Crisis Services: The Stories

Over the past 44 years, Crisis Services has saved lives and changed lives, tens of thousands of lives. For us, it’s a daily occurrence. But one thing we haven’t done very well is to tell those stories. The stories of families torn apart by violence, of young people thinking their only alternative is suicide, of single mothers facing the prospect of homelessness for themselves and their children. These are the people that have turned to Crisis Services, at one time or another, during their time of crisis.

There are a couple of reasons why we’ve been reluctant to tell these stories. The first is that the confidentiality of our clients is of paramount importance to our mission. Our clients “stories” are something that would never be discussed, even among staff here at the agency, let alone publicly. If the individual is willing to tell his or her story, that’s a different thing. However, most people who reach out to Crisis Services do so in a time of extreme emotional hardship. Once they move past the crisis, they are usually not willing to relive the event by retelling it.

Over the past few years, we have received letters and emails from former clients thanking us for our intervention, either for them or for their family members. In some instances, they have updated us with specifics on how and what they are doing today. Letters like these are so wonderful for our staff. They give our staff a sense of closure, which is rather rare. Imagine how it feels to be with someone during a very vulnerable point in their life, helping them and making sure that they are safe and secure before handing them off to someone else for longer term care. Although we do have a couple of therapists on staff who see clients on a long term basis, most of our counselors interact with clients in a very limited timeframe that is, during their period of crisis.

We have reached out to those who have contacted us and asked if they would be willing to tell their stories for a series of videos that we’d like to produce for our website. First hand storytelling like that can be a very powerful therapeutic tool for someone going through a similar experience. It’s been done very effectively on many websites, including the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Safehorizon.org. Everyone that we’ve contacted so far is very willing to tell their story in the hope of reaching out to others, giving back now that they’re in a better place. We are very thankful to those who have agreed to help.

If you have a story that you’d like to share about your experience with this agency, please email info@crisisservices.org.
For most of the Agency’s 44 years, Crisis Services has performed very well by functioning with two faces: 1) the face of immediate response to an episode of human crisis and, 2) the face of our back office work related to finances, facility management, human resources and the other critical efforts that keep the Agency’s lights on and the heat/air conditioning flowing throughout our building 24/7.

Without question, the most important face of Crisis Services is the crisis response component of the organization. This is the work by which we are measured and evaluated by our funders, by government and by our local Community. As the only true 24 hour mental health crisis response organization in Erie County, our services must be delivered by staff that are experienced, trained and ready to act.

A more slowly but steadily developing third face of Crisis Services is its fundraising and marketing department. As the front page article points out, the “storytelling” aspect of the organization has been late to the game. But, it now appears prepared to move forward with a well-defined agenda and goal.

Our immediate intent is to tell the “stories” of success via newsletters, appeals and social media in order to raise the awareness of the mission of Crisis Services. In our case, it is a message of immediate 24 hour response, live hotline services and a comprehensive “safety net” approach to those in the most dire of circumstances. The long term goal is to raise unrestricted fundraising revenue that would ultimately serve to offset the financial challenges inherently experienced by a 24 hour operation such as Crisis Services.

The fundraising for Crisis Services is primarily engineered by the Crisis Services Foundation Board of Directors, featured on page three of The Safety Net. In close consultation with the Agency Management and the Board of Directors of Crisis Services, the Foundation Board will work on fundraising strategies to assist and support the mission of Crisis Services.

With health care financing changing by the day, with Erie County and the State of New York talking about reform and with the Federal Government mired in political and economic combat, it becomes necessary that Crisis Services adopt a serious agenda to raise funds through individual donations and corporate sponsorship. Promoting and orchestrating an additional face requires much coordination and dedication by management and both boards of directors. Fortunately, should the face of fundraising prove successful in the coming years, the two original faces of Crisis Services will not have to depend solely on the uncertainties of local, state and federal politics and can focus on the mission of supporting people in crisis. Isn’t that what this should be all about?

Douglas B. Fabian,
Executive Director
Meet the Crisis Services Foundation Board

The Crisis Services Foundation is an all-volunteer organization that was created in March of 1987 for the sole purpose of raising funds to provide Crisis Services in fulfilling its mission. We currently have 5 directors on our Foundation Board. This is a separate entity from the Crisis Services Board. Foundation Board members, like our agency board, cycle on and off the board every three years. Thus, the board is always active in its recruitment of prospective board members for future placement. Should you or someone you know be interested in serving on the Foundation Board of Directors, contact Douglas B. Fabian, Executive Director at 834-2130, ext. 4404.

Don Ko, President

Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, Donald Ko graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Honor’s Program at the University at Buffalo. Following 5 years working in Product Management at ATTO Technology, Inc., Don went on to acquire his Master’s of Business Administration from the University of Rochester’s Simon Graduate School of Business.

A proud Buffalonian, Don moved back after acquiring his MBA. He became a passionate member of the Foundation Board at Crisis Services, forever indebted to them after their services helped him through a family tragedy, and is currently employed as Product Marketing Manager at ValueCentric, LLC. Don has been a pained but still proud supporter of the Buffalo Bills his entire life, and enjoys movies, reading non-fiction, and both watching and playing sports in his free time.

Ryan Casullo

Ryan Casullo is a Vice President and Branch Manager at First Niagara Bank in East Amherst. He has been involved with Crisis Services on the Board of Directors for 3+ years and served as the last 2 previous years Men Who Cook Chairman. Along with his work with Crisis Services, he is involved in many other community groups and not-for-profit organizations. As of recently, he resides with his wife Jill and 2 children in Lancaster.

Tommaso Occhiuto

Tommaso (Tom) Occhiuto is the President and Owner of Progressive Direct Marketing located in Depew, New York. He leads an exceptional team providing unsurpassed concept-to-completion direct mail marketing services to companies nationwide. Tom is proud to be involved with Crisis Services and enjoys lending his time to other non for profit organizations in the Buffalo Area. He currently lives in Clarence, New York with his wife and their Lab, Harley.

Tim Lafferty

Tim Lafferty is a sales and marketing professional with 30 years of progressive experience in information technology. Tim is National Sales Manager of The PCA Group, Inc. where he is responsible for the oversight and implementation of the company’s sales and marketing strategies.

Tim presently serves as President of the University at Buffalo Alumni Association and is a volunteer for the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County.

Scott Atwater

Scott is the president of the Crisis Services Board and sits as a representative of that board. Scott has practiced law for over 30 years and has a nationwide litigation and appellate practice. He is a former Senior Assistant District Attorney for Erie County, assigned to the Major Violent Offense Bureau, and in that capacity tried jury cases involving homicide, arson and sexual assaults. He was also an Assistant New York State Attorney General where he tried civil claims made against the State of New York. Today Scott is a shareholder at Gross Shuman Brizzle & Gilfillan in Buffalo. He and his wife Janet are the parents of 3 daughters and reside in East Aurora with their Golden Retrievers, Gilda and Farris.
Saluting Our Volunteers

April 21-27 is National Volunteer Week. From the beginning, Crisis Services has relied on volunteers to provide the depth of services that we offer on a 24-hour/day, 7 day/week basis. Our volunteers are dedicated and committed individuals who bring an impressive mixture of experience, compassion and diversity to our agency. They include university students working on internship credits, seasoned life veterans, recent retirees, and many part and full time employees who manage to add these volunteer hours to their already busy lives. Their reasons for giving of their time so generously vary greatly, but they share a common thread – the desire to give of themselves to those that are in immediate need of a human connection. Here is a list of those who have volunteered over the past year. The management and staff of Crisis Services extend our deepest gratitude for all that you provide for the agency.

Thank you for making a difference!


Interested in Becoming a Crisis Services Volunteer?

Call 834-3131 or visit www.crisisservices.org for more information.
8th Annual Walk A Mile in Her Shoes
Saturday, April 27th
12:00-3:00 PM

Starts and Ends Right Here at Crisis Services!

What better way to end ‘Sexual Assault Awareness Month’ than a stroll down Hertel Ave. in a pair of gorgeous red pumps? Especially if you happen to be of the male persuasion. Walk A Mile In Her Shoes is an international men’s march to stop rape, sexual assault and gender violence. The idea is “First you walk the walk, then you can talk the talk”. Last year about 500 walkers took part in this entertaining spectacle of men walking in women’s heels.

The route will take participants down Hertel to Starin and back up the other side, finishing back at the agency. Afterwards there will be a party to help take your mind off the blisters and backaches.

Teams have already started forming and donations have started trickling in, so what are you waiting for? Create your team and get your friends, co-workers, family members, and anyone else you can think of registered! This event is kid and dog-friendly. FYI—Men do not HAVE TO wear high heels and women are also welcome to walk to show their support for the men.

Sponsored by:

Find us on Facebook and/or Twitter, we will be posting any updates that come our way.

To register or for more information, just visit our website at www.crisisservices.org and click on the link on the homepage.

The 7th Annual Kory Memorial Tournament

It’s time to dust off those clubs as we await the start of the 2013 golf tournament season. The Kory Memorial Golf Tournament will be held at the Batavia Country Club on Saturday July 20. This tournament is held yearly in memory of Jerry Klubek’s brother, Kory, who took his life eleven years ago at the age of 19. Jerry and his longtime friend, Kevin Tamol, organized the tournament 7 years ago as a way to honor Kory’s memory while raising dollars for the suicide prevention efforts of Crisis Services. The following sponsors have contributed to the financial success of this tournament over the past several years: Buffalo Bandits, Derico of East Amherst Corp, West Seneca Moose Lodge 959 & Ladies Aux. 2299, Payroll Processing, Buffalo Bisons, Teamsters Horseman Chapter 46, Merchants Grill, WNY Teamsters Joint Council 46, Lipstz Green Scime Cambria LLP, Mighty Taco, Bella Pizza, Carbones Pizza, Pepsi Cola Bottling of Buffalo and Russell’s Steakhouse.

Crisis Services, along with Jerry and Kevin, wish to extend our most sincere thanks for their contributions to this great fundraising event. For more information or to register for this year’s tournament, go to our website, www.crisisservices.org
Our Mission
Crisis Services is dedicated to promoting the health, safety, and well-being of the community through prevention, education, immediate intervention, and access to community-wide resources 24 hours a day.

Memorial & Tribute Gifts to Crisis Services

Make a donation today in support of Crisis Services and those who depend on our critical services.

Remember a friend, loved one, or family member for a birthday, anniversary, or special celebration or to offer a meaningful expression of one’s sympathy, love, and respect at the time of death with a gift to the Crisis Services Foundation. Your gift today can help Crisis Services continue to provide excellent services and programs to individuals in need in our community, as it has since 1968. In order to treat and assist people in emotional crisis through a variety of therapeutic services, we need your ongoing generous support. Enclosed in this newsletter is a convenient envelope for your use, or you may charge (MasterCard, VISA, or American Express) your donation online by visiting our secure website at:

www.crisisservices.org

Donate Online

Make your tax-deductible gift on our secure website using your MasterCard, VISA, or American Express.

Like us on Facebook

Please consider donating your old cell phone(s) to Crisis Services to help survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Call 834-2310, ext. 4467 for more information.

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