**MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT, CYNTHIA HAMMER**

As you will see throughout this report, fiscal year 2017 was a pivotal year for us. We made great strides in accomplishing the Agency’s core mission, as well as capacity building, to ensure Crisis Services remains a sustainable organization.

Not only did we end the year with a strong financial statement, we also finalized the sale of our Main Street building. We moved into our new location to provide our staff, volunteers, and clients with much needed and well-deserved space.

Through the generosity of our dedicated donors, grantors, and community sponsored third-party events, we exceeded our fundraising goals. The Agency received essential dollars to improve our working environment, install a new sophisticated phone system, improve our technological capabilities, and turn our new space into our “home”.

While 2017 was a great success, it was not without tests of our strength and resolve. In the midst of this very successful year, our CEO, Jessica Pirro, was diagnosed with breast cancer and successfully fought through her own personal life crisis. With the support, strength, determination and dedication of our leadership team, staff, volunteers and board members, Jessica and the Agency didn’t miss a beat.

I am proud of what Crisis Services has accomplished in 2017 and excited about the future. We will be finalizing a strategic plan and branding initiative to guide the Agency and ensure that Crisis Services can continue to provide immediate help, intervention and ensure that no one is ever alone.

On behalf of the Agency and Foundation Board of Directors, we would like to thank you for your generosity, dedication and commitment. We need your continued help and support. You are why we are here and together we can build the future of Crisis Services.

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**SURVIVING AN INTERNAL CRISIS**

If you ever need an example of what inspiration is, take a look at Crisis Services’ CEO, Jessica Pirro.

The move of our agency was a multi-layered process. It took years to find a suitable new space, hundreds of hours of planning, meetings upon meetings, upon meetings. All to build up to the orchestration of packing an organization that never closes and moving to the other side of the city. This occurred during the same week of our 3rd annual CowPok Semicolon Tattoo event, the Drag Out Darkness Show, and the week leading into Thanksgiving. With all of this we failed to mention that throughout 2017 Jessica Pirro, our CEO, was undergoing chemotherapy and radiation for triple negative, Grade 3, breast cancer.

**FROM JESSICA C. PIRRO, CEO**

When I rang in 2017, I was enjoying time with close friends and family as we headed into a New Year. One major and exciting effort was on the horizon for our organization: a move to a new location that we desperately needed to care for our staff while we continued to grow. Within weeks of starting 2017, the plan for my year changed when a routine mammogram quickly led to a biopsy that resulted in a diagnosis of breast cancer. As someone who has rolled with the punches and dealt with various ups and downs in my life, this situation was different. I realized that, similar to the experiences of those we serve, a crisis can change your path without a moment’s notice.

With this extreme challenge, I worked to maintain my courage and confidence. We at Crisis Services had so many exciting plans as we worked to move our organization to a new home. A home that was well overdue for our crisis.
first responders, who were working in an environment that only added chaos to crisis center work. In response to the challenge, we did what we do best: rallied together to determine the best possible plan to complete the work needed for our move.

From March to October 2017, I underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation treatment. I sometimes worked from home in between treatments to support our amazing leadership team, especially our CFO, Barbara Gasiewicz, who stepped in to help move our mission forward and keep us on track for our move. I finished my last radiation treatment on October 17th, and within the month we moved operations to our new home on River Rock Drive. It was a wild time and I am thrilled that we achieved success during this time of adversity. It is this experience that makes me feel even more honored to be a part of this organization. I truly admire everyone that supports our mission: our board of directors, our staff, and our volunteers. They were amazing during this unexpected internal crisis. I was thrilled to end the year in a better place than where we started, and sitting in an amazing space that truly supports our team and our work. I am extremely proud of how this year taught us, challenged us, and helped us to become better and stronger for ourselves and our mission. Thank you everyone that supported me during 2017. The community of Crisis Services is top-notch and this internal support reflects the excellence our team provides in our community every day to those in crisis.

THANKS TO OUR MAJOR FUNDERS:

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

HEALTH RESEARCH INC./NEW YORK STATE

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF VICTIMS SERVICES

NEW YORK STATE WNY DELEGATION WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO SEN. TIM KENNEDY AND SEN. PATRICK GALLIVAN
Building our future

Crisis Services moved into the Main Street location in 1988. At the time, the square footage more than accommodated the staff and programming requirements. However, between 2014-2017 the agency had seen a 20% organizational staffing boom and quickly outgrew the home office on Main Street.

Through an initiative dubbed “Building Our Future” Crisis Services was able to raise much needed funds from some incredible supporters of the agency. Our new home at 100 River Rock Drive would not have been realized without the tremendous generosity of the following donors:

- UB | MD Emergency Medicine
- Acquest Development

Making moves - A Reflection

After nearly 30 years of operations at 2969 Main Street, Crisis Services moved the agency’s office to the other end of Hertel Avenue, in Buffalo’s Black Rock community.

Growth in employment and programming, including the addition of the Addiction Hotline in 2016, prompted the move. Crisis Services went from a 7,800 SF office space into a 15,000 SF building.

Moving began on November 14th and took a couple days to get everything and everyone transferred over. There were a few hiccups along the way, but our staff did what they do best: problem solve and help resolve the crises in front of us.

The Crisis Services team has been doing an amazing job of settling into the new space while resuming work as usual during a time of great change and adjustment in our new home.

Two thousand seventeen had a lot of moving parts for our organization to manage. I am so proud of what we have accomplished. I want to thank all our generous donors whose investments helped us lay the foundation of our new home and are truly helping to build our future.

On my final walk-through of our Main Street location I took pause to the silence in the building. Walking the halls, I reflected on the hundreds of thousands of people we supported on our hotline, the sound of our door opening and closing as our Mobile Outreach Counselors responded to those in mental health crisis, and the numerous survivors that sought safety through our therapy services.

As I entered in the hotline area, I had mixed emotions. Laughter of how the chairs were strewn about like the staff quickly left to get to our new place, while simultaneously having a visual of the significant impact on our community if these chairs were truly empty and the monitor that busily monitor our phone system calls was blank. I have had several people this past year talk about what would this community be like without Crisis Services. The empty desks and total silence brought this question to reality.

Crisis Services is the only 24 hour organization that provides excellence in crisis response services for our community. Because of the work of our crisis first responders those impacted by trauma can begin to heal. Hope is restored in moments of darkness, and advocacy provides empowerment to those overcoming abuse. Like police or fire, we are crisis first responders and part of the foundation of a healthy Buffalo.

-Jessica Pirro, from our December e-newsletter
If you are interested in exploring the new offices and seeing firsthand how this new space has revitalized our organization, please contact Jessica Henschel to set up a tour.

Jessica can be reached at 716-831-4408 or email jhenschel@crisservices.org.
Many thanks to all our third party supporters:

- CowPok Semicolon Tattoo Fundraiser (3rd Annual)
- Kory Memorial Golf Tournament (10th Annual)
- Drag Out Darkness (2nd Annual)
- UB Men’s Group Hoops for Hope
- Chris Cornell Tribute at Iron Works
- Clarence High School’s Destination Imagination Project: “Mystery in the Mall”
- Grand Lady Cruises Cruise for a Cause
- True Gr’t 5K
- Rice Candlelight Vigil
- Williamsville Schools Teddy Bear Toss
- Salon Allure’s Aveda Sale
- Alex & Ani Charmed by Charity
- Jamberry Nails Sale
- 31 Club Sale
- Paradise Wine #ADayWithoutWomen Sale
- Ladies Night Out: Bad Moms 2 Premier
- Daddy’s Girl Club” Premier Screening
- The Mentholatum Company Jeans Day
- Painting With A Twist Paint Night
- Bowl Over the Blues
- ArtReach WNY Sugatory: Sweetening Our Existence
- Community Beer Works’ BeLikeFrank Happy Hour
- Twiddle & Aqueous Concert
- Knights of Columbus #413 Summer Concert Series
- Tip Jar Donation

Crisis Services recognizes the amazing investment by the community through these events. They are proof that everyone can make a difference, which is also reflected by the growth of special events income over the past three years (see chart to left).

If you are interested in supporting the programming and mission of Crisis Services, please contact Jessica Henschel in Fund Development to find out options for sponsorship and other opportunities to contribute to our organization.

Call 716-831-4408, or email jhenschel@crississervices.org.
GOOD NEWS

Senator Chris Jacobs announced Crisis Services was the recipient of a $25,000 public protection grant to further their respective mission of providing assistance to victims of domestic violence and their families across Western New York.

Crisis Services’ Advocate Department’s Sexual Violence Prevention Program won the Inclusion Award at the 3rd annual Spotlight on Population Health (SOPHi) Awards & Expo at Buffalo Riverworks.

Crisis Services’ CEO, Jessica Pirro was honored at the 1st Annual Party for Preventionfocus for helping make Erie County and safer and healthier place.

Crisis Services’ COO, Robyn Wiktorski-Reynolds, completed the Health Foundation of Western & Central NY Health Leadership Fellows Program.

Sarah Bonk, CIT Case Manager, was the recipient of a Community Partnership award on behalf the of NFTA Police Department.

Eric Kegler, Crisis Counseling Specialist, was recognized for his years of dedication to the Buffalo community with the Paradigm Service Award at the Buffalo Association of Black Social Worker’s Inc. at their Annual Scholarship & Legends luncheon.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Crisis Services is proud to be a part of the Anti-Stigma Coalition of Erie County. In June 2017 the Coalition launched an awareness campaign “Join the Conversation”. The Coalition is a group of 16 agencies that were brought together for one cause: ending the stigma around mental illness. The Coalition secured support from the Patrick Lee Foundation, The Tower Foundation and also a media partnership with Channel 2 WGRZ. The campaign asks our community to “Join the Conversation” and share stories about their own experiences around mental health.

Check out the website and take the pledge to help end stigma: letstalkstigma.org

UNITY IN HELPING

In October 2017, Buffalo welcomed over 100 leaders in crisis response services from across the country to the National Crisis Center Conference presented by the National Association of Crisis Organization Directors (NASCOD) and Contact USA (CUSA). Topics for discussion circled around the theme of unity in helping and ranged from how to support crisis team workers and fighting burnout, to helping with emotional support for refugees, to best practice collaborations with law enforcement, hospitals, and other emergency services. This annual conference provides an opportunity for these leaders to come together to share best practices, expertise in crisis response, and provide professional development.

Crisis Services’ Emergency Mental Health Response Team was chosen to present a workshop at the conference. Crisis Services was a sponsor of this year’s conference and Jessica Pirro, Crisis Services’ CEO, was part of the conference planning committee and offered opening remarks.
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