

# Samaritans Southcoast Hug-A-Thon kicks off on September 1

Samaritans Southcoast Hug-A-Thon kicks off on September 1 to raise awareness about suicide prevention and focus on ending the stigma around mental illness. It's the second annual fundraiser supporting Samaritans Southcoast's emotional support and suicide prevention hotline.

"September is National Suicide Prevention Month," said the organization's Executive Director, Darcy Lee. "Hugs are a powerful reminder that someone cares."

Powered by social media, the Southcoast Hug-A-Thon will span the entire month of September.

"Our hugs are just \$5, so everyone can participate," said Lee. "Sharing hugs with the people we love, even virtually, can boost someone's mood, alleviate stress, and reduce fear. We couldn't think of a better way to promote prevention, increase awareness, and share what everyone needs right now. Hugs!"

Samaritans Southcoast is the region's suicide prevention agency serving 61 cities and towns in Bristol and Norfolk Counties. Services include an emotional support telephone hotline, Kare Calls for senior citizens, and Safe Place peer-to-peer support group for suicide loss survivors.

"Locally and nationally, suicide rates continue to rise. Last year, we answered more than 14,000 calls on the hotline," she said. "Our generous donors make it possible for our services to remain free to anyone of any age in need of a caring, compassionate listener."

This year's goal is to raise \$20,000 through the Hug-A-Thon.

"Every gift, no matter what the size, helps us reach our goal," said Lee.

Sponsors include First Congregational Church Fall River,

Merrow, Partners Insurance Group, the TJA Fund, First Citizens Physicians Corporation, BayCoast Bank, Southcoast Health Cares, First Citizens Federal Credit Union, Radius Financial Group, Inc., and Tierce Design.

“Supporting Samaritans through the Hug-A-Thon is fun and easy,” continued Lee. “Share hugs with your friends, and they’ll share hugs with their friends, and so on.”

For more information about participating in the Samaritans Southcoast Hug-A-Thon, please visit <https://fundly.com/samaritans-southcoast-hug-a-thon-2>, Samaritans Southcoast’s Facebook page @samaritanslisten, or Samaritans Southcoast’s website at [www.samaritanssoco.org](http://www.samaritanssoco.org).