

Befrienders Worldwide

volunteer action to prevent suicide

Newsletter - October 2017

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to send you the latest BW Newsletter.

New member

We are pleased to announce that Lifeline in Trinidad and Tobago-Lifeline one of the original members of Befrienders International have rejoined Befrienders Worldwide. In fact this year Lifeline celebrates their 40th Anniversary and Lucy Gabriel, who has been there for each one of the 40 years has kindly contributed an article to the news letter, describing the history of the organisation. Congratulations and welcome home to Lucy and to Lifeline!.

Celebrations

Further congratulations are due to many other centres around the world who are celebrating special anniversaries. From our records the following centres have been operating for:

10 years

Befrienders Kenya
BW Japan - Kumano
BW Japan - Miyazaki

20 years

Samaritans of Cyprus

40 years

Lifeline - Trinidad & Tobago

50 Years

Samaritans Perth (Australia)
Samaritans of Manawatu (New Zealand)

Congratulations to all of them! If we have omitted your Centre's milestone please let us know and we will acknowledge you in the next newsletter

World Suicide Prevention Day

This is the time of year when we note with great interest the activities of our members around the world for World Suicide Prevention Day. In particular we have contributions from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur) and South Africa

Next Newsletter

We know that many other centres around the world were very active in World Suicide Prevention Day. We would like to hear from you so we can include your news in an extra news letter which we are planning to publish before the end of the year.

European Regional Conference June 2018

We are very pleased to announce that Youth Line in Vilnius Lithuania have agreed to host a European conference which is planned to take place from 14-17 June 2018. Although this event is mainly for our European members, our friends from other regions will be welcome to join them. Further details of this conference will be sent to each of our European members individually and will also be contained in the next newsletter

With our very best wishes

The Befrienders Worldwide Board

New member Trinidad and Tobago

Lifeline

We befriend the despairing and suicidal

LIFELINE NOV.1976 – 2017

“Do what you can with whatever you have”

Chad Varah, May 1977. Trinidad

The ten people who founded Lifeline first started to meet in November 1976. Someone wrote the Samaritans UK, about how to start a telephone helpline. Chad replied that he would be going to South America and would we like to meet with him? Anybody in their right mind would have said: “No you can’t.” Why? Trinidad and Tobago had a moratorium on new phones. Instead he said the above. We started listening in June 1978 on a borrowed phone and did not get our own until June 1985!!

The discussions took a year to bear fruit. Weekly meetings were held at which every aspect of the organisation was discussed. One of the most thorough was the name. It could not be “The Samaritans” because in T &T it was well established that a “Samaritan” was someone with the best of intentions but totally inept. In our innocence Lifeline was chosen with no thought of it being a competing international organisation. Another major feature of Lifeline emerged: its focus on meeting the needs of the despairing and suicidal in T &T irrespective of what others think. We nevertheless maintained good relations with Chad, the Samaritans UK and Befrienders International (BI) when it was officially formed.

In the past 15 years Lifeline has struggled. It is sadly under funded by both the private and public sector. The stigma associated with suicide has been mainly responsible. Government is the major donor to charitable organisations. When BI formally needed annual subscriptions to belong we could not afford it. Lifeline has continued no matter what the challenges were to operate according to Samaritan Principles and Practices.

2017 has so far been very eventful. Public focus on Lifeline was dramatically increased when it was reported publicly that a young man died by suicide because he could not get through to us. Once again, it is as Chad said, it takes someone dying publicly to focus attention on suicide.

On May 1st Lifeline went 24/7. This was due to experienced listeners returning and a significant number of new volunteers joined. Appeals for assistance from our three telephone companies finally bore fruit. As of June 1st calls to Lifeline are toll free. There are still some technical details to be sorted out but the call is free.

T &T has the third highest suicide rate in the Caribbean and Latin America, 14.4 per 100,000. At present 73% of our calls are from the highly suicidal. We get an average of 10 calls per day, lasting from one minute to 6 hours. It is expected that with the toll free line and more effective promotion of the service it will increase to 151 calls per day, 7.3% highly suicidal.

Lifeline is lucky to have just enough money to pay the rent and basic utilities for June-August. However, we continue to do what we can with whatever we have.

We are happy to be part of BW and look forward to contributing as much as we can.

Lucy Gabriel (T & T)

World Suicide Prevention Day activities

Japan



Overnight Helpline on 31st August at BW Tokyo Japan

BW Tokyo Japan expanded hours of operation to focus on 1st September, the first day of the second semester in Japan, which day is well known as the highest risk of suicide among students.

- On 31st August, more than three times volunteers as regular night shifts gathered for Overnight Helpline.

- We carried out 54 hours Toll-free Helpline from 2nd September 0:00 am to 4th September 6:00 am (The activity was carried out in collaboration with six BW centers in Japan.)

BW Tokyo Japan hosted a public lecture for ordinary citizens titled “To snuggle up to people with difficulties in their lives and cannot be expressed in words”. The speaker was Ms. Jun Tachibana, the representative of NPO for supporting teens and 20’s going through hardships.



Mr. Yuhiro Tonai of BW Tokyo Japan and Ms. Jun Tachibana of BOND PROJECT



BW Miyazaki (Miyazaki Suicide Prevention Center) was televised at TV Miyazaki on September 9. The pictures are from the TV Program.

<http://www.umk.co.jp/genki/genki-90205/> (In Japanese)



Director of BW Miyazaki, staffs from Public Welfare and Health Division of Miyazaki Pref., and a staff of TV Miyazaki



Mr. Shinji Tanaka, Director of BW Miyazaki

BW Osaka distributed posters informing phone number of the Helpline to all the Junior High Schools and High Schools in Osaka Pref. (abt. 800 posters)
 The posters are put up on the board at all the stations of Osaka Municipal Subway as well. (abt.140posters)

Poster on Subway Station



BW Osaka held a charity piano concert for Suicide Prevention on September 9, 2017 at Shimanouchi Church. Mr. Toshiaki Matsumoto, a pianist as well as a composer, played piano before 90 people.

Thailand



Samaritans of Thailand (Bangkok Centre) held various functions during the first week in September, in connection with the World Suicide Prevention Day (10 September). The



first activity took place on 6 September at a business establishment where we displayed our mission, raised funds (selling our symbolic flowers and T-shirts). Followed by our Director's joining panel discussion at a seminar in collaboration with Rajvithi Government Hospital on 7 September, gave a talk, held by an NGO Thai Family Link, on 9 September. During the week our volunteers were dispatched to various

places where we set up booth to do our PR and raise funds. Thanks to many of our volunteers who sacrificed their valuable times to help with all these activities.



The Befrienders Kuala Lumpur

Public Talk: Take A Minute, Change A Life – Preventing Suicide by Dr Uma Visvalingam on 9 September 2017



Befrienders
Kuala Lumpur
Life is Precious

World Suicide Prevention Day 2017
**Take A Minute
Change A Life**
A talk on how you can offer support
to a suicidal person

 **Dr. Uma Visvalingam**

9 September 2017 (Saturday) 10.00 - 11.30am
The Befrienders KL - 95 Jalan Templer, 46000 PJ

- Consultant Psychiatrist at Department of Psychiatry & Mental Health, Hospital Putrajaya
- Involved in several national and state-level projects within the Ministry of Health Malaysia including developing frameworks and guidelines as well as training pertaining to mental health services in Malaysia
- Actively gives talks for public and government agencies in various aspects of mental health including stress management, suicide prevention, psychosocial response in disasters etc. Strives to work with the community, including schools, to create awareness in promoting mental health and educating the community in prevention of mental health issues
- Since stigma is a huge hurdle when dealing with mental health, she believes that by constructing inter-agency programs to create platforms for dialogues and open discussions, this can be addressed in a more holistic manner
- Life member of Malaysian Psychiatric Association

Free admission by registration only. Limited seating.

Registration & Enquiries:
admin@befrienders.org.my | 03-79571306
www.befrienders.org.my | f t i BfriendersKL

Press Release for WSPD 2017

<http://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2017/09/11/take-a-minute-to-change-a-life/>

Suicide Prevention Workshop for University Students



South Africa



The theme of the 2017 World Suicide Prevention Day on the 10th September:

TAKE A MINUTE, CHANGE A LIFE

Every 40 seconds someone in the world dies by suicide.

Every 41 seconds someone is left to make sense of it.

People do lose the battle with their suicidal thoughts – they are real and not a sign of weakness. Talking to a Befriender volunteer who

listens and cares help people regain their strength and acquire resilience to stay among the living.

It remains a challenge to stay strong on the worst day of one's life – be brave and ask for emotional support. The Befrienders offer free, confidential and non-judgemental emotional support to anyone who experiences distress and despair.



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CROSSROADS

At the intersection of life and death
he looks both ways.

Hesitates.

Wanting not-wanting the release of dying
coping not-coping with the hurt of living

he paces a pavement of pain
and recalls

that in the unforgiving long-ago
suicides

denied sacred soil

were buried at a crossroads

(the ultimate censure

of the ultimate transgression)

and for the moment less ambivalent

he determines his direction.

Chooses life.

Pamela Williams (past Regional Coordinator; Africa)