

2017 -- H 6247

LC002765

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAMARITANS OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Mattiello, Shekarchi, Morgan, Barros, and Lancia

Date Introduced: May 24, 2017

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, In 1953, a vicar in London named Chad Varah officiated at one of the
2 earliest funerals of his career. The deceased was a fourteen-year-old girl who had started
3 menstruation, but because she had no one to talk with about her condition, she mistakenly
4 believed she had a sexually transmitted disease and sadly took her own life; and

5 WHEREAS, Chad Varah was so immensely moved by this senseless loss of life that he
6 dedicated himself to raising awareness of suicide prevention and to creating a global network of
7 independent organizations and people, trained in befriending, better known as nonjudgmental
8 listening, who would answer calls about anything including thoughts of suicide; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1977, a group of dedicated volunteers in Providence came together to
10 form The Samaritans of Rhode Island, in the compassionate desire to address the unmet needs of
11 the hopeless, alone and suicidal in our state; and

12 WHEREAS, Since that year, more than 1,573 devoted volunteers have answered the
13 phone for more than 550,000 callers to the agency's Crisis Hotline/Listening Line; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1981, the agency recognized the growing needs of those left behind by
15 suicide and created Safe Place, the state's only free, continually operating bereavement support
16 group established exclusively for adults who have experienced death of a family member or
17 friend by suicide; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1986, after a cluster of teen suicides impacted our state, legislation was
19 enacted mandating the Rhode Island Department of Education to partner with The Samaritans in
20 order to raise awareness of the need to offer teen suicide prevention education; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2004, recognizing the role that the Internet and social media could play in
2 raising awareness of suicide prevention education, The Samaritans, in conjunction with
3 community volunteers, created the agency's first website, and from 2004 through 2016, more than
4 519,826 visitors from more than 100 countries, have sought information; now, therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
6 Providence Plantations hereby recognizes The Samaritans as the agency of choice for Rhode
7 Islanders to turn to as the gateway to care. We moreover celebrate The Samaritans on the
8 occasion of its 40th Anniversary and wishes it continued success in offering its programs and
9 services in hopes suicide should never be an option; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
11 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Meredith Hampton, President of The
12 Samaritans of Rhode Island.

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