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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Increase in Suicide Rate – Young Men and Youths at Risk**

Suicide rate in 2009 increased to 9.35 from 8.76 per 100,000 residents in 2008, bringing a total number of confirmed suicides to 401. Total number of male suicides (267) doubled that of female (134).

Young men in the age group of 20-29 were found to be at high risk - total number of suicides increased from 26 in 2008 to 51 in 2009. There was also an increase in youth (age 10-19) suicides– from 12 in 2008 to 19 suicides in 2009.

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) provides confidential 24-hour emotional support by trained volunteers to people in crisis, thinking of suicide or affected by suicide. In the recent review period from April 2009 to March 2010, SOS handled a total of 39,956 calls, out of which 76.3% were crisis calls made to SOS. On the average, SOS handled 3,330 calls per month, or about 110 calls per day.

Men (age 20-29), who called in to the SOS hotline, often spoke of their difficulties and anxieties in coping with stressors in their life. Some of the problems shared by the youths who called in include identity and crisis-related issues. They also expressed concerns relating to studies and exams, and spoke about relationship problems with parents, school friends, and boy-girl relationship.

SOS volunteers are the key reason why SOS is able to help those in distress. However, the number of calls SOS can take is limited by the number of volunteers. Individuals interested in volunteering with SOS can email to [pv@samaritans.org.sg](mailto:pv@samaritans.org.sg).



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## **SOS Focus on Suicide Prevention amongst Youths**

On 8 and 9 September 2010, SOS will be holding a 2-day conference cum workshop as part of our 40th Anniversary activities and in conjunction with the annual Suicide Awareness Week.

The pre-conference workshop on 8 September will be focusing on suicide prevention amongst the youths. The workshop will be conducted by Professor Graham Martin, National Advisor on Suicide Prevention to the Australian Government, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Director of Centre for Suicide Prevention Studies in Young People, University of Queensland.

Professor Martin is also the keynote speaker for the conference on 9 September 2010, and he, together with other distinguished speakers, will be sharing with us on what works for suicide prevention and post-vention. There will also be a panel discussion on the approach the community should take towards suicide prevention.

On 18 September 2010, SOS will be holding a talk cum forum, exclusively for those bereaved by a suicide death.

More information on the conference and forum can be found on <http://www.samaritansofsingapore.blogspot.com>.

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