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Investors Bank Helps Make New National Text Crisis Line Possible
Bank Provides Funding and Volunteers for CONTACT of Mercer County

SHORT HILLS, New Jersey – Michael Cilino, an Enterprise Applications Support Specialist with Investors Bank’s Applications Support Group, has been volunteering with CONTACT of Mercer County since 2007, and can tell many stories of times that he believes he, as well as the other volunteers, have helped save lives. Cilino, who also is on the Board of Directors and is the Treasurer of CONTACT, remembers a time when he connected with a suicidal teen by using the message from one of her favorite songs by her favorite band - One Direction.

“She thought everybody had it better than her. She was depressed and wanted to die,” he said. “But a popular song at the time by One Direction described her situation perfectly, so I asked her about it, and in one second it completely turned around her mood. It made her feel a lot better. That was a really great thing and really rewarding. That conversation dramatically illustrates how much of a difference it can make in someone’s life if they can talk about their problems with a caring, non-judgmental listener, even if it’s just for an hour.”

Troubled pre-teens, teenagers and adults from across the country who are depressed or are experiencing issues ranging from abuse to family problems will soon have another avenue of coping, thanks in part to two \$5,000 grants, one from the Investors Bank Foundation and one from Roma Bank Community Foundation, to CONTACT. The funds will be used for a new program called TxtToday – a confidential and anonymous national text message crisis line. The non-profit organization provides compassionate, confidential listening and referral services that give hope to people in crisis.

“TxtToday is for people with cell phones to text us to get help and support,” said Eleanor K. Letcher, Executive Director of CONTACT of Mercer County. “It is meant for those individuals who are depressed, suicidal, or considering self-injury, who are usually looking for emotional support and someone to listen to what they have to say. We really want to reach out to young people and use the method of communication with which they’re most comfortable. Investors Bank and Roma Bank are our primary sponsors of this brand new and exciting program we hope to launch soon across the country.”

Of people aged 15 to 34, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the United States, according to CONTACT. The non-profit believes the tool to save these young people may be the cell phone – something 98 percent of them have.

The new program is a follow-up to CONTACT’s crisis hotline, but talking on the phone is the least preferred method of help-seeking communication for those under 25, according to CONTACT, so the organization felt a texting program would better reach young adults. TxtToday is private – users can text even in a room full of people. It also is more natural for users, able to help more users simultaneously,



easier in the process of referrals, and creates a seamless record of conversation in the case of multiple crises from the same user.

“What we do is amazing,” said Cilino. “Some people contact us several times a day. We can’t fix their problems – we don’t try to – but we can make them feel better and get them through today and in most cases, that’s really all they need.”

CONTACT applied for the grants through Investors Foundation, which supports non-profit organizations that enrich the diverse communities served by Investors Bank; Roma Bank became part of Investors Bank in early December 2013. The funds will be used for training staff and volunteers of CONTACT.

“Today’s young people in particular have so many things going on, whether it be school, friends, family, work, or another matter,” said Linda Martin, a Senior Market Manager for Investors Bank. “Investors Bank is proud to support CONTACT of Mercer County in increasing the availability and use of mental health support to everyone, but especially teenagers and young adults.”

Photo Captions:

Photo 1 - Eleanor K. Letcher, Executive Director of CONTACT of Mercer County, accepts two \$5,000 checks from Investors Bank representatives, from left, Dawn Darrah, Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager – Hopewell; Linda Martin, Senior Market Manager; and Richard Mancuso Jr., Customer Service Associate Supervisor. Mancuso and Darrah also are members of CONTACT’s Board of Directors.

Photo 2 – Investors Bank Senior Market Manager Linda Martin writes a check for CONTACT of Mercer County’s new TxtToday program. Cheering her on are, from left, Investors Bank Customer Service Associate Supervisor Richard Mancuso Jr., Dawn Darrah, Investors Bank Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager – Hopewell; and CONTACT of Mercer County Executive Director Eleanor K. Letcher. Darrah and Mancuso also sit on CONTACT of Mercer County’s Board of Directors.

About Investors Bank

Investors Bank is a full-service community bank that has been serving customers since 1926. With more than \$20.04 billion in assets and more than 130 retail branches in New Jersey, New York City and Long Island, Investors Bank delivers personalized services and products tailored to the needs of its customers. Investors’ consumer banking services include complete deposit products, online banking, home equity loans and lines of credit and a full array of mortgage loans. Serving the business community, Investors provides deposit accounts, cash management services, business loans and lines of credit, and commercial real estate financing solutions to small and middle market companies, professional services firms, municipalities and other businesses. Investors Bank is a member of the FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender.

About CONTACT of Mercer County

CONTACT of Mercer County provides crisis prevention programs, addressing community needs through volunteerism. Incorporated in 1975, CONTACT of Mercer County, NJ, is marking its 40th anniversary of providing free-of-charge crisis support 365 days a year in 2015.