

The answer is
HOPE

November 17, 2020

Dear Community Member,

Meeting the need. That's always been our mission at Lines for Life. We get together every couple of weeks to assess and evaluate how we are meeting the need: fulfilling our mission of preventing substance abuse and suicide and promoting mental wellness. We look at data, check in on morale, talk about support and new initiatives. All about *meeting the need*.

But we never predicted the need coming our way in 2020.

In March 2020, like everybody else, our world changed. And "meeting the need" changed like never before – because the scope of the need exploded, the nature of the need became more complex, and the gravity of the need become more urgent.

Meeting the need took on a whole new meaning as Oregonians' worlds were turned upside down. The struggle with isolation and loneliness for older Oregonians became harder. Teens lost their primary social connections as schools went to Zoom. Figuring out how to educate our kids – while doing our jobs, the laundry, making meals – was just too much. For many Oregonians, job losses meant belt-tightening, unpaid bills and mortgages – anxiety, stress, and depression.

This year, meeting the need became more important than ever before.

Within days, with lots of help from lots of partners, we had 90 percent of our crisis line and prevention teams working from home. Everyone here has done their part and then some. Our prevention team put their projects on hold and answered calls on the crisis lines. Our IT department delivered phones and computers to staff working from home.

The state of Oregon immediately deemed Lines for Life an essential service and our partners at Oregon Health Authority, health systems, local governments and the Veterans Administration asked us to take on more front-line work. And thanks to your help as our supporters, and our excellent staff, we took on new contracts and partnerships to meet the growing need.

SUICIDE LIFELINE

800.273.8255

ALCOHOL & DRUG HELPLINE

800.923.4357

MILITARY HELPLINE

888.457.4838

YOUTHLINE

877.968.8491

SENIOR LONELINESS LINE

503.200.1633

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

800.273.8255

SAFE + STRONG HELPLINE

800.923.4357

Since the onset of COVID-19, we have connected with tens of thousands of Oregonians on our 24/7 crisis lines to help them cope with isolation, fear, anxiety and loneliness – on top of the struggles already faced daily by our callers.

Our YouthLine keeps breaking their record for contacts on a single night – first topping 75 in May, then 90 in July and in September, for multiple nights, our teen volunteers connected with over 200 youth in crisis. They are meeting the need – and on pace to connect with over 25,000 young people this year.

Meeting the need has never been just about reaching more people for us – meeting the need is about reaching *all people*. Over the last 15 months, we've been building an ambitious effort to better engage and empower communities of color – so that Lines for Life and the crisis and mental wellness work we do become woven into these communities as a support and resource. It means changing how we do pretty much everything – so that racial justice and community engagement are a part of how we think about all of our work. The racial justice movement ignited by the killing of George Floyd has accelerated this work and deepened its importance.

In April, we expanded our Senior Loneliness line to cover the entire state in order to address the new added stressors Seniors are experiencing – thanks to support from the State of Oregon.

In September, we launched a new emotional support line to help folks who are overwhelmed decompress and reduce stress, before reaching crisis levels. And we added a Behavioral Health Support Line that connects people to treatment professionals to navigate enduring challenges.

Just as we thought this crisis might be leveling out, fires broke out on the West Coast – devastating communities across Oregon. Meeting the need changed again, as we added expertise to support families affected by the fires and expanded the Safe + Strong Helpline to support those communities.

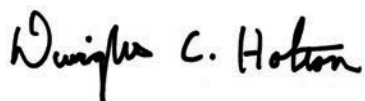
The challenges we face with COVID-19 aren't over yet. As the virus peaks again across the country, people are experiencing Coronavirus Fatigue – those who were emotionally fine in the early months are reaching their limits and calling our lines.

This remarkable team of volunteers and professionals at Lines for Life – this team so committed to meeting the need, even as the need evolves and changes – this team is here ***because of you.***

We simply could not do it without your support. You make it possible for the innovation at the heart of our work to happen. You help us support the team so that they can continue providing excellence. You help us seize new opportunities to meet the need.

Please give generously this season and help us continue offering 24/7 support to Oregon and beyond – no matter what comes our way.

Best,



Dwight Holton
CEO, Lines for Life