



# The Candle

Email News from the Contra Costa Crisis Center ■ March 2012

- [Our website](#)
- [Annual report](#)
- [Board of trustees](#)
- [National Lifeline](#)
- [211 database](#)
- [Print newsletter](#)
- [Management staff](#)
- [211 California](#)

## Message from Interim Executive Director: Cory Pohley

In January, after 15 years of service, Executive Director John Bateson left the Center to focus on the promotion of “The Final Leap” his important new book about the ongoing tragedy of suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge. John is also hard at work on another book about military suicides. We are forever grateful to John for his incredible contribution to the growth of the Center and we wish him much success as he continues to raise awareness about suicide.

It’s been almost two months since I was appointed to serve as Interim Executive Director of the Crisis Center and I am truly honored to follow John in service of such a powerful and important mission - carried out 24/7 by a strong, committed, and highly skilled circle of staff and volunteers.

I am here to provide the Board and staff with the “breathing space” they need to prepare themselves for new leadership, while I attend to the day-to-day oversight of the organization.

A huge thank you to staff, board, volunteers, our donors, community partners, and funders for the warm welcome and help that has been extended to me, in these first few weeks. This makes my job a pleasure.

A change of leadership is hard. It’s also one of the most significant and challenging opportunities any nonprofit Board will face. The Crisis Center’s Board of Trustees recognizes this and is committed to engaging in a thoughtful process that will include input from staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders.

Leyna Bernstein Consulting has been selected to conduct an extensive Executive Search and is currently working with the board and interviewing stakeholders whose input will be instrumental in helping to shape the recruitment process.

Later this year, we will welcome a new Executive Director who will lead us into our 50th year and in to the next decade. I know how fortunate the next executive director will be to find as I have, a deeply committed board, staff and community pulling together to keep people alive and safe – to help them when they need it the most – with skill and grace. Together, the Crisis Center’s energy for this powerful work remains strong.

## Crisis Chat Launch: Stephan Clifford

I can't believe it's only been 30 days since we launched Crisis Chat! There was so much build up and work to be done to ensure a smooth launch day of this groundbreaking new service that it seemed perhaps that launch day would never actually arrive. The anticipation alone was enough to keep me motivated while training our two volunteer associates (Ed Heney and Jesse Kuzman), and for Marina to continually fine tune the protocols so that we would be prepared to test our phone skills in this brave new world of Crisis Chat.

There we were though on the first day, myself and my awesome partner Marina, waiting for that first chatter to log in, gripped with equal parts nervousness and excitement. The journey since those moments has been amazing and humbling. I am happy to report that our ASIST training has been nothing but invaluable while helping visitors to the Crisis Chat program.

Most of our visitors have come to us through the National Suicide Prevention Line portal, and most of them have been high lethality for suicide. The type of person that utilizes a chat service in this way is often more isolated and higher lethality than callers we come across on the hotline. Not only have we had to adapt to this normally uncommon caller but we've also had to adjust to the very different skill set needed for online chat. I am happy to report that we have collaborated together to meet these challenges head on, adapting as needed to bring the best possible service to our clients. We have been successful in reducing lethality and using our current follow up program on the hotline to offer support to clients that need resources and encouragement to utilize safety plans. Our early success has even been recognized by the NSPL team who will use our experience and methodology to help train current and future centers embarking on this new medium with which to help people.

I couldn't do my job without the amazing volunteers and staff here at the Contra Costa Crisis Center. The support and enthusiasm for Crisis Chat has kept me energized and motivated. Due to the nature of these challenging chats, without the team atmosphere and the amazing training we've received the future of Crisis Chat would be uncertain. However, here at the center we're transferring the dedication and high standard of care we're driven to provide directly into this new program. Crisis Chat is just one more way that this incredible place is proving that with help comes hope and I am truly proud to be a part of that process.

Crisis Chat/Hotline Specialist

## Calling All Walkers: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual 5K Walkathon

### *Walk To Help Others Have Hope!*

It's hard to believe it's been a year already since we launched our first ever Walkathon. Your support last year helped to make the walk a big success; so much so, that we decided to do it again this year! Our 2nd Annual 5k Walkathon will bring together family, friends, staff, volunteers and community members—all committed to making a difference. Some will walk in memory of loved ones and others to ensure that support is there for the thousands of people who rely on the Crisis Center each year.

This half day event promises to be fun for everyone. ABC News Anchor Dan Ashley's band PUSH and the band SHARP Nine will perform and kids can expect to be entertained too! [Click Here](#) for the walkathon flyer

Date: Saturday May 19th, 2012

The event will be held at Heather Farms Park (Ygnacio Valley Rd. & North San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek.) Registration begins at 9am and the walk starts at 10am.

Registration is \$20 for an individual, \$30 for a family (up to 4); fee includes T-shirt, food, and entertainment.

There are so many ways you can help:

Register as a walker (To Register as a Walker Now [Click Here](#))

Sponsor a walker (To Sponsor a Walker Now [Click Here](#))

Become an event sponsor

Volunteer or all of the above!

### ***JOIN OUR EARLY SPONSORS***

Thank you to our early 2012 Walkathon Sponsors! ([Click Here](#))

As a friend of the Crisis Center, you understand the importance of our work. Your generosity, involvement, and partnership make it possible for our staff and volunteers to provide life-affirming services to people throughout Contra Costa County.

We need your help to make the Walkathon a success again this year.

Please consider joining our growing list of sponsors.

We offer a premier sponsorship program for individuals or businesses that can be tailored to your needs. Most sponsorships offer a covered booth where you may display or handout your organization's flyers and materials.

This year's Walkathon will attract more than 400 participants from throughout Contra Costa and will provide vital support for our life-affirming programs.

For more information on the sponsorship program, please contact Judith Parker, Director of Development, by email at [judithp@crisis-center.org](mailto:judithp@crisis-center.org) or call 925.939.1916 ext 134.

We hope to see you at the walk,  
Jack Scaff and Jim Holt  
2012 Walkathon Co-Chairs

### **Cultural Competency: Asian American Basketball Phenomena**

Robert Almanzan, the Crisis Center's diversity consultant notes that Jeremy Lin, a young NBA basketball player from the Bay Area, has caused a sensation by his outstanding performance for the New York Knicks. There have been a couple of Asian players in the NBA that have been stars but they are foreign born. Lin is the first Asian American that has risen to this high level of play. He has been a hero to many but particularly to other Asian Americans that have not had someone from their racial group demolish some of the stereotypes that Asian American men endure. One such stereotype being that Asian American men are more intellectually and less athletically inclined. In the past, being able to play basketball at the highest professional level was not a performance that has been associated with an Asian American male.

After the New York Knicks lost a game in mid-February, an ESPN.com website alluded to "chink in the armor" on a headline. A few days later an ESPN News anchor discussing Jeremy Lin's weaknesses asked, "If there is a chink in the armor, where can Lin improve his game." ESPN apologized and took disciplinary action against the sportscasters. Many people, including one of the offending sportscasters, have felt that the use of the phrase "chink in the armor" was not used in a racially derogatory manner. "Chink" has been used as a disparaging term for Asians in the U.S. for more than a century and it seems clear that using "chink in the armor" was used specifically because Jeremy Lin is Asian American.

This is not an infrequent argument when derogatory terminology is used in talking about different social identities that are saddled with negative stereotypes. I think that it is important to keep in mind that people from targeted groups are the best judges of what words or terms are insulting or diminishing.

Asian American men are celebrating that Jeremy Lin is demolishing an old stereotype. As Jeremy talked with a reporter about all of this, he mentioned that he still hears comments like "he's quicker than he looks" and "he's deceptively athletic."

Situations like this present us with an opportunity to discuss these issues so that we can all become more culturally competent.

## Diversity Film Series: Black in Latin America

We are continuing with the documentary series, "Black in Latin America," with the third film, "Brazil: A Racial Paradise?" Henry Louis Gates, Jr., continues his exploration of Latin America in Brazil, the destination of more than 40% of all the slaves from Africa brought to the Americas. Brazil may be the most racially mixed country on earth, a mixture of African, European and indigenous peoples. A major religion, Candomble, is a mixture of African traditions and Roman Catholicism. Much of what Prof. Gates sees in Brazil reminds him of his travels in Nigeria and Angola. But then when Prof. Gates continues his explorations in Rio de Janeiro's wealthy neighborhoods and beaches, he sees few black people anywhere until he enters the slums.

Come to learn about Brazil and the history of the descendants of African slaves there. Is there a possibility of a "racial democracy" in Brazil?

"Brazil: A Racial Paradise?" will be the diversity film at the Contra Costa Crisis Center on Monday, March 26. You don't need to have viewed the prior films to engage with this month's presentation. Our program, as usual, will start with refreshments and light food at 6:30 PM. Bring something to share if you can. The film will begin at 7:00 PM and afterwards we will have a facilitated conversation about our experience with this film.

If you would like to attend please RSVP to Roberto Almanzan at [robertoa@crisis-center.org](mailto:robertoa@crisis-center.org), or call 925.939.1916, x128, or 510.531.6462. There is no fee to attend.

***Black in Latin America - Brazil: A Racial Paradise?  
Monday, March 26, 2012  
6:30 pm – Light food & refreshments  
7:00 pm – Film & Discussion***

***Come to movie night at the Contra Costa Crisis Center!  
Please RSVP at [robertoa@crisis-center.org](mailto:robertoa@crisis-center.org)  
Send your name, contact phone and the number of  
people coming with you. If you need more information,  
contact Roberto by email or phone at 925.939.1916 ext. 128 or 510.531.6462.***

If you would like to be removed from this email list please reply to this email with "remove" in the subject line.

If you received this announcement indirectly and would like to receive future diversity film announcements directly,

send an email to [robertoa@crisis-center.org](mailto:robertoa@crisis-center.org) requesting to be added to the diversity film list. Please forward to any of your contacts who might be interested.

Our apology if you've received this notice about this film program before.

## Ways to Give: How You Can Help

The Contra Costa Crisis Center is a nonprofit agency incorporated under Section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Our tax-exempt number is 94-1747227. All donations are tax-deductible and support our 24-hour crisis lines, grief counseling program, youth services program, and 211 information and referral service. Individuals can donate online, by mail, by attending our gala and walkathon, and by shopping at Leftovers Thrift Shop, a Crisis Center auxiliary. [More >>](#)



## Getting Help: 24-Hour Numbers

|                 |              |                             |              |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Crisis:</b>  | 800.833.2900 | <b>Child Abuse:</b>         | 877.881.1116 |
| <b>Suicide:</b> | 800.273.TALK | <b>Elder Abuse:</b>         | 877.839.4347 |
| <b>Suicide:</b> | 800.273.8255 | <b>Homeless:</b>            | 800.808.6444 |
| <b>Suicide:</b> | 800.SUICIDE  | <b>Youth:</b>               | 800.863.7600 |
| <b>Español:</b> | 888.628.9454 | <b>TTD/TTY:</b>             | 925.938.0725 |
| <b>Grief:</b>   | 800.837.1818 | <b>Info &amp; Referral:</b> | 211          |



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