

## Executive Director's Message

The Support Network is Edmonton's Crisis & Information Centre, a safe place to call when life hurts. Our dual focus supports those experiencing crisis and provides information and resources to individuals and families, helping them connect with the human services that will meet their needs. Partnerships with other organizations expand our reach of service delivery into the community. In January, through a collaboration with the Elder Abuse Intervention Team, the Society for Bereaved and Semi-Bereaved, and the YWCA, the Seniors' Abuse Help Line was established and incorporated into our crisis services.

The development of 211 continued through 2003 with funding assistance from the Edmonton Police Foundation, Community Initiatives Program (Alberta Lottery), United Way, and FCSS. Start-up preparations are near completion and a soft launch date set for June 2004.

We have a 40-year history of helping point people in the right direction for community services and will continue to do so. 211 is a universally recognized, memorable telephone number for quick access to this information.

Like many non-profit organizations, The Support Network is fiscally responsible, relying on effective fundraising to support programs. This is not an easy feat in the current funding environment. Even with support from the United Way, FCSS, City of Edmonton, and Alberta Mental Health Board, finding sustainable funding continues to be a challenge to our services. To offset the funding roller coaster, The Support Network embarked on a Capital Campaign to create an endowment fund that will generate steady earned income and will have the potential to support individuals and families into the future. Our goal is to raise \$2 million by the end of 2004.

- Joan Wright  
Executive Director

Our mission is to strengthen individuals, families and the community, especially those who are experiencing crisis or distress, through support, information and education.

The Jean Minerva Award of Excellence 2003 was dedicated to the memory of Rick Cormier whose heartfelt contributions to the organizations ended suddenly with his untimely death in September. A memorial fund has been set up in his name to continue the work he cared about so much.

### In memory of Rick Cormier



Thanks to the participants and volunteer organizers, our annual fundraising events increase community awareness and funding for all of our programs. Special thanks to the Chair of the Theresa Cormie Champagne Luncheon, Lisa Sudd, the Chair of the Spirit Lifter Breakfast, Marshall Sudd, and all the volunteer ambassadors for our Corporate and Capital Campaigns.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors, volunteers, staff, core funders, and donors who, together, contribute to our success. Your continued annual support, through donations, gifts-in-kind, sponsorships, and volunteering enables us to meet the needs of callers and clients of all ages.



## 2003 Donors of \$1000+

Cliff Lede Family Charitable Foundation  
Shell Canada Limited  
Bill Cormier / The Brick Corporation  
Lloyd Sudd Insurance  
Vincent Gallant  
Hadi Seikaly Professional Corporation  
T. Marshall & Lisa Sudd  
Mary Gallant  
Donald R. Seaman Foundation  
Civic Service Union #52  
Ivor Ruste  
Victoria Tirmizi  
National Home Warranty Programs  
Edmonton Public Teachers Local #37 Charity Trust  
Royal Alexandra Hospital Employees' Charitable Donations Fund  
Century Valten  
PROCOR Limited  
Fountain Tire Charitable Foundation  
Sam Chapple & Terena Delaney  
Eleanor Seaman  
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Edmonton Country Club Ltd.  
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Accredited by the  
American Association  
of Hospice Care



Here to listen  
when life hurts.

## 2003 Funders and Grantors

Alberta Mental Health Board  
Suicide Prevention, Bereavement, and Caregiver Support Programs

City of Edmonton, FCSS  
Community Service Referral Line  
Volunteer Information & Referral Line  
Walk-in Counselling

United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

Distress Line  
Volunteer Information & Referral Line  
Walk-in Counselling

Anonymous Donor

Capital Campaign  
Distress Line  
Walk-in Counselling

The Muttart Foundation

Publications - database grant  
Youth One

Wild Rose Foundation

Youth One

Community Initiatives Program/  
Alberta Lottery Fund

211 Start-up

Edmonton Community Adult  
Learning Association

Volunteer Training & Support

Edmonton Community Foundation

Walk-in Counselling

Edmonton Police Foundation

211 Start-up

Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research

Suicide Prevention Program

Tegler Trust

Youth One

Volunteer Canada

Public focus groups

Every dollar donated makes a difference

We are grateful for the generosity of the many donors, sponsors, individuals and businesses who contribute annually to our annual campaign, special events and volunteer program. Collectively, they have a large impact on the community. Each and every gift is valued and vital to supporting youth, families, and seniors in need. Unfortunately, space does not allow us to list all donors. If there are any errors or omissions, please call us and we will correct our records.

## 2003 Annual Report



servicing  
Edmonton and  
area for over 40  
years

## Crisis Services

### Distress Line 482-HELP(4357)

When you or someone you know feels vulnerable, alone, and overwhelmed with a problem or crisis, the Distress Line is available every hour, every day to offer hope, direction to resources in the community, and help to develop solutions on your terms.

*"I am calling out of gratitude to the person I spoke to who really provided me with a cohesive call and really listened. Just wanted to thank you for lending an ear—it helped."* - Distress Line caller

20,000 callers reached out to the Distress Line in 2003 when they needed someone to talk to. 3,375 calls were suicide related. 42 required emergency intervention.



### Seniors' Abuse Help Line 454-8888

In Alberta, 11% of the population is over the age of 65. National Statistics indicate that 7% of all seniors have experienced abuse; in Edmonton that represents approximately 5,600 elders. A partnership between The Support Network, the Elder Abuse Intervention Team, the Society for the Retired and the Semi-Retired, and the YWCA of Edmonton helps provide a service, just a phone call away, to offer confidential, anonymous support and information.

In its first year of operation, the Seniors' Abuse Help Line answered 466 calls related to a senior being emotionally, financially, or physically abused.

### Crisis Chat [www.youthone.com](http://www.youthone.com)

In touch with youth, our Youth One program has peer support forums and moderated chat for those who want anonymous, convenient help with their everyday problems. Over 600 posts for peer support and crisis chat deal with issues that range from relationships, domestic violence, loss, depression, to self-harm and suicide.

### Walk-In Counselling

Unique to The Support Network is a no-fee, Walk-In Counselling program that provides immediate help, in person, when you need it. This solution-focused program respects personal dignity, recognizes individual strengths, and fosters a sense of control over one's life.

*"I was given immediate help—you're so kind and it amazed me that you could help me this much in one session."* - Counselling Client

800 clients left a counselling session with a practical action plan and information about available services in the community.

### Suicide Bereavement

The impact of a suicidal death can be devastating and the feelings of grief, guilt, anger, shame, and blame that follow can be intense and frightening. Often survivors feel isolated by the stigma of suicide and the discomfort of others.

The Suicide Bereavement Program offers individual and group support, a chance for people to talk about their loss, share their pain, and learn about how the trauma affects them. We help them integrate the loss into their lives.

In 2003, over 500 survivors learned to cope with a suicide loss. With client involvement, the second annual March in March was held to raise awareness and honor lives lost to suicide.

### Caregiver Support

Many in the community are supporting someone who is at risk for attempting suicide and don't know where to turn. We can provide information, support and referrals to help this experience be less isolating and stressful.

180 caregivers were interested in services while supporting someone who is at risk for suicide.

### Information Services

#### Community Service Referral Line 482-INFO(4636) —soon to be 211

An important step in preventing the escalation of problems into crisis is to get good community services information when you need it. In 2003, 12,800 callers to 482-INFO were provided referrals from our database of community services. The database, available to the public at [inform@edmonton.com](http://inform@edmonton.com), lists over 5000 services in the Edmonton region that can help individuals and families cope with problems they are facing. TTY, a text telephone communication tool at 482-7273, has been added for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

The Volunteer Information and Referral Service links people who want to volunteer with organizations that match their interest or the people they would like to help, an important step in getting involved in the community.

Monthly, Network meetings are held in-house to provide caregivers and professionals with information on community services, best practices, and to enhance their own referral skills. Topics have included Justice, Multicultural, Legal, Youth-at-Risk, and Seniors Services.

### Publications

For forty years, an important reference source to community programs in the Edmonton Region is the *Directory of Community Services*, produced and published by The Support Network. We now have an online searchable database of community services at [www.inform@edmonton.com](http://www.inform@edmonton.com).

The *Tough Times Handbook* is available to low-income and unemployed individuals, both directly and through the organizations that serve them.

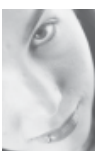
### Suicide Prevention Education

Workshops are available at The Support Network and in the community on spotting the early warning signs of suicide, developing practical skills to help a client, friend, or family member, connecting with resources, and learning to cope as a caregiver.

2000 participants in 65 workshops learned about suicide prevention and crisis intervention from our trainers.



### Youth One



Youth One celebrated its 2nd anniversary in March and launched a new program called YouthSPEAK, bringing discussion forums and debates to classrooms and campuses on issues of the day. The program is expanding, bringing youth resources, youth volunteering, youth support organizations closer together...connecting online and in the community...peer to peer.

Monthly, youthone.com received 600,000 hits and 20,000 unique visitors.

## Support Services

### Volunteer Program

The Support Network has a dynamic Volunteer Program, known for its excellent training and meaningful experiences. Our volunteers are involved in every aspect of the organization, contributing energy, enthusiasm, diversity, and fresh ideas. Over 250 volunteers contributed 30,000 hours of their time at an estimated total value of \$462,000. Volunteers participated in 4500 hours of Distress Line training and 1200 hours of other program training.



*"It's an amazing feeling when you get to the end of a call and the person sounds optimistic for the future."* - Distress Line Volunteer

### Fund Development

If volunteers are the heart of the organization, donors are the lifeblood. Without the caring commitment of our friends and supporters, The Support Network would cease to exist. In a positive shift in fund development, we are committed to innovative, forward-thinking planning to establish more stable sources of annual income. A piece of that planning includes a Capital Campaign plan to establish an endowment fund as The Support Network Foundation, a new way to invest in the organization you care about, in 2004 and into the future.

Our Campaign Internal Division was launched in 2003. We expect a public launch of the Capital Campaign in 2004.

### Capital Campaign Cabinet

Angus Watt, Chair  
National Bank Financial  
Doug Goss, Vice-Chair  
Bryan & Company  
Marshall Sadd  
Lloyd Sadd Insurance Inc.

Karen Platten  
McLennan Ross LLP  
Jim Greenough  
Greenough Consulting  
Vincent Gallant  
North American Energy Partners  
Elexis Schloss

### Special Events

The increasing popularity of our special events has seen sellouts at the Theresa Comrie Champagne Luncheon in May and the Spirit Lifter Breakfast in November. We are grateful to the volunteer committee members, sponsors, and speakers for their contributions to these events.

Thanks also to the Hash House Harriers who contributed the proceeds of their annual Red Dress Run to The Support Network.

### Board of Directors 2003

Brent Hesje, Chair  
Fountains Tree  
Karen Platten, Past Chair  
McLennan Ross LLP  
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Terena Delaney  
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One in three Albertans will need support for depression, stress, or other mental health issues during their lifetime. In Canada, the annual cost of work time lost to stress alone stands at \$12 billion.

Every day a person in Alberta dies from suicide, one every three days in Edmonton.

Suicide affects us all.

### Distribution of Expenses by Program



- Suicide Prevention Program 29%
- Volunteer Information and Referral Services 10%
- Walk-In Counselling 11%
- Community Service Referral Line 8%
- Crisis Chat 15%
- Distress Line 10%
- Information Services 9%
- Walk-In Program 11%
- Volunteer Training & Support 17%
- Combined Programs 1%

Total Revenue: \$1,166,114  
Total Expenses: \$1,181,559  
Audited financial statements are available upon request.