

Listening Ear Crisis Center
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Agency Updates

Listening Ear is pleased to welcome new personnel and congratulate those who have made advancements —

Welcome:

- Stephanie Bird, Mental Health Specialist in the Crisis Center
- Children Services Interns: Cindy Seger - MSU MSW, Amanda Webb - Ferris MSW, Katarina Oblinger - CMU BSW, Taylor Ronk - CMU BSW, Rachelle Kellogg - CMU BSW, and Alyson Strzalkowski - CMU BSW
- Rianne Leslie, Mental Health Technician/2-1-1 Call Specialist in the Crisis Center
- Alexandria Marcantonio, New Case Manager in the Runaway Homeless Youth and Transitional Living Programs

Congratulations:

- John Lyons promoted to Assistant Director in the Crisis Center.
- Jamie Dagenais promoted to Senior Program Director for Residential Services - Central
- Jessica Ellis promoted to Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Mt. Pleasant
- Cindy Croke promoted to Assistant Program Director for Residential Services - Central, Mt. Pleasant
- Rebecca Brewer promoted to Program Director for Residential Services - Central, Clare
- Andrea Binge promoted to Program Director for Residential Services - Central, Isabella
- Ashley Walters promoted to Program Director for Residential Services - Central, Isabella
- Robert Hubbard promoted to Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Adams
- Cody Mayhew promoted to Program Director for Residential Services – Central, Adams
- Cindy Miller promoted to Senior Direct Care Worker for Residential Services – South, Ionia
- Chris Chambers promoted to Senior Direct Care Worker for Residential Services – South, Belding
- Natasha Ingersoll promoted to PT Assistant Program Director for Residential Services – North, Kresnak and PT Employment Specialist
- April Alexander promoted to Senior Program Director for Residential Services- North, North Limits

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Executive Director: Donald Schuster

If you wish to have your name removed from the newsletter mailing list, please write: **Executive Director, Listening Ear P.O. Box 800 Mt Pleasant, MI 48804-0800** or, email dschuster@listeningear.com. If you want more information about us, please visit our website at www.listeningear.com or see www.guidestar.org.

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The mission of Listening Ear is to provide citizens of Michigan with human services and affordable housing that satisfy, support, and promote the dignity and well-being of those in need.

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Listening EAR

Listening Ear Partners with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Many don't realize that suicide is the second-leading cause of death for those ages 15-34. While men are more likely to kill themselves, three times the number of women attempt suicide. Sadly, veterans' suicide rate has tripled in the last decade with more than 2,000 suicide deaths across the country. Suicide rates are also high among older adults. **But, suicide is preventable. One call can save a life.**



Because of financial support from our donors, for over 45 years Listening Ear has been able to help thousands of area residents expressing pain and discussing their wish for suicide. Our 24 hour Crisis Center mental health workers are trained to identify a caller's suicidal desire, capability, and intent. The staff offer an empathic ear, explore coping strategies and alternatives, and offer resources - including emergency help.

Now, Listening Ear has joined the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network of 165 crisis centers across the nation. In addition to calls made to our 989-772-2918 or 989-386-2774 numbers, the Network will rout calls made to their Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE from Clare, Isabella and Gratiot County callers to our year-round Crisis Center, which thanks to you is *"Always There."*

(See more on page 2.)

INCREDIBLE COMMUNITY

Dear Readers,

Nationally accredited with the Council on Accreditation since 1998, Listening Ear has also met the high standards of the National Suicide Prevention Network. With this new designation, calls received by the Network's Suicide Prevention Lifeline from Clare, Isabella and Gratiot residents will be routed to our Crisis Center. While other Crisis Centers have closed we have been able to sustain the 24 hour crisis line because of community support. This service, founded over 45 years ago, continues to help area residents who call for a wide range of reasons. Sadly, suicide is among those reasons. Suicide affects everyone - including the person's family and friends.

One call can save a life...

Sally called our 24 hour Crisis Center late one night after she just swallowed a handful of pills. She talked about being a past rape victim, having terrible memories that robbed her of sleep and that she wanted to die. Yet there was part of her that wanted to live. Keith, our trained Crisis Center telephone mental health worker, stayed on the phone with her. He listened to her pain and together they worked on a plan of help and rescue. But as the pills took effect, this became even more challenging. Calling from a cell phone, Sally was not sure of her exact location. Keith asked her for landmarks which he relayed to the dispatcher who directed the emergency responders. He did a great job working with Sally to find a reason to live and summoning help. After the incident, with referrals, Sally did receive treatment to support her recovery while dealing with her past trauma.

Keith did a great job helping this suicide caller, yet it is you and your financial support that allows us to help hundreds of callers each year like Sally. With your support, Listening Ear is able to build a community that is *"Always There."*

Sincerely,

Donald Schuster, LMSW
Executive Director

Power of Kindness...

The **Lori A. Shively Power of Kindness Award** was presented to three deserving staff at the 2015 Board Award Banquet. The award is given to employees who, like the late former board member Lori A. Shively, demonstrate kindness, passionate and loving service and a tenacious "can do" attitude.



Jenny Jacobs has worked 15 years for Listening Ear, most recently as the Program Director in the Residential Services- South program in Ionia. As verified by letters from her staff, Jenny is a person who has brought Gentle Teaching to life with compassion, warmth, respect, a warm smile or a sharing a laugh.

Jo Crossett has worked 14 years for Listening Ear as a Program Director in the Residential Services- North program in Mancelona. Jo is a great advocate for her consumers and is always ready to lend a helping hand to consumers who operate their own micro enterprise. She is hard-working, loyal and always willing to go the extra mile. She is a woman of action who gets things done quickly but finds time to offer comfort.



Mark Ellis has worked 24 years, most recently as a Program Director in the Residential Services- Central program in Mt. Pleasant. Mark has a great sense of humor but offers advice and direction while encouraging each person to make their own choices. Mark has traveled with consumers to Nashville, Las Vegas and Mackinaw Island helping them meet their dreams.



Creating Affordable Housing...

More than half of the information and referral calls to Listening Ear's 24 hour help line are from people looking for affordable housing or assistance with utility costs. "Affordable housing with energy efficient heating is usually the number one need", says Donald Schuster, Executive Director of Listening Ear.

Low income housing is a critical part of any community's healthy housing mix but it is in short supply. Affordable housing allows low income families to live in communities close to work, education, and affordable transportation. According to Schuster, "Low income housing contributes to the well-being of both parents and children, since studies show that children living in stable housing do better in school!"

Listening Ear has developed 79 apartments over the last fifteen years that meet low income affordable housing standards. In the coming months 60 more low income housing units will be added. Schuster says, "That means that about 350 children and adults will have an affordable and energy efficient place to call home in Isabella County." To learn more about housing options, call 2-1-1 or the 24 hour crisis line at (989) 772-2918.

We are thankful for these supporters!

(Gifts made since the last newsletter)...

LISTENING EAR CRISIS CENTER FUND

- Betsy Banta
- Kathy Tarrant

CONSUMER NEEDS & DREAMS FUND

- Laurie Booth
- Jane Kipp
- Bonnie Hayward

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT FUND

- Anonymous
- John & Linda Dinan
- Chuck & Linda Blaksmith in memory of Valerie Stephen's birthday
- Carolyn VanCleave; from Carolyn, John & Deb in honor of Kristin Sheridan

PHIL A. LANGLOIS ENDOWMENT FUND

- Vicki Chessin

GENERAL DONORS & GRANTMAKERS - Thank you to:

- Alpha Kappa Psi toward Transitional Living Program for homeless youth
- Anonymous for meeting baseball dreams
- CMU-RPL 430 Fundraising event for the Crisis Center
- First Nonprofit Foundation toward new accounting system and capacity building
- The Alden and Vada Dow Family Foundation toward youth and adult recreation
- The James R. & Anita Horne Jenkins Family Foundation toward Crisis Center
- Isabella Bank and Trust toward Transitional Living Program for homeless youth
- John and Cleo Leppien made a generous gift to the 24 hour Crisis Program and for homeless youth.
- Donald Schuster made a gift to the Schuster Family Fund for Listening Ear
- Jessica Lynn Smith toward the Crisis Center

The following that made gifts for the Harley Days event/Weekend Recreation Program:

- Abbott Furniture
- John Sebastian Productions
- Al Kaufmann
- Mid Michigan Industries
- Battle & Sons
- Moose on Bikes St. Louis
- Eric's Auto Body
- Moose Lodge 1566
- Exit 95
- Tony & Diann Turnwald
- Ila Rousseau

The following individuals directed their United Way gift to Listening Ear during 2014/2015 Campaign

- | | | | |
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