

## is center Connection Summer/Fall 2021 crisis center



## From our executive director



Despite the continued challenges of providing services during a pandemic, we have so much to celebrate. Our Neat Repeats resale store in Orland Park moved to a new, much larger location. This would not have been possible without the help of some incredibly dedicated staff and countless volunteers. Stop in soon for an amazing boutique shopping experience (15551 94th Avenue), and remember, 100% of the profits support the Crisis Center.

We honor our donors and volunteers in this issue of the Crisis Center Connection. Last year was not an easy year for fundraising, but you came through with humble hearts and generous gifts. Thank you, too, to those who recently supported our annual Dianne Masters Cup golf outing.

In the past few months we welcomed two new members to our Leadership Team. Latasha Hubert joined us as our Director of Human Resources whose responsibilities also include our volunteer workforce, and Meghan Mokate joined as our new Director of Finance. Both women bring exceptional talent and expertise to their positions and make terrific additions to our leadership team!

Finally, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is upon us. In October, we look forward to increasing awareness and honoring survivors of domestic violence with activities and events. Thank you to BMO Harris Bank who is graciously kicking off our annual #31derfulways campaign with an increased gift of \$15,000 this year. You can keep in touch and learn more about DV Awareness Month activities by reading our monthly e-newsletters and following us on social media.

As summer comes to a close and fall is upon us, I think about the impact of change. Thank you, again, for helping us navigate the changes of the past year. We can't do it alone!

With gratitude,

Pam Kostecki, Executive Director

## LEAV Welcomes 22nd Police Department

The Law Enforcement and Victim Outreach Program recently added another partnership with a local police department. Merrionette Park became the 22nd police department to forge a partnership with the Crisis Center. The program collaborates with local law enforcement agencies to identify and support victims of domestic violence and provide them with resources. Last year, over 4,700 follow-up calls were placed to victims after police responded to domestic disturbances and over 4,000 connections were made with victims who received support and resources.



Merrionette Park Police Chief, John Palcu



Navigating the court system when you are a victim of domestic violence is difficult. Now try to imagine that you don't speak English so you cannot understand what's being said or what you need to do. Crisis Center Court Advocate, Esra, sees this every day at the Bridgeview courthouse, one of the two courthouses where our staff spend their days.



Esra met Aliyah when she helped her file a police report and secure an Order of Protection. Aliyah endured physical violence, as well as emotional and financial abuse for over ten years at the hands of her husband. When he used a rope to give

each of their four children burns on their arms because they refused to stop playing and sit quietly, she knew things had to change immediately. She was tired of walking on eggshells and was fearful for her children's lives, and her own.

Aliyah did not speak English, so when she saw Esra and learned that she spoke Arabic she immediately felt safe and comforted. "Navigating through the court system is hard enough for a victim of domestic violence, but when they don't speak English, it's even more difficult. It's very confusing. They don't get the rules and steps that must be followed," Esra said. "Many victims often abandon the process out of frustration."

In their role as Court Advocates, each staff member must recognize when a victim needs help. Recently another advocate overheard a court hearing held via Zoom at the courthouse due to pandemic restrictions. What she heard prompted her to interrupt the judge and share that the client needed an Arabic translator despite the fact that she indicated she could speak and understand English. The client was then connected with Esra and immediately she breathed a sigh of relief.

"Domestic violence cases are growing in epidemic proportions and cultural and language barriers often prevent victims from seeking help," Esra said. "I know that sometimes all they have to see is my hijab (a religious veil worn by Muslim women in the presence of any male outside of their immediate family, which usually covers the hair, head and chest) and they gravitate toward me for help in the courtroom."

37% of Arab women have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetime. Collectively, our Court Advocates speak several languages and in the past year filed 945 Orders of Protection at the Bridgeview and Markham courthouses, an increase of nearly 30% over last year. 95% of them were granted.

"37% of Arab women have experienced some form of domestic violence in their lifetime."

"I know I am doing my best for our clients, especially women who only speak Arabic, but I know there is so much more to be done."

#### Filling the Void



Liane Birk's energy and kindness is contagious. Spend just a few minutes with her and you'll find yourself smiling and feeling compelled to do good for someone else. Liane and her husband, Jim, own Birk Plumbing in Alsip. "We want to

support the people in the community who give us business and there's no better way to do that than to support local charities," Liane said. "I research the charities and the business makes the financial contribution."

Over the past few years, Liane has provided a monthly meal for the shelter clients. When the pandemic prevented her from being able to cook in our kitchen, she started catering the meals. Liane also makes sure that every client in the shelter who is celebrating a birthday feels special. She provides

birthday-themed paper products, decorations, cupcakes and beverages. In the past 15 months she has provided materials to decorate shelter bedroom doors when someone in the family is having a birthday.

"Doing the birthday boxes, donating meals and helping the clients feel happiness fills a void for me," she added. "I don't need anything more in my life except the feeling I get when I give back and help someone else."

#### Staff Retreat



Staff participated in an all-day retreat filled with activities and discussions about change and healthy work environments. A food truck from Doug's Dogs was on hand for lunch, which was provided by the Crisis Center Board of Directors.

#### **Accepting Responsibility**

The Partner Abuse Intervention Program is a 26-week educational group for batterers that focuses on accepting responsibility for violence in an effort to end the cycle of abuse. Participants in the program are mandated by the court to attend class or serve jail time if they fail to attend classes.

"For many of the group participants, acknowledging their behaviors and accepting responsibility for their actions is a huge step, and not an easy one," said Lynn Langton, training manager. One of those participants was Harry.

Harry is 55-years-old, struggled with anxiety and was easily overwhelmed when speaking in front of the group. However, he often arrived to class early and talked through some issues. Narcotics, partying, and violence had been his lifestyle for decades. This also further complicated his performance in class because he was not accustomed to talking about his feelings and examining his motives.

"Blaming, minimizing, and denying was a coping mechanism in many areas of Harry's life. Taking responsibility, admitting his behavior and making commitments to end his use of violence were indicators of his therapeutic movement and increased maturity," Lynn added.

Last year, 76 batterers attended and participated in weekly PAIP groups.

"Verbally, I used every word and phrase there is; physically, I punched, kicked, choked, and threw things, including throwing my wife down the stairs. I stopped drinking, stopped the verbal abuse, and do not hit for any reason."

- Harry, recent PAIP graduate

## Finding Courage

Jerri Newman is an amazing, bright and resilient woman. As a young woman, she married a Marine whom she thought was the love of her life, but things rapidly changed. He spent lots of time drinking with friends and was rarely home. His behavior became erratic.

He threw her against the wall and almost hit her with a glass blender. He hid a loaded gun in their oven and when she turned the oven on to make dinner, the gun went off firing several rounds and nearly killing her children. Finally, she grabbed her kids and left.

They moved out-of-state, but he still tracked her down. He showed up at Christmastime asking for money, and out of fear, she gave it to him. "I didn't have a choice. He was acting crazy and I was so afraid of him," Jerri said. By this time he was selling drugs and leading a very dangerous life.



She moved back to the Chicagoland area and lived with her grandmother, who was a huge source of support. Many of her family members worked in law enforcement and soon she followed, accepting a job with the Cook County Sheriff's office working

at the county jail on 26th and California. Today, she works as a police officer with the Robbins Police Department, but her real desire is to be a domestic violence advocate and help other victims, like herself, learn that they don't have to live in fear and stay in an abusive relationship.

Jerri took our 40-hour domestic violence training course and volunteers on our hotline one day a week. "There is so much more we can do to help these women," Jerri said. "Talking about it and telling others that they don't have to stay is the best place to start."

### Making Room

The need for emergency shelter often seems endless and on most days the Crisis Center's shelter is at capacity. In order to accommodate more households, we have once again shifted staff into different offices and are currently renovating the existing space to accommodate two additional households. "The changes we're making will allow us to provide shelter for 15 households," said Sarah Tygart, Director of Victim Services. "Ensuring that families have their own private space has positively impacted the healing process for our survivors."

## **Next Steps**

The Counseling staff are launching a new group called Next Step Survivor Education. It is a psychoeducational group that teaches victims of domestic violence to recognize the early signs of domestic violence so survivors can avoid becoming engaged in another abusive relationship.

Our staff aren't the only ones who can help victims of domestic violence. If you suspect someone is in an abusive and violent relationship, you can help.

- Help the victim make a safety plan, regardless of whether or not she/he is staying or leaving the abuser.
- Encourage her/him to spend time with you and other supportive friends or family.
- Provide her/him with resources whenever you can.
- Encourage her/him to get help and talk to someone.
   Pass on our 24/7 hotline number 708-429-SAFE.
   It's free and confidential.

**24-Hour Hotline** 

## 708.429.SAFE (7233) ## www.crisisctr.org

## Corporate & Community champions

Proven I.T. has been a supporter of the Crisis Center for over 30 years. They have contributed to our capital campaigns, Gala and Golf fundraisers, our seasonal appeals, and made other donations over the years. They are one of our longest-standing Corporate Champions. Members of the Cosich family, who established and continue to operate and manage Proven, have been dedicated to personally donating to our mission in order to ensure that victims of domestic violence continue to receive free services. Several Proven employees have also joined our fundraising committees.

This local business is by easiest definition a Corporate Champion. We are so grateful for their loyal support!





Civic clubs and community groups play a very important role in our community and at the Crisis Center. In July, we met Dave Sesterhenn and Keith Wallace from the Tinley Park-Frankfort Rotary Club who toured the shelter and presented us with a check from a fundraiser held at Ted's Greenhouse in Tinley Park. They were deeply impacted by the tour and plan to have us speak at one of their upcoming meetings.

## Neat Repeats Relocates Orland Park Store



In mid-August, our Neat Repeats Resale Store in Orland Park relocated from 159th street to its new home at **15551 94th Avenue**. "The move was a lot of work, but thanks to some incredibly dedicated staff and volunteers, the store looks amazing and we're open for business," said Chris Beele, Director of Neat Repeats.

The store is 8,600 sq. ft., of sales floorspace, which is the same size as the Worth store and 50% larger than our previous store. It has plenty of space to display clothing, household items, home décor and furniture. Donations of new or gently used seasonal

clothing, shoes, purses, jewelry and decorative housewares are accepted during regular business hours: Mon, Fri & Sat 10am to 4 pm, and Tues, Wed & Thurs from 10am to 6 pm. Furniture donation can be arranged by contacting Dany Garcia at dgarcia@crisisctr.org. If you can't make it into the store, please shop online at neatrepeatsonline.com.

#### We would not be here today if it weren't for the unwavering and generous support from our donors and volunteers. Thank you!

This list is merely a glimpse of those who have made a significant impact at the Crisis Center and partnered with us to support victims of domestic violence. While we cannot recognize every donor and every gift due to space restrictions, we are so grateful for all of them and their generous hearts.

Gift dates July 1, 2020 — June 30, 2021

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Leaving a legacy

Remembering the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in your will or estate plans enables us to continue to provide life-saving services to victims of domestic violence. For more information about leaving a legacy, contact Lorri Nagle at 708.429.7255 or Inagle@crisisctr.org.





### **Matching Gift Challenge**

\$31 from 31 people for 31 days = nearly \$30,000 for victims of domestic violence!

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the Crisis Center is launching its #31derfulways challenge in hopes of raising \$30,000.

This year, Corporate Champion BMO Harris Bank is energizing our campaign by matching all gifts, up to \$15,000. "UN Women has referred to violence against women during COVID-19 as the "shadow pandemic" lurking in the background as healthcare systems are drained, and shelters are at capacity. It's critical that we support organizations like the Crisis Center that provide valuable support and resources to survivors," said Alma Velasquez,

Community Giving Manager, BMO Harris Bank. "Boldly growing the good in business and life is our purpose at BMO, and supporting the Crisis Center's #31derfulways campaign is a perfect example of what that means."

How can \$31 help? It will provide . . .

- Emergency shelter and food for families fleeing from domestic violence
- Professional counseling
- Staff to work in courthouses and hospitals to help identify and support victims
- Community education about domestic violence, and much more

Complete and return the form below or donate online at www.crisisctr.org.

If you have any questions contact Lorri Nagle at Inagle@crisisctr.org or call 708.429.7255.

#### Your gift will be MATCHED!

Name			
Address	_ City	_ State Zip	)
Email			
I am proud to support victims of domestic violence and the Crisis Center for South Suburbia with a gift of \$1,000 \$500 \$500 \$500 \$\$1			
My check is enclosed. Charge my credit  Monthly gift. Please charge \$ to m			Take the #31derfulways challenge!
Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.  Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover  Card Number			#31 derful ways
Expiration Date Security Code Signature		\$31 from 31 people for 31 days = Nearly \$30,000 to help	
PLANNED GIFT  I would like someone to contact me about including the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in my estate plans.  I have included the Crisis Center for South Suburbia in my estate plans.			

Mail your gift to: Crisis Center for South Suburbia I PO Box 39 I Tinley Park, IL 60477 or make your gift online at www.crisisctr.org

Many employers offer a matching gift program. If you or your spouse's employer offer this option, please obtain the appropriate form

MATCHING GIFTS

from Human Resources and submit it with your gift.

#### Online Fundraising Friends

Last fiscal year, online fundraising on behalf of the Crisis Center really took off! These friends utilized Facebook, GoFundMe and other online platforms to raise over \$15,000 for an event, campaign or overall need at the Crisis Center. Want to set-up an easy fundraiser on Facebook, but need help? Visit www.crisisctr.org and look under Ways to Help for step-by-step instructions.

Dave Anders Deborah Bivens Amy Brown Celeste Brown Hannah Christie Irish Christina Estella Ontiveros Sierra Cruz Laura B Dominici Julia Garv Georgia Gofis

Samantha Keeton Kelly Kiley Kristin Lee Pamela Long Lisa Mollov Jenny Mulcahy Lorri Nagle Mady Sullivan Jennifer Warner Flvia Williams Mary Carol Witry

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## National Night Out

Staff participated and supported ten local police departments on National Night Out. They talked

to community members about the signs of domestic violence, how to get help and shared resources offered at the Crisis Center.



#### New Illinois Bill Ensures Clients have Personal Care Products

Gov. Pritzker recently signed a bill ensuring that personal hygiene products be available in all homeless shelters and in all bathrooms at public colleges and universities. While the Crisis Center has always provided these items to clients, we applaud the Governor for signing this bill. The bill will also require the state to work toward allowing women who receive public food and nutrition assistance to use the programs for diapers and hygiene products.

If you can donate feminine hygiene products, please call Janice Barry at 708,429,7255, x141.

## Steamy Golf

Our annual Dianne Masters Cup Charity Golf Outing was held on August 10th, one of the hottest days of the summer. Despite a heat index of 107 degrees, 172 golfers enjoyed the day – and the cold spa towels that Crisis Center staff and volunteers distributed on the courses! Special thanks to our sponsors. including our title sponsor, Action Sertoma, donors, and the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to make the day a memorable one. The event raised over \$70,000.



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> Crisis Center for South Suburbia PO Box 39 | Tinley Park, IL 60477

> > for south suburbia

CAROL STREAM, IL

Contact LaTasha Hubert at 708.429.7255 at Neat Repeats, in our programs and as

## Shop Amazon Smile!

Crisis Center as your beneficiary. Every Support the Crisis Center by shopping time you shop, we will receive a small on Amazon Smile and choosing the percentage!

# Give the Gift of Time

Learn more about volunteer opportunities part of our annual fundraising events. x134 or Ihubert@crisisctr.org.







Connect with us on social media





Barry at jbarry@crisisctr.org or for South Suburbia. For more Consider a memorial or honorary gift to the Crisis Center information contact Janice call 708.429.7255 x141 a Want to honor www.crisisctr.org loved one:

## the Events calendar

#### **Auxiliary's Virtual Walk Against Domestic Violence**

August - September 30, 2021

The Crisis Center Auxiliary is hosting a virtual walk and hopes to raise \$6,000 during August and September.

To donate, visit AuxWalk2021.givesmart.com or mail a check to CCSS Auxiliary, PO Box 174, Palos Park, IL 60465.

#### **Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

October 1 - 31, 2021

Check out our monthly e-news for details on upcoming events. Not subscribed? Contact Lisa at Imolloy@crisisctr.org.

#### **Annual Gala — Passport to Adventure: Night in Venice**

February 26, 2022 **Odyssey Country Club** Stay tuned for details, but save-the-date!



