



CONTRA COSTA  
CRISIS CENTER

2016  
*Annual Report*

*With*  
**help**  
*comes*  
**hope.**



## *Executive Director's Message*



Dear Friends,

The year 2016 was a strong and fortunate one for the Contra Costa Crisis Center. We are happy to be sharing a few of those highlights with you in this Annual Report.

The Crisis Center, once again, welcomed and trained two complete classes of crisis/211 call specialist volunteers. We depend on our highly-trained volunteers to work alongside our professional staff and as a group these mighty volunteers provided 5,153 hours of crisis/211 response to our community. In our Grief Counseling program we delivered seamless group and individual counseling services with a small group of highly skilled volunteer facilitators working in concert with our excellent clinical interns. Together they served 5,098 adults and youth through 72 school and community presentations. They also provided needed counseling to community members surviving a loss of a loved one to suicide or other traumatic means.

Dr. Andrew Pojman has continued as president of our Board of Directors with new members Robert Park, PhD and Angela Peluso, MBA joining the Board this year. Rob Park is a clinical psychologist with Kaiser Permanente and Angela Peluso is Vice President and Sr. Project Manager with Mechanics Bank. The Board completed its 2016-2019 strategic plan and together with staff, has begun to reach multiple benchmarks.

The Crisis Center was reengaged by the Countywide Continuum of Care Homeless project. We are working alongside multiple partners on a meaningful effort to streamline and increase homeless related services in our community. This includes a unified effort to increase use of our 211 information and referral program.

Building on our longtime relationship with First 5 Contra Costa, the Crisis Center is developing a mobile-friendly, specialized pictorial-based resource guide within our 211 program. This guide is designed to support the needs of parents with children 0-5 in their search for child development assessment tools and access to appropriate services.

This year the Crisis Center was surprised and delighted to receive two bequests from former volunteers and donors who thoughtfully and kindly included us in their estate planning. These unplanned gifts will serve as our safety net. We are so very grateful to both Lillian Poage and Florence Oaks for their thoughtfulness.

And, as always, our staff and volunteers met the mental health and crisis needs of our county 24/7 this past year; check the infographic on the front page of this document to see our reach.

On behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers of the Contra Costa Crisis Center, thank you for your support in so many ways and for your part in making 2016 another successful year!

Sincerely,

Rhonda James

Executive Director



## *Volunteer Profile*

Susan Platt

Susan Platt became interested in volunteering for the Contra Costa Crisis Center 11 years ago when she began her search for a more meaningful and fulfilling life - one that included a charitable component.

What was her first impression of the Crisis Center? "It was an intimidating experience because of the huge responsibility I would have on the call line to the people in distress. Of course, the training was thorough and we were able to practice until we felt competent. I made a leap of faith believing that I could do this work, trusted myself and my colleagues, and fell in love with the whole organization."

Susan trained in Crisis and Grief Counseling; she worked in the Call Center and was also part of the Grief Support team for nearly five years. A few years ago, she began working with the Crisis Center's Spousal Support Grief Groups as well as the Mobile Postvention Team. "I have been trained so thoroughly in so many areas, I feel that I can jump in anywhere I'm needed. Ultimately, this diverse training has allowed me to join other county agencies and assist in a variety of roles as needed - I cannot express how grateful I am to the Crisis Center for what they have taught me."

Susan's friends often express to her that the work sounds depressing, sad and overwhelming; they wonder how she handles this weight. While Susan does not dismiss the seriousness of these crisis situations, she doesn't experience these interactions with callers and clients as depressing. She says, "I am them. I'm just currently in a bit of a different place. Everything they are experiencing, I have, am or will experience as well. And, this is the reality

of a life fully lived; I embrace it and learn from it. At some point in a crisis call, you recognize whether this is regarding a potential suicide, homelessness, a job loss, mental illness, a family crisis or any number of tragedies or difficulties. As I'm listening, I'm also recognizing that it could be me on the other end of the line. As I realize the connections I have with others, the similarity of circumstances and the shared humanity, I no longer have the idea of 'helping' or 'giving back' - I simply realize we are basically all the same and I can relate to what's being said to me and learn about myself through this process. In essence, I live it with them."

Susan's wish for society is that it somehow changes its antiquated, judgmental and painfully ignorant attitude about mental illness. She says, "The stigma attached to those who experience mental illness is sad and causes immeasurable pain to those who suffer. Additionally, the distress people feel when confronted with crisis, but are unable to seek help because of the stigma attached to needing help, is damaging, counterproductive and completely unnecessary. I want us to allow people to feel unashamed regarding their illnesses or their need to seek emotional support."

Susan sees a societal dichotomy: there is an increase in the population's distress, along with a decrease in people's ability to find solace. She says, "We are more divided, it seems, than ever before - philosophically, politically, financially. Bullying is on the rise, suicide is epidemic, poverty is increasing, children are in emotional danger more than in the past, drug and alcohol abuse are on the rise - people seem more distressed and agitated than in the past, and our social and coping skills seem to be decreasing as the need for them increases. I am quite disturbed about the level of self-destruction I see around me, and lament that we are not more educated and enlightened about the need for health care - both physical and mental."

Susan feels that the Crisis Center is part of the answer to some of the dilemmas mentioned above. She says, "This agency is superbly managed with integrity, stability, kindness and an ongoing commitment to education and training. Its influence extends to clients, staff and volunteers - how we feel about the work we do and how we treat each other. Since Rhonda James took the helm, I have felt her steadiness, her vision, her commitment, and of course her delicious sense of humor. I know she and the staff she has chosen have my best interest in mind as well as everyone we serve. I take enormous pride in working with this incredible community resource, and I am dedicated to its continuance."



# CONTRA COSTA CRISIS CENTER

# 2016

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Private Practice

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Contra Costa County

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Dan Ashley  
ABC News

### Mike Rekasis

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## Beacons of Light

### Donors/Funders

We thank the following for  
their generous support in 2016:

#### Visionaries (\$100,000+)

Contra Costa Health Services  
First 5 Contra Costa  
Leftovers Thrift Shop

#### Luminaries (\$50,000+)

United Way of the Bay Area  
Contra Costa County EHSD  
Kaiser Permanente

#### Pillars (\$25,000+)

Contra Costa County Office of  
Probation  
Contra Costa County Aging and  
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City of Concord CDBG  
Dean and Margaret Leshner  
Foundation

#### Guardian Angels (\$10,000+)

HEDCO Foundation  
Firedoll Foundation  
Contra Costa County CDBG  
City of Walnut Creek CDBG  
Jack and Kathy Fragie  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company  
Robert and Patricia Dahl  
Foundation

#### Lifesavers (\$5,000+)

Paul and Thelma Beshgetoorian  
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Twanda Foundation

#### Humanitarians (\$2,500+)

Danville Children's Guild  
Masses Sports Bar and Grill  
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Mechanics Bank  
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#### Benefactors (\$1,000+)

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Kendall and Tamera Anderson  
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Kent and Suzanne Buckles  
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Mark and Julie Flower  
David Frane and Charla Gabert  
Lorraine Griswold  
Kathryn Hallock  
Carol Hult  
Arcenio and Joyce Ibardolasa  
Thomas and Jahanna Knight  
Nicola Longmuir  
Susan and Richard Mason  
McDaniel Charitable Trust  
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Mark and Betsy Templeton  
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Bonnie Glatzer  
Lisa Greif  
Charles and Ginger Guthrie  
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William and Marilyn Hoenig  
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Terrell Johnson  
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Dr. Montgomery and Leslie Kong  
Andrew and Shelley Krompier  
Lafayette Physical Therapy, Inc.  
Paula Lepak  
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Paul and Susan Nagata  
Robert Park  
Dale Pearce  
Jim and Susan Pooler  
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Rossmoor Rotary Foundation  
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Frederick and Nell Stamm  
Richard Thayer  
Inna Tsukerman  
Christopher White

#### Stewards (\$250+)

Michael Bowers  
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Jeanette Cook  
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Cathleen Davis  
Jachyn Davis  
Verna Dow  
Dawn Ecklund  
Judith Forcina  
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Kathy Klein and Scott Fink  
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James and Rene Maher  
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Margaret Mediat  
Patricia Mewha  
Marlene Powell  
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S. Donley and Sharon Ritchey  
Julia L. Rogers  
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Debbie and Michael Shepherd  
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Felipe Toledo  
Margaret Toralti  
Jeffrey and Karen Vesely  
Jennifer Weise  
Robert and Mona Whitley



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## Friends (\$100+)

Anonymous  
Carl and Sharon Anduri  
Mark and Donna Antonioli  
Automation Services Group, Inc.  
Joseph Barger  
Kent Barnes  
Roberta Baron  
Nadine Barroca  
Michael and Linda Barry  
Nancy Battey  
Robert and Wendy Bergman  
Jacqueline Bergman  
Birte Beuck  
Jody Black  
California Wellness Foundation  
Michael and Mary Callahan  
Edwing Carr  
Christoph Castro  
Harvey and Phyllis Ceaser  
The Child Day Schools, LLC  
David Clingerman  
Agnes Cocotis  
Susan Cohen  
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Paul Lazarus  
Dr. Sheldon and Suzanne Lewis

Dennis Loo  
Mark Lynch  
Dr. B. Kenneth and Janine Lyons  
Joe and Jo Macaluso  
Oleg Maslenikov  
Ross and Kathleen Mayer  
Martin Mazzanti  
Shaun and Sandra McMahon  
Fran McNamee  
Carole Meierer  
Joseph and Jerilyn Moore  
Libby Myers  
Theron Nelson  
Gregory and Lynn Nerland  
Charles and Laura Newton  
Jim Nirenstein  
Nancy Olson  
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Aleksandr and Olga Persits  
Nancy Pigg  
David and Mary Ramos  
Bruce and Carlene Reeves  
Roseann Renzullo and  
Ninoos Tumazi  
Beth Reynolds and Ted Cassman  
Ken and Kathy Ridings  
Jeffrey and Jodi Riley  
Maurice and Gloria Sandler  
Claudia Schmidt  
Nancy Scott  
Karen Shankman  
Joseph and Valerie Siino  
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Michael and Cathleen Simmons  
Shirleymae Skaredoff  
Gary Skrel  
Daniel and Marilyn Smith  
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Mi Keesha Stafford  
Stedman & Associates  
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Renee Turman  
Michael and Pamela Volan  
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Lee Wagner  
Beth Wainwright  
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Timothy and Victoria Walker  
Donna and John Walton  
Roland and Agripina Warthan  
Diane Whaley Lees  
Thomas and Pamela Whitman  
Stanton Wong  
Kevin Woodard  
Jessica Wright  
Kathy Zahner

## Staff List

**Rhonda James, MA, LMFT**  
Executive Director

**Middleton, MBA**  
Finance/MIS Manager

**Leslie Garcia, MA**  
Call Center Manager

**Melissa Caine-Huckabay, MPA**  
Grief Counseling Program Manager

**Rocio Polanco**  
Office Manager/Call Center Volunteer Team Leader

**Blanca Gutiérrez-Costilla**  
211 Resource Manager

**Scott Chavez, MDiv**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Eva Covarrubias**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Brooks Elliott, MA**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Rico Millan**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Joanna Siefert, MSW**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Valerie Purdy, MS**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Sharon Schutjer**  
Crisis Line/211 Call Specialist

**Dee Dee Robillard**  
Community Projects Manager

OUR  
VOLUNTEERS  
ANSWERED  
**25%**  
OF OUR  
211 &  
CRISIS LINE  
CALLS.

THEY GAVE

**5,549**

HOURS  
OF SERVICE







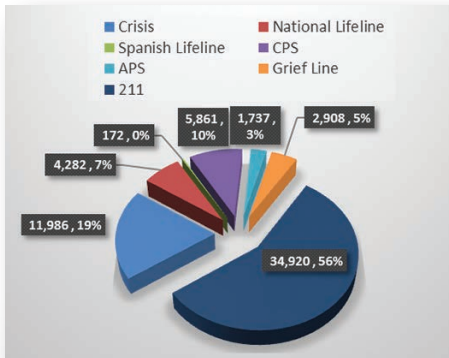
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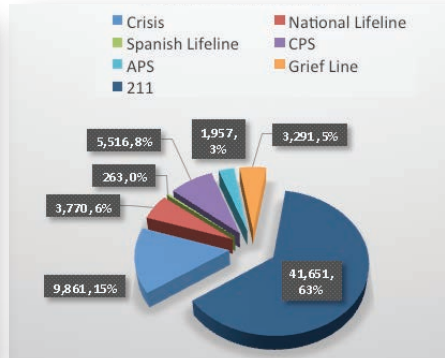
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## Service Calls

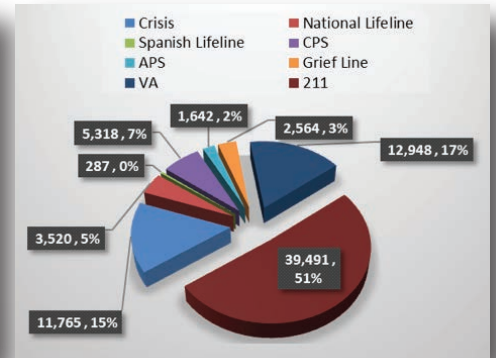
Service Calls 2016



Service Calls 2015



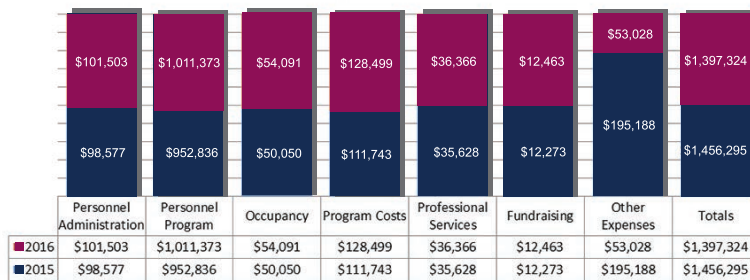
Service Calls 2014



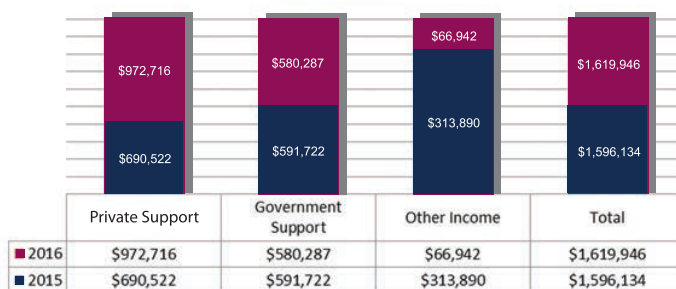
8 staff and 30 to 40 volunteers answer our crisis lines and our 211 information and referral line. Total for 2016 = 61,865

## Expenses & Revenues

### Expenses



### Revenues



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*comes*  
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