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November Gala to Honor Music Icon and Nobel Laureate

CONTACT We Care will honor music icon Judy Collins and Nobel Laureate John Nash and his wife Alicia Nash at its 35th Anniversary Gala on November 11 at the Shackamaxon Golf & Country Club in Scotch Plains, NJ. Other honorees will include James Lape of Trinitas Regional Medical Center and Sylvia Axelrod of NAMI NJ.



John Nash

The event will celebrate individuals and businesses speaking out to prevent suicide, advocating for quality mental health services, and enhancing the lives of individuals throughout the state.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to honor such a talented and committed group of individuals who in their own unique and special ways are working to prevent suicide,” said David Owens, executive director



Judy Collins

for CONTACT We Care. “This celebrity event will raise critical funding support for our crisis hotline, which serves nearly 12,000 callers each year throughout New Jersey.”

“We are honored to have tremendous support for our Gala from many dignitaries throughout the state including: Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, Senator Tom Kean, Jr., and former Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells,” said Arlene Klemow, development director. “CONTACT’s Gala Committee is hard at work planning the November event, soliciting sponsorship support, selling ad space in the Gala commemorative journal and gathering prizes for the Gala Silent Auction.”

For more information, please call Arlene Klemow at 908/301-1899 or visit the website at www.contactwecare.org. ☎

Westfield Police Participate in CONTACT Suicide Intervention Training

Three members of the Westfield Police Department, Sergeants Jason Carter, Leonard Lugo and Jason Rodger, learned how to intervene in the case of suicide when they participated in CONTACT’s ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) Program held July 9th and 10th in Cranford. The police participation was made possible by

scholarship support from the Westfield Rotary Club.

“We come across an average of two suicides or attempts per month,” said Captain David Wayman of the Westfield Police Department. “The ASIST training provided by CONTACT We Care will provide our officers the skills

Westfield Police (continued on page 7)

Laurie Groves Wins Governor’s Award

CONTACT We Care proudly announces that its long-time hotline volunteer Laurie Groves of Liberty Corner was selected as the 2010 Winner of the New Jersey State Governor’s Jefferson Award in the category of Emergency Services. The honor, one of only twenty awarded from more than 500 nominations, was presented at New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark on April 28th.

For over ten years Groves has dedicated more than 1,500 hours to staffing CONTACT’s hotline. She consistently volunteers more than the required eight hours per month in order to ensure that callers find a caring listener at the other end of the phone line. With nearly 12,000 callers per year to the hotline, Groves’ contribution is critical to the hotline’s existence and most importantly, its callers.



Laurie Groves

In her warm and comforting way, she lets callers know they are not alone – that someone cares. As someone who lost her father at age 11, was widowed as a young mother and is a three-time cancer survivor, the 71-year-old grandmother brings a profound sense of compassion and empathy to her volunteer work. Groves understands the need to have someone to talk to. “I could easily have been a caller to CONTACT We Care if I didn’t have support systems in my life,”

Laurie Groves (continued on page 6)

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Hotline number:
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From the Executive Director:

Showing Up and Shutting Up — Advice from an Odd Couple

Lately I've taken to citing two well-known international figures as I speak about CONTACT. Two men prominent for very different reasons, two men with very different perspectives on life, two men not ordinarily mentioned in the same sentence. Not that they have anything to do with CONTACT, though I would love for each of them to donate just a small portion of their time and wealth to our cause, but the two of them have been much on my mind for memorable things they have said.

Woody Allen is widely credited with the aphorism, "Eighty percent of life is just showing up." (The phrase is sometimes quoted to just as great effect with the word "success" replacing "life." For trivia hounds, the phrase originated in his movie "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex but Were Afraid to Ask" from 1972.)

The phrase is apropos of what we do here at CONTACT in that 80 percent of our job is just showing up, just being here to answer the phone. Being here on the other end of the phone for that lonely soul out there who has something to get off her chest — a story to tell, a problem to sort through — and no one right at hand to tell it to. Ours is, in essence, a remarkably simple task. Perhaps its very simplicity is what often makes it so devilishly difficult to do.

This is where the other half of our "odd couple" — Bishop Desmond Tutu — comes in. A few months before we

began seeing his face in the crowd at Soccer City in Johannesburg as South Africa played proud host to the World Cup, Bishop Tutu did an interview (for what special occasion I can't recall) on National Public Radio. The focus of the interview was on all the changes Bishop Tutu has seen in South Africa over the course of his ministry since he won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1984.



David Owens

Somewhere toward the end of the interview, the bishop was asked how his relationship with God has changed in this time. He chuckled heartily and replied, "I shut up more."

I find his answer remarkably profound. It is the key to the other 20 percent of our task as CONTACT Listeners. Just showing up to be there on the phone with someone who needs an empathetic ear is the first and most important task we have, but fulfilling that last 20 percent is difficult because as human beings we always want to get our own say in. Sure, we know we answer the phones to listen, but we can't help wanting a really reciprocal conversation. We'd like a chance to talk, too, thank you. We might have something to say that could help the caller. That's what we're all about as volunteers. We want to help another person and we feel in our bones that being helpful means doing something positively active. That is an attitude that brought Bishop Tutu success as a leader in the South African movement to dismantle apartheid. But over time, in communing with God, the

Executive Director (continued on opposite page)

Mission Statement

CONTACT We Care believes that every human being has intrinsic value. We provide hope, offer compassion, and save lives through our caring & crisis line and community outreach programming. We devote ourselves to preventing suicide and other self-destructive behavior by listening actively and empathetically to people in distress, offering them emotional support without judgment. Since volunteers make our service possible, we are committed to providing an enriched, rewarding volunteer experience. ☎

New Board Members Elected

CONTACT We Care elected Bruce Hartman of Chatham, and Joan Glass Morgan and Joseph Swingle of Westfield to its volunteer Board of Trustees at the organization's 35th Annual Meeting on March 11th. More than 70 volunteers and supporters of CONTACT We Care were on hand at the event, which also recognized the organization's dedicated volunteers.

Bruce Hartman recently retired as the Chief Financial Officer at Massachusetts-based Yankee Candle Company. Prior to joining Yankee Candle, Hartman held executive positions with Cushman & Wakefield, Foot Locker, where he was the CFO, and May Department Stores. A native of Portland, Maine, Hartman is a graduate of Suffolk University in Boston. He and his wife, Connie, have resided in Chatham for the past 11 years with their four now-grown daughters. They are members of the Renaissance Church

in Summit. Connie's involvement with their local Rescue Squad inspired Bruce to seek out service with CONTACT, whose form of mental and spiritual first-aid he embraces.

Joan Glass Morgan, Psy. D. holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Rutgers University. She has a private practice in Westfield, where she works with adults blending traditional therapy with mindfulness-based stress reduction and other approaches. She is a part-time faculty member of the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University and she is on the faculty of the Center for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis of New Jersey. Dr. Morgan is eager to bring her background in mental health and her interest in community psychology to her activities on the Board.

Joseph Swingle is a 22-year real estate services veteran with Grubb & Ellis. He

manages more than 1,400 professionals as well as the relationships with many corporate clients including Aetna, Citi, Capital One, Kraft Foods, The Hartford and Nordstrom. Currently Joe is Executive Managing Director, Market Leader for the New York Metropolitan area. Prior to his work in real estate, Swingle purchased and operated the family business, Swingle's Colonial Diner in Springfield, New Jersey. His wife Carrie is a CONTACT Listener volunteering on the hotline. They reside in Westfield with their three children.

"We are thrilled to welcome Bruce, Joan and Joe to CONTACT's Board of Trustees," said David Owens of Westfield, executive director. "They each bring with them valuable leadership skills and a true commitment to making a positive difference in the community." 📞

CONTACT Provides Tender Touch to its Volunteers

CONTACT's hotline volunteers were treated to some tenderness and caring by the Healing Hands Spa & Retreat in Plainfield at a special Volunteer Appreciation Event on June 21st. Twenty-five CONTACT Listeners signed up to receive soothing and relaxing chair and table massages during the day-long event.

"As caregivers who consistently provide compassionate, empathetic support to our callers, our volunteers also need to be nurtured and cared for,"

said Wendi Rothstein, LCSW, clinical director. "We were so pleased to have the opportunity to express our appreciation for all our CONTACT Listeners through this fun event. As a volunteer-staffed hotline, CONTACT is very committed to providing a supportive, caring environment for all our volunteers — where they feel valued and appreciated."

Warmest thanks to Elizabeth Smith of Healing Hands Spa & Retreat for making this special event possible. 📞



Executive Director (continued from opposite page) bishop learned the importance of just keeping his mouth shut.

It is a hard thing to do. Sometimes our callers remind us: "You don't have to say anything. Just let me talk." Even so, restraint can be difficult. We want to participate.

Learning to shut up can be an heroic act. That's what CONTACT Listeners do at their best. They show up and shut up. And by those acts they discover something divine.

So now, if anyone asks me from whom I learned one of my most important lessons, I can say it was from The Odd Couple of Divine Comedy, Allen & Tutu.

David Owens

"The reason why so few people are agreeable in conversation is that each is thinking more about what he intends to say than about what others are saying, and we never listen when we are eager to speak."

— *Francois La Rochefoucauld*

Volunteers Recognized and Honored at Annual Celebration

More than seventy volunteers who staff CONTACT's crisis hotline and help lead and support the organization attended the festivities at CWC's Volunteer Recognition Celebration and Annual Meeting in March at Ferraro's South in Westfield. With delicious hors d'ouvres and drinks, long-stemmed chocolate roses for each volunteer in attendance, and dozens of exciting door prizes, it was a terrific evening for all!

"What a joy to have the opportunity to publicly recognize and celebrate each and every individual that makes our life-saving service possible," said David Owens, executive director. "Our volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. They make our service possible. Warmest thanks to all of them!" 📞



CONTACT Listener Deb Scheibe, who has served more than 500 hours on the hotline, gets a big hug from Executive Director David Owens.



CONTACT Listeners David Owens, Gene Bloomwell, Grace Bradley and Maureen Moynihan were recognized for each serving more than 1000 hours on the hotline.



Three Cheers for CONTACT's Training Assistants: Deven Mavani, John Ryan, Barry Klassel, Bob John, Charles Herman, Amy Green, Edna Nash, Joyce Cuomo, Gene Bloomwell, Eileen Burlinson, Sylvia Borne, Leesa Nash, Grace Bradley, Laurie Groves and Deb Scheibe.



Facilities Volunteer Steve Gruber and Volunteer Webmaster & Graphic Designer Ann Campbell were recognized for their valuable contributions by Executive Director David Owens and Training Director Sue Fasano.

CONTACT Listeners Jessica Mattfield, Marianne Kranz, Laurie Feinberg and Marsha Gelfand





CONTACT Listeners Barry Klassel and Joyce Cuomo, who each served more than 600 hours on the hotline, were recognized by Executive Director David Owens.

CONTACT Listeners Kathie Simon, Swava Socha, and Sheila Becker.



Recent graduates of CONTACT's Volunteer Training Class # 77 were celebrated: Pictured with David Owens and Sue Fasano are: Megan Accardi, Kathie Simon, Sheila Becker, Joan Johnston, Deb McCardle, Shaquaya Jones, Susan D'Agastino and Marsha Gelfand.

Longest serving volunteer Joanne Bloomwell, who has served more than 3000 hours on the hotline, receives a standing ovation and special recognition from Executive Director David Owens. Proudly applauding behind Joanne is husband Gene Bloomwell.



CONTACT Listener and scheduler Barbara Kreder along with David Owens.

CONTACT Listeners Anne Goetz and Kim Stratton.

CONTACT Accepting Registrations for 79th Training Class September 15 – December 8, 2010

All classes run from 7 to 10 p.m.

Class #1 September 15, Wednesday	Welcome – Philosophy of/Commitment to Contact CONTACT – Past, Present and Future Values Clarification
Class #2 September 20, Monday	Techniques: CONTACT Listening I
Class #3 September 27, Monday	Techniques: CONTACT Listening II
Class #4 October 6, Wednesday	Practice Session Call Management, Call Policies and Intro to Call Situations Setting Limits, Stuck-in-Place Callers
Class #5 October 13, Wednesday	Call Situations: Mood, Panic and Personality Disorders
Class #6 October 20, Wednesday	Faith/Spirituality as a Resource Call Situations: Grief Call Survivors of Suicide, Calls from the Elderly Isolated, and Lonely
Class #7 October 27, Wednesday	Call Situations: Thought Disorders Substance Abuse and MICA
Class #8 November 3, Wednesday	Special Technique: Carefrontation Situations Requiring Carefrontation Manipulative and Abusive Callers
Class #9 November 10, Wednesday	Call Situations: Suicide & Life Threatening Situations
Class #10 November 17, Wednesday	Suicide Intervention Procedures
November 24, Wednesday	Off for Thanksgiving
Class #11 December 1, Wednesday	Introduction to iCarol and Call Recording
Class #12 December 8, Wednesday	Final Practice Sessions Additional Call Situations – Outreach Calls; Information and Referral Calls Non-Suicide Emergencies (Homicide, Domestic Violence, Runaways) Introduction to the Telephone Room & Scheduling Intern Shifts

Laurie Groves *(continued from page 1)*

she said. “Everyone needs someone to talk to.”

Her commitment to the callers and the hotline service is so great that she also volunteered to serve on CONTACT’s Board of Directors, leading the agency for more than six years. For two years, she served as president of the organization.

“I feel that every time I’m on the lines I get just as much out of it as the callers.

I am a real advocate that if you want to help yourself, start by helping someone else. The more you give, the more you get,” said Groves.

Over the course of ten years on the hotline, Groves has handled approximately 2,000 calls, with approximately 80 of those calls from individuals considering suicide. ☎

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January through June 2010

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Yutsus, Karen

PSEG Employee Soothes Souls & Saves Lives by Listening

When her teenage daughter's friends came over to hang out, they would often linger at the kitchen table with her, open up, and share their stories. That's how PSEG employee Michelle Brady made an important discovery.

"The kids would tell me 'I don't talk to my own mother like this,'" said the Hillside mom. "It felt good to know they were comfortable to talk. I always wanted to create a safe and accepting place for my daughter and her friends. And I discovered all I had to do was listen!"

Brady's commitment to listening has set her on an important new path in life. The senior administrative assistant in the human resources department at PSEG in Newark regularly soothes souls and saves lives by volunteering for CONTACT We Care, the 24-hour caring and crisis hotline based in Westfield.

"When my daughter's friends would say, 'You should be a counselor, Miss Michelle,' it got me thinking. I realized that the ability to listen is a skill I can use at work, at home and in all areas of my life. Through PSEG's Volunteer Match Program I discovered CONTACT We Care and signed up to take their Volunteer Training because I wanted to learn how to really listen and make a difference."

After nearly two years answering calls to the hotline, Brady says the rewards are countless. "The most rewarding part is when a caller expresses appreciation and says they feel better. They thank me for being there for them."

CONTACT We Care handles more than 11,000 calls a year from men, women and teens who are lonely, depressed, stressed or suicidal. The 35 year-old non-profit was recognized as the Best Statewide Volunteer Organization by the New Jersey Governor's Office of Volunteerism.

Born and raised in Scotch Plains, Brady, who was known by her maiden name Shelley Coleman, attended Berkeley Business School following graduation from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School in 1985. She has worked in varying positions at PSEG for nearly 13 years. "I'm a social person and I love to connect with people," said Brady. "It feels so good to help them and make a difference."

"Volunteering on the crisis hotline gives me great perspective," said Brady. "I realize that whatever I'm going through

isn't so big after all. We tend to make problems bigger than what they are sometimes."

More and more often Brady answers the hotline phone and finds a caller without hope, considering suicide. "It's

tremendously powerful to be able to be there for someone in crisis and help them through their dark moment. It feels so good to connect and touch others in such a significant way – to help another human being."

Brady's experiences at CONTACT have inspired her to go back to school to study psychology. She's begun looking into different programs and options. "I'd

love to enhance my skills and learn even more about the human mind. It's taken time and many different experiences to get me to this point, and it's all coming together now," said Brady.

For more information about volunteering for CONTACT We Care, call 908/301-1899 or visit the website www.contactwecare.org. ☎



Michelle Brady

Hats Off and Welcome to New Training Graduates

Hats off and welcome to CONTACT's Training Class 78! Sukhbir Chadha of Edison, Monica Cueto of Newark, Amanda Friend of Bridgewater, Randi Gelfand of Scotch Plains, Frieda Gurdon of Millstone Township, Teesha Hoffman of Edison, Lisa Irby of Watchung, Jennifer Kleinow of Perth Amboy, Christopher Lombardi of Livingston, Sarah Ogden of Piscataway, Jennifer Song of Skillman, Jillian Stabert of Edison, Lisa Valentine of South Plainfield. ☎

Westfield Police *(continued from page 1)*

and training to deal with these difficult situations."

The ASIST program is designed for first responders, school personnel, corporate managers, clergy members and other community leaders who might come into contact with suicidal individuals. CONTACT's unique hands-on, interactive, two-day training prepares participants with the skills to successfully intervene in situations when someone may be at serious risk of suicide.

"As the listening experts, serving the community for 35 years by providing

crisis intervention services, we are pleased to share our expertise with organizations, large and small, throughout the community," said David Owens, executive director. "CONTACT'S ASIST program provides participants with the means to reduce the risk and the confidence to create a positive outcome.

For more information about arranging a custom-tailored training session exclusively for your organization, visit CONTACT's website www.contactwecare.org or call (908) 301-1899. ☎

Save the Date!

CONTACT We Care
35th Anniversary Gala
November 11th

Honorees Include:

Judy Collins
John & Alicia Nash
James Lape
Sylvia Axelrod



www.suicidpreventionlifeline.org
1-800-273-TALK



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