

NATIONAL RUNAWAY SWITCHBOARD

SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE ISSUE

HELPING YOUTH FIND THEIR WAY
TO THE LIGHT SINCE 1971

On the street, a young girl darts into a dark alley to escape attention. In his bedroom, a boy stares into the night contemplating the unknown. At school, a lonely student is overlooked by classmates and teachers. Runaway and at-risk youth are running in the shadows of danger, conflict, and isolation. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) provides a beacon of light for youth in crisis.

NRS relies on people working in the shadows to connect youth to help. To a kid calling 1-800-RUNAWAY, the frontline team member answering the phone is a mystery. The youth is desperate for anyone to lighten his burden. So, he takes a chance on an unknown person. NRS' crisis call staff and volunteers are the frontline of the shadows. They are the most visible source of help. Aiding their efforts, staff work behind the scenes to provide crisis intervention training, write a check to pay the electrical bill, and switch out the computer's emergency batteries. Further into the shadows, board members have lunch with a potential funder, strategize texting services for youth, and purchase event tickets for friends. Broadest in numbers, donors and funders give their generous, often faceless, support that impacts every call answered. NRS' work in the shadows has expanded across the country as Street Team Members canvass communities with 1-800-RUNAWAY posters. This past year, Ian Urbina, a reporter for the NEW YORK TIMES, published a two-part series, *Running in the Shadows*, including online videos. It was an impactful way to illuminate the plight of runaways to the nation.

With the combined efforts of the media, Street Team Members, donors, funders, Board of Directors, volunteers and staff, NRS will continue to be the lighthouse guiding youth to safety during tumultuous times. Thank you for your part in helping NRS keep America's runaway and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.



Richard Malone
Board Chair



Maureen Blaha
Executive Director

Crisis Intervention: NRS operates a crisis hotline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls to the crisis line are anonymous and confidential. The frontline team of staff and volunteers receive 40 hours of training to provide non-judgmental and non-directive support.

*"I'm feeling like I'm fumbling in the dark.
Where do I go now? What do I do?"*

Ash, Age 16

Message Service: NRS maintains a message service for youth who want to relay a message but are not ready to communicate directly with their parent. NRS' message service is a less intimidating means for a youth to reestablish contact with their parent/guardian and often serves as the first step toward reunification. In addition, a parent may access the service to leave a message for their child.

Information & Referrals: A database of more than 13,000 youth and family agencies provides countless options for callers to access a myriad of services, such as; counseling, shelter services, alcohol/drug treatment and child protective services. In addition, NRS maintains a hard copy library of reference materials to supplement the database.

Conference Calls: When youth request assistance contacting their family or an agency that can help them, NRS will facilitate a conference call. The frontline team member remains on the line with the youth, advocating on their behalf.

Home Free: In partnership with Greyhound Lines, Inc., NRS helps reunite runaway youth with their families through a free bus ticket home. Over 13,000 youth have been reunited with families through the Home Free Program since 1995.

Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum: NRS' 14-module curriculum provides interactive lessons for youth to develop life skills and resiliency. Complete with an eight-minute film, 1-800-RUNAWAY, this free curriculum is available in English and Spanish on a CD or for download at 1800RUNAWAY.org

*"Most agencies don't have the time and resources
to be available to youth to the extent we do.
Being in the shadows doesn't mean youth have to be
alone—we'll be right there with them."*

Froilan Landeros, Call Center Supervisor

Prevention and Educational Materials: NRS provides educational and promotional material free of charge to individuals, schools and organizations to distribute within their community.

Kids Call: Through this innovative program, teens and pre-teens can openly discuss issues and challenges of youth. Kids Call provides trained NRS staff via teleconference to talk about alternatives to running away.

National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM): The national awareness campaign is held each November, spearheaded by NRS and the National Network for Youth (NN4Y). Other prominent national organizations join in to increase awareness of the issues facing runaways and educate the public about solutions in preventing youth from running away.

Street Team: The Street Team raises national awareness of NRS' services through grass root outreach efforts in communities across the country. Street Team members distribute materials and promote 1-800-RUNAWAY while earning incentive points for promotional rewards.

Fee-based Trainings: NRS offers comprehensive trainings on a variety of topics tailored to meet the host agency's needs including: NRS Solution-Focused Crisis Intervention Model; Youth Running from Care; Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC); *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*; and Effective Volunteer Program Development and Management.



NRS Training & Education Manager, Natalie D. Smith delivers an NRPM in a Box to SSWAA Executive Director, Rochelle Leiber-Miller at the 2010 School Social Workers Association of America Annual Conference.

NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH IN A BOX



The NRPM in a Box Initiative made stops in Nevada, California, New York, Missouri, Georgia, and Illinois. NRS Executive Director, Maureen Blaha delivers an NRPM in a Box to Tim Mullen, Interim Executive Director for the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth.



NRS Director of Programs, Gordon Vance delivers an NRPM in a Box to Children of the Night Executive Director, Dr. Lois Lee.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

FISCAL YEAR 2010: May 1, 2009 through April 30, 2010

Program service revenue—Federal government agency grant	\$1,647,000
Contributed services	\$283,862
Contributions and special events	\$274,891
State agency grant	\$6,000
Work-study programs	\$6,521
Income on investments	\$3,261
Net gain (loss) on investments	\$27,379
Miscellaneous	\$19,166

TOTAL REVENUE \$2,268,080

Program services	\$1,837,216
Management and general	\$259,945
Fundraising	\$123,076

TOTAL EXPENSES \$2,220,237

Net assets, beginning of year	\$182,195
Net assets, end of year	\$230,038

Increase in net assets \$47,843

"We all find ourselves in the shadows at some point in our lives, but if NRS is there to help lift even one person out of the shadows and into the light, to open our hearts and to lend an ear, that's what life is really all about, and that's what keeps me volunteering for this amazing organization."

Christina Van Pelt, Crisis Line Volunteer



Maureen Blaha with 2009 Spirit of Youth award recipient Chef Charlie Trotter.



Cubs Care Foundation sponsored the Tenth Annual Thanksgiving Dinner, providing 24 Chicago Cubs volunteers to feed 90 homeless youth.



NRS Youth Task Force members Ruben Anzures, Board Alumni and Will Schreiber-Stainthorp, Board Member, volunteer at the 2009 Spirit of Youth annual benefit.



Country singer and NRS ambassador Jason Michael Carroll visits with NRS Executive Director Maureen Blaha and NRS Board Chair Rich Malone.

Outside the crisis call center, NRS also answers calls across the globe from the media, legislators, social service agencies, teachers, and others. Seen as knowledgeable leaders and the experts in the runaway and homeless youth arena, NRS is sought after to present at conferences, quoted in national media outlets, and accessed for its intellectual property.

Each year, over 100,000 people visit www.1800RUNAWAY.org. Youth and parents are searching for services and solutions to their family crisis. Others are utilizing NRS as the resource for information on the runaway crisis. NRS provides statistics on calls handled by state and area code. Also available, are statistics from credible research sources illustrating the plight of at-risk youth. NRS lists comprehensive training workshops available and educational materials to order or download. In addition, NRS features 14 modules, tools and technical support for its *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*.

"It would be nice if every child had a loving family to whom they could return. But the fact is, that isn't the answer for many of our youth. NRS is there to help them find the right solution."

Bonnie Wheeler, NRS Board Member

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEPTEMBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010

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Maureen Blaha, *Executive Director*



2009-2010 NRS Board—Luke Palese, David Wells, Mark Seals, Akeshia Craven, Will Schreiber-Stainthorp, Jim Criner, Joan Steltmann, Kelly Mead, Bonnie Wheeler, Rich Malone, Ron Richter, Jim Williams, Gary Harper, Michele Lehman, John Roy with 2009 Spirit of Youth Award recipient Chef Charlie Trotter and NRS Executive Director Maureen Blaha. Not pictured are NRS Board members Maree Bullock, Greg Buseman, Stephen Mack, John McDonough and Jack Philbin.



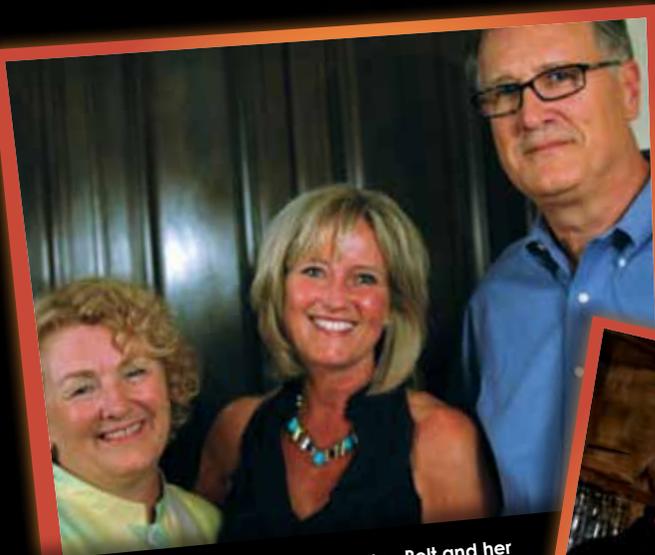
(Left to right) Phil and LaJule Gant with NRS Board Member Mark Seals and wife, Vada Seals.

STAFF MEMBERS

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Diana Delia, Call Center Supervisor
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Jasleen Jaswal Vines, Development & Communications Associate
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Gordon Vance, Director of Programs
Michelle Vos, Volunteer Coordinator
Katy Walsh, Director of Development & Communications
Katrina Wyss, Trainer

National Runaway Switchboard
3080 N. Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60657
773.880.9860 – administrative office
1.800.RUNAWAY – hotline
www.1800RUNAWAY.org



NRS frontline team member, Christina Van Pelt and her husband Larry Diskin hosted a house party raising over \$7,000 to help runaway and at-risk youth. Pictured with NRS Executive Director, Maureen Blaha.



NBC 5 TV personality Lee Ann Trotter presents volunteer Jenny Moore, with the 2010 Volunteer of the Year Award during NRS' Annual Volunteer and Community Recognition event acknowledging volunteers for their commitment and continuous support of NRS.

"I've talked to a lot of people about my situation, but this is the first call I've made that I felt like someone was on my side. Thank you."

From the NRS message board

NATIONAL RUNAWAY SWITCHBOARD THANKS OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Family & Youth Services Bureau;
The Administration for Children,
Youth & Families; U.S. Department
of Health and Human Services
Illinois Department on Aging

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Greyhound Lines, Inc.
United Airlines

NRS wishes to acknowledge the following foundations, corporations, and individuals for their generosity. The donors listed below provided gifts between May 1, 2009, and April 30, 2010.



NRS donors Tracy and Jane Little and Board Member John Roy hosted a house party to raise \$2,500 to help runaway and at-risk youth. Attending the event was NRS Executive Director Maureen Blaha.



Charlie Eck presented Executive Director Maureen Blaha with a check from the Lincoln Mortgage-ETS Environmental 6th Annual Invitational Golf Classic.

THANK YOU!

Coldwell Banker Charitable Foundation hosted a fundraiser event raising \$9,000 to benefit runaway and at-risk youth served by NRS. (pictured left to right) The 2009 Coldwell Banker Charitable Foundation Committee: Rita McCarthy, Stephanie Englund Sigel, David Hall, NRS Board Member Kelly Mead, Tim Freeman, Kathy Kalnes, and Paul Boyd.



PHILANTHROPIST LEVEL \$20,000 and Above

The Elizabeth Morse
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AMBASSADOR LEVEL \$10,000 and \$19,999

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 The Alford Group*

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 Maureen Blaha and Joe Morris
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 Joel Dabisch*

*In Memory of Jackie Satton
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*In Memory of Bea Tarara
 Jim and Sue Walsh*

*Board of Directors

NRS gratefully acknowledges the hundreds of gifts under \$50 and in-kind donations from individuals and businesses in support of our annual benefit and our daily operations—thank you!

It is possible that we have omitted someone inadvertently or printed someone who wished to remain anonymous. Please inform Katy Walsh if any error has occurred at 773.289.1727.



The 2009 Running for Runaways Team raised over \$15,000 to help runaway and at-risk youth. (left to right) Jay Baldrige, Shari Bryan, Todd Garrett, Emily Tang, Froilan Landeros, Callie Knoll, and Kelly Carder.

*G'day NPS. I just called your line a few minutes ago, and
the things weren't solved yet, I want to extend an
ly thank you for all you've done so far. I've talked to a lot
of people about my situation, but this is the first call I've
made that I felt like someone was on my side when even my
own family and friends have turned against me. You took me
seriously when everyone else either didn't believe or didn't
understand. Just wanted to let you know that you've already
done so much and I'll definitely call back once I make my
decision. Love you guys, Vindicated.*

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www.1800RUNAWAY.org



*Millie was calling because her 12 year old
grandson, Chance, had runaway 3 weeks
ago. Millie was extremely upset because
she had done everything that she could
think of and didn't know what else to do.
Millie stated that Chance was the son
of her daughter who had died in a car
accident.*

RUNNING IN THE SHADOWS

*Since her daughter died, Millie
had custody of Chance. Prior to Chance
running away, Chance's father was in the
process of getting custody of him. Mil-
lie explained that Chance told her that if
he had to stay with his father he
would runaway. As soon as the father
was out to be given custody Chance
did run away as he had threatened to do*

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2010 | ANNUAL REPORT

