Thirty-five and Thriving!

This year, Cathedral Counseling Center has been celebrating its 35th year of service and as you'll read in the article about our annual benefit, sometimes we've had a lot of fun doing it! However, we've also taken this opportunity to do some serious reflection on what we value about the Center and refresh how we think about the Center. Some of this work has resulted in new strategies that the board of directors is pursuing to ensure organizational sustainability.

One of the results has been an updating of our mission and vision statements (see box). Groups of staff members, board directors, and donors provided input to creating the new version of these statements. We believe they capture the essence of Cathedral Counseling Center’s purpose and what it means to everyone who is a part of our community.

Cathedral Counseling Center helps people make sense of their lives during difficult times through professional, affordable mental health services.

Cathedral Counseling fulfills its mission by providing psychotherapy and psychiatric services on a sliding fee scale based on income. Experienced clinicians participate in the mission by contracting their services at a portion of the market rate. They also build and support the professional community through commitment to high standards, and that you share it with a friend.
The following letter was received from a client, a 38-year old teacher with a Master’s degree, who gave us permission to publish it:

“I just moved to Chicago for graduate school when I came to CC. I did very well in school, everyone around me seemed very hopeful and optimistic about what I was going to do and who I was going to become. No one around me ever had any idea that despite my public success I was very depressed and suicidal and had no hope for myself at all. I did not have any words to express how I felt or what my past was like or why all I wanted to do was die. I was hoping that my therapist could look at me and see clearly what was wrong and then she could express it back to me and I could just sit there and nod in agreement. Yes my life sucks and I’m poor and yes, alone and yes my parents are assholes and would hate me if they knew I was in therapy or on medication or had to be hospitalized. Yes. But I guess it doesn’t really work that way. I was going to have to learn how to say how I felt and why, learn to access feelings that I had been smothering my whole life or had been smothering me.

“Therapy for me has been a very slow and painful process. Without the help from Cathedral Counseling Center, simply put, I would be dead. I have suffered from a deep depression most of my life. I experienced sexual trauma as a child that has made it very hard for me to trust anyone. I grew up in a family where expressing how you felt, both good or bad was not encouraged, in fact it was just not done. Silence is a type of resistance that rarely works for anyone. “It is a hard to express in only a few words what has taken years to develop, how deeply I appreciate my therapist and psychiatrist and all of the Center’s help and support. Therapy for me is a very private thing that even now I still don’t share with others. I suppose it is like that for many people, hard to ask for help especially when you can’t afford it. Not being able to afford treatment can make you feel even less deserving to get help. I’m sure that there are many clients here who would love to say out loud, to publically thank Cathedral Counseling for all of the help they privately get. I know I am one of them. I thank Cathedral Counseling Center that I am still alive.”
Students with Depression Twice As Likely To Drop Out Of College

ScienceDaily (July 7, 2009)

College students with depression are twice as likely as their classmates to drop out of school, new research shows. However, the research also indicates that lower grade point averages depended upon a student’s type of depression, according to Daniel Eisenberg, assistant professor in the University of Michigan School of Public Health and principal investigator of the study.

“Lots of students who have significant depression on some dimension are performing just fine, but may be at risk and go unnoticed because there is no noticeable drop in functioning.” Students with both depression and anxiety had especially poor academic performance.

Many students with depression—as with the general population—remain untreated. “Maybe the biggest reason is only about 50 percent of people with depression say they think they need help,” Eisenberg said. “College students in particular may feel that stress is normal.” According to Eisenberg’s research, certain types of students have higher levels of stigma. Males, students from lower-income backgrounds and Asian students, in particular, report higher levels of stigma about mental health.

Study Reveals that 8.3 Million Adults in the U.S. had Serious Thoughts of Committing Suicide in the Past Year

Nearly 8.3 million adults (age 18 and older) in the U.S. had serious thoughts of committing suicide in the past year according to the first national scientific survey of its size on this public health problem. The study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also shows that 2.3 million adult Americans made a suicide plan in the past year and that 1.1 million adults had actually attempted suicide in the past year.

The study provides important insights into the nature and scope of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. For example, the risk of suicidal thoughts, planning and attempts varies significantly among age groups. Substance use disorders also were associated with an increase in the risk of seriously considering, planning or attempting suicide. The study also revealed that adult females had marginally higher levels of suicidal thoughts and behaviors than males in the past year.

“This study offers a far greater understanding of just how pervasive the risk of suicide is in our nation and how many of us are potentially affected by it,” said SAMHSA Acting Administrator, Eric Broderick, D.D.S., M.P.H.