



The Candle

Email News from the Contra Costa Crisis Center ■ July 2010

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\$100,000 Grant

We're pleased to announce a new grant from the J.M. Long Foundation. The grant, for \$100,000, is to assist in the purchase of a building for our Leftovers Thrift Shop... Leftovers was founded in 1976 for the sole purpose of raising money to support the Crisis Center. Over the years it has operated in leased space in Walnut Creek. Our goal is to buy a building for the shop so that all proceeds can be used to benefit our work... Since its inception, Leftovers has operated entirely with volunteers. Anyone who's interested in volunteering—or who's looking for a good deal on quality merchandise—can go to the shop, which currently is at 2333 Boulevard Circle (925.930.9393).

Volunteer Appreciation Event

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in a democracy,” said an unknown source. “You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” Our volunteers epitomize this, and more than 100 attended our recent volunteer appreciation event. Crisis line counselors, grief counselors, youth services volunteers, Leftovers Thrift Shop volunteers, gala committee volunteers, and others were recognized for their invaluable contributions to our agency and the community. **Kathleen Creel**, a longtime crisis line counselor and trainer, received our 2010 Rosemary Caldwell Award, the one award that we bestow annually in recognition of extraordinary service.

Board Changes

The terms of two long-time board members ended in June. We appreciate the leadership, expertise, and commitment of **John Jenks** and **Mike Rekasis**... Jenks is the treasurer and chief investment officer of the James Irvine Foundation. Rekasis is a financial consultant who worked more than 30 years at Citigroup and UBS. Both men served terms as president and treasurer of our board, and Rekasis remains an active crisis line counselor and grief counselor... June also was the last month of service for our two U.C. Berkeley board fellows, Teal Brown and Kimberly Dasher Tripp. Brown graduated recently from the Goldman School of Public Policy while Tripp graduated from the Haas Business School. We thank them for their service and wish them well in the future.

Conference Wrap-up

Dr. Shawn Shea, a professor of psychiatry at the Dartmouth Medical School and the author of numerous books, was the guest speaker at this year's suicide prevention conference in Contra Costa.

The conference was sponsored by the Contra Costa Crisis Center, Contra Costa Mental Health, Contra Costa NAMI, John Muir Health, and Seneca Center. Conference funding was provided by California's Mental Health Services Act. Nearly 300 people attended.

Diversity Film Series

Our diversity film series is on summer hiatus. It'll resume the evening of Monday, September 27. For information on the series or to get on the mailing list, please contact **Roberto Almanzán** (roberto@crisis-center.org or 925.939.1916 x 128).

Cultural Competency: After the Verdict

Says **Roberto Almanzán**, our cultural competency coordinator, "Most of the news about Oakland after the Mehserle verdict was announced concerned mobs running wild, looting, and vandalism. What was often conveyed was that people in Oakland—particularly African-Americans—engaged in rioting as a result of the verdict... My wife and I have lived in Oakland for over three decades. We shop regularly at Farmer Joe's, a community market where **Oscar Grant** worked behind the meat counter before he was shot and killed. We heard from other staff that he was well liked by his co-workers... Oakland receives a lot of bad press about being crime ridden and dangerous, and I was worried that violent demonstrations following the verdict would add to negative images of the city. I wasn't alone. Police agencies, religious groups, and nonprofit organizations prepared for community fallout. In the downtown area, where many people were expected to gather to protest, police were out in force under orders to allow peaceful protests and to maintain discipline by not overreacting to agitators in the crowd... After the verdict of involuntary manslaughter was announced, I watched TV coverage of the demonstration in downtown Oakland. Besides the police maintaining an area where demonstrators could gather at 14th and Broadway and limiting mass movement beyond this area, there were 60 to 70 ministers and other community leaders in orange vests in the crowd talking to people and working to keep the demonstration peaceful. As the speeches and demonstration went on into the early evening, about 1,000 people gathered. Oscar Grant's grandfather spoke and expressed his disappointment in the verdict, but asked that the community not "dishonor his grandson" with violence. Except for a few isolated incidents, the demonstrations were peaceful until after dark. Then several hundred people, many of them from outside of Oakland, began smashing windows, looting, spray painting buildings, lighting trash cans on fire, and throwing things at the police. One Oakland councilmember who was at the rally said that he talked with several out-of-town people who had backpacks filled with hammers and rocks. They planned to incite violence and provoke the police to overreact. Some of them would stop in the middle of a destructive act to snap photos and record videos of themselves to share with others afterwards. A few people started yelling at the looters, telling them to stop. Some of them did. Unfortunately, it was easier for the media to focus on the rioting, destruction, and looting after dark because that's what was expected rather than the peaceful protest in downtown Oakland earlier in the day... The demonstration was not anything like the riot after the Rodney King verdict. This time, 78 people were arrested, only 19 of whom lived in Oakland. Most of the others lived outside the Bay Area, including 12 from other states."

People in the News

Jillian S., a crisis line volunteer, successfully lobbied for our agency to receive funding from the Giving Grove, an art and fundraising agency in Hercules. We appreciate Jillian's initiative and

support... Congratulations to **Sandy Heinisch**, a grief counselor at the Crisis Center and also a hospice nurse on the publication of her book, *Lights for Dark Places*. The book offers comforting words to people who have lost a loved one... Congratulations, too, to our newest class of certified grief counselors: **Jesse Alcantara, Mike Brungardt, Allyson Byrd, Fred Cone, Cindy Escamilla, Scherri Hendricks, Karla Lagaya, Anne Mabee, Marcie Mouyard, Yesena Navarrette-Munoz, Elahe Noori, Ximena Prudent-Hawkins, Mike Rekasis, Robyn Romanucci, and Barbara Sugrue**. Condolences to former staff member **Liezl Dizon** whose brother died recently of leukemia. He was five years old.

Giving Opportunities

Your generous donations to the Contra Costa Crisis Center support our life-affirming services. You can donate securely online (www.crisis-center.org) or by mail (P.O. Box 3364, Walnut Creek, CA 94598). Gifts to our endowment, whether immediate or made via your will or trust, generate lasting support... Founded in 1963, the Crisis Center is a nonprofit agency, and all donations are tax-deductible. Shopping at Leftovers Thrift Shop, an agency auxiliary located at 2333 Boulevard Circle in Walnut Creek, helps too (visit www.leftoversthriftshop.org for store hours). To learn more about the Crisis Center, the benefits of donor partnership, or our endowment fund, please contact **Kristen Gauché**, our development director, at kristeng@crisis-center.org.

24-Hour Numbers

Crisis:	800.833.2900	Grief:	800.837.1818	Homeless:	800.808.6444
Suicide:	800.273.TALK	Child Abuse:	877.881.1116	Info & Referral:	211
Suicide:	800.SUICIDE	Elder Abuse:	877.839.4347	TTD/TTY:	925.938.0725

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