

Chicago-Based National Runaway Safeline Adds New Leadership

Business and Student Leaders are 2016 Newly-Appointed Board Members

CHICAGO (Sept. 16, 2016)—The Chicago-based [National Runaway Safeline](#) (NRS), the federally designated national communication system for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth, announces the five newest members to serve on its board of directors. The new board members are Ryan Bracken, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Carlton Technologies; Adriana Kissel, Senior Corporate Counsel at Groupon; Donald Sands, Vice President, Strategic Distribution, Allstate Insurance; Brian Shin, Director of Application Development, The SMB Help Desk, Inc.; and Erica Wolfort, a frontline team member at NRS.

“These new board members bring unique experiences, energy and commitment to supporting the National Runaway Safeline in its mission to keep America’s runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets,” said Maureen Blaha, NRS executive director. “We appreciate and are honored that they will dedicate their time and expertise to increase awareness about the help available and raise funds for the National Runaway Safeline.”

The announcement occurs as NRS prepares for November’s [National Runaway Prevention Month](#), a national public education campaign to raise awareness of the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues that these young people face, as well as to educate Americans about solutions and the role they can play in preventing a youth from running or becoming homelessness.

NRS, formerly known as the National Runaway Switchboard, established in 1971, serves as the federally designated national communication system for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth. With the support of more than 120 volunteers, NRS makes more than 250,000 connections to help and hope through hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY), online (1800RUNAWAY.org), texting (66008) and offline resources. NRS provides crisis intervention, referrals to local resources, and education and prevention services to youth, families and community members throughout the country 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. NRS also provides the free, evidence-based [Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#) in English and Spanish to schools and youth-serving organizations. More than

15,000 youth have been reunited with their families through NRS' [Home Free](#) program done in collaboration with Greyhound Lines, Inc. For more information, visit [1800RUNAWAY.org](#).

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**Headshots available by emailing Kwalsh@1800RUNAWAY.org*

Biographical information on new board members:

Ryan Bracken, *(Chicago resident)*

Ryan is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Carlton Technologies, Inc., a computer hardware and services firm, and is also a partner in BOGA, a Chicago "Elevated Casual" Menswear brand. His volunteer experience includes service with the Center on Halsted and Dreams for Kids. Ryan has a long-established history of NRS support in both a corporate and individual context, including Spirit of Youth sponsorship and the purchase of Spirit of Youth auction items on multiple occasions.

Adriana Kissel, *(Chicago resident)*

Adriana is Senior Corporate Counsel at Groupon. Prior to joining Groupon, she was an associate attorney with Cinnamon Mueller in Chicago. Adriana serves on the publicity committee of the Association of Corporate Counsel and is a Personnel Co-Vice President for the Junior League of Chicago. Adriana graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Miami, College of Arts & Sciences in 2004. She received her Juris Doctor in 2007 from the University of Miami School of Law. She was admitted to the Maryland Bar in 2008 and the Illinois Bar in 2009.

Donald Sands, *(LaGrange Park resident)*

Donald is Vice President, Strategic Distribution, Allstate Insurance Company. Prior to joining Allstate, Don was a core member of the Financial Services Practice with the Boston Consulting Group, during which he led several transformational projects. He received his bachelor's degree in psychology at Harvard University and went on to earn his MBA in 2001 from Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management.

Brian Shin, *(Chicago resident)*

Brian is Director of Application Development, The SMB Help Desk, Inc. He graduated in 2008 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a bachelor's degree in statistics and a minor in computer science. Brian holds multiple Salesforce.com certifications, including certified developer, certified administrator, certified cloud consultant and certified sales cloud consultant.

Erica Wolfort, *(Chicago resident)*

Erica has worked in a management capacity with Anthropologie since 2009, most recently as visual manager. Among her activities, she was curator with the Robin B. Gallery in 2013 and has served as an NRS' frontline team member since 2011. Erica has also served on NRS' Spirit of Youth Task Force, raising over \$25,000 in sponsorships. Erica brings a global perspective to her role, having visited 27 countries to date. In 2008, Erica earned her BFA in Fine and Studio Arts from Ohio University.

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