Stay in Touch Foundation

Impact Statement 2024 to 2026

Strengthening communities through human connection. Reaching people before crisis, and building the instrument to prove it works.

The Case

The Stay in Touch Foundation exists for one reason: people who are connected to other people do not fall through the cracks. We strengthen communities through real human connection, in person events that blend music, art, and education, root partnerships with organizations already doing transformative work, and a research program that measures whether connection actually changes outcomes. Every part of the Foundation's work reaches people before crisis, because the evidence says that is where the leverage is.

For a century, America has built crisis infrastructure. Suicide prevention lines, domestic violence shelters, child protective services, overdose response. This infrastructure is necessary, and it is not enough. Suicide deaths in 2024 were substantially higher

than in 2000. Drug overdoses kill Americans by the hundreds every day. Hundreds of thousands of children are confirmed victims of abuse each year. The system activates after crisis, and the numbers have not moved.

Upstream of every one of those outcomes sits the same pair of conditions: loneliness and emotional dysregulation. Multiple national surveys in 2025 found a majority of American adults reporting loneliness. Dysregulation is the physiological state that precedes the decision to harm oneself or someone else. It is measurable, it is predictable, and it has a window.

That window is the intervention point. When distress begins, before fight or flight fully engages, the act of vocalizing to another human activates the vagal nerve and physiologically interrupts the stress response. This is not a metaphor. It is the mechanism. A 2024 study in JAMA Psychiatry found that brief empathetic phone calls reduced loneliness, depression, and anxiety within four weeks. The Canadian Red Cross Friendly Calls Program has seen demand surge as isolated adults seek exactly this kind of contact. The 988 crisis line's repeat contact rate is roughly 2.4 percent. Most people who reach a crisis line do not come back. They needed something before the crisis.

> The Foundation's community work builds the connection. Our sister organization, Call the Moms and Dads, a free volunteer run listening line for any adult, for any reason, is the voice on the other end of the line when connection is what someone needs most. The Foundation builds the awareness, the partnerships, and the research infrastructure that make all of it work and prove that it works.

2024

The Foundation Year

4

USC Capstone semesters completed across 2024 and 2025

20

young people wrote and recorded original songs

2,500+

The Blox alumni network joined for national expansion

150

participants, 8 bands, 4 artists at the Amped Up benefit concert

Amped Up benefit concert

Amped Up was the Foundation's first large scale community intervention. Roughly 150 participants, eight bands, and four individual artists came together in Columbia, South Carolina for six hours of live music in service of a single message: no one should have to reach a crisis before someone will listen.

The format was the point. Shared music is one of the most reliable ways to produce synchrony in a group, the state in which heart rate, breathing, and attention align across people in the same room. That

synchrony is a measurable form of co regulation, the same mechanism a listening line delivers one conversation at a time, delivered here to a room at once. For six hours, people who arrived alone left as part of something.

Amped Up also did strategic work. It established the Foundation's presence in the Columbia music community, introduced Call the Moms and Dads to the audiences and venues that carried the message through 2025, and generated the coverage that put the line on WIS TV. The Amped Up Check In Crew, born from the event, became the volunteer base for the work that followed. Amped Up is now an annual anchor event for the Foundation.

Launch infrastructure

We built the platform before the launch. In partnership with Raising Sails and web developer Alexander McCarthy, we designed the digital presence for both Call the Moms and Dads and the S.I.T. Foundation and built the strategic social media and communications plan for the release of the listening line.

Research partnership

We began the research partnership with the University of South Carolina IIT Capstone Program, completing the first two semesters of development on the Foundation's research and operating infrastructure under the faculty leadership of Dr. Keiona Middleton, with Dr. John Gerdes leading one semester. We positioned the Foundation inside the university's community leadership network, began mapping the grant landscape, and opened cultivation conversations with funders whose priorities match upstream prevention.

National reach

We competed on The Blox, the televised entrepreneur competition, and joined its alumni network of more than 2,500 entrepreneurs. That network is the relationship base for expanding Call the Moms and Dads nationally as the organization grows, and through it, awareness of what is coming reached beyond South Carolina before the line ever opened.

Media

WIS TV featured Call the Moms and Dads twice in 2024. The first was a primetime news hour on the listening line and the model behind it. The second brought Dr. John Gerdes of the University of South Carolina on air alongside the Foundation to speak to the research partnership. Musician Chris Reed also performed an original song written for the line on WIS in July 2024.

2025

The Build Year

Research and operating infrastructure

We completed the third and fourth semesters of development with the University of South Carolina IIT Capstone Program under Dr. Keiona Middleton, four consecutive semesters in total. The result is an integrated operating and research platform engineered for scale from the first day, rather than retrofitted for it later.

On the operating side, the platform handles the full volunteer lifecycle: streamlined onboarding, standardized training, and a data

driven workspace volunteers use in daily service. The telephony architecture is designed to scale to national call volume as the rollout proceeds, and the system as a whole is built to absorb volunteer and caller loads well beyond what a regional launch requires. Capacity will not be the constraint on growth.

On the research side, the same platform gives the Foundation a working instrument for measuring emotional well being at the community level: who is reaching out, where, when, and what they need, gathered with consent and built to protect privacy. Every awareness channel the Foundation runs is designed to be measured against its effect in the community, which turns outreach itself into a study. We are not waiting to see if this works. We built the instrument to measure it.

To fill that capacity, the Foundation is forming strategic partnerships with organizations whose members already hold the listening and mentorship skills the line requires, so volunteer recruitment scales through existing networks rather than one applicant at a time.

Direct impact

We led a two day songwriting workshop for the Princess Empowerment and Boyz II Men program, an arts based initiative led in the community by Tracey Oakman. Twenty young people learned to express difficult feelings through their own voices, wrote original songs in small groups with working musicians, recorded them in a studio, and performed them at a community CD release celebration. Their album, Empowering Voices Through Music, is available on Bandcamp with proceeds returning to the program. This is the upstream model applied to youth: teach the skill of vocalizing before dysregulation becomes a pattern.

Community leadership

We joined with a community leader in Columbia, South Carolina to support the formation of AmplifiHER, a women's empowerment music collective. Through speaking engagements at its events, we spoke to the protective role of social connection and self expression: belonging is one of the strongest known buffers against isolation, and vocalizing what we feel, in conversation or in song, engages the same physiological pathways that regulate the stress response. Community led groups like AmplifiHER are upstream prevention delivered by the people who already hold trust in a place.

That experience is shaping what comes next. The Foundation intends to offer scholarships to community leaders who are building connection based initiatives of their own, so that this kind of work is seeded, not only supported, across South Carolina.

Root partnerships

We stood beside Adaptive Surf Project, a leader in adaptive sports, at two landmark events in 2025: the opening of the East Coast's first radically inclusive beach access in North Myrtle Beach, and their Epic Wheel to Surf day in June. The work at those events was theirs. Our role was to show up, support their team, and share their story. Adaptive Surf Project has formally endorsed the work of Call the Moms and Dads. Root partnership means we do not duplicate what strong organizations already do. We amplify them, and they amplify the line.

Governance

We seated the Board of Directors, with Jean Boiteau and Aubrey Vaughn joining founder Bobbie Green Dameron. We finalized bylaws

that protect the founding mission, name a designated successor to the presidency, and establish automatic funding authority for the operating costs of Call the Moms and Dads so the line never goes dark for administrative reasons.

Recognition

Her Campus South Carolina featured both Call the Moms and Dads and the S.I.T. Foundation. The University of South Carolina has used the S.I.T. Foundation model as a classroom example in clinical community psychology.

What We Will Measure

The Foundation will report where isolation and distress concentrate in the communities we serve, when they spike, who is reaching out, and whether connection reaches people before crisis infrastructure ever has to. We will report which forms of outreach move people to connect, and which do not.

No organization in this space has built an instrument to answer those questions at the community level. We have.

2026

The Growth Year

The S.I.T. Foundation enters 2026 with a research instrument built, a board in place, partnerships in motion, a national alumni network behind it, and Call the Moms and Dads set to launch in 2027. This is the year we build the community around the line before the line goes live.

In 2025 we began the vision for the S.I.T. Community Endowment Fund. The endowment exists for the community itself: a standing resource to help individuals and families meet financial needs that, left unmet, become the isolation and stress that crisis infrastructure later has to absorb. Meeting a need early is upstream prevention in its most direct form.

Operating costs for Call the Moms and Dads are protected separately through the automatic funding authority in the Foundation's bylaws. We are pursuing research funding through the William T. Grant Foundation and the Duke Endowment, and cultivating a principal investigator at the University of South Carolina to lead the formal study.

2026 is the seed year. The infrastructure is built and the launch is set; what the Foundation needs now is the capital to carry it through the 2027 launch and the first year of operation. We are building sponsorship packages and a dedicated donor program to match that need, and seeking the founding funders whose early commitment will be recorded in the first data the line produces.

> The 2026 Growth Statement will report what was built this year. The first real data from the line arrives with the 2027 launch.

Someone answers before it becomes a crisis

We have awareness. We know these problems exist. This is the point where the community decides how far the work goes.

Donate Now

Partner With Us

The S.I.T. Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Stay in Touch Foundation, Cayce, South Carolina.