

# Crisis Call Center

Life got you down? We'll get you through it.

Fiscal Year of 2009 -2010



## The Desk Bell

On every desk, in each office, close at hand is a bell. Staff has been trained to ring that bell as a signal for help should they need crisis assistance with an incoming call.

## About Crisis Call Center



Crisis Call Center was established as an outreach program of the University of Nevada, Reno in 1966 in response to the high rate of suicide in Nevada. Working with Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health, a plan was created to establish a 24 hour suicide prevention hotline through the Department of Psychology at the University of Nevada, Reno. Crisis Call Center became an independent not-for-profit agency in 1985. We are accredited by the American Association of Suicidology and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency, and are a Standard of Excellence Partner of the United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra. Crisis Call Center is a multi-lingual provider.

**24-Hour Crisis Hotline:** Crisis Call Center's 24-hour crisis line often serves as the first point of contact for individuals who are seeking help, support, and information. The need for emotional support or referral assistance is something most individuals encounter at some point in their lives. Crisis Call Center's staff and volunteers are available 24/7/365 to help individuals discover the skills and resources they uniquely possess and that allows them to develop solutions and maximize self sufficiency.

**Nevada 2.1.1:** Every hour of every day, someone in Nevada needs essential services from finding an after-school program to securing adequate care for a child or an aging parent. Faced with a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help-lines, people often don't know where to turn. In many cases, people end up going without these necessary services because they do not know where to start. Nevada 2.1.1 helps people find and give help. 2010 Calls: 75,320

# The work we do is not easy and has been made more difficult by the hard economic times we are all facing.

Kathy Jacobs, Executive Director

Rather than reflecting back on things that have been out of our control for the last year, I prefer to think about the positive things that Crisis Call Center experiences daily. Things that cannot be bought or sold, that can only be given away by warm and caring hearts.

When people ask me where I work, and I tell them Crisis Call Center, they usually respond by saying how difficult that must be, while looking around the room for a way to make a quick exit. "Crisis" is not warm and fuzzy, and it is not an easy topic for a lot of people. So, for all of those times when I have not been able to further explain . . .

Crisis Call Center is full of warm and caring hearts. Hearts that want to give comfort, support and assistance to the countless number of individuals who are experiencing situations that have not only made their lives difficult, but oftentimes make them seem unbearable. These unbelievably loving and caring hearts belong to the staff and volunteers at Crisis Call Center. The work we do is not easy and has been made more difficult by the hard economic times we are all facing.

Resources to help individuals in need are much harder to come

by, and sometimes, are not available at all. People are angry, hurt, and frustrated, they are frightened, and sometimes they take it out on those warm and caring hearts that are here to help them. And yet, through it all, these hearts come back, day after day, week after week, and year after year, to give a small piece of themselves to help others in need.

These warm and caring hearts are not just a part of Crisis Call Center, they are a piece of our community. They care, they give back, and they are helping to build a stronger and healthier community for all of us. They do it through their ongoing commitment to reach out and touch someone, one life at a time. They are the heart and soul of Crisis Call Center. I am honored to be a small part of what they give to make a positive impact in the lives of people they will never know, everyday.



*A civilization flourishes*

*when people plant trees*

*under whose shade*

*they will never sit.*

*Greek Proverb*



## Light at the end of the tunnel

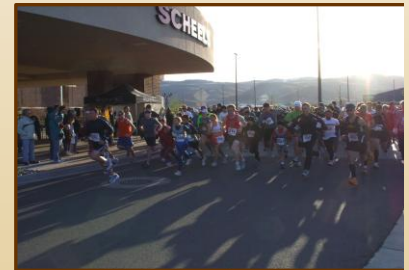
Thanks to our wonderful supporters and ambassadors in the community 2009-10 was a very successful year for Fund Development. The Knights of St John selected Crisis Call Center as the beneficiary of their annual City Lights benefit in the Palladio Penthouse. The Knights of St John were able to present the Crisis Call Center with a \$10,000 check towards the new text messaging support services. Ambassador Mike Norman was able to donate \$5,000 in collaboration with New York Life for his efforts in the community. Wal-Mart was once again our biggest supporter of the year donating over \$20,000 to our general fund!

Special events saw a lot of changes as we partnered with the Reno Aces for a fundraiser on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July that brought 150 CCC supporters to the game and a fireworks show. The Scheels FANatic 5k was a huge success bringing in over 550 runners, the most ever for a Crisis Call Center

run! The uncertainty of what lies ahead is a lingering question on everyone's mind. Fund Development has become more important than ever, as we strive to keep ahead of the economy and keep our life saving services available to Nevadans.

As we move into the 2010-11 year more challenges are on the horizon. Your support is more important than ever. I'm confident that with new ideas, a fresh outlook and an increase in new support we are sure to have an exciting year ahead.

By: Jeff Simpson, Coordinator of Fund Development and Marketing



**Sexual violence** and teen dating violence have a major impact on the lives of individuals, their families and friends, and ultimately, on the entire community. The correlation between child sexual abuse and public health is well documented. Survivors are more likely to suffer under a number of chronic disorders including PTSD, and from difficulties forming healthy relationships without interventions.

For over 20 years the SASS program has offered 24/7 face-to-face crisis intervention and direct advocacy services for victims of sexual assault in Washoe County and neighboring northern Nevada and California rural communities. Combined with the support provided by our 24-hour crisis hotline for primary and secondary survivors, and the access to our victim support group, many of these individuals receive the care and resource they deserve.

Clients Served in FY 09-10, SASS and the Crisis Lines provided services to 1,385 individuals, which includes:

- Accompaniment for 175 primary and secondary victim/survivors
- Support groups for 37 individuals
- 24-hour hotline support for 1,173 primary and secondary victim/survivors

**Access & Activation** There are three approaches that will activate the SASS Team's response: **Hotline calls:** If a victim of sexual assault or a family member calls the Crisis Lines to learn for themselves what to do, or to better understand what their options are, a crisis line volunteer will provide immediate intervention skills, provide options, and then alert the SASS team. One of the options available to the survivor of sexual assault is access to a forensic examination by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), free of charge without having to report the crime to Law Enforcement. This activation is known as the Anonymous "Jane Doe" Forensic Exam: **Anonymous "Jane Doe" Forensic Examinations:** Jane Doe Exams can be activated by a number of ways: the most common is a call to the crisis lines, and a call center volunteer explains this as one of their options, and the SASS staff or volunteer contacts the individual and schedules an exam

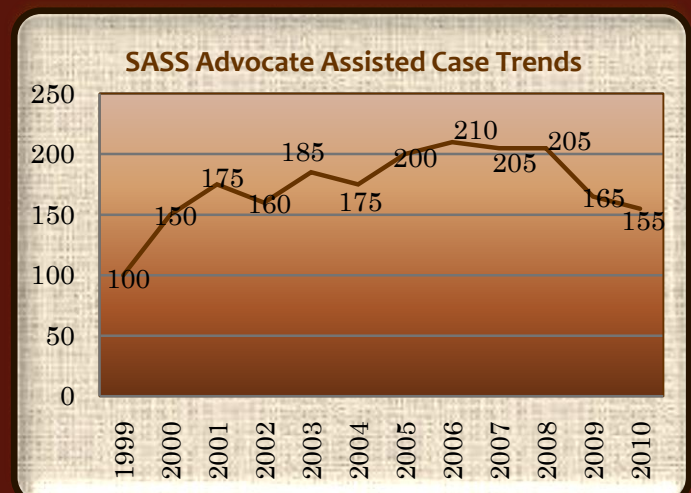
with a SANE Nurse, the advantage being is that crucial time-sensitive evidence and need for care may be identified while giving time for the individual to decide how they might want to proceed or are undecided about how to proceed towards healing and/or justice.

Another typical activation is when the SASS Team is contacted by hospital ER staff or by a law enforcement officer when it is known that the survivor is not ready or motivated to file a formal police complaint. **Law Enforcement Activation:** If a formal police report has been made, and a Law Enforcement Officer and survivor wishes an examination, the LEO will contact the SASS program team and arranges for an examination to be made. In this case, all evidence collected will be attached and identified to a Case ID # which may later be used in prosecution. At any point in the above illustrated processes a SASS advocate may be inserted to ensure that the survivor feels well responded to and cared for by providing services that they might require, and when options are unknown to a survivor, they are clearly laid before the individual so that they might better be informed. **Aftercare** is another component to the program, so the SASS program offers ongoing follow-up care when desired to ensure that the healing process is allowed to begin.

## Sexual Assault Support Services

Update By: Ben Felix,

Coordinator for the SASS Program



## As certain as the sun rises in the East, we know our phone will ring.

In the fiscal year 2009/2010, the Crisis Lines answered over 2,300 calls each month and that number is continuously rising. The calls vary in topics ranging from suicide to domestic violence to rental assistance. We are finding more and more callers arriving at the end of their rope due to these tough economic times; nevertheless, when all hope begins to fade, we find a way to shine all the brighter.

To help provide the best service possible to the community we love, the Crisis Center has become the first in the nation to provide 24-hour crisis intervention via text message. We created a program targeted to the deaf and hard of hearing community along with the teenage/young adult population. As any parent knows, text messaging is spreading like wild fire and it is quickly becoming the preferred form of communication with the upcoming generations. Similarly, text messaging has been a part of the deaf and hard of hearing community for a while; this program is allowing us to “get with the times” and connect with people we otherwise might not have been able to reach. The program has been implemented with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population as well as Native American youth in a rural setting. We will continue to introduce this program to the community in increments until all youth and crime victims in Northern Nevada are aware of this specialized service we now offer.

With the certification of the Crisis Lines Coordinator, Debbie Gant-Reed, and the Head Trainer, Janett Massolo, in the Suicide Prevention Model, ASIST, it has now been implemented Center wide. Our Suicide Prevention and Intervention training was extended from 60 hours to 72 hours to incorporate this model into our already extensive program. All volunteers and crisis lines staff have completed the training as well as most of the general Crisis Center staff. The new Suicide Prevention model has been well received by both seasoned and newly trained staff and volunteers. It has enabled us to have a comprehensive assessment of our suicidal callers and enhances our safe planning to include more extensive follow-up with our callers.

Additionally, the Crisis Lines has enhanced the follow-up procedure. After multiple studies conducted by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the American Association of Suicidology have proven that following-up with a person having thoughts of suicide or making an attempt on their life can drastically decrease that person’s chance to follow through with their plan or make a second attempt. In accordance with those findings, we have not only extended our follow-ups to all suicidal callers that consent but we are also pursuing collaborative relationships with law enforcement, emergency services and hospitals. We believe this postvention endeavor will greatly help our community grow to be stronger and healthier than ever.





## **SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE LOSS SUPPORT GROUP**

I have had the honor of facilitating the Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL) support group since 2001 and have seen a steady increase in the numbers of survivors I talk to yearly since that time. We have new members joining our support group almost weekly. It fills me with sadness that someone has to find a support group after a loss, but it fills me with joy to know that when the group members show up, they will receive the help and support they want. You can almost see them breathe a sigh of relief when they come in and sit down and see this isn't a counseling session but a safe place that they can express their feelings and emotions. We range anywhere from 6-24 group members at each meeting. The "seasoned" group members do a wonderful job of welcoming the new members and making them feel very comfortable. Most of my referrals for new group members come from the Crisis Lines volunteers and staff, who are doing a great job at getting the basic information to the callers and then in turn, getting the callers contact information to me for a follow-up call. I also produce a monthly newsletter (Lifelink) that is being mailed out to over 250 members and community resources. I have heard feedback from group members that the newsletter helps them cope and that they often read and re-read it over the course of the month until the new newsletter arrives. Last November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009, we held our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Vigil for Survivors of Suicide loss. We had a nice turnout. The vigil is an evening of honoring

and remembering our loved ones as well as the giving and receiving support for an approaching holiday season that is often difficult for someone who has experienced a loss of a loved one to suicide. Three years ago many SOSL members including myself, got together and created our 1<sup>st</sup> Northern Nevada Faces of Suicide Quilt (that hangs on the wall at the Crisis Center) and I am happy to report that our second quilt is in the finishing stages. It is very bittersweet to put together a quilt square due to all the feelings of loss. It is the hope of all the SOSL members, who contributed a quilt square to either quilt that the community understands that suicide has a face and that real people are impacted. The SOSL support group members get involved when and where they can in areas of suicide intervention and prevention. Many participated and or helped in the planning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual "Walk in Memory, Walk for Hope", that was held at Idlewild Park in Reno on September 11<sup>th</sup> for National Suicide Prevention Week. Many SOSL group members, when they feel they are ready, actually take the Crisis Lines training and become volunteers, answering the hot line and helping individuals who have been overcome by the thought of suicide, choose life! I am truly blessed to work with so many wonderful support group members as well as the staff and volunteers of the Crisis Call Center.

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