THE SAFETY NET | 42 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ERIE COUNTY

THE NEWSLETTER FOR CRISIS SERVICES
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Another Voice/*Mental Health*

Agency provides help when things don't seem right

BY DOUGLAS FABIAN

It has been a few days since the tragic shooting in Tucson, Arizona. Like many, I have been watching the news and following the story's evolution online. Many questions have emerged from this incident in the nation's Desert State. Most of these questions have no easy answers or immediate solutions.... We are all now asking the prerequisite questions: Could the Tucson tragedy have been avoided? Could the appropriate intervention in this young man's life have altered the inevitability of his violent actions?

Could what happened in Tucson take place in Buffalo?... *While rhetorical questions such as these cannot be answered simplistically, at Crisis Services we are confronted with these questions on a daily basis. It is vitally important for readers to be aware that there is an organization you can contact when questions of a behavioral or mental health nature arise...*

Douglas Fabian, Executive Director, Crisis Services
Printed in the Buffalo News, 1/14/11

Averting a Tuscon Tragedy Here

The often unpublicized irony of tragic situations, such as the Tucson shooting, is that individuals with mental illness are actually less likely to be violent than the general public. In addition, the majority of people who are violent do not have a mental illness and those with mental illness are far more likely to be the victims of violence, rather than the perpetrator. However, with this being said, where can the community turn when "something is not right"? In the aftermath of these tragic situations, there are often multiple observers, family members, or neighbors who felt, in hindsight, that something had changed, odd behaviors were witnessed, or they had become fearful of the individual in question.

Crisis Services, our community's crisis response expert, deals with situations like this on a daily basis, and is cognizant of the need to continually provide the community with education on how to access services when "something is not right". The Emergency Outreach Program is focused on hospital diversion, assisting, when possible, to keep individuals out of the hospital and engaged with outpatient treatment. In addition, the program is newly focused on jail diversion as well, working with law enforcement to keep individuals with mental illness from being arrested and jailed for non-violent, victimless crimes that occur as a result of their illness, and can be better addressed via appropriate mental health treatment than inside the walls of a holding center. However, when diversion is not an option, Crisis Services does have the authority and responsibility to see that an individual is taken to a psychiatric emergency room for further evaluation. So, to answer the rhetorical question above, **"Could what happened in Tucson take place in Buffalo?",** it is the hope of our agency that we can assist in seeing that it does not.

Continued on page 3

Crisis Services
Your safety net... since 1968

IN THIS ISSUE

A MESSAGE
From the Director

LONGTIME VOLUNTEER RETIRES

1ST ANNUAL THANKS-FOR-GIVING
A great event!

NEW PHONE SYSTEM INSTALLED

DONOR LISTING
Many Thanks

www.crisisservices.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Douglas B. Fabian, Executive Director

She realizes now that a tragedy was averted because of the intervention provided by Crisis Services.

Full Circle

This past week we received a letter from a woman who had utilized Crisis Services nearly twelve years ago. She wrote a letter to Crisis Services in order to provide an overdue word of "thanks" for the assistance of a Crisis Services' Outreach Team in the late 1990's. Her story, and the response she received from our agency, were strikingly similar to the work being done today.

Her son had returned home from military service overseas. While serving, he had been involved in a traumatic event. According to his mother, he carried the trauma of the incident with him for many months. Indeed, he returned to his family and community a changed man, with what appeared to be deep-seeded emotional scars. His problems escalated to a point where his mother contacted Crisis Services. An Outreach Team was dispatched to the home. There, they encountered a very troubled young man who was threatening violence. It was determined that an evaluation for inpatient psychiatric treatment was necessary. As in many such situations involving our workers, this decision was not met with total acceptance. This young man, his friends, his family, and especially his mother, endured great emotional pain during this time.

In her letter, the mother wrote of her grave concern at the time. Had she done the right thing by allowing Crisis Services to enter her family's life? It wasn't until hearing of the Arizona shooting, and following the story, that she began to look back on this traumatic time in her and her son's life and reflect on its outcome. The mother admitted in her letter that she was worried at that time that her son was capable of actually carrying out a mass shooting. Fortunately, his emotional turmoil was addressed, a possible tragedy averted, and lives allowed to move forward without a marked incident. As I later talked with the mother, I thanked her for sharing her story. While the shooting in Arizona triggered horrible memories of that time, she realizes now that a similar tragedy was averted because of the intervention provided by Crisis Services. Although their lives were briefly interrupted, they were ultimately reconstructed. This mother took the time to thank us for entering her life, and we in turn thank her for coming "full circle" and writing the kind of letter very seldom received at Crisis Services. Thus, thanks are extended to her and to a generation of Outreach Teams that perform their work without a lot of fanfare, attention or recognition.

Douglas B. Fabian, Executive Director

CRISIS SERVICES 1ST ANNUAL THANKS-FOR-GIVING

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

More than 30 volunteers attended the 1st Annual Thanks-For-Giving dinner held at Crisis Services on November 16, 2010. A turkey dinner with all the trimmings was prepared by Crisis Services' staff as a way to say "thank you" to our devoted volunteers. Executive Director Douglas B. Fabian addressed the gathering, thanking them for their tireless contribution to the agency. The volunteers present for the evening's festivities work throughout the agency on our 24-hour hotline, the Advocate Program, the Trauma Response Program, and the reception desk.

Preparations are already in the works for the 2011 Thanks-For-Giving scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2011.

Crisis Services relies heavily on our volunteers to provide services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Doug Fabian (standing in center) talking to a group of Crisis Services volunteers

If you would like more information about becoming a volunteer, visit our website at **www.crisisservices.org** or call 834-3131.

CRISIS SERVICES INSTALLS A NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART PHONE SYSTEM

In 2009, The Patrick P. Lee Foundation awarded Crisis Services $75,000 to purchase and install a new state-of-the-art phone system to help improve our 24-hour hotline and overall agency phone system. We are pleased to report that, after a year of planning and development, the new system was installed on January 19, 2011. This new state-of-the-art system has streamlined how the hotline receives and answers calls. Some of the enhanced components of this system are automatic call distribution, updated call recording, and expanded data collection. The hotline counselors have commented on the "flexibility" of the system and the much improved "sound quality". This new state-of-the-art system was a great way to start 2011 and Crisis Services is thrilled with this opportunity to take our work to a new level and incorporate enhanced technology to assist our community 24 hours a day.

Averting a Tuscon Tradgedy Here, Continued from page 1.

Referrals can come from anywhere....family, friends, law enforcement, mental health providers, or even a concerned stranger. Little known to the general public, Crisis Services, via the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, takes approximately 6-10 referrals annually from the White House on local individuals who have contacted the President, or his administration, presenting in a threatening manner to self or others, or seeking help they felt they could not receive by reaching out within our local community. Crisis Services responds to each of these cases, with the hope of diversion from hospitalization or jail, but with the ability to recommend inpatient care if there are significant safety and stability concerns. If you are concerned about the well-being or safety of someone that you know, please don't wait until it's too late. Crisis Services is available 24 hours a day and can assist, but we need you to call. Please help us to help those with mental illness, so that what happened in Tucson does not happen here. Call us at 834-3131. If you would like to show your support for the mission of Crisis Services, please consider sending in a donation today.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

For the past 42 years, Crisis Services has assisted people in need, whether it's a victim of domestic violence, a homeless family of four, or a despondent caller needing to talk to someone. We are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

We thank the following donors for their very generous contributions to our agency over the past year. Memorial gifts are made in the name of friends or family who have passed away, as a meaningful expression of sympathy. Special Occasion (Honorarium) gifts are made in the name of friends and family as a way to honor them for birthdays, weddings or to simply acknowledge them.

Your support ensures that the Crisis Services' safety net will be here to support all who need it in our community in the days and weeks to come.

Anonymous
Mr. Nabil Abousaid
Wiliam & Lisa Ackendorf
Mr. Kyle A. Anderson
Ms. Judith Andruczyk
In memory of Patricia Frey
Kareema Arkel
Mr. Gregory Balzano
Ms. Brenda Battleson
Mr. John Beltrami
Mr. David Benes
Mr. Michael Brennan
Mr. Stanley Bolas
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Mr. Robert L. Klick
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Ms. Eugenia Taylor
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Ms. Katrina Wetzel
Mr. Lawrence W. Wheatley
Ms. Deborah Wright
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Wright
Mrs. Patricia Zielinski
Dr. William Zorn
Mr. Lawrence Zygaj

TRIBUTE GIFTS

This is a way to pay tribute to a loved one through a gift to Crisis Services. Our thanks go out to those who designate Crisis Services as the beneficiary of memorial donations to be made in memory of their loved one. When we receive a gift of this nature, we acknowledge the donor and notify the family of receipt of a gift.

We send our deepest sympathies to those who lost family and friends this past year.

Danielle B. Dash
Anonymous(2)
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Ciminelli
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Ciminelli
Clarence Central High School
Ms. Ruth DeLuca
Ms. Ann Deutschlander
Ms. Bernadine Frank
Mr. Jay Gershberg & Staff
Michael & Marilyn Giancarlo
Anthony & Tracy Greco
Patty & Bruce Green
Bob & Lynn Karas
Ms. Kathleen Moran-Cavorsi

Danielle B. Dash, *continued*
Mr. Philip Perna
The Perna Family
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Barton & Margo Scott
Mrs. Ethel Scott
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Supermarket Management
Richard & Louise Vivacqua
Richard & Mary Vivacqua
The White Family

Randall Hill
Ms. Danielle Billera
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Jennifer & David Palombo
Ms. Kelly Sloan
Ms. Louise Soper
Mr. Charley Trainer
Ms. Danielle Umansky

Joseph T. Kolarczyk
Robert & Karen Kolarczyk
Mark & Matilda Oppenheimer

Thank You

Donate online at www.crisisservices.org

LONGTIME HOTLINE VOLUNTEER RETIRES AFTER 34 YEARS

Doug Kroll began his volunteer career at Crisis Services as a college student in 1977, working the midnight - 8 am shift every other Friday on the hotline. Although his choice of shift would change, for the next 34 years Doug would be found answering phones at Crisis Services on Friday evenings, twice a month. He experienced across-the-board changes in both technology and personnel, watching administrations change and literally hundreds of staff and volunteers who have come and gone. Logging in well over 4500 hours on the phones, Doug's calm voice has touched many lives in Western New York.

When he started as a volunteer, the agency was located at Main and Heath, and was staffed entirely by volunteers. He recalled how, back then, each volunteer was responsible for loading their own reels onto a reel-to-reel tape recorder, used to record every call, technology that seems antiquated by today's standards.

At a dinner in his honor held on January 30, 2011 Doug remarked that he has been a Crisis Services volunteer longer than he has done any other thing in his life, including his professional career as a transportation consultant, and his marriage. He holds the longevity record for any volunteer in the agency's 42-year history, with his career spanning four tumultuous decades. Doug will be greatly missed and forever appreciated.

Doug has been a Crisis Services Volunteer longer than he has done any other thing in his life.

BECOMING A CRISIS SERVICES VOLUNTEER

Help us provide our services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year! Crisis Services relies heavily on volunteers. Please consider joining our **Crisis Counseling Program** (hotline) or our **Advocate Program**. Both programs require completion of a 40-hour training session.

To receive more information about becoming a Crisis Services volunteer, visit our website at www.crisisservices.org or call 834-3131.

BOB EVANS PROVIDES THANKSGIVING DINNER

Michelle Vera, with plaque presented by Crisis Services.

The holidays do bring out the best in people. Michelle Vera, manager of Bob Evans on Transit Road in Lancaster, decided that she wanted to do something for women and families in need. So she put up some signs and some donation jars around the restaurant, and watched as customers and staff began to donate money. They collected enough to donate four of their Bob Evans Farmhouse Feast Thanksgiving Dinners. These dinners serve 6-8 people and are valued at $75.00. She contacted Crisis Services to find four families from our Homeless and Advocate Programs who were in need of a Thanksgiving dinner.

These dinners were delivered to the families by staff members of both programs. **Thank you, Michelle, and Bob Evans for such a generous holiday donation!**

DONATE ONLINE

www.crisisservices.org
(Secure Website)

You can charge your tax-deductible gift to:
MasterCard, Visa, or American Express

MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING YOUR OLD CELL PHONE(S)

to Crisis Services
to help survivors of
domestic violence and
sexual assault.

**Call 834-2310 ext. 146
for more info.**

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.

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 its excellent services and programs to individuals in need in our community, as it has since 1968. Treating and assisting people in emotional crisis through a variety of therapeutic services (24-hour hotline, suicide prevention, homelessness, rape and domestic violence, and mental health and trauma) need your ongoing generous support. Enclosed in this newsletter is a convenient envelope for your use, or charge your donation online by visiting our secure website at:

www.crisisservices.org

Crisis Services
Your safety net... since 1968
2969 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14214-1003

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Your gift to Crisis Services today can help us to prevent a Tucson tragedy from happening right here in Erie County.

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