



January/February 2008 - News and Updates

Position Announcement

CONTACT USA is seeking a part time Executive Director to manage the operations of an association of nearly 45 centers, with an annual budget of under \$80,000 per year. See CUSA website at <http://contact-usa.org/Newsletters.htm> for further information.

REMINDER

Member center documents are due February 28, 2008. Documents include:

- ⌋ Annual Center Report
- ⌋ Annual Accreditation Document
- ⌋ 2007 Statistics - calls by service
- ⌋ 2007 Statistics - calls by classification
- ⌋ Spirit of CONTACT nomination
- ⌋ Volunteer Awards application - Mary R. Brown Society & Hernando Palmer - if applicable
- ⌋ Group tax exempt roster - if applicable

If you have misplaced your documents, or their buried under the other stack of

things to be done, please email me so that I can send another packet.

Accreditation

The CUSA Accreditation Committee is scheduling dates for site visits for 2008.

The **Reassurance Accreditation** manual is near completion.

CUSA will begin working on a **Warmline Accreditation** manual

Upcoming Conferences

May 9-11, 2008 - Convening/CONTACT USA joint conference, Chicago Marriott Downtown.

Each CONTACT USA member center is entitled to one free registration as part of your membership in CUSA. It is preferred, but not necessary, that the registration is for a volunteer

Fall 2009 - CONTACT USA will host the LifeLine International

The following letter is from Don Vilella, CONTACT of Beaver Valley on reasons he feels the Convening/CONTACT USA Conference is of value to him and his center.



This May I will attend my 5th conference.

When I first was hired as the Executive Director for CONTACT Beaver Valley my predecessor and many of the phone workers told me stories about previous CUSA Conferences that they attended. CONTACT Beaver Valley always seemed to have a nice crowd at the conferences. I was told that everybody seemed to get a lot out of the CUSA Conferences.

My first conference was the AAS/CUSA conference in Miami Beach. I was excited and, as the “new guy on the block”, I was really looking to bring back a lot of information, meet other CONTACT directors and volunteers, and to enjoy a good time with some of my volunteers.

To my dismay, nobody from CONTACT Beaver Valley joined me in Miami Beach. When I asked some of the volunteers and board members why they were not attending, I was told that the cost was prohibitive, and that most could not miss a week of work. Many also told me that conferences “were not the same any more”.

The conference in Miami was fun. I got to meet a lot of my fellow directors. I enjoyed many restaurants, and did some sight seeing, but I really did not learn much. Most of the training was not geared to Crisis Centers. There was what I felt, a lot of wasted time. In addition, it was expensive, and I was away from the office for a week.

I really wondered if the conference was worth it, and when the next year came around, I went to Denver with AAS/CUSA, and got more of the same. Very little training, good socializing, and some sight seeing.

The following year I attended the Convening/CUSA conference. I was not sure what to expect, but was very pleased that five of my volunteers attended with me. They felt the prices were OK, and they felt that they could do a long weekend.

I can honestly say that we had a fantastic time. The training was geared to Crisis Centers, and we split ourselves up to make sure we got at least one person in each class. The cost was affordable. When I got back, I asked my board to reimburse the volunteers for their registration fees. We had enough left in our budget from what was usually used up by me at previous conferences to cover these fees.



My volunteers and I had a blast. We ate at Joes across the street from the Marriot and went to a comedy club on Saturday night, and came back with a lot of knowledge. We had a workers meeting the month after the conference where each of my volunteers made a presentation based on the classes they attended.

I only had one volunteer attend with me last year, but Cyndi was able to be a presenter. I think that we would have had more attend if the conference was not held in March. Over all it was again a great learning experience. Both Cyndi and I came back with a lot of knowledge that we could share with the other volunteers.

I am looking forward to the conference in 2008. I hope moving back to the May date will allow more of my volunteers to attend. I cannot express enough what the interaction with other CONTACT Directors and volunteers has meant to me at all of the conferences that I have attended. The training that is geared to Crisis Line Workers at the Convening/CUSA Conference is the big difference that I see.

I will arrive on Friday, register, have a class, and enjoy the mixer. Saturday will to fly by with every class time turning into a real learning experience. I will relax and enjoy Chicago on Saturday night. Sunday will also be a great leaning experience and I will reflect on all that was accomplished in such a short time on my flight back to Pittsburgh. I will begin putting my thoughts on paper on Monday and getting ready for a Workers Meeting that is planned for later in May to recap all that I learned for my volunteers.

I know that this conference will be another great event, and I will wonder how it went by so quickly. There will be no wasted time. In addition, it will cost my organization less then half of what it cost to send me to the conferences in Miami and Denver.

In short, go to the Convening/CUSA Conference. Talk some of you volunteers in attending. Get a great education on subjects geared to Crisis Center Phone Workers and Crisis Center Directors. Meet and socialize with other Crisis Center Directors and Volunteers. Enjoy Chicago.

Hope to see you there.