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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: March 3, 2022**

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**SARATOGA COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION PARTNERS WITH THE CHURCH AT NEWTOWN ROAD  
TO OFFER SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING TO THE COMMUNITY**

***Soul Shop for Youth Workers Training the First to be Held in Upstate New York***

SARATOGA COUNTY -- The Saratoga County Suicide Prevention Coalition is partnering with The Church at Newtown Road to offer suicide prevention training to the community. Two unique trainings will be offered in March. They are open to the public and registration is required for each.

The Soul Shop for Youth Workers training focuses on faith-based and youth-specific suicide prevention techniques and is the first of such training to be held in upstate New York. The Community Awareness Skills Training (CAST) is a community conversation to address how we think and talk about suicide.

Michael S. Prezioso, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Saratoga County Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services said, "Sadly, suicide rates are climbing in New York State. While many people can and do overcome the crisis through connections with others and intervention strategies, everyone can play a role in preventing suicide by learning the warning signs and reaching out to someone they're concerned about. These impactful and much needed trainings will provide attendees with the knowledge and tools to help save a life."

Amy Hughes, Outreach Coordinator at The Church at Newtown Road said, "Suicide prevention is more than just stopping someone from acting on their thoughts. It is recognizing the warning signs, understanding how to talk about suicide and depression, and knowing the resources available for suicide prevention. These trainings offer a holistic approach to learning how to help someone who may have suicidal desperation and are beneficial for everyone in our community."

**Community Awareness Skills Training (CAST) Addressing Suicidal Desperation: Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 7PM at The Church at Newtown Road, 142 Lower Newtown Rd, Waterford, NY**

CAST addresses suicide as a major community health problem and presents steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of suicide. It is designed for the entire community including parents, teachers, first responders, medical professionals, support groups, veteran organizations, domestic abuse organizations, senior centers, and more. All are welcome to attend this meaningful discussion about suicide and practice interactions with persons at risk.

To register, please visit [www.newtownroad.org/CAST](http://www.newtownroad.org/CAST)

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**Soul Shop: Friday, March 25, 2022, 9AM-3PM at The Church at Newtown Road, 142 Lower Newtown Rd, Waterford, NY**

Soul Shop™ for Youth Workers is a one-day, faith-based training designed specifically to equip persons to minister to youth who are impacted by suicidal desperation. Special attention is focused on youth-specific issues of impulsivity, contagion, and confidentiality. The training lays a Scriptural foundation for ministering to suicidal desperation among youth and includes how to recognize warning signs, how to engage in life-saving conversations, and how to keep youth safe. In addition, Soul Shop™ for Youth Workers provides practical ways to integrate this ministry into lesson plans, group activities, and one on one conversations. This training is beneficial to anyone who works with youth in their community and is also important for anyone who is the parent or caregiver of a child age 10 to 18.

The Soul Shop training costs \$10 per person and lunch will be provided. To register, please visit [www.newtownroad.org/soul](http://www.newtownroad.org/soul)

Suicide Statistics:

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10 to 24 in New York State and across the US. (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)
- Suicide is the 4th leading cause of death for ages 35 to 54 in New York State. (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)
- In Saratoga County there were 23 suicides in 2021; 15 male and 8 female ages 23 to 78. (Saratoga County Coroner's Office)
- In the US, teenage emergency room visits for suicide attempts increased significantly during the pandemic, with a 50% rise in cases in females and almost 4% increase in males. (Baylor College of Medicine)
- 54% of Americans have been affected by suicide in some way. (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention)

These trainings are made possible through partnerships with the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Saratoga County, The Church at Newtown Road, The New York State Office of Mental Health, the Suicide Prevention Center of New York State, The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and National Alliance on Mental Health New York State. The Soul Shop training is also supported by funds donated by Metabolic Meltdown, which held a suicide prevention and awareness fundraiser to benefit the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Saratoga County.

The Suicide Prevention Coalition of Saratoga County supports prevention through education, training and awareness events. It is co-facilitated by Saratoga County Public Health Services and Saratoga County Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Coalition members are a broad range of local stakeholders from the mental health and healthcare sector.

The Church at Newtown Road is a non-denominational church in Halfmoon, NY that's been serving the Capital Region for over 40 years. For more information visit [www.newtownroad.org](http://www.newtownroad.org).

For more information about these trainings, please visit <http://www.newtownroad.org/suicide> or email Amy at [amy@newtownroad.org](mailto:amy@newtownroad.org).

For more information about the Saratoga County Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, please visit [www.saratogacountyny.gov](http://www.saratogacountyny.gov) or call 518-584-9030.

