



Strub Caulkins Center for Suicide Research

Advancing suicide awareness and prevention through research.

2016 Annual Report



Dear Friends and Supporters,

In late 2015 the Strub Caulkins Center for Suicide Research (The Center) formally came into existence. In early 2016 we were granted tax exempt, public charity status from the IRS. As we enter 2017, the Center continues to evolve and grow. We are proud to say that 100% of our donations and consulting revenue has gone directly to supporting our mission with 0% going to salaries. It is people like you, who donate, volunteer, or use the end products of our labor that make the Center possible.

The Center was the vision of Tim Heap and shared by Chris Caulkins, who conceived of a non-profit that would conduct research on suicide and related phenomenon. We recruited a top-notch Board of Directors, rolled up our sleeves, and got to work building something meaningful. We were sad to see Tim leave in 2016 to pursue career aspirations in Thailand, but his legacy continues. Our signature service is the psychological autopsy, a social science, evidence-based investigation that gathers facts and analyzes data on individuals who died by suicide to understand the “perfect storm” that resulted in a tragic death. In addition, we conduct original research on suicide from a variety of perspectives and in an interdisciplinary manner. We share our findings through a variety of mediums including presentations, journals, social media, and video productions.

Our future goals are to expand research, presentations, and dissemination of information, with a focus on broadening our national and international presence. We will provide resources for other researchers in the way of making data available and creating an annotated bibliography section on our website. To accomplish these things, we need the continued support of people like you. Together, let’s work towards eliminating the over 834,000 suicides worldwide and more than 42,000 suicides in the US annually.

Sincerely,

Chris G. Caulkins
Executive Director
Strub Caulkins Center for Suicide Research



We constantly seek to

- advance awareness and understanding of the public health implications of suicide, self-harm, and its related mental health issues.
- positively contribute to suicide assessment, intervention, and prevention practices.

Purpose

Mission

We shall

- conduct original research and build upon previous research in suicide causality and effect and its related mental health issues.
- make all research and data collected by the Center available to the general public.
- develop and provide educational opportunities for health care professionals, public safety professionals, and the general public.

We envision a world where

- suicide is the lowest cause of death.
- there is no stigma associated with a death by suicide or the mental health problems that may lead to suicide.
- all people can speak knowledgeably and empathetically about suicide and its under-lying mental health issues.
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Vision

Values

We believe

- suicide is a health issue just like cancer or heart disease.
- people afflicted with mental health issues ought to have ready access to quality mental health assessment and treatment.

Research

The following projects were completed or are in progress from 2015 through 2016.

Suicide Among Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Providers in Minnesota

This in-progress project is partially supported by the Minnesota Ambulance Association, who paid for acquisition of Minnesota Department of Health death records, books ordered as part of a literature search, and a subscription to [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) to research names appearing in death records. Research support is/was provided by the following agencies and individuals who spend significant amounts of time matching records, vetting names, and verifying identities. To these organizations and people, we owe a debt of gratitude.

- Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board (EMSRB)
- Minnesota Board of Peace Officers Standards Training (POST)
- Monica Shevik
- Margaret (Meg) McConnell
- Jacob Capistrant
- Christina Lutz
- Nancy Caulkins

The objective is to identify EMS personnel who have died by suicide in order to understand the true magnitude of the problem in Minnesota. The original research proposal, *Suicide among paramedics in the State of Minnesota*, was published on [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) and has been viewed over 363 times online.

Prehospital Treatment of Psychache: A Case for Ketamine in the Management of Life-Threatening Suicidal Ideation

This extensive search of the literature explores the use of the medication, ketamine, for suicidal ideation. In this paper, the case is made for administration of ketamine for life-threatening suicidal ideation by paramedics in the prehospital environment.

This completed paper was completed and published on [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu), where it has been viewed over 178 times.

Other Research Projects

The following is a list of other projects in process that are currently in-progress, albeit slowly because of other pending work.

- An analysis of murder-suicide in the State of Minnesota.
- Suicide among Minnesota college students and the role of connectedness.
- A comparative analysis of suicide rates and trajectory between the US and Italy.
- A literary analysis of suicide in select Stephen King novels.

Video Production and Teaching Guide

A Dignified Death

With the volunteer support of professional photographer and videographer, Scott Cohen, a 7 minute 24 second video, *A dignified death*, was filmed and posted to the Center's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrliqIX1f6o>. An accompanying teaching guide was created and posted to [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) and a link from YouTube to the file in Dropbox was provided. The video features Larry Turner, a man who

survived the death of his daughter and was facing his own impending death due to pancreatic cancer. Sadly, Larry succumbed to his cancer on October 21, 2016. We are grateful for his support—both in participating in creating the video and his financial donation in support of the Center.



This video was created with the purpose of comparing two different kinds of suicide. The first being the result of an unbearable psychological pain, often called a psychache, as a result of an extreme psychological crisis or severe mental illness. The second being the result of a terminal illness in which the person seeks to avoid physical incapacitation, loss of mental faculties, extreme and untreatable physical pain, and/or dependence on other people or medical interventions to survive.

Since completion, the video has been watched over 338 times with 10 positive and no negative reviews. The teaching guide has been viewed over 12 times on [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu). We are unable to track Dropbox downloads at this time.

[academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu)

This site, designed for academics to share work, has served as a posting site for the Center's work. Our uploaded suicide-related material has been viewed in excess of 891 times in 45 US states (all except AK, HI, ME, MD, and VE) and 43 countries. The map shows the reach of our research through [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu). This does not include visits to our Facebook fan page, YouTube Channel, or website.



Psychological Autopsies

A psychological autopsy consulting project for the American Association of Suicidology was concluded in November 2016. We currently have one psychological autopsy in progress for a known suicide death in Texas.

Presentations

We presented a total of 13 times from late 2015 through 2016, educating hundreds of people on our research and suicide in general.

Month/Year	Topic	Location
December 2015	Public Safety Suicide	Minnesota Symposium on Terrorism and Emergency Preparedness, Brooklyn Park, MN
December 2015	Suicide: Personal, Public, and EMS Provider Impact	Meds-1 Ambulance Service, Grand Rapids, MN
January 2016	Mental Illness: The Stigmatized Diversity	Power in Diversity Leadership Conference, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
February 2016	The "S" Word–Suicide: Guidelines for Preventing Tragedy	National Campus Safety Summit, Las Vegas, NV
April 2016	Suicide: Personal, Public, and EMS Provider Impact	Itasca County Crisis Response Team, Grand Rapids, MN
May 2016	Suicide Among College Students	University of Macerata, Macerata, Italy
June 2016	Suicide Among Public Safety Personnel	White Bear Lake Police Department, White Bear Lake, MN
July 2016	Suicide Among the SE Asian Population	Wilder Foundation, Center for Social Healing, St. Paul, MN

Month/Year	Topic	Location
October 2016	Understanding Suicide: Staring the Monster Down	Youth Workers Conference, Brainerd, MN
October 2016	EMS Suicide Research: Preliminary Results	Minnesota Ambulance Association, St. Cloud, MN
October 2016	Suicide and Emergency Medical Services	Plymouth Fire Department, Plymouth, MN
December 2016	EMS Suicide Research: Preliminary Results	Minnesota Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board
December 2016	Suicide: Cultural Themes and Variations	Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN



Presenting to academic peers at the University of Macerata, Macerata, Italy

Meeting with Professor Maurizio Pompili, a noted international suicidologist, in Rome, Italy



Media and Public Relations

The Center's work was featured in an Itasca County, MN cable television interview program called *How to Save a Life—Suicide* as well as in the July/August edition of the *International Association for Suicide Prevention News Bulletin*, and the November 2016 issue of *The Buzz*, the Metropolitan State University alumni newsletter. Links are available on our website at www.suicideresearch.org.



newsbulletin
International Association for Suicide Prevention

JULY/AUGUST 2016

Suicide among emergency medical services personnel

Working in emergency medical services (EMS) for over 23 years, I have responded to countless patients with suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, suicide, and a wide variety of psychiatric emergencies. As such, I have long been interested by the phenomenon of suicide. My interest transformed into passion when, in 2003, my wife died by suicide. Following this, my fervour for understanding grew when, in 2008, my brother died by suicide.



Chris Caulkins

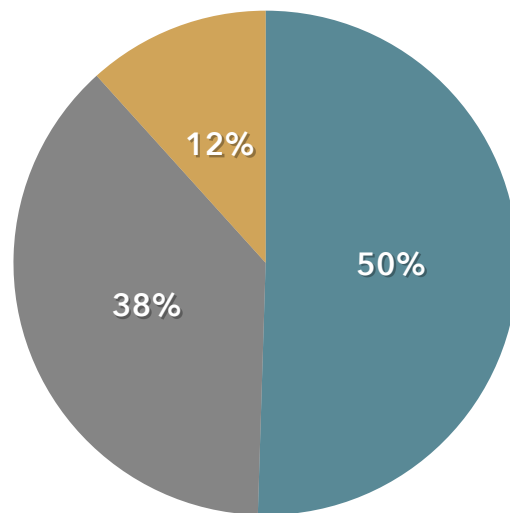


Chris Caulkins ('12, '14) and **Timothy Heap** ('10), both of Woodbury, have teamed up to found the Strub Caulkins Center for Suicide Research (SCCSR), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation dedicated to advancing suicide prevention and awareness through research. A signature service of the SCCSR is the provision of the psychological autopsy (PA), an evidence-based method of determining if a death of unknown manner is a suicide or due to some other manner. PAs may also be conducted on people who are known to have died by suicide and whose loved ones are seeking to understand the "perfect storm" of factors leading to the tragedy. The SCCSR's website is suicideresearch.org.

Fundraising

Our fundraising is off to a bit of a slow start. We learned, that as a group, we are shy about asking for donations. The Board has scheduled a retreat in 2017 to strategize the Center's fundraising efforts. Shyness aside, we did manage to raise \$5,584.83, which helped greatly with research efforts and operations.

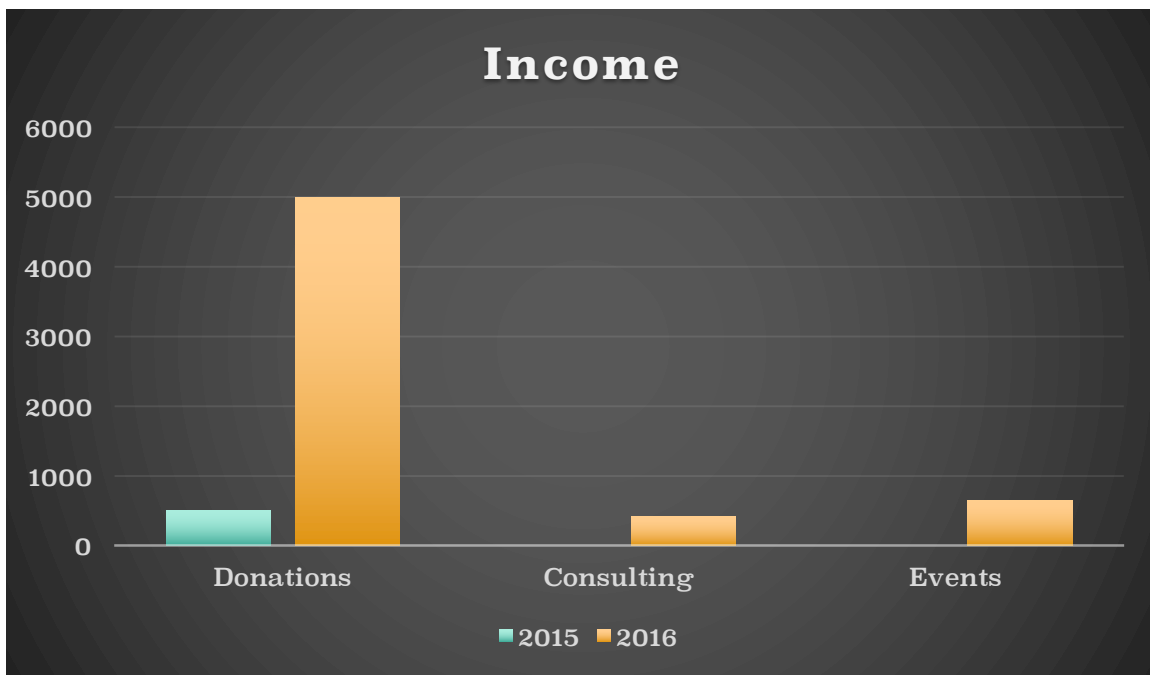
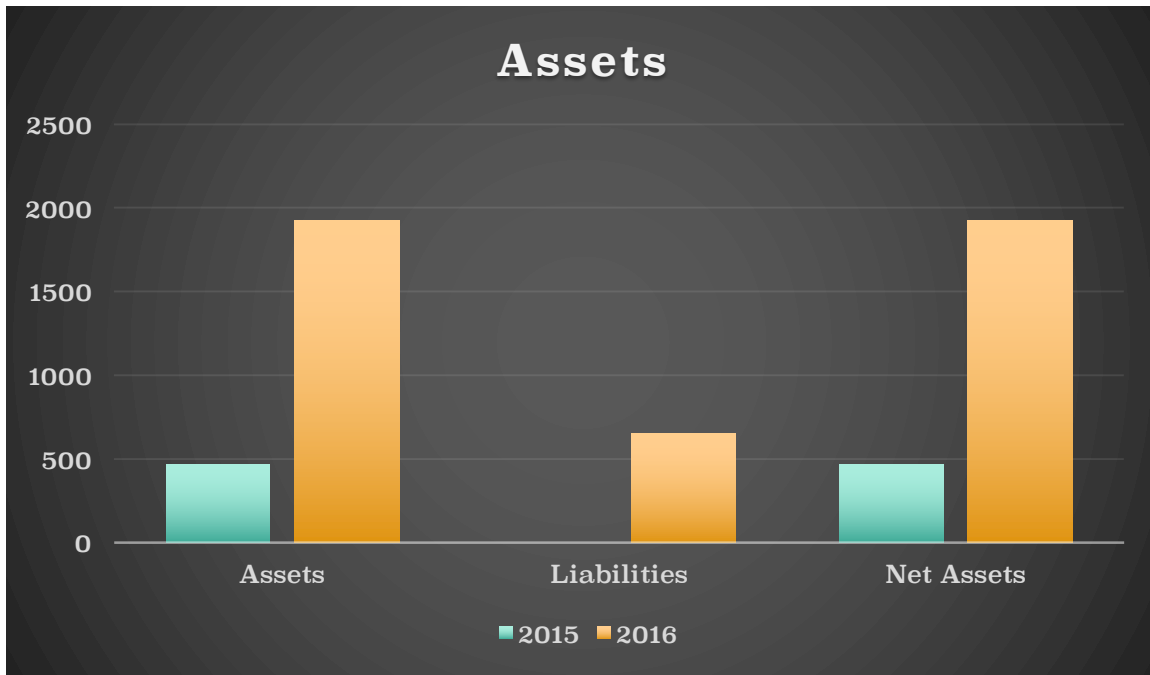
■ Individuals ■ Organizations ■ Special Event



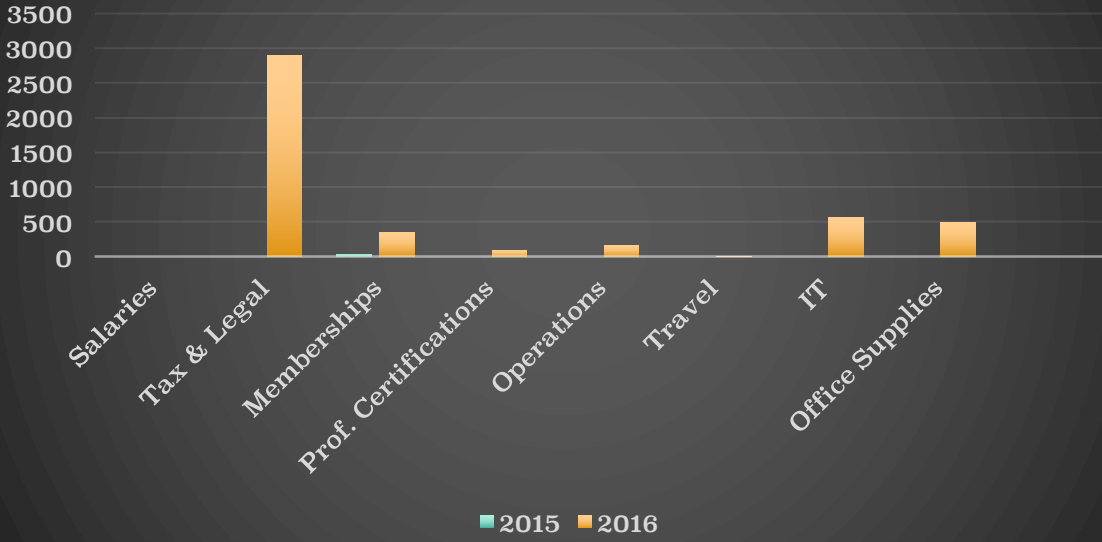
Our one special event was a demolition derby held in Bird Island, MN with the proceeds of a raffle going to the Center. This event was conceived of and organized by Nicole Gilberts and would not have happened if it were not for her hard work. Nancy Caulkins represented the Center and gave a brief welcome speech. Debbie Peterson helped staff the registration table. Thanks, Nicole, Nancy, and Debbie!



Financials



Expenses





Board of Directors

Mary Vukelich, Chair

Chris Caulkins, President

Edi Hassan, Treasurer

Jeralyn Jargo

Jessie Breyer

Paul Coyan

Bill Snoke

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