



**Distress Centres**

# Lifeline

**August 2010**

## There's a Life on the Line

Caller "Diane" experienced a debilitating period of depression in the month of July. Calling the Distress Centres Helpline regularly during this time helped her manage the emotional pain.

*"I might have hurt myself had it not been for your people. Honestly, **you saved my life**. I am probably alive today because of the Distress Centres. It's incredible. The support is always there for me. I hope you never disappear."*



What a year it has been for Distress Centres. Demand for service has never been higher. During the past year we have heard from more people in crisis than ever before. In fact, there was a disturbing 76% increase in the number of crisis calls placed to our helpline. More calls, more complex problems and more new callers reaching out to us for the first time.

The numbers reflect the continuing challenges faced by our callers during and in the aftermath of the recent economic downturn. While an increasing number of callers are struggling with meeting basic needs, they have also shared with

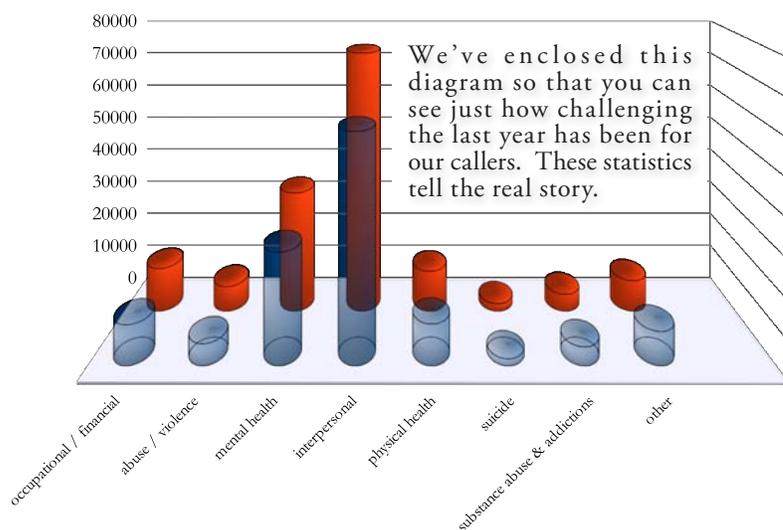
our telephone responders that the issues of financial worry have compounded and contributed to a clustering of other emotional difficulties as well. These include: worsening mental health, substance abuse, relationship problems and suicide.

Despite being impacted by the stressful economic climate, we're gratified to be able to say that Distress Centres was able to meet the spiraling need in our community. Some re-organization of services and the commitment of a very dedicated volunteer corps enabled us to increase helpline coverage and to support the 15% increase in Survivor Support Programme's new clients.

As well this year, Distress Centres has undertaken a new role: social reporting. Our agency has partnered with other organizations to strengthen the network of available resources by sharing the information provided by our callers. Our service statistics are being used to inform the community about the overall state of emotional well-being of our most vulnerable and at-risk citizens. These "snapshots" are providing useful, real-time stories and data to government, social planners, social service agencies, neighbourhood networks and the wider community through the media. We know the cost—now we can work together on the response! There are lives on the line.

## The Numbers Speak for Themselves!

**Number of Helpline Calls  
2008 vs. 2009**



## From the phones: What our callers are saying!

- 76% increase in crisis calls on our helpline last year
- Only 6 out of 100 callers look to Distress Centres for information; they want real-time emotional support
- 26% of our callers shared an experience of abuse or violence in their lives
- Many suffer from social isolation: 2 out of every 3 callers reported living alone
- Almost one-half of our callers are in treatment for mental or physical health problems
- 10 times daily, one of our volunteers spoke to an individual who was considering suicide
- Everyday, we provided crisis intervention for at least one of our distress line callers
- Rarely does someone want to talk about one problem: our callers lives are complex and often overwhelming



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## Distress Centres Volunteers Honoured

Sincere congratulations and gratitude are extended to our very worthy volunteers who were recently honoured for their significant contributions to Distress Centres. On June 17th, five of Distress Centres' own were recognized for their dedication, commitment and longevity of service by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration at their annual Volunteer Service Awards presentation. We salute Jasmin Bogdanovich, John Childs, Terry Condie, Peggy Collier and Brenda Redinger. They are treasured examples of the difference that volunteers can make by working together to create an emotional safety net for the vulnerable and at risk.

As telephone and face-to-face counsellors at Distress Centres for between 5 and 20 years, this incredible group has been steadfast in supporting those in need. In addition, they have taken on added responsibilities whenever asked. They are volunteers who provide leadership to both those with whom they continue to work and those who follow in their footsteps. We are proud to count them amongst our own.

## You too can make a difference!

Distress Centres offers comprehensive, in-depth training to all of our volunteer counselors in preparation for their life-sustaining work in one of our programs. Volunteering is an enriching experience that enables caring individuals to contribute back while they are learning and experiencing life-changing personal growth and development. Check it out. Information, application forms and contact numbers can be found on our website [www.torontodistresscentre.com](http://www.torontodistresscentre.com).

## Thank you!

It takes a team to create an emotional safety net for those in need. Heartfelt thanks for the role that you have played in ensuring that we are there in times of despair.

On behalf of everyone at the Distress Centres, please accept our deepest gratitude for your generous contributions over the last year. Your donations have made it possible for us to continue having a positive impact on the lives of those in need. There's a life on the line!

### Contact Us

#### Distress Centres

P.O. Box 243, Stn Adelaide  
Toronto, ON M5C 2J4  
Office of the Executive Director  
Tel. 416 598 0168  
Resource Development  
Tel. 416 598 0292  
Administration  
Tel. 416 598 2454

#### Distress Centres Helpline

Tel. 416 408 HELP (4357)

#### Survivor Support Programme

Tel. 416 595 1716

#### Website:

[www.torontodistresscentre.com](http://www.torontodistresscentre.com)

## Volunteer Contributions in 2009

Total Number of Volunteers	630
Total Number of Volunteer Hours	97,560
Total Number of Individual People Served	48,200
Total Number of Helpline Calls	120,000

## Distress Centres Services

### Our Programs:

- 408-HELP Line
- Caller Reassurance Program
- Survivor Support Programme
- The PAIRO Helpline for Internes and Residents of Ontario
- The Emergency Medical Services Warm Transfer Line
- Community Education and Outreach

## Befrienders Circle

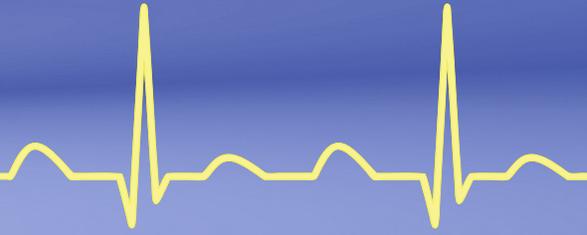
*Monthly Donations Save Lives & Sustain Communities*

Please consider joining our 24/7 Lifeline work by becoming a monthly donor. We're here when other caregivers have turned out the lights and gone home for the day. Your regular commitment will ensure that our lights stay on and the phones are always answered round the clock, every day of the year. You can maintain the City's emotional safety net by joining the team.

Need more information?

Please call our Resource Development Office at 416 598-0292 to discuss this further or to enroll. On behalf of our callers, we thank you.

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## An Exercise in Community Engagement Stakeholder Voices

In April of this year, Distress Centres invited guests at its Annual General Meeting to participate in an innovative exercise in community feedback and engagement. This was designed to provide opportunities for all of our stakeholders to join in our strategic planning process by giving voice to their experiences, knowledge of the issues and to identify creative suggestions for addressing them. The community consultation was facilitated by Tom Pawelkiewicz from RBC, who ensured that all present had a dynamic dialogue about the future direction of our organization. This was the most energized Annual General Meeting ever held by Distress Centres!

Representatives from all of our major stakeholders were in attendance, including former service users, staff, community partners, donors, board members, and volunteers. The round table discussions were rich with thoughtful reflection on both the challenges and opportunities Distress Centres faces as we move into the next decade of service. The Board of Directors, at the conclusion of the exercise, renewed its commitment to integrate the feedback from stakeholders into its long-term planning process.

Distress Centres has a long history of community engagement through its Community Education and Outreach Program. Creating new opportunities for conversation with stakeholders is a core agency value. To support this aim, we are all eagerly anticipating the launch later in the year of our new reformatted website, which will have a number of easy access channels for the community members to connect with us around their needs and our services.

## H1N1: Distress Centres Joins the Response Team

The keynote speaker at our 2010 Annual General Meeting was Barbara Switzer, Emergency Planning Coordinator for Toronto Public Health (TPH). TPH plays a pivotal role in the City's Critical Incidence Emergency Response Plan and, as part of that function, has created a network of community agencies to coordinate a psycho-social response, to meet the emotional needs of Torontonians affected by disaster. The Psychosocial Emergency Response and Recovery Services (PERRS) offers immediate and long term communication, crisis counseling and resources to facilitate de-escalation and healthy functioning in the aftermath. PERRS has successfully mobilized to respond to a number of crises in the GTA over the last decade including SARS, the Blackout, H1N1 and now the G20 Summit.

Distress Centres is a key member of PERRS. In fact, you may have met one of our volunteers at the inoculation clinics opened during the H1N1 crisis. After their challenging start-up, DC and other member agencies were enlisted to provide "emotional first aid" to

anxious individuals waiting in long lines for their vaccinations. Following our participation in the response effort, we received a message of thanks from Dr. David McKeown, the Medical Officer of Health for Toronto. Dr. McKeown acknowledged our volunteers for "the invaluable contribution you made to the H1N1 Response." Our team supported Toronto Public Health in the immunization of more than 220,000 people.

During her address, Ms. Switzer spoke warmly about her long-standing connection to Distress Centres and expressed her appreciation, on behalf of Toronto Public Health, to the volunteers who participated in the H1N1 Response. She said:

*"Thanks to your support, the nurses were able to provide necessary medical services to citizens who were experiencing acute emotional distress that had escalated over time and significantly compromised our ability to successfully treat them. The help that you offered enabled us to do what we do best and helped create a more supportive environment for the waiting public. This was an effective partnership!"*

## Concert by Twilight

Take a lovely spring evening, gracious hosts, a moving violin performance by a world-renowned soloist in a beautiful home, a dedicated organizing committee and you have Concert by Twilight. For more than 15 years, this signature fundraising event has taken place annually in some of Toronto's most spectacular and historic homes. This year's event was organized at an outstanding architectural home, built in 1930 for famed Toronto industrialist Frederick Cowan, overlooking the Rosedale Golf course. The property was designed by John Lyle, the architect responsible for such notable buildings as Union Station, the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Royal Canadian Yacht Club.

Special thanks to Moshe Hammer and his piano accompanist Robert Kortgaard for their exquisite musical renditions. Congratulations to the Concert by Twilight Committee who once again organized a very successful and enjoyable evening. With such a wonderful track record, it is important to recognize what a lifeline this event has been for Distress Centres. We extend our warmest appreciation to the committee members who have worked so hard over the years to provide significant support for this agency.





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## B.A.D. Ride 13

**T**hirteen is an iconic number for motorcyclists and B.A.D. Ride 13, held on Sunday, May 30th 2010 did not disappoint. Under sunny skies, more than 1,350 riders and almost 2,000 people gathered in support of Distress Centres for the annual Bikers Against Despair event. After the signature send-off by John Derringer of Q 107, participants enjoyed a scenic 3-hour ride through south-central Ontario backroads to their final destination for a fun filled afternoon at the Markham Fairgrounds. And, what an afternoon it was! Live music, great barbecue, custom car show, stunt riding performance, a silent auction, contests and the list goes on. All leading up to the finale of the grand prize motorcycle draw, pulled by comedian Mike Bullard, for this year's prize, the 2010 Harley-Davidson Fat Boy Lo. The lucky winner was Ricky Rice, who was too excited to speak. Special thanks to all of our sponsors, who enable Distress Centres to deliver on its promise that 100% of the funds raised by the riding public goes directly to support the program needs of the agency. We continue to be grateful for the tremendous support of the motorcycling community. In particular, we are pleased to recognize this year's top 3 fundraisers—they have definitely raised the bar: Mark Ludwig bringing in more than \$25,000, Bob Redinger over \$6,000 and Adam Fillier exceeding \$5,000. Thank you to everyone who participated: almost \$215,000 was raised!



<p><b>CORPORATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6572669 Canada Inc.</li> <li>Aviva Canada Inc.</li> <li>Bell Canada</li> <li>CIBC - Employee Campaign</li> <li>Cremer Services</li> <li>Dundee Wealth Inc.</li> <li>Go Networks</li> <li>Gold Metal Consulting Group</li> <li>Hydro One Inc.</li> <li>IBM Employees' Charitable Fund</li> <li>Interward Assesst Management Ltd.</li> <li>JTI-Macdonald Corp.</li> <li>K J M Marketing Ltd</li> <li>Key Concepts Consulting</li> <li>Marantup Investments Inc.</li> <li>Morningstar Air Express Inc.</li> <li>Ontario Power Generation</li> <li>S.A. Armstrong Limited</li> <li>Shepell FGI</li> <li>TD Bank Financial Group</li> <li>TD Insurance</li> <li>The Gloria Morris Agency Inc.</li> <li>Transamerica Life/AEGON Canada</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHURCHES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agincourt Pentecostal Church</li> <li>Asbury and West United Church</li> <li>Beaver Bible Class</li> <li>Bedford Park United Church Women</li> <li>Humber Valley United Church Women</li> <li>Rosedale United Church</li> </ul> <p><b>FOUNDATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donner Canadian Foundation</li> <li>E.W. Bickle Foundation</li> <li>Pace Family Foundation</li> <li>Porticus North America Foundation</li> <li>Robins Appleby Charitable Foundation</li> <li>The Conn Smythe Foundation</li> <li>The EJLB Foundation</li> <li>The Harry E. Foster Charitable Foundation</li> <li>The Henry White Kinnear Foundation</li> <li>The Jackman Foundation</li> <li>The Murphy Foundation Incorporated</li> <li>The Paloma Foundation</li> <li>The Riley Family Foundation</li> <li>The Sharp Foundation</li> <li>The Tippet Foundation</li> <li>Toronto Community Foundation</li> </ul>	<p><b>B.A.D. RIDE SPONSORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hero Certified Burgers</li> <li>Lettieri</li> <li>Riders Plus Insurance</li> <li>Stitchy Lizard</li> <li>Swift Trade Inc.</li> <li>Terraplan Landscape Architects</li> <li>Petite Thuet</li> <li>Artik</li> <li>Neal Brothers</li> <li>Q107 Classic Rock</li> <li>Beard Winter LLP</li> <li>Kahuna Powersports</li> <li>Toronto Motorcycle Show</li> <li>Ready Honda</li> <li>Motorcycle Mojo Magazine</li> <li>The Silver Dollar Room</li> <li>Centro Restaurant and Lounge</li> <li>Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada</li> <li>Jacox Harley-Davidson</li> <li>Davies Harley-Davidson</li> <li>Markham Fair</li> <li>Mackie Harley-Davidson</li> <li>Yamaha</li> <li>Daymak</li> <li>Bentall Retail Services</li> <li>Palmer Audio</li> <li>North American International</li> <li>Motorcycle Supershow</li> <li>MotoLimo</li> <li>Enbridge Consumer Gas</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONCERT BY TWILIGHT SUPPORTERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kristian and Margaret Isberg</li> <li>Eve Lewis and Paul Oberman</li> <li>Kim and Pat Ward</li> <li>Rosalie Sharp</li> <li>Creswick Investments Limited</li> <li>a La Carte Kitchen</li> <li>Bau-Xi Gallery</li> <li>Chairman Mills</li> <li>Colio Estate Wines</li> <li>Elte</li> <li>Studio B</li> <li>Francisco Bunning</li> <li>Moshe Hammer</li> <li>Robert Kortgaard</li> <li>Corey Ladouceur</li> </ul>  <p><b>United Way Toronto</b></p> 
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