

CONTACT CONNECTIONS

CONTACT LANCASTER HELPLINE NEWSLETTER

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Advisory Board:

Regina Begley, Cyndi Bellack,
Erin Birk, Sally Loomis,
Linda Shank and
Merle Sollenberger

Newsletter Committee:

Eleanor Sloan, Judy Musser,
and Sally Edwards
CONTACT Connections
is printed in March, June,
September, and December.

Mission Statement:

CONTACT Lancaster Helpline
is a community service
that responds to human need
by providing a seven day a
week telephone helpline
staffed with trained volunteers,
who give confidential
nonjudgmental support
to callers, who show
compassion for all individuals,
who affirm the value and
resiliency of each caller, and
when appropriate, provide
callers with referrals.

The Community Action Program
of Lancaster administers the
CONTACT Lancaster Helpline.



MEMORIES OF CONTACT PAST CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF COMPASSIONATE LISTENING

It was nostalgic for the four telephone workers, those who have served the longest, to walk down “memory lane” and reminisce about the last three and a half decades with CONTACT Lancaster Helpline.

Who could forget the huge TTY machine used to communicate with the deaf? We called it “the monster” as it gave a loud clanging sound when the tape brought forth a message.

During the years we have moved six times, really seven as a bomb scare (someone was very unhappy with us) necessitated a hurried move to a warehouse for a short time.

One volunteer could never forget a call that came in at 6:57AM. The caller’s first words were “tell me why I shouldn’t kill myself” and the retort was “tell me why you should.” Poor listening skills used on that call.

Another memory was from a caller many years ago. A man called to talk about his struggles with new sobriety. While having coffee, a friend had convinced him to go to detox. When he was about to go to the rest room his friend first asked for the knife in his pocket. The caller did go to detox and his friend agreed to be his AA sponsor. A short time later the sponsor was going away and gave him the CONTACT number. His call came in around midnight and caller and listener agreed to hang together while the volunteer would take other calls as needed. Each time she returned to the open line, she sang “Help Me Make It Through the Night”. Hours later the man decided that he could go to sleep. The story doesn’t end there. Years later the same volunteer received a call from a man who wanted to thank CONTACT. He had been sober for a few years and just had a déjà vu experience. He had persuaded an alcoholic friend to go to detox. He remembered his experience years ago, right down to the knife. He said a lady at CONTACT had (by then the volunteer was crying) stayed with him through that terrible night and she sang (before he could finish, she started to sing “Help Me Make It ...”) and he began to cry. These two calls cemented that volunteer’s dedication to answering the Contact Helpline.

Many times we don’t receive an immediate reaction to our calls. Like the evening a young man called on the Suicide Line, saying that he was in the basement of his home, had a rope around his neck, and was standing on a barrel. He called to tell one last person about how mean his parents were to him, taking

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**Thank you to all of our donors
for consistent and generous support of CONTACT.**



ABOVE & BEYOND



These are the CONTACT volunteers who worked "above and beyond" the standard 24 hours for the months of September, October, and November.

- Linda Shank: 124 hours
- Rhoda Patterson: 108 hours
- Sally Loomis: 96 hours
- Mary Ann Ziegler: 72 hours
- Regina Begley: 64 hours
- Kandy Hoover: 64 hours
- Mary Kathryn Noll: 60 hours
- Julie Steffy: 60 hours
- Bill DiNino: 52 hours
- Sally Edwards: 52 hours
- Eleanor Sloan: 52 hours
- Phyllis Farmer: 48 hours
- Francis Horton: 48 hours
- Donald Mowrer: 44 hours
- Tanya West: 44 hours
- Fern Gehman: 40 hours
- Charlotte Whiting: 36 hours
- Cyndi Bellack: 32 hours
- Elaine Brubaker: 32 hours
- Peggy Burnley: 32 hours
- Debbie Moore: 32 hours
- Jane Rizzuto: 32 hours
- Arlene Kreider: 28 hours
- Rosie Rodriguez: 28 hours



CONGRATULATIONS, REGINA!

Congratulations and Welcome to Regina Begley in her new position as the full-time director of CONTACT!

Regina is a graduate of Immaculata University with a bachelor's degree in sociology, and she has generously served as Volunteer Director since April 2009.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings CONTACT Friends and Followers,

Wow! Another 3 months have passed and changes are constantly in motion. Thank you to all CONTACT volunteers and followers for the warm welcome and support you have shown me in my new position as CONTACT's fulltime director. It's because of you and the community we serve that my passion for what we do grows stronger every day.

It is with great pleasure that I tell you that CONTACT has received a \$20,000 capacity-building grant from the Lancaster County Community Foundation. This grant will be to used to hire a consultant to work with me and our volunteers on fund and volunteer development, with the intent of doubling our volunteer base, getting us back to 24/7 coverage, and making us financially solvent.

In other good news our Celtic Gala is right around the corner looking to be a good time for all. Anyone interested in helping on this last leg of the trip please join us! We can use all the support we can get to make CONTACT's 35th celebration a success.

As always thank you to all volunteers for all the "extra" you give to CONTACT. My blessings to you and your families for the holiday season.

Warmest Wishes, Regina Begley, CONTACT Director

MEMORIES OF CONTACT PAST (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

away privileges and not caring about him. "They aren't home now and they will have a rude awakening when they find me dead." The telephone worker listened for a time to his rantings and then heard someone calling his name, and the line went dead. You all know that awful feeling of not knowing. It was a short time later when his mother called to say he was off his meds and through her tears thanked the CONTACT volunteer.

Remember what we did when it snowed? Many times we climbed over huge snow drifts but there was the dedication of two couples who would bring a change of clothes, food and as many comforts from home as they could carry, planning to stay until the emergency was over. We were really committed to 24/7 coverage.

How proud we were to host the CONTACT USA National Conference. A year's worth of hard work and some said it was one of the best ever. Some of us had the privilege of attending conferences all around the country. Also our own retreats were fun and educational.

Oh, how we labored over the paper logs until the age of the computer came along. I-Carol has simplified record keeping.

As help lines were added (remember the Birth Announcement to introduce the Teen Line?) additional training was needed especially for the Suicide Line. As the needs grew we kept up and over a dozen of us are proud to have a certificate from the American Suicidology Association saying that we completed their course.

It was over 50 years ago that the idea of a helpline was conceived in Australia. It was called Lifeline and when the concept was brought to the States, the name CONTACT USA was given. We are still under their "umbrella" following most of their rules and regulations.

We are sure that all of the volunteers will join us in thanking the Lancaster County Council of Churches and Community Action Program for their support the past 35 years.

CONTACT's longest serving volunteers, those who joined in 1975 and 1976, all contributed to this article. These dedicated listeners are: Sally Buckwalter (34 years), Mary Kathryn Noll (38 years, including Night Ministry), Eleanor Sloan (35 years), and Tanya West (34 years). Our writer is Eleanor Sloan.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DEC. 1 – PR COMMITTEE MEETING, 11:30 a.m.
GALA COMMITTEE MEETING, 12:30 p.m.
Prudential Home Services Building, 150 North Point Blvd.

DEC. 8 - NEW TRAINING CLASS
Tell your friends about CONTACT and this new training class!
Call Regina to sign up! (Office phone: 509-7711 -or- Cell phone: 405-7464)

DEC. 8, 9, and 21 – GIFT WRAPPING at Barnes and Noble
Early Shift from 9 a.m.-12 p.m., then two hours shifts from 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Sign up in the phone room!

DEC. 15, 16, and 17 – GIFT WRAPPING at Borders
Two hour shifts from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sign up in the phone room!

DEC. 15 – GALA COMMITTEE MEETING, 11:00 a.m.
Prudential Home Services Building, 150 North Point Blvd.

JAN. 29, 2011 - GALA CELEBRATION, 6-10 p.m.
The Statesman Hall at the Double Tree Resort (Willow Valley)
CONTACT's 35th ANNIVERSARY

*The CONTACT ADVISORY BOARD meets monthly
on the second Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at CAP. Everyone is welcome!*

*The DONOR DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE meets monthly
on the first Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Merle Sollenberger's office
(Prudential, off the Oregon Pike).
Call Linda Shank (471-0841) for information.*



Celtic Gala

To benefit:
Lancaster CONTACT Helpline

January 29, 2011, 6-10 p.m., Double Tree Resort/Willow Valley

Tickets include: Dinner, Musical entertainment by Donegal, and a Silent Auction

Ticket Cost: \$ 50.00 per person
Look for your invitation in the mail later this month!

