Fees	–	–	–	–	–	136,561	–	136,561
Depreciation	–	–	–	–	–	50,624	–	50,624
Subtotal	6,364,051	10,479,074	5,705,512	2,535,028	25,083,665	1,537,575	3,864,393	30,485,633
Direct Expenses of Functions	–	–	–	–	–	–	6,632,083	6,632,083
Cost of Goods Sold - Public Store (netted in other revenues)	–	–	–	–	–	–	79,848	79,848
Total	\$6,364,051	\$10,479,074	\$5,705,512	\$2,535,028	\$25,083,665	\$1,537,575	\$10,576,324	\$37,197,564

Statement of Cash Flows (Year Ended June 30, 2019)

Cash flows from operating activities

Change in net assets	\$10,526,318
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities	
Depreciation	50,624
Amortization of educational film costs	26,000
Realized gains on investments	(2,225,188)
Unrealized (gains) losses on investments	1,852,669
Deferred rent	(35,640)
Changes in assets and liabilities	
Unconditional promises to give and other receivables	1,285,028
Prepaid walk materials and other expenses	(2,813,182)
Grants payable	493,608
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	37,023
Deferred event revenue	141,187
Net cash provided by operating activities	9,338,447

Cash flows from investing activities

Purchase of property and equipment	(620,253)
Acquisition of investments	(24,672,436)
Proceeds from sale of investments	24,063,965
Return of security deposits	45,833
Educational films	—
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,182,891)
Net increase in cash	8,155,556

Cash

Beginning	5,278,748
Ending	\$13,434,304

Non-cash investment transaction

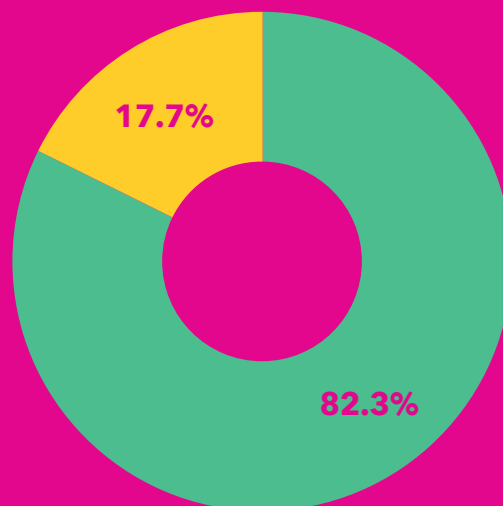
Purchase of property and equipment paid by landlord	\$1,875,574
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Program Services and Administrative Costs

We invest our resources wisely to put more of every dollar toward research, education, advocacy, and support for those affected by suicide. This past year we kept administrative and fundraising costs to 17.7%, well below the industry standard of 25%.

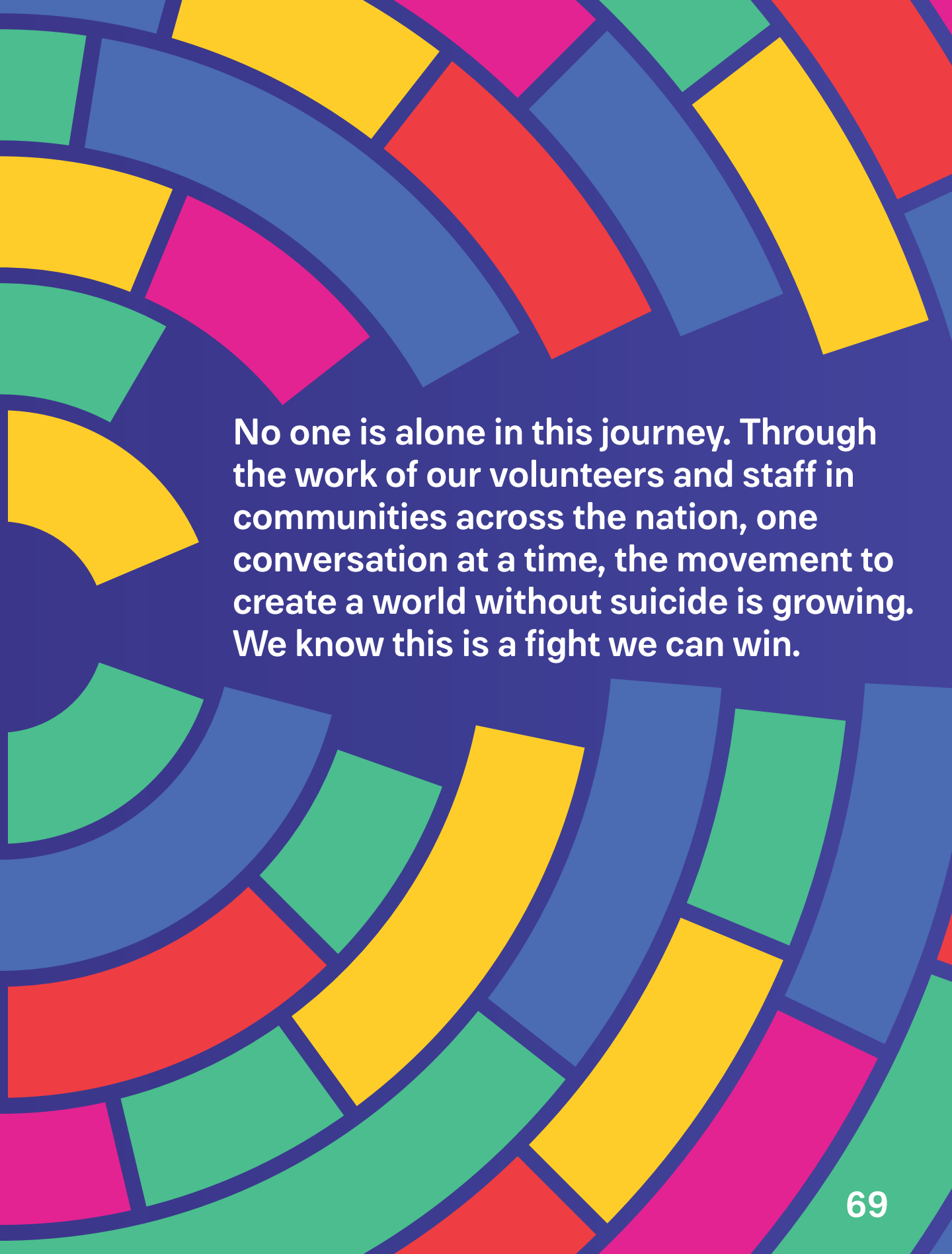
Expenses

Program Services	\$25,083,665
Administrative Costs	\$5,401,968





Our Community



No one is alone in this journey. Through the work of our volunteers and staff in communities across the nation, one conversation at a time, the movement to create a world without suicide is growing. We know this is a fight we can win.

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AFSP North Stars

2019 Overnight North Stars

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Boston

Nancy Cook
Chris Curley
Samantha Fahy
Tammy Fannon
Susan Flint
RoseMary Fuss
Larry Kelly
Dara Kelly
Mo Krausman
Amy Micheletti
Tanya Prunier
Marcia Resnick
Chris Tackett
Jackie Zegowitz

San Francisco

Kristin Eberwein
Carol Henton
Sally Longyear
Kimberley Miller
Renata Ravina
Ella's Sunflowers
Catharyn Turner, II
Brett Waters

2018 Community & Campus Walk North Stars

Alabama Walk
Chasing Awareness

Annapolis Walk
Ann Brennan
Ajia Holt

Atlanta Walk
Tricia Mountain

Berkshire County Walk
Molly Souede

Bismarck/Mandan Walk
John Jessen

Boston Area Walk
Gay Crowley
Brandon Tonsberg

Brandywine Walk
Christina Kelly

Burlington County Walk
Jeanne Andersen

Capital Region Walk for R.I.T.A.
Dan Egan

Charlotte Walk
Christy Knight

Chicagoland Walk
Ryan Balogh
Amy Kartheiser
Cara Levinson
Kim Scanlon

Cincinnati Walk
Virginia Lee Williams

Eugene, OR Walk
Carson Lydon

Fairfax Walk
Gail Romansky
Dana You

**Fairfield University
Campus Walk**
Margot Deely

Greater Lehigh Valley Walk
Stephanie Tutty

**Greater Los Angeles Walk,
Santa Monica**
Aimee Rosenbaum

Howard County Walk
LaShanda Whaley

Lansing / Capital Area Walk
Jody Francis

LaSalle County Walk
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Little Rock Walk
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San Francisco Walk
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Santa Rosa Walk
Frances Templin

St. Louis Walk
5th Annual Gentleman Jake
Memorial Cornhole Tournament

**Univ. of Maryland
Campus Walk**
Owen Sherman

Virginia Beach Walk
Robert Ike

Washington D.C. Walk
Shinedown

Yellowstone Valley Walk
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#BoozyChefGives
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2019 Dan Cooney Classic
Nan Cooney

5K for BK
Michele Taylor

Aimee's Neiman Marcus Event-Survivor Outreach Program
Aimee Adamo

Annual Britton Finkenbinder Memorial Race
Clair Finkenbinder

Brandon Cook Memorial
Christina Ross

The Chris Behounek Memorial Golf Tournament
Matthew Behounek

Dalton Viner 2nd Annual Memorial Golf Tournament
Terry Viner

Dan Cooney Classic
Nan Cooney

Delbarton Raising Hope Walk
Angela Brown

Fight for Life in Memory of Kacy Muzzey Pavlik
Cameron Beecy and Ava Pavlik

Flying Pig Marathon for Brittany Belland
Natalia (Belland) Talbot

Good Life 2018
Natalie Bonvie

Hike for Hope: Coming Together for Suicide Prevention
Emma Chun, Isabel Gurney, and Lauren Sonneborn

Jason's ULTRA for Suicide Awareness
Jason Paulin

Mitchell Swayze Page Memorial Tennis Tournament
Bonnie Neiman

More than Music
Katie Kaczmarz

The Open Ear
Nicolas Rodin

Phi Sigma Sigma's Suicide Prevention Week
Phi Sigma Sigma Iota Mu

Philadelphia Half Marathon and 8K in Memory of Alex Umble
Molly Umble

RunLaraRun Walk for Suicide Prevention
Robert Scarantino

The Saving Grace Project
Saving Grace Project

Seth Swims for Suicide Prevention Awareness
Seth Garrett

Sound of Hope 5K for Suicide Prevention
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SSA Lacrosse Face-Off Against Suicide Event #FaceOffAgainstSuicide
Ronan O'Connor

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WORTHY
Shay Williamson

Zach's Leadville 100 MTB Race for Suicide Prevention
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