



Annual Report 2009

A young islander enjoys 2009 Project Wishbone



*"We cannot do great things on this Earth, only small things with great love."
Mother Teresa*

From the Director's Desk 2009

“When the superstructure of society crumbles [human beings are] freed to act on, most often, not the worse, but the best within.” Rebecca Solnit, author *A Paradise Built in Hell*

This past year has clearly represented a community in distress. Some residents who may have considered themselves insulated from economic hardship have discovered that it just “warn’t” so. The common mantra from early spring on was, “I always was a donor to Helpline, now I’m coming here for help.”

Our food bank was a clear barometer of the times. Each month demonstrated a consistent, or in some months, an alarming increase in number of households served and the frequency in use of the food bank. It peaked in October with an incredible 2,042 services, that is, the number of times at least one bag (and usually more) was selected, packed and left the agency to augment shrinking family resources.

Our social workers sorted through increased requests for housing and utility assistance and referred to other organizations to help stabilize families who had never been forced to face these kinds of crises before.

In all this, other neighbors quickly recognized the critical nature of supporting our mission more so now than ever before. From early in the year on, we saw an incredible response; cash donations, extra produce from gardens, neighborhood food drives, and small, informal fundraisers that delivered heart along with the proceeds.

We worked diligently to make sure islanders understood the scope of need and the efficiency of our business operations. We recognized the importance of having our city officials take tours, meet staff and understand the social service issues that impact their constituents.

As the year ended, we were planning on increasing outreach efforts to schools and local organizations, such as Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) in an effort to expand the base of knowledge of our mission and to bring neighbors into the circle of giving and receiving through Helpline House.

Joanne E. Tews
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

The unfortunate state of the economy had a direct impact on Volunteer Services at Helpline House in 2009. The need for basic services such as food and clothing increased dramatically—up 24% in December 2009 from the previous year. Clients' needs were so great by the end of 2009 that the holiday programs showed increases as great as 50%, measured by the number of households requesting seasonal assistance. Serving the needs of so many meant increasing volunteer staff proportionally, and the community responded in record numbers this year, providing both long-term and short-term volunteers as we all worked together towards solutions to clients' stressful situations.

Highlights and Successes of the Volunteer Program:

- Specially-trained volunteers logged over 20,000 hours in 12 diverse programs and projects, providing the equivalent of ten fulltime employees.
- Volunteers compassionately worked with people from over 100 households per day requesting a variety of services and information.
- Peer volunteer leadership brainstormed, developed and provided supervision for a variety of events, projects and ongoing programs.
- Over 200 households were served by each Project Backpack and Project Wishbone, with assistance from over 60 volunteers.
- Implemented Summer of Service Program; 28 students performed 290 total hours of community service during the school summer break.
- Facilitated the participation of over 100 projects and donation efforts by community groups, churches and businesses.
- Collaborated with social work staff to connect 97 households with Washington State's Basic Food program which provides cost-free food from grocery stores.
- Prepared for computerized intake in food bank, providing for more efficient service to clients.
- Provided volunteer management with social work, if appropriate, as part of an overall plan for clients.
- From community gardeners, accepted and processed triple the amount of previous years' donations of fresh produce.
- Helpline volunteers produced significantly more fresh food this year as well, from its own expanding gardens, both onsite and at Rock Farm Garden and Battle Point Pea Patch.
- Responding to President Obama's Call to Service and the agency's own needs, Volunteer Management involved increasing numbers of community members in the work of the agency on a temporary basis or connecting them with other appropriate efforts in our area.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Social Work

In 2009, we were able to stabilize crises for 166 households, just a bit above last year's total of 158 households. A great resource for Helpline staff has been a Kitsap Mental Health (KMH) therapist placed at Helpline, one day a week.

A trend worth noting has been the number of new clients who were previously (upper) middle class. Clients included former Washington Mutual executives, builders, contractors and carpenters who starting coming into Helpline in late 2009. These community members maintained their lifestyles by using their savings accounts, but now had to face that those resources had been depleted. This new group of clients, who had never experienced this kind of need, were not aware of the services they were eligible for and were surprised and relieved to find out that there was assistance available to them.

Collaboration

Helpline House spearheaded a meeting of North End social services providers in September 2009. The outcome was a list of specific services and parameters for funds available for each community that could be used for clients coming from other areas. Assessment tools that Helpline House used to assist in determining financial appropriateness were shared as well as an offer for training in the use of those tools.

Outreach Efforts

In April 2009, Helpline House held an event called "Guidance – Planning – Support (GPS). The GPS event was designed to assist clients who were having vocational, financial and housing crises and was held at an offsite location on Bainbridge Island. The idea was to make non-traditional clients feel more comfortable about receiving assistance by not having to come to the facility directly. Various dates and times were selected to give community members maximum access to services.

Only two community members showed up and received assistance over a month long period. Even though the number served was very small, we thought it worth the effort to try to deliver services in an alternate way.

Summer Planning

Helpline House's approach to summer planning for working families with children was to invite families in April to set up an appointment with a social worker early on in order to secure limited scholarships. As in the past, the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation Department was the most used resource.

From mid-March through the end of August, at least 76 families used Park and Recreation vouchers to provide activities for over 150 children. The total number of families who received assistance and planning was 100 families with over 200 children benefiting from our efforts.

Gateway Services

Gateway Services are services that Helpline House does for other organizations that require the collection of personal information to determine eligibility for financial or other kinds of help. Assessments for veterans and scholarship assistance are two gateway services.

Boys and Girls Club, Bainbridge Island Music Guild, sports clubs on Bainbridge Island and the Special Needs Foundation are just a few of the organizations that Helpline House provided this service for. The benefits are two-fold; the referring organization avoids having to ask sensitive questions and the person referred has access to a social worker. Clients may not come to Helpline House for themselves, but will make the trip for their son or daughter. While the parent is here, the social worker can help them access services for which they are eligible. One of the main services is food assistance from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). One woman who came in found out that even with their unemployment income they were still eligible for \$365.00 of food assistance each month. The woman, after she did the math in her head, said, "Why didn't we come in six months ago?"

As the Service Officer for the local VFW, Helpline House has access to another segment of the Bainbridge Island population. Veterans who need assistance are referred to Helpline House from Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) in Bremerton. The assistance fund is a one time help up to \$1,500 for allowable expenses for Kitsap veterans. KCR liked Helpline House's fast turnaround time and has been referring veterans from other parts of Kitsap County to us.

Sound Teeth Response

In 2009, there were 22 referrals to the local participating dentists for emergency dental work. One participating dentist, Sally Hewett, offered to provide free dental work for the participants in the Island Home program. The preventive dental work will save the participants and their children thousands of dollars in remedial dental work.

Family Counseling Program

In 2009, Helpline continued the process of providing supervision to interns working on accredited Master's degree programs. Our latest intern is from Antioch University in Seattle. In the past we have had interns from Seattle Pacific University as well as other local universities.

The number of clients who used Family Counseling Services fell significantly because of two factors. One was the discontinuing of the Living Fully Support Group and the other was Helpline social workers providing more short term counseling with clients rather than referring out to a contract counselor. Often this 'light touch' resulted in greater ability to cope with circumstances and make better household decisions.

Skills Plus Program

High unemployment was the major theme of 2009. Job search assistance was the primary service, with the focus once again on resume/cover letter preparation, interview coaching, networking and staying motivated, the latter being the most challenging. Clients ran the gamut from professionals experiencing unemployment for the first time to those with more chronic problems and significant obstacles to being employable. People looking for work were very discouraged and increasingly pessimistic that 'things will get better.' Unemployment figures have decreased – however these statistics do not include those who do not receive unemployment benefits or who have given up on their job search. Unfortunately the immediate future doesn't look bright. Most pundits are now saying the job situation will not improve significantly for one to two years.

A major change for Skills Plus in 2009 was Housing Resource Board's decision to end the Island Home/Stepping Stones program, a two year transitional housing program. Although Stepping Stones remains a Helpline service, Island Home residents are no longer required to set education/career related goals.

Coordination of Services to Special Needs Population

During 2009, staff worked to bring increased stability to Hope House, our one remaining community Adult Family Home (AFH) for people with developmental disabilities and to facilitate connections between support providers, families and individuals with developmental disabilities. Staff remains committed to building numbers of Adult Family Homes and will continue to work with the owners of the Serenity House site as they remain dedicated to creating one to two adult homes and to support Hope House in their expansion plans. Staff contributed to Hope House's success in securing grant monies from local, county and state sources. Collaboration extended to other local businesses – Community Energy Solutions, Conservations Services Group and Puget Sound Energy.

Good progress was made in forging connections between Helpline House and Bainbridge Island Child Care Centers, Peacock Family Center, Speckled Egg Farm, Boys and Girls Club, Parent Child Center, Bainbridge Island Special Needs Foundation, People First and Bainbridge School District education staff. Staff initiated a job fair at Island Wood outdoor education center that resulted in an ongoing collaboration between Helpline House, Island Wood, Able Opportunities and other Kitsap County supported employment vendors.

Frequent contacts with individual community members and stakeholders (families, service providers, case managers, local and regional politicians) have resulted in a broader community understanding of challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Another arena of focus was local social justice realms important to people with disabilities and/or low incomes including affordable housing, local transportation, senior supported living and issues concerning our liveaboard community. The liveaboard issue will continue to surface as a community challenge into the new year. Efforts included supporting leadership efforts, gathering input from multiple sources and community education through attending and hosting meetings with interested parties.

ADMINISTRATION

In 2009, we continued our efforts to keep the business office running as efficiently as possible. We worked to keep our website updated and have received numerous compliments as to its content and ease of use. Computer hardware and maintenance costs related to information systems continue to increase each year.

This year, we entered into the realm of social networking. Helpline now has a Facebook page with a Helpline Causes page connected to it. We also added a “Donate Now” button to our website the beginning of December, which yielded a good return in a very short period of time.

The Emergency Plan in its final form was ready for staff and volunteer use in early 2009.

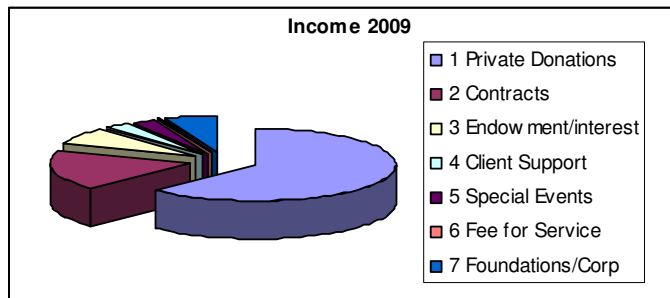
FISCAL

In 2009, Helpline House experienced a 13.5% overall increase in private donations. This amount included One Call For All, United Way, churches, businesses, organizations, and other individual donations. We received a private donation for client housing support as well as two substantial donations of stock.

At the same time, staff worked diligently to keep operational costs in line and be good stewards of client support funds.

Please note that this is an un-audited statement

2009 Total Income: \$801,730.			2009 Total Expenses: \$783,193		
Private Donations	504,282	62.9%	Financial Assistance to Clients	167,263	21.4%
Contracts	142,486	17.9%	Program Costs	491,138	62.7%
Endowment and interest	59,312	7.4%	Facilities/Equipment	10,677	1.4%
Local Funding - Client Support	24,305	3.0%	Administration	63,448	8.1%
Special Events	20,362	2.5%	Utilities/Maintenance	46,533	5.9%
Fee for Service Revenue	2,733	.3%	Special Events	4,134	0.5%
Foundations/Corporations	48,250	6.0%			
Total Income:	\$801,730	100%	Total Expense:	\$783,193	100%



Helpline House

Board of Directors

Board Meeting Calendar for 2009

All meetings were held at 282 Knechtel Way at 7:30 pm

Thursday January 22, 2009

Thursday February 19, 2009

Thursday March 19, 2009

Thursday April 16, 2009

Thursday May 21, 2009

Thursday June 18, 2009

No July Meeting

No August Meeting

Thursday September 17, 2009

Thursday October 15, 2009

Thursday November 19, 2009

Thursday December 10, 2009

BOARD MEMBERS

2009

Board Member	Term expires
Rick Dernbach, President	12/2009
Stella Carosso, Treasurer	12/2011
Robin Denis	12/2010
David Henry	12/2010
Linda Henry, Secretary	12/2009
Hank Keaton	12/2009
Scott Lindquist	12/2011
Joyce Knutsen	12/2009
Garnet Logan	12/2011
Sue Lukins	12/2011
Alan Miles	12/2009
Carol Thornburgh	12/2009
Sue Vincent, Vice President	12/2009

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Joanne E. Tews, M.S.
Murray Prins, M.S.E., LMHC

Executive Director
Social Work Supervisor

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