

- 1968: Council of Churches of the Inner City of London identifies a need for a crisis suicide intervention service
- 1971: Founding member of Distress Centres Ontario (DCO)
- 1975: Crisis lines become operational 24 hours/day, 365 days/year
- 1977: Incorporation on May 18, 1977. A constitution was adopted by the membership and a Board of Directors was formed
- 1984: Approved as a member of the United Way of Greater London
- 1987: Contact Crisis Centre name changed to London and District Distress Centre
- 1989: Youth Crisis Line was established
- 1998: London Community Foundation grant funded a formal agency program evaluation
- 1998: United Way of London & Middlesex approves multi-year funding
- 1999: Spanish Line piloted
- 2001: LDDC and Project S.E.N.I.O.R. launch Seniors Helpline
- 2002: Ontario Trillium Foundation funding establishes a Fund Development program
- 2006: LDDC relocates operations
- 2006: United Way approves a 2<sup>nd</sup> multi-year funding request
- 2007: Chaos Organized software makes its debut
- 2007: Ontario Trillium Foundation funds 2 year, Promotions and Awareness Campaign
- 2008: Diva Day, March 2008, exceeds fundraising expectations
- 2008: London CAREs Pilot response line goes "Live" in October
- 2009: New LDDC website goes "Live" in July
- 2010: LDDC develops 3-year Strategic Plan including a new vision and strategic objectives for 2010-2013.



2009-2010

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 16TH, 2010

OUR VISION

“A HEALTHY COMMUNITY  
THROUGH CARING AND  
CONNECTION.”



LONDON &amp; DISTRICT

## OUR MISSION

*The London and District Distress Centre is a community-based agency that provides individuals in need with short-term empathetic listening and confidential telephone support, operated 24 hours a day by highly trained and caring volunteers.*

## 2009 – 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gregory Clark - Chair  
 Corinne Marshall - 1st Vice Chair  
 John Humphrey - Treasurer  
 Kim Newman - Secretary

Directors:  
 Joan Seabrook  
 Jody Learn  
 Paulina Dysko  
 Sarah Muto (Corrigan)  
 Adrienne Paquette  
 Evan Russell  
 Connie Morrison  
 Bill Diver  
 Kelly Ziegner (retired)

*“I love volunteering with an organization that honestly respects each member of this community.” - Emily Wilton*

This year, the London and District Distress Centre introduced a new vision: “A healthy community through caring and connection.” This vision speaks to the common desire of our callers: to connect with someone who is caring and nonjudgmental.

Distress Centre volunteers provide confidential support to callers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For many, our service provides a safe way to ask for help when dealing with stressful life events or circumstances. In a healthy community, individuals should be able to ask for help. In 2009, 1880 calls were from people who felt isolated. For them, a call to the Distress Centre may be the only human contact they have in a day. In a healthy community, every member should know they are cared about as an individual. Others call looking for information on community resources. We are able to help callers become more aware of the tools available for them in this community.

Call volunteers are dedicated to improving their community. They complete over 30 hours of initial training, participate in ongoing training and even do online learning forums. They also commit to at least 16 hours of service a month for a minimum of a year.

Call volunteers embrace the importance of caring and connecting every day at the Distress Centre. By giving of themselves, they ensure that our callers have the chance to be heard and valued in their community.

STAFF FOR 2009 – 2010

**Bill Diver**

Executive Director

**Charlene Foster**

Trainer & Volunteer Coordinator

**Bobbi-Jo Gardiner**

Community Development Coordinator

**Alice Cox**

Statistician and Database Maintenance

**Emily Wilton**

Volunteer Management Assistant,  
Summer Canada Works

**Nancy Johnston**

Bookkeeper

2009–2010 *Div*a Day COMMITTEE

Sarah Westlake - Co Chair

Heather Bishop - Co Chair

Bobbi-Jo Gardiner -Staff

Laurie Kornmuller

Erin Rothenburger

Kerry Blackwell

Debbie Duplan

Shawna Harkes

Wendy Horton

Jody Learn

Jen Ruck

It is with great pleasure that we find ourselves able to share in the success of our community; answering the call of individuals who were feeling worried, sad, scared, overwhelmed or who are in crisis. Over 125 dedicated, committed, caring volunteers gave over 10,500 hours of their time to answer our help lines 24/7, 365 days while faced with a 10-15% increase in service demand. We thank everyone who has shared in these significant achievements!

As the year was winding down, we were busily putting the final touches on our year-long project of strategic planning. Wow - what a huge undertaking! With the expert assistance and leadership of Jennifer Kirkham, we structured the work plan, sought input from our volunteers, our callers and our community partners. Our entire Board of Directors attended a strategy retreat in mid-April. Emerging with a new Vision, detailed Values, and several key goals and strategies, we have a framework to guide the London and District Distress Centre for the next 3 years.

Timely as it was, the Strategic Plan focused our role on mental health. Our long-term outcome goals are to decrease mental health stigma, to increase access to services, and to optimize levels of function/quality of life. As a United Way of London and Middlesex funded program we share a significant community-wide mental health role.

We were fortunate too, this year to begin reviewing a wide reaching potential partnership with the London Mental Health Crisis Service. Both 24/7 helplines currently focus on answering the calls of individuals in need and in distress in our community. A new potential service model may emerge, providing the same high level of service to our callers.

One of the community's biggest challenges remains tearing down the stigma of mental health distress and illness; we have made some ground. Our Call Volunteers, Board of Directors and staff are relentless champions of mental health. We continue to take the messages everywhere we go, to every committee we are involved with and at every chance we find. With the help of so many of you, we have made gains but are often reminded, of how much more there is to do to achieve, *a healthy community through caring and connection.*

## JUST THE FACTS

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2009

**16103** Total Calls Received

**7177** Callers had a diagnosed mental illness

**2297** New callers used our lines

**1880** Callers felt isolated in their community

**1246** Seniors Helpline calls answered

**589** Calls related to employment

**504** Suicide Crisis Calls

**953** London CARES calls

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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& PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Revenue - \$219,316**

United Way - 63%

Fundraising and one time Grants – 19%

City of London - 18%

**Expenses - \$227,859**

### LDDC/ LMHCS PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

Over a year ago the Distress Centre was approached by CMHA to initiate a strategic review of a potential partnership with the London Mental Health Crisis Service. Both organizations provide 24/7 support to callers in distress and crisis.

At the March 2010 meeting of the Board of Directors it was agreed to proceed with discussions of the most likely service model through business, transition and implementation stages. With the assistance and guidance of Maria Sanchez-Keane a consultant, a formal process was adopted and is being followed. This collaborative, with the blessing of the community is seen as increasing supports for people experiencing distress and/or mental health crisis, building greater telephone and face-to-face opportunities and more effectively providing services to the community. Both the distress lines and crisis lines would be kept intact, and answered at the Distress Centre.

It has only been through the cooperation and input of our volunteers that we have been able to progress on this truly innovative approach to a new service model for answering the call of individuals in the community who are worried, sad, scared, overwhelmed or in crisis 24/7, 365 days a year.