

**Every hour of every day,
someone is here to listen.**



CrisisConnection

2008 Annual Report

Leadership Letter

2008 was another year of outstanding service to our community, and real progress on the path to greater stability.

If you were to ask us “what’s new,” here are some of our answers:

- We initiated a partnership with Greater Twin Cities United Way, to operate its popular 2-1-1 service overnights and weekends. This has had a transforming effect on our service delivery.
- We initiated a crisis line relationship with the Red Lake Indian Reservation. This community once had the highest youth suicide rate in the nation, and has great need for services like ours.
- We were named as one of six crisis lines to participate in a three-year, federally funded study of suicide prevention methods.
- We received a three-year grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation that will substantially support our work with farmers, farm families, and others in rural Minnesota.

“What’s new” is exciting, but our ongoing work, that we’ve been doing for 40 years now, is important. The most critical dimension of our ongoing work – because it is our core mission – sounds simple: answer the phone. We did this more than 42,000 times last year. Each time, after answering, we then talked to someone facing a personal crisis. Sometimes the crisis was so difficult that the caller was considering ending his or her own life.

Simple? Not always. Our highly trained volunteer counselors were there last year for 42,000 callers, no matter what day of the week, or what time of the day or night, they needed our help.

On the financial side of Crisis Connection, we essentially broke even. While over the long run we need to do better than this, getting our revenues and expenses to be roughly equal is evidence that a financial turnaround we’ve been pursuing aggressively is working, even in the exceedingly difficult economic environment affecting all nonprofits.

Hundreds of people are involved, in a wide variety of ways, in helping Crisis Connection accomplish its life-saving mission. Many are mentioned in this report. It’s worth noting that those who are most involved – the volunteer and staff counselors who are on the phones every hour of every day – are not mentioned by name, for reasons of privacy and confidentiality. But you know who you are, and you know better than anyone else the vital nature of your work.

Ours is a great and essential mission. Read on for more on how we pursue it.



Carol Jackson
Board President



David Therkelsen
Executive Director

Program Summary

Crisis Connection operates two call centers, every hour of every day, and several related programs. Here is a summary of the programs, and their accomplishments in 2008.

Community Call Center

If you call (612) 379-6363, no matter the day or the hour, you will reach a counselor who has plenty of empathy, and plenty of expert knowledge in counseling and about community resources. The counselor may be a member of our staff, but more likely he or she will be a volunteer, who has undergone at least 55 hours of training.

Anyone with any self-defined crisis can call our line; there is never a charge to the caller and the service is anonymous and confidential. While we're available to everyone, some separate lines have been set up for special populations, such as farmers and farm families statewide, and men disposed toward violent behavior. We're also the Minnesota arm of the National Suicide Prevention Line.

In 2008 our Community Call Center handled 42,076 calls. That's one every 13 minutes.

CrisisPlus Call Center

When phones ring in our contract call center, the caller may never know he or she is talking to a Crisis Connection counselor. That's because we are engaged by other organizations – private psychology practices, counties, employee assistance programs to name a few – to represent them. A typical arrangement is for clients to have us take over for their own operations nights and weekends. Our contract call center counselors, all of whom have at least a master's degree, pride themselves in their ability to provide seamless service to our clients.

Since 2007 we have had a contract with the Minnesota's Department of Veterans Affairs through which we share DVA's staff responsibility for the new LinkVets line, able to assist returning Iraq war veterans and their families.

In 2008 our Contract Call Center handled 14,536 calls.

Workline

Hennepin County public assistance clients aim to get living-wage jobs, and eventually end their dependency on public support. But even with a job, there can be practical barriers to getting to work: the car that fails to start, the sick child who can't go to regular day care are a couple of common ones. Here's where Crisis Connection comes in. Under a contract with Hennepin County, we are able to help welfare-to-work clients solve these problems, and get to their jobs – and thus keep their jobs.

In 2008, 445 welfare-to-work clients were enrolled in the Crisis Connection workline program. They received 74 emergency rides, and 150 child care or sick-child care placements. Some 88% of those enrolled stayed employed in their jobs.

Teen Education Program

While suicide rates overall are declining, they are rising in teenage populations. Can there be any greater tragedy than losing a young person, to a self-inflicted death, because he or she could not see a solution to life's problems?

In our Teen Education Program, Crisis Connection counselors visit schools and conduct seminars for young people, covering topics like how to recognize signals that a friend might be considering suicide, and what to do about it.

In 2008 Crisis Connection delivered 31 community education seminars reaching 3060; of these, 87% were presentations through our Teen Education Program.

Sowing Seeds of Hope/AgriWellness

Since 2006 Crisis Connection has provided counseling support to rural populations through its statewide Sowing the Seeds of Hope crisis line. The pressures and stresses of farming, and economic activity in rural areas related to

farming, are immense. In some studies, suicide rates in rural populations are estimated to be triple that of the population as a whole. In 2008 Crisis Counselors assisted more than 4,000 callers from rural areas of Minnesota.

Using financial support from the Otto Bremer Foundation, the agency, along with several partners, also initiated a pilot project, to develop seminars on stress management that can be web-accessed.

United Way/2-1-1

United Way's 2-1-1 service (once known as First Call for Help) is the state's premier information and referral service. Although not a counseling resource, 2-1-1 matches people with needed resources more than a thousand times a day. In 2008, Crisis Connection became United Way's nights/weekends provider of this service. Each night at 6 p.m., these calls are switched over to Crisis Connection; they go back to United Way at 7 a.m. the next weekday. It's all designed to be seamless; the caller gets high-quality information and referral assistance, by day or by night.

SAMHSA Research Project

Crisis Connection entered into a three-year research project in 2008, with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project involves six crisis centers around the country, who follow up later with potentially suicidal callers; the aim is to see whether the followups lead to better outcomes.

Service Statistics

Community call center

Calls answered	42,076
Calls receiving counseling services	34,923
Calls receiving information and referral	9,677
Percent reporting reduction in stress	73%
Percent reporting intention to take positive action	72%
Percent with health care coverage	65%

CrisisPlus call center

Calls answered	14,536
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WorkLine program

Clients enrolled	445
Percentage of clients retaining employment	88%
Rides	74
Child care/sick child care	150

Teen education/ Community education program

Community presentations	31
Attendance	3,060

Volunteers

Call center volunteers	64
Call center volunteer hours	12,941

2008 Contributors

A special thank you to all our contributors. Because you are here for us, we can be here to listen to those in crisis, every hour of every day.

Organization Contributions

\$3500 - \$7500

Ameriprise Financial
 Ameriprise Financial Employee Giving
 DST Systems, Inc.
 Margaret Rivers Fund
 Optimal Advantage
 Verizon Foundation

\$1000 - \$1499

Felhaber, Larson, Fenlon & Vogt
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Under \$100
 3M
 Blue Cross Blue Shield
 Centennial United Methodist Church
 Food Perspectives, Inc.
 Healing Through the Heart
 Hillcrest United Methodist Women
 Medica

Grants

Greater Twin Cities United Way	\$169,722
Otto Bremer Foundation: AgriWellness	\$25,000
Otto Bremer Foundation: General Operating	\$25,000
General Mills Foundation	\$10,000
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation	\$9,000
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	\$7,500
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans Foundation	\$7,500
Women's Club of Minneapolis	\$7,500
Wells Fargo Foundation	\$6,000
Edina Federated Women's Club	\$6,000
McKesson Foundation	\$5,000
Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America	\$5,000
Deluxe Corporation Foundation	\$5,000
Simmet Foundation	\$5,000
City of Golden Valley	\$3,000
Target	\$2,500
Catholic Community Foundation	\$2,000
Downtown Minneapolis Kiwanis Foundation	\$2,000
Burdick-Craddick Family Foundation	\$1,500
Plymouth Congregational Church	\$1,500
Wayzata Community Church, Board of Women's Fellowship and Ministries	\$1,500
Wayzata Community Church Board of Missions and Outreach	\$1,000
St. Edwards Parish Pastoral Council	\$1,000

Shoreview Family Psychologists	United Way Employee Giving Anon.
Suzanne Swanson, Inc.	United Way of Greater Milwaukee
Tollefson Studios, Inc.	Employee Giving
Travelers Insurance	

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\$5000 and Over

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Curtis Gray

Under \$100

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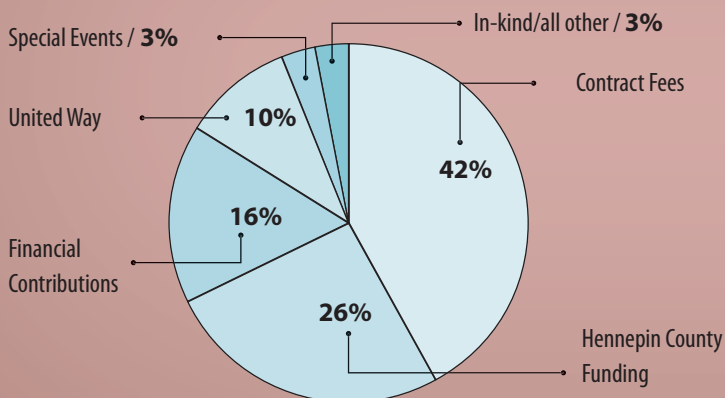
"You guys are great. You are my lifeline. Tell everybody there how much I appreciate you."

"You don't know how much it's appreciated that there's a human being—a nice person—on the other end of the line."

"I'm so thankful because the counselor helped me so I was able to lift my head up again through these trials and tribulations. And I thank you for hiring her and all the other workers. This will save lives and this will help people keep going."

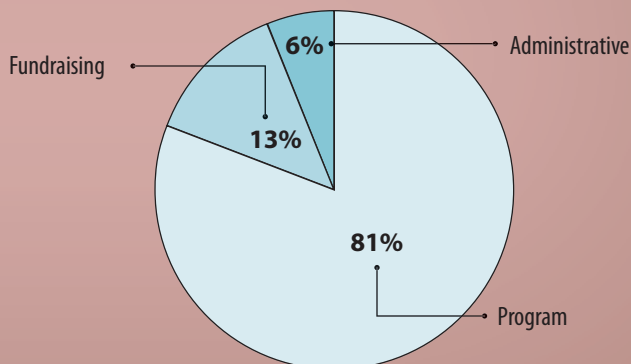
Financials (From audited financial statements for 2008)

Income / \$1,477,255



Expense / \$1,482,591

Increase (decrease) in net assets (\$5,336)



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Crisis Connection

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Richfield, MN 55423

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Every hour of every day, someone is here to listen.
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