

The Upper Room Crisis Hotline

Five Year Report

2008-2012



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Letter from the Board President

September, 2013

Dear Friends,

For the last few years, I have been called to serve as President of The Upper Room Crisis Hotline Board of Directors. In serving with Sr. Mary Frances Seeley, Chief Operating Officer of the Line, the Board and volunteers, we feel joy in being a part of this vital outreach. I personally, and others, have seen that each year we build on the good work that has been done the year before. This growth reminds us that the need to be there for the priests, deacons and men religious have increased, and is greatly needed. Our men religious and clergy are much older now, fewer men are being ordained, and the health of our priests are a concern. Just lately three priests that I serve with, under age fifty, are having major surgeries. All of these dedicated men, no matter what age from newly ordained, to a man of 65 years as a priest, or religious, need to be cared for with a call, and prayers.

The challenge that The Upper Room faces is that our priests wait until something in their lives becomes a crisis. As a priest of 24 years, I try to encourage men to use the Line as a means of support, a listening ear, or to share with the volunteers the good that has been accomplished in their ministries. Jesus, in the Upper Room, not only focused on the difficulty of service but on all the good that has been done, in bringing others closer to the Father.

The Board, volunteers, and I, celebrate the good things that God has accomplished through the mission and work of The Upper Room Crisis Hotline. It is my hope and prayer, as President of the Board, that we have the financial means to keep this Line alive and well. We have been good stewards of the benefactors giving. Through the generosity of God, benefactors and grant monies, we can grow in our services and reach out even more to priests, deacons and men religious throughout dioceses in this country and outside the United States; to the priests and brothers serving in mission lands throughout the world.

May Christ the High Priest lead the priests, deacons, and brothers to peace and solace in The Upper Room. Through the intercession of St. Thomas of the Upper Room, with the Apostles, and Mary- the first disciple guide, may we direct and protect the brother who calls us, in The Upper Room Crisis Line. May whatever we do now and in the future always praise God, our Almighty Father.

Sincerely in Christ,

Father Peter

Rev. Peter P. Jarosz, Pastor, Christ the King Catholic Church
Board President, The Upper Room Crisis Hotline
Diocese of Joliet in Illinois

Introduction

The Upper Room Crisis Hotline has been privileged to serve our priests, deacons, and men religious for five years, beginning January 1, 2008. It looks forward to continuing services into the future, for the benefit of the men in ministry.

The **MISSION** of The Upper Room Crisis Hotline is to be the expression of God's unconditional love for those called to the ministry of Jesus, namely, the Roman Catholic Priests, Deacons and vowed Religious Brothers of the United States.

The name, The Upper Room, was selected to memorialize the place where the Apostles gathered for mutual support and prayers after the Resurrection. It was also the place where Jesus instituted the Eucharist and Holy Orders.

It is fitting then, that The Upper Room be a place where brothers and sisters can meet to exchange confidences, to pray, and to mutually support one another in our daily ministry.

The Upper Room is dedicated to providing skilled listening, information and referral, suicide prevention/crisis intervention and reassurance calls to the elderly on a 24/7/365 basis.



Administrator's Report

The Board of Directors of The Upper Room consists of priests, religious, and lay men and women interested in furthering the ministry of The Upper Room Crisis Hotline which serves as a support service to the men in need. The Board meets quarterly and takes an active part in the direction and services of the Line.

All services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are available by telephone only. The Line is staffed by volunteers specially trained for telephone services.

During these past five years the staff has consisted of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Sr. Mary Frances Seeley, OSF, Ph.D., assisted by volunteer office helpers, and the trained telephone operators who handle the calls.

To respond to the incoming and Sunshine calls, volunteers are recruited from the parishes in the Diocese of Joliet, IL and are required to take a specially designed training program after which they are selected by the COO to work 4/6 hours on the Line responding to the calls on the toll free number.

1-888-808-8724 Toll free - 24 hrs a day - 7 days a week



Reassurance Program

The Reassurance Program (Sunshine Service) is a unique pastoral service available to clergy and men religious. It is designed to provide companionship, assistance, and encouragement to men who are living alone, in a small group, or feeling alone in a larger community setting. Some of our callers find themselves isolated from their peers by distance and some are over-extended by additional demands in their ministry. Others recently retired from active ministry are adjusting to a new life style in a new living situation. At times, we serve those who are shut-in and dealing with serious health problems. We remind them about appointments, medications, or meals.

Unlike many of the services of TURCH, which respond to an immediate crisis situation, The Sunshine Service is a ministry of hospitality and warmth. It gives our volunteers an opportunity to converse with some of the most dedicated and gifted clergy who are retired, offering these men a confidential listening ear and a little companionship. Sometimes our call is the break in their day that helps them to feel connected to the memories of parish life which they enjoyed during their active ministry. When the limitation of aging seems too difficult to travel alone, we are there. We are the whisper of hope between doses of medications, doctor visits and hospital procedures. Our volunteers value the opportunity to be the voice, and sometimes the only voice, to reach out to our retired-aging clergy with words of gratitude for a lifetime commitment that continues to enrich the Church.

- ☐ A daily phone call
- ☐ Available 24/7/365
- ☐ Trained volunteers on staff
- ☐ Confidential conversation
- ☐ Referrals as needed

Since we are available 24/7, we can equally assist those who are falling into depression or who are feeling overwhelmed by the demands of their ministry. At times, our daily call lightens a burden, helps a clergyman regain focus, provides perspective, or renews zeal.

The primary objective of the Sunshine Service, however, is to make a daily call to check in on the health and safety as well as the physical and emotional well-being of those who register for this service. We know that this is a needed critical service especially for those church men who for any reason live alone and at some point might need resources and referrals to continue to live an independent life style. Our volunteers are trained to handle their issues and concerns, and when the need arises, can get help to them.

Our goal is to serve an additional 30-60 participants in 2013 through this program. You can help us reach our goal if you would like to register for a Sunshine call or if you would encourage someone whom you know would benefit from this service to contact us.



The Volunteer Training

Syllabus

The training syllabus is provided to the prospective operator on the first night of course to be read thoroughly in order to be prepared for the important task of listening, referring, and assisting in whatever way possible to the caller in need. Being an operator, or volunteer, on the hotline is an honor. It is important that everyone be prepared to the best of their ability to provide these services with compassion, and good listening skills. It has been a tradition, and a necessity with crisis hotlines, that a course of study is offered to those wishing to provide these services. However, just because a person has registered for the course does not guarantee that they are automatically accepted as an operator. Working on the Line is dependent on the ongoing evaluation throughout the course, which will include not only class sessions, but a personal interview and extensive role-playing experiences.

Knowledge Application

This course will provide the volunteer with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be an Upper Room Operator. The various lectures will present the student with information about the policies of The Upper Room, which they are expected to adhere to assiduously; the use of referrals, the psychology of the callers, the skill of reflective listening, and the special programs which The Upper Room has to offer.

Both the attitudes and skills necessary for reflective listening, developed through role-playing, will begin after the third class session and continue during each class to assure the application of the knowledge received.

Course Competencies

Throughout the course the potential volunteer will be evaluated on his/her abilities, knowledge and skills. Specifically, the role-playing will be evaluated for the:

- 1) ability to accept in a non-judgmental and non-directive manner persons who differ from themselves in such areas as theology, morality, and suicide;
- 2) ability to understand the limitations of the assistance the individual volunteer and The Upper Room can provide;
- 3) ability to handle both one's own feelings and those of the caller, who may be in imminent lethal danger to himself or others.

Course Requirements

The course is held over an eight week period, meeting twice a week, and attendance is mandatory. The time frame of this training/education program can be adjusted, but it is not usually shortened or abbreviated, since the knowledge and skills provided are vital to our services on the Line. Moreover, it is during this training period that observations and evaluations of the personal conduct of the trainees occur. We trust that all the trainees are sincere and want to help their brothers. However, not all volunteers come with phone skills nor can they adapt to the non-directive and non-judgmental attitudes required on the Line.



Future Plans

Because The Upper Room has been successful in many ways, the importance of its work became known in other geographic areas. It is acknowledged that the priests, worldwide, need such a support service and lay, clergy, and men and women vowed religious are dedicated to serve them in such a ministry. For this reason other institutions and Dioceses are desiring collaboration with The Upper Room to establish such a ministry in their area.

Ireland

In the early part of 2012 Sr. Mary Frances Seeley, COO of The Upper Room, corresponded with the Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland, through a mutual acquaintance from Maynooth, Ireland. The Archbishop approved and encouraged the idea of such a ministry in Ireland and directed Sr. Mary Frances to correspond the Bishop of the Diocese of Ballina. (Ballina is located in the upper western region of Ireland.)

In September 2012, Sr. Mary Frances met with the Bishop and had a positive conversation about establishing the hotline for the clergy and men religious of Ireland. After returning, Sr. Mary Frances sent a Proposal to the Bishop containing an outline of personnel needs, site location, and other issues, to which he responded favorably. Later, a budget was also sent containing the many options at his disposal, concerning the costs involved in the establishment and maintenance of such a ministry. At this time the conversation continues.

International

The Upper Room has received calls from Canada, Australia, England, South Korea, Germany, Norway, Spain, and Austria, in the five years of its services. It is the goal of The Upper Room to serve priests, deacons, and men religious when and where needed. These calls exhibit a need for this ministry internationally. The calls came from priests, women religious, Brothers, and various lay people. However, because we do not ask identification of the caller, the identification is known only because of the content of the call.

The incidences of sexual abuse by clergy and men religious, as well as completed suicides, are difficult issues for everyone concerned. The issues of trust, confidentiality, and anonymity, the bedrock of hotline services, can be used to address these issues for the benefit of the Diocese, the individual involved, as well as the victim in cases of abuse.

Advancement

The Upper Room has been approached by other institutions of rehabilitation, for men and women religious, and a collaborative working relationship is in process. It is desirable, as shown by the calls received on the Line, that the ministry be extended to women religious and potentially lay people.

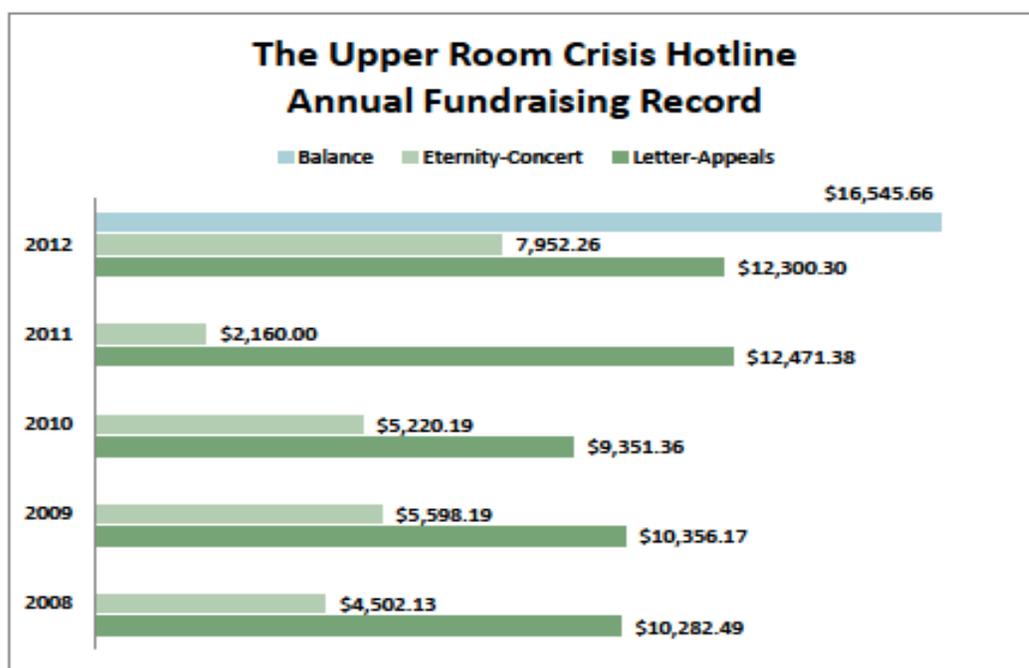
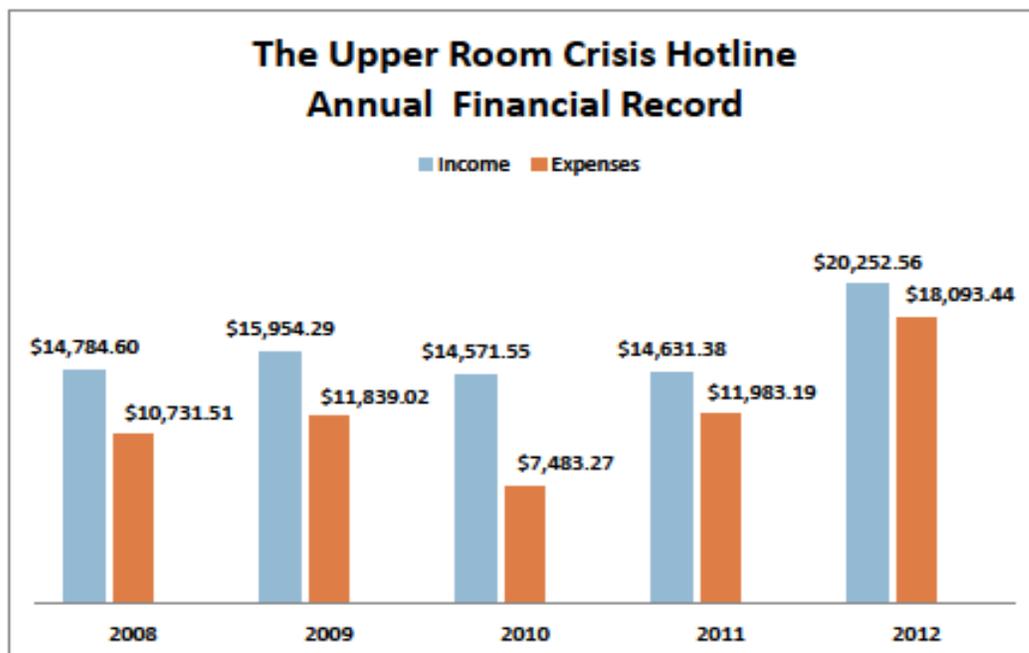
This would require separate Lines for each population served. The priests, deacons, and men religious would retain the original Line, while the women religious and lay people would have separate numbers and receive services appropriate to their concerns. The ministry to lay people would be limited to problems or questions of a religious nature, as there is no other Catholic hotline available. The volunteers will not be trained to handle marriage problems, child care, or other family concerns. Other hotlines already established in many communities handle these calls and The Upper Room strives not to duplicate services. It is a privilege of the staff and volunteers to serve in such a sacred ministry.



Subject Matter of Calls - Annual Statistics

Subject Matter of Calls	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Aging/Retirement	0	1	3	3	17
Alcohol Abuse	2	0	3	19	43
Anger	0	1	0	0	0
Authority	2	1	1	9	13
Business	30	23	17	11	6
Chat Room Usage	N/A	N/A	4	2	0
Chronic Caller	N/A	N/A	6	37	237
Counseling	20	50	97	616	682
Demonic Possession/Satanism	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	30
Depression	14	11	31	189	64
Elder Abuse	2	0	0	0	0
Family/Friends	5/1	2/1	17	171	129
Finances	2	3	8	67	47
Homosexuality	0	2	5	11	30
Housing	N/A	N/A	5	0	23
Information	N/A	N/A	N/A	30	63
Isolation/Loneliness	4	25	25	252	231
Job/Employment	2	3	10	19	40
Legal Issues	0	3	2	21	14
Medical Issues	2	9	16	266	166
Mental Health	N/A	N/A	N/A	108	52
Prayer	0	6	2	2	0
Reassurance	1	9	31	175	264
Referral	1	5	2	0	0
Relationships	5	7	23	104	83
Religious Life/Issues	7	9	4	31	76
Sexual Abuse	0	2	0	1	0
Sexuality	2	13	8	18	22
Spirituality	3	8	23	9	15
Stress/Anxiety	2	0	0	0	0
Substance Abuse	1	0	4	1	0
Suicide	3	4	0	0	0
Suicide Information	N/A	N/A	6	6	17
Suicide Threat	N/A	N/A	5	1	0
Talk to a Priest	N/A	N/A	6	0	0
Total	110	198	364	2179	2364
Sunshine Contacts	375	698	994	753	719
Total	485	887	1358	2932	3083

Financial Reports



Memorials and Recognitions

Clergy and Religious	Donors	Year	Year	Year
Rev. Frank Anksorus	Paul J. Walden, Sr.	2009		
Rev. Louis Antl	Mary Beth Welhelmi	2013		
Rev. Bob Maternoski	Rev. Ron Sciarlata	2013		
Rev. Engne Buccifero	Douglas & Loretta Spesia	2012		
Rev. William J. Buckley	Dr. & Mrs. James C. Moses	2013		
Rev. Paul Burak	Joe McGinnity	2012		
Rev. Joseph Burns	Mary Anne & Bill Theobald	2009		
	Carol Sterr-Lehman	2009		
	Linda Deiss	2009		
	Joseph & Karen Anzalone	2009		
	Nancy Louck	2011		
Rev. Crello	Mrs. Frances Fortier	2009		
Rev. Paul Decera	Dolores P. Ritter	2011	2012	2013
Rev. Bill Dugal	Gary Rose	2011		
Rev. John Fogarty	Matthew & Dolores Gross	2009	2011	
Rev. Raymond Foster	Donald C. Karcz	2011		
Rev. Mark Fracaro	Mary Burns	2011		
Franciscan Friars	Judith Speckman	2012	2013	
Rev. Robert Galchus	St. Mary's Congregation of the Mission	2009		
Msgr. John E. Gilmartin	Rev. Michael A. Boccaccio	2012	2013	
Rev. Emmett Gleason	Donald Karcz	2011		
Rev. Ray Grasso	Dan Chorney	2009		
Rev. Ted Guminga	Sr. Geneva Berns, OSF	2009		
Rev. Ed Hussli	Larry & Milly Laux	2013		
	Michele Hussli	2013		
Sister David Ann Hoy, OSF	Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Smyth	2012		
Rev. Bill Irwin	James & Janet Klover	2011		
Bishop Roger Kaffer	Anonymous Donor	2009		
Rev. George Klepec	Larry & Mildred Laux	2012	2013	
	Theresa Lopez	2012		
	Matthew & Dolores Gross	2012	2013	
	Jyme Johnson	2013		
Rev. John Kosmal	Loretta Creely	2009		
Robert Kubishak, C.P.	Anonymous Donor	2011		
Rev. David Lawrence	Barb Laneek	2010		
	Anonymous Donor	2009		
	Anonymous Donor	2009		
	Anonymous Donor	2009		
Rev. Jim Lennon	The Golden Family	2009		
	George & Regina Block	2011		



Memorials and Recognitions

Clergy and Religious	Donors	Year	Year	Year
Rev. Eugene Lutz	Marcia Van Natta	2009		
Rev. McDonald	Marianne Vabilis	2009		
	Mary Schoenborn	2010		
Rev. Bob McLaughan	Allen & Jean Sheehan	2012		
Rev. Edmund McMahan, C.P.	Edmund & Eileen Morrow	2012		
Rev. Medard, OFM	Dottie Mueller	2009	2011	
	Mary E. Alsup	2009		
	Anonymous Donor	2009		
	Jo Ann Barber	2011		
Rev. Bill O'Brian	Anonymous Donor	2009		
	Peter Zilka	2009		
Rev. Mike Pennock	Anonymous Donor	2009		
Rev. Don Pock	Frances Radencic	2009		
Rev. Mario Quejades	Mary Holub	2009		
	Mike Robinson	2009		
	Marianne Vabilis	2010		
Rev. Francis Rausch	Adele Vevine	2010	2013	
Rev. Reagan	Loretta Creely	2011		
Rev. John Regan	Lynn Zeitler	2009		
	Jeff Cherrick	2009		
	Kathy Cheatham	2009		
Rev. Ray Ryan	Larry & Mildred Laux	2012	2013	
	Rev. James Lennon	2013		
Struggling Priests	Nancy Davis	2012	2013	
Priests of St. Paul/Apostle	Rosemary DeGiulio	2011		
Jack Shankland	Cecelia & Betsy Hansen	2011		
Rev. Kevin Shanley	Judith Aksamit	2009	2010	
Rev. Sinsky	Lou & Jill Glavan	2010		
Rev. Jerry Simonelli	Anonymous Donor	2009		
Rev. Edmund Szott	Nancy Crowe	2009		
Rev. Joseph Thomas	Rev. Charles Fanelli	2012		
Rev. Paul TSI	Mr. & Mrs. David Ritter	2010		
	Dolores Ritter	2010		
Rev. William Vogt	Don Vogt	2009		
Rev. Zieba	Walter Dedzik	2009		

The Upper Room Crisis Hotline

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Executive Director
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Turch
1-888-808-8724

**A pastoral service
for clergy and men religious
available 24/7/365**

We're on the Web
www.theupperroomcrisis hotline.org

The Beautiful Hands of a Priest

We need them in life's early morning,
We need them again at its close;
We feel their warm clasp of true friendship,
We seek them when tasting life's woes.

At the altar each day we behold them,
And the hands of a king on his throne
Are not equal to them in their greatness;
Their dignity stands all alone;

And when we are tempted and wander,
To pathways of shame and of sin,
It's the hand of a priest that will absolve us--
Not once, but again and again.

And when we are taking life's partner,
Other hands may prepare us a feast,
But the hand that will bless and unite us--
Is the beautiful hand of a priest.



God bless them and keep them all holy,
For the Host which their fingers caress;
When can a poor sinner do better,
Than to ask Him to guide thee and bless?

When the hour of death comes upon us,
May our courage and strength be increased,
By seeing raised over us in blessing--
The beautiful hands of a priest.

Author Unknown