



# The Candle

Email News from the Contra Costa Crisis Center ■ March 2010

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## New Tool for Policy Makers

This month a new, cutting-edge tool was launched in California. Called Healthy City, it allows users to translate complex data into useful policy-making information and represent it visually on a map. There are also options to chart and analyze data, as well as find local resources... For example, users can start with a map of Contra Costa County or a specific zip code; add the location of children under age five; add filters such as family income, ethnicity, and language spoken at home; then overlay the location of Head Start sites, WIC clinics (Women, Infants, and Children program), and First 5 learning centers to see the proximity of resources to needs. Alternatively, users can map the location of parks and playgrounds relative to childhood obesity rates in a community. The possibilities are almost endless, especially because current census data from many sources are loaded... We have made all of the resource information in our 211 database available to Healthy City, as have most other 211 providers in the state. This way users can search for resources in our database while on the Healthy City site. Healthy City is an independent, nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles. The service is free and easy to use. Go to [www.healthycity.org](http://www.healthycity.org).

## TWANDA Foundation Grant

Recently we received a new grant from the TWANDA Foundation. The grant is for \$25,000 and supports all of our programs—our 24-hour crisis lines, grief counseling program, youth services, and 211 information and referral. We appreciate the foundation's ongoing support of our work, which helps make these life-affirming services possible. Incidentally, while TWANDA is not an acronym, foundation officials spell it in capital letters.

## National Park Service Training

Last month **Judi Hampshire, LMFT**, our crisis line/211 director, provided trainings in suicide prevention to 40 National Park Service rangers. Ironically, the first training occurred on the same day that a new law went into effect making it legal to carry a gun in national park... Although the general public isn't aware of it, people sometimes kill themselves in regional, state, and national parks, in part because parks offer privacy and solitude. Suicide prevention training helps prepare rangers to intervene effectively in an attempt, as well as gives them resource information for counseling and support.

## Crisis Line Class Evaluations

Evaluations from the 15 people who completed our recent 38-hour crisis line training class offer testimony, once again, of its value:

- “A great experience! I learned so much and felt very supported throughout.”
- “Excellent training that more people should obtain. I will carry this with me always.”
- “Loved it. Very insightful. Great information at each session. Learned a lot!”
- “The training was awesome! I learned so many valuable tools.”
- “One of the best things I have done in my life.”
- “I am very grateful to have taken part in this training. Thank you!”
- “Judi was fantastic! She has great experience, knowledge, and compassion.”
- “Alan’s personal stories really opened my eyes and humbled me.”
- “Pete was a great speaker. Such a fun night!”
- “Josie made learning about the database interesting.”
- “Susie’s training was great. Her grief exercise was especially powerful.”
- “Roberto made me more aware of how different other cultures or groups can be from my own.”
- “I felt honored to hear what each member of the NAMI panel shared, and I learned a great deal.”
- “Wow! Wow! Wow! Amazing stuff. I am proud to say I am ASIST trained.”

After new volunteers complete their classroom training, they receive six weeks of one-on-one training in our crisis line room with an experienced counselor. The next crisis line class will take place this fall. For information, contact **Mike Brungardt**, our volunteer coordinator, at [mikeb@crisis-center.org](mailto:mikeb@crisis-center.org).

## 2010 Census

This month, people throughout the country will receive a 2010 census form. The form is simple—only 10 questions—yet it’s critical that everyone fill it out and send it in. Data from the census determine everything from the number of seats in Congress to where to build schools, hospitals, and senior centers. The census has a direct impact on federal funding as it guides the allocation of \$400 billion in federal grants to cities, counties, and states over the next 10 years. For every 100 people who are missed, an estimated \$1 million in federal funding is lost to local and state governments. Considering the current budget crisis, this year’s census is more important than ever before. We encourage everyone to participate and be counted.

## Success Story: Suicidal Caller

A man in his late 30s, living with HIV/AIDS and bipolar disorder, called our crisis lines recently. He had moved in with his mother after losing his job and was fighting with her. When he called, he was contemplating whether to check into a hospital for treatment or kill himself... Although he had a large support network of therapists, psychiatrists, and medical staff, he admitted that he had not been honest with them, failing to disclose issues related to his mental illness and his thoughts of suicide. Together, the caller and our phone counselor began formulating a safety plan. This included immediate treatment because of the caller’s heightened anxiety. The caller agreed to have a friend transport him to a hospital for psychological evaluation. He also gave us permission to call him afterward to check in to see how he was doing... During the follow-up call, he said that he

was grateful for our support, had re-evaluated his situation while in the hospital, and felt motivated now to take steps to address his mental health issues and his suicidal impulses. This included opening up to his therapist and addressing the issues that he had denied for so long... Another crisis line counselor called him a week later. The man said that he was continuing on the same positive path, working with his mental health providers to stabilize his medications and address the issues that led him to contemplate suicide. In addition, his mother had entered treatment herself so that she could cope better with his bipolar disorder. He thanked us for our help, said he hoped he would never feel that desperate again, and added that if he did, he would call us for support.

## Diversity Film Series

Our diversity film on March 22<sup>nd</sup> is *Light in the Shadows*, by **Shakti Butler**. It's about a multi-racial and multi-ethnic group of 10 women who engage in an open conversation about race in the United States. Like *The Color of Fear* with all men that we showed last month, the conversation gets hard at times but remains engaging. It shows that clear language and open hearts can help us connect with each other across our differences. These are the conversations that we mostly avoid but that we need to have to create an inclusive and respectful environment for all of us. Our program will start with refreshments and light food at 6:30 p.m. Bring something to share if you can. The film will start at 7 p.m., and we'll have a facilitated conversation afterward. Please RSVP to **Roberto Almanzan** ([robertoa@crisis-center.org](mailto:robertoa@crisis-center.org)) if you plan on attending.

## Cultural Competency: Racist Party

Says **Roberto Almanzán**, our cultural competency coordinator, “On February 15<sup>th</sup> a group of students at U.C. San Diego held an off-campus party that they called a ‘Compton Cookout.’ Compton is a city in Los Angeles that developed a reputation for gang violence in the 1980s and 90s, and the invitation instructed male partygoers to wear gold chains, oversized T-shirts, and gang tattoos while the females were to dress like “ghetto chicks” and speak with a limited vocabulary. Watermelon, fried chicken, and malt liquor were to be served... This created uproar and protests by African-Americans, Latinos, and other students of color, supported by many white students. After the party, on a student-run campus television station program, some students defended the party and the stereotyping saying that they were just having fun and that blacks were pulling the ‘race card.’ The university administration shut down the station. A week later, a noose was found hanging in a campus library. Within a day a female student admitted putting it there, adding that she didn’t mean any harm and had no idea that a noose could be considered racist even though a noose has been used to provoke terror in African-Americans and is a symbolic way of saying that this area is for whites and others are not welcome. The university administration suspended her and referred to these events as racially insensitive and unacceptable in the university community... Although surveys show that the current generation of students has lower levels of prejudice related to race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation than past generations and that higher education tends to increase tolerance of differences, there is no denying the existence of pockets of intolerance. One response is to increase diversity education. All students should know what is offensive and intolerant behavior to different groups. At U.C. San Diego, administrators are now working with the Black Student Union on this. In addition, the president of the statewide U.C. system appointed a special advisor to focus on tolerance issues at the San Diego campus. It’s a good start. All students need to feel safe, included, and valued as part of the university community.”

## People in the News

Congratulations to the following crisis line volunteers who recently reached 100-plus hours of service: **Fred C., Alisa G., Alison H., Cristy K., Keith N., Scott N., Jennie R., Alison S., and Jesse W.**... **Blanca Gutiérrez-Costilla** has been hired as a 211 call specialist. For the past three years she has been a care coordinator, bilingual translator, and administrative assistant at the Bay Point Family Health Center. Previously she was a community health organizer in Bay Point... Our thoughts are with **Ximena P.** and **Lorena S.**, two members of our crisis line team. They have family members in Chile who survived the recent earthquake but are experiencing life without food or water... **Judi Hampshire, LMFT**, our crisis line/211 director, recently was elected to the steering committee of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The Lifeline operates America's suicide hotlines: 800.273.TALK, 800.SUICIDE. and 888.SUICIDA (for Spanish speakers). We answer all local calls to these numbers... **Susan Moore, M.A.**, our grief counseling director, taught a three-day, University of California Extension class in grief and loss. She has been core faculty in this course for more than 10 years.

## Giving Opportunities

Donations to the Contra Costa Crisis Center support our life-affirming services. You can donate online ([www.crisis-center.org](http://www.crisis-center.org)) or by mail (P.O. Box 3364, Walnut Creek, CA 94598). Gifts to our endowment generate long-lasting support. Patronizing Leftovers Thrift Shop, an agency auxiliary located at 2333 Boulevard Circle in Walnut Creek, helps too. The Crisis Center is a nonprofit agency, and all donations are tax deductible. To learn more, contact **Kristen Gauché**, our development director, at [kristeng@crisis-center.org](mailto:kristeng@crisis-center.org).

## 24-Hour Numbers

<b>Crisis:</b> 800.833.2900	<b>Grief:</b> 800.837.1818	<b>Homeless:</b> 800.808.6444
<b>Suicide:</b> 800.273.TALK	<b>Youth:</b> 800.863.7600	<b>Info &amp; Referral:</b> 211
<b>Suicide:</b> 800.SUICIDE	<b>Child Abuse:</b> 877.881.1116	<b>Info &amp; Referral:</b> 800.830.5380
<b>Suicidio:</b> 888.SUICIDA	<b>Elder Abuse:</b> 877.839.4347	<b>TTD/TTY:</b> 925.938.0725

## About This Newsletter

This newsletter is emailed monthly to Crisis Center donors, volunteers, former staff, and friends. To unsubscribe, send an email to [admin@crisis-center.org](mailto:admin@crisis-center.org).



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