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A friendly ear Hotline: Ready to listen

By ALICE COLLINS

Somewhere out there on the other end of a telephone line is a listener, trained not to give advice and not to make moral judgments.

The listener is there to help the caller find his or her own way out of an immediate crisis—things so desperate at home that a teenager sees running away as the only solution... a housewife thinking about suicide... a child with a question about sex and afraid to ask anyone he knows.

"After talking a problem over with a trained listener—who's also anonymous—a caller often sees there's more than one solution to the problem," said Emma Forrest, describing Hotline, the crisis intervention telephone service she directs.

"We help them discover they're responsible people who can find alternative solutions."

Hotline was started seven years ago by the Birmingham Youth Assistance Committee to offer immediate emergency help to adolescents and adults.

To the public, Hotline is a telephone number—664-3322—and a voice at the other end.

To those who operate the service, it's an office with five telephones, trained volunteer listeners, volunteer professional people who offer advice and help instruct the listeners and a staff of three.

There are also feedback committees in the high schools in the Birmingham-Bloomfield and Southfield areas coordinated by Judy Joseph.

This feedback tells us drugs are still a problem in the schools, but alcohol is an even bigger problem now," said Ms. Forrest.

IT'S ESTIMATED that almost 50 per cent of the calls for help come from the Birmingham-Bloomfield area, said Ms. Forrest.

"There's really no way to know for sure where many of the callers are because of the nature of the problem," she said, "but both the caller and listener are anonymous."

"A lot of people have problems and can't talk to anyone face-to-face. Our help is only short term. Hotline is a starting point," she said.

Hotline primarily serves Oakland County, but calls come in from the tri-county area. Its \$20,000 operating budget comes from donations.

"Funding is a problem," said Ms. Forrest. "It's natural that when a community or a group donates to a project, they want to know how many people from their particular area are benefiting."

"But, again, we don't know where many of them are calling from."

MS. FORREST, who lives in Rochester with her two young sons, became director

of the agency recently. "I taught school for five years, got married, had two sons and was director of a day care center. Getting a job as a teacher was difficult at that time, so I went to work as a secretary in a wedding shop. While I was there I learned how to sew small jobs and it enabled me to go back to school."

Ms. Forrest is a part-time student at Oakland University, working toward a masters degree in guidance and counseling. She found Hotline and Hotline found her at the university, where she met Diane Vincent. Ms. Vincent succeeded Ms. Vincent in the post.

SEVEN YEARS ago Sally Ginn, then a member of the Birmingham Youth Assistance Committee, read a magazine article about a crisis intervention telephone service in Los Angeles. As a result, a local study was conducted and Hotline was born.

Ms. Ginn is now a member of the Hotline board of directors.

Regular donations come from the youth assistance committee, the Community Action Council, Oakland County, Southfield, Clanton and churches, groups and individuals.

Some communities, like Beverly Hills, donate through the Birmingham Youth Assistance Committee.

ALTHOUGH 16 AND 17 year olds still make the most calls for help, there has been an increase in the over-35 group, said Ms. Forrest.

The problems they call about include marital conflicts, unemployment and legal questions, primarily related to marital problems.

Younger callers are concerned with their own personality problems because the sexes conflict with parents or trouble at school.

Drugs and alcohol are still major problems.

Hotline hours are from 3 p.m. to midnight on weekdays and 6 p.m. to midnight on weekends. When the telephones aren't manned, a taped message provides the numbers of two 24-hour crisis centers for emergencies and the number of a "hidden phone in case you're bored and want something to do."

Center distributes free trees

Evergreen tree seedlings will be given free to persons bringing recyclable materials to the Southfield Recycling Center, 2030 Berg, April 19-24.

The free trees are being given away during the center's open house which coincides with Arbor Week. Staff members will be available from noon to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday to demonstrate center operations and distribute trees.

Arbor Day, April 22, is usually introduced in 1973 by Michigan-born J. Sterling Morton, has taken on a wider ecological meaning in recent years than its traditional tree-planting purpose. The Arbor Week open house, city officials said, is an attempt to draw together conservation and resource recovery topics.

Forestry and parks and recreation department personnel will be on hand to answer questions on recycling, pending environmental legislation as well as ornamental tree care and planting.

Bulletins and information also will be available illustrating how materials collected at the recycling center are processed by industry into finished products.

The recycling center, managed by the parks and recreation department since 1973, collects glass, newspapers and cans. The center is on Berg just north of Civic Center Drive.

Selected for training

Airman Charles D. McArthur, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. McArthur, 2180 Inlander Road, Southfield, has been selected for technical training in the U.S. Air Force communications systems field at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas.

The airman recently completed basic training at Lackland, Texas, where he studied Air Force mission, organization and customs and received special instruction in human relations.

Airman McArthur, a 1973 graduate of Southfield High School, received his ABA degree in 1975 from Cleary College, Ypsilanti.

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1 to 3 p.m.	Tuesdays	April 27
7 to 9 p.m.	Mondays	April 19
7 to 9 p.m.	Wednesdays	April 14
7 to 9 p.m.	Thursdays	April 15

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