

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

Chanhassen Villager

BREAKING NEWS ONLINE AT WWW.CHANVILLAGER.COM

CALL FOR HELP

County, state gear up for better suicide prevention crisis line

BY AMY FELEGY
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Minnesota is changing how it handles mental health crisis calls by upping the number of people it can serve and making it easier to do so — in Carver County and beyond.

Four suicide prevention call centers are now running in the state: the Greater Twin Cities United Way for metro callers; First Call for Help in northern and central areas; and First Link in northwest Minnesota.

The fourth, run by the Carver

County Mental Health Crisis Program, launched in November. Thanks to a recent \$620,000 grant from Vibrant Emotional Health, the center will be able to handle an expected uptick in calls by hiring more staff and upgrading buildings. The grant is spread out over five years.

And efforts aren't stopping there. Though still over a year away, the county will change its suicide lifeline number from 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to a simpler, three-digit 988 in July 2022. It's part of a nationwide switch to come next summer.

WHAT DO CHANGES MEAN?

The 988 number will be easier for people to remember during a crisis.

Until that number is put in place, people will still need to call 1-800-273-TALK in a crisis. But thanks to the four new call centers, phones will be streamlined.

That means callers will be routed to one of four Minnesota centers, depending on where they dial from. It lessens transferring to out-of-state centers.

That's an important detail to Derek Gunderson, chair at the Carver County Mental Health Local Advisory Council (LAC) and Victoria City Council member.

"Why is someone in crisis in Carver County calling out to Nebraska and then Nebraska reaching back out to the Carver County Sheriff's Office for support if it's needed?" he said. "To me, that makes no sense."

People throughout Minnesota can call 1-800-273-TALK and be connected to someone at the nearest facility.

Gunderson said Minnesota's been without a national suicide prevention lifeline since the spring of 2018 when it shut down due to lack of funding. Locals in crisis

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CARVER COUNTY

The Carver County Environmental Center has a product reuse room, offering donated household products for free to Carver County residents.

Spring cleaning?

How to get rid of stuff — safely

BY AUDREY KENNEDY
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Whether residents are rotating out seasonal items or purging a basement, an annual spring cleaning is a good time to reevaluate what's taking up extra space in a home.

But after creating a pile of stuff, it's not as easy as throwing everything in the trash. Those cleaners under the kitchen sink might do more harm than good in the dumpster, and garbage haulers often won't accept large appliances or electronics.

That's where local waste facilities comes in.

Agencies like the Carver County Environmental Center in Chaska, and the Scott

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ARBOR DAY AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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- Family friendly event • FREE Pine Seedlings!
- Music by "Traveled Ground"
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