

180 Turning Lives Around



A proposal prepared especially for:

Into The Light Foundation
Louis J. Mazzini, Board of Trustees



March 16, 2022

Into The Light Foundation
Board of Trustees
ATTN: Louis J. Mazzini
PO Box 222
Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716

Dear Mr. Mazzini,

We are so pleased to share with you information about 180's 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline. Thank you so much for considering 2NDFLOOR a recipient of your Foundation's generous philanthropy. Our sincere condolences once again on the loss of your brother to suicide. With a loss so tremendous, it is understandable to desire to go forth in honor of your brother's legacy, and to engage & partner with organizations who share your deep convictions.

Enclosed, please find a 2NDFLOOR Program Impact Report which discusses our work with teens and topics which are imperative to address within this age especially—topics including: mental health, suicide, dating abuse, sex & sexuality, LGBTQ, substance abuse, health and so much more.

We are confident that you will find our work worthy of your support. We welcome the chance to answer any questions you may have and appreciate the opportunity to share with you the wonderful work of our 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline.

Sincerely,

Liz Graham, Associate Director
Lynn Lucarelli, Development Director

OUR SERVICES

2NDFLOOR reaches thousands of New Jersey teens and young adults each year. We began as a Monmouth County helpline twenty years ago, and we have grown to become a New Jersey, state-wide service, with presence in 100% of every public middle and high school in the state—1,348 schools to be exact.

With two decades of outreach, engagement and intervention throughout New Jersey, 2NDFLOOR has established a reputation among youth for our comfortable, welcoming and informative safe space for teens to share their deepest concerns in a non-judgemental and supportive way. Teens reach us by phone, text and web-chat message boards, and each communication is met with empathy, compassion and understanding. We handle each individual who reaches us with the utmost attention and care ensuring every caller feels safe, dignified and empowered to discover solutions to the challenges they face. We provide support so that each individual understands that there always solutions and that no problem is insurmountable. We are confidential and anonymous and can be reached 24/7/365 days a year.

THE NEED

The mental health of our youth is of great concern. Suicide ranks as the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and its the 2nd leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds. The hopeful news is that teens reach out to 2NDFLOOR for help. In fact, we experienced acute increases in call volume during the early weeks of the pandemic with text messaging jumping by 50%. Inundated with calls and significant wait times, we were able to meet this need and added counselors to our busiest shifts while successfully reducing wait time for callers.

With the increased stressors that the pandemic, and its continuing effects, have placed upon our youth, compounded with pre-pandemic stressors of epic proportion (suicide, drug use and drug overdose, dating abuse and domestic violence) its no surprise that the U.S. Surgeon General—this past December 2021, issued an advisory to highlight the urgent need to address the nation's youth mental health crisis. The Advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health outlines the pandemic's unprecedented impacts on the mental health of America's youth and families, as well as the mental health challenges that existed long before the pandemic. The plan calls for a swift and coordinated response to this crisis as the nation continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and provides recommendations that individuals, families, community organizations, technology companies, governments, and others can take to improve the mental health of children, adolescents and young adults. Read more here: [U.S Surgeon General Advisory](#).

In the first few weeks of the quarantine, youth across New Jersey reached out to us in droves, with text messaging jumping by 50%. Our staff was inundated, and initially, wait times on calls increased, but we rose to the challenge, adding counselors to our busiest shifts, and successfully reducing the time callers had to wait for assistance.

OUR REACH

At 2NDFLOOR, we have been adjusting our services to respond to these unprecedented times. We increased supportive counseling and have added a number of Master-level clinicians to our team and have dedicated, expert Licensed Counselors in place. We currently have **18** people trained to answer calls and texts.

This past year (Fiscal Year 2021) 2NDFLOOR:

- Responded to 5,547 inbound phone calls
- Exchanged 88,483 text messages
- Communicated on 530 web-based, message board posts
- Received 40,170 unique visits to the 2NDFLOOR website
- In our home operating area of Monmouth County, call volume comprised 20% of the total calls received

Additionally and of note, in the last two years:

- Calls from teens related to self harm totaled 183
- 89 teens with suicidal intentions reached out for help
- 96 helpline calls were elevated to emergency service intervention

VOICES OF 2NDFLOOR

- Having lost two family members to COVID, along with any type of support system, a young girl was grateful for our counselor's assistance in finding a mental health professional in her area who works at reduced costs.
- A transgender teen in crisis who had suffered verbal, physical, and sexual abuse from his parents contact 2NDFLOOR and our counselor was able to reach child protective services to have someone sent to the caller's location within 24 hours.
- With trouble managing the ongoing anxiety and panic attacks that the pandemic brought on, a young adolescent contacted us in distress. Our counselor reviewed coping mechanisms with the caller until they had a plan in place with specific techniques they felt comfortable implementing.
- A young adult who, facing the fear of coming out among a family where homosexuality is forbidden, was relieved and thankful for a safe space where he could process this challenge and the options for managing it.
- Our counselor was able to assist a pre-teen whose mother has a history of abusing her and locking her in her room. The counselor assisted the caller in reaching Child Protective Services and together they filed a report that included information about her mother's deceptive behavior.
- A suicidal teen who wanted to end her life (and who had five previous attempts) had just been released from a treatment program and contacted 2NDFLOOR. It was clear the caller needed intervention that night, and after providing her location, the counselor contacted the local police to respond to her.
- A young teen who was abused by her parents and told by her mother to kill herself. She and the counselor talked and agreed child protection services should come and assess the situation.
- A young teen who was being bullied in school and was coping through self-harm contacted 2NDFLOOR and our counselor discussed ways to address the bullying and healthier coping strategies.

OUR ACCREDITATION & PARTNERSHIPS

2NDFLOOR is a program of 180 Turning Lives Around, a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization receiving financial support through government & private foundation grants, individuals, organizations and corporations. Gifts to 180 can be restricted for use to our 2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline and donations are tax-deductible to the full extent possible under IRS regulations.

2NDFLOOR is certified by the American Association of Suicidology and our Program Coordinator is a licensed clinician and member of the Monmouth County Suicide Prevention Task Force and the Monmouth County Traumatic Loss Coalition. Other lead clinicians are members of the New Jersey Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council. We work in partnership with the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide sharing resources, collaborating on best practices and engaging together for the betterment of our community.



A M E R I C A N
ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

