There are some organisms that die if they do not remain in motion. San Francisco Suicide Prevention is very much like those life forms – we are always in some form of motion and change. New volunteers arrive every three months like clockwork. Others leave as their lives change. We move to new offices. We change how the offices look. This year we changed some staff members. We moved former Crisis Line Volunteer Coordinator Marc Roman into the position of Program Director for the Crisis Line – a wonderful culmination of his six years of dedicated work with the agency so far. Laura Balch, a graduate of the University of Texas with a background in high tech staff coordination took over the Volunteer Coordinator position and brought her own creativity and enthusiasm to it. And when the position of HIV Nightline Coordinator opened up, we added Jules Dizon, a graduate of UC Santa Cruz and a San Franciscan who is also fluent in Tagalog. Embracing change sounds easier than it is. Things move around and are not as easy to find. Routines shift. Preferences are different and perhaps less predictable. BUT – on the other hand – new things happen: yummier pastries, spiffier training manuals, zingier brochures. And we suddenly realize we’ve arrived at a new level. You’ve arrived with us – you were right next to us all along the way! Thank you so much for helping us to change, for changing with us, for celebrating and embracing the changes that help us stay alive—and for helping us keep people who need us alive! We are always proud to have you in OUR family! —Eve

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bernard Mayes first arrived in San Francisco in 1962 – as a 33-year-old anchor with the British Broadcasting Corporation assigned to cover the story of the “world’s highest suicide rate.” One year later, the handsome and charismatic Mayes had founded San Francisco Suicide Prevention and trained its first volunteers, renting a basement cubicle at Geary and Larkin for the agency’s first home.

In 1968 he became founding chairman of National Public Radio as he helped to organize public radio and television in the United States and became a consultant for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting in Washington, DC. By 1984 he was teaching at the University of Virginia, eventually chairing the Department of Rhetoric and Communications and later the Media Studies Program.

After his retirement in 1999, he wrote and published his autobiography, Escaping God’s Closet: The Revelations of a Queer Priest, which won the Lambda Literary Award in the spirituality category. He has also recorded dramatic works for radio, including Homer’s Odyssey and The Lord of the Rings in which he played the part of Gandalf.

But he never lost his love for suicide prevention – or for San Francisco. He has returned here to live and to pay sporadic visits to the agency he began when he first arrived in the United States. He recently celebrated his 80th birthday at the agency’s “Business of Prevention” luncheon in October at the City Club.

BERNARD MAYES RETURNS TO SAN FRANCISCO

Bernard Mayes, founder of San Francisco Suicide Prevention, announced that he has worked with the staff of the agency to create the “Bernard Mayes Legacy Fund.” This new fund allows people who want to make their donations part of their estate planning to designate San Francisco Suicide Prevention as a beneficiary of their estate.

“I’m making San Francisco Suicide Prevention one of my beneficiaries myself,” Mayes announced, “and I wanted to make it easy for other people to do this too. Not everybody can write a check right now.” Mayes added that he is honored that the fund will be named after him. Proceeds will be used to handle emergency expenses that other funding sources will not cover, such as repairing broken equipment or purchasing specialized software.

“We could not be more grateful,” said Eve Meyer, Executive Director of the agency. “This is a very generous and forward-thinking action on Bernard’s part – just very typical of how his thinking helped to start the entire Suicide Prevention movement in the United States.”

To participate in the BERNAHARD MAYES LEGACY FUND, contact David Paisley at the SFSP Development Office at 415/984-1900 x106.
FROM THE NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

My journey with San Francisco Suicide Prevention began in the autumn of 2003. I remember it well, for I was deeply impressed with the volunteer program from the start and knew I’d want to stay with the organization well after completing the yearly commitment requested of all its volunteers.

This particular agency fell into my lap as if by fate. I had been canvassing the Bay Area for graduate programs in counseling when I came across a flier for San Francisco Suicide Prevention while visiting the University of San Francisco. The bulletin boards in the hallway of the counseling department were filled with various fliers for academic clubs, meetings and community events. However, it was the flier seeking volunteers at SFSP that stood out the most for me. I later called and scheduled an interview. After completing the required paperwork, I was accepted into the fall class. By the way, I never did apply for the master’s program at USF, although today we have a very good working relationship with this university. Second to San Francisco State University, most of our interns come to us from this institute of higher learning. Other prestigious schools include JFK and Alliant University.

I count myself among the fortunate few who can honestly say they’re satisfied with their work.

Prior to my involvement with San Francisco Suicide Prevention, I spent many years in other helping professions. This included teaching English as a Foreign Language in South East Asia, working as a certified nursing assistant in San Francisco and Daly City and, many years ago, working as a mental health worker in a locked psychiatric unit in my home state of Connecticut.

This year marks my sixth year with San Francisco Suicide Prevention. It has been an honor and a pleasure getting here. I count myself among the fortunate few who can honestly say they’re satisfied with their work. Perhaps more fitting words to describe how I feel at the end of a workday include: gratified, moved, encouraged, and, often times, touched. This is due to the many callers I am privileged to speak with each and every day who trust in me to share their sorrows, anger and pain. I’ve also come to this place of serenity due to my working alliance with a dedicated staff and a group of caring and hopeful volunteers.

I have many dreams for the agency, two of which include education and outreach. One of these dreams was realized as early as last night. I was sitting in the audience of our newest training class of 15 participants. Additional staff, current volunteers and myself were spilling out of the training room and into the hallway. I looked around and discovered that a dream of mine had just come true. We had a full house! Our marketing and recruitment efforts, in addition to many hours of interviewing, had paid off. Everyone appeared deeply engaged. We were learning how to be with a person in pain.

As the new Program Director, I am often asked by staff and volunteers, “How will things be different under your direction?” I see this very interaction as a significant step in the right direction for I’ve known many organizations whose infrastructure doesn’t encourage the management to interact with its employees. The volunteers who selflessly donate their time each week to our callers aren’t getting paid to do what they’ve come to do so well, so managing volunteers is a different situation. I like hearing everyone’s ideas. To this end, I encourage the volunteers to stay active in the agency. My staff and I attend various community events each month in order to keep current in prevention, intervention and postvention of suicides. This effort however isn’t limited to suicide-related work. It also includes fostering mental health disaster planning, modern approaches to cognitive behavioral therapy, as well as acquiring a culturally competent treatment approach for individuals living with HIV and AIDS. I will add here that I was proud to see so many of our own volunteers attending the recent forum, “Sex, Drugs & HIV: A Harm Reduction Approach” presented by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation held at the Women’s Building. This was a great opportunity for us to hear from local experts and to put our name out there so everyone knows what we do for the community.

Beyond attending community lectures and workshops offered at various mental health agencies in the Bay Area, my team and I are also scheduling our own presentations in an effort to teach others the statistics on attempted and completed suicides and ways to detect the warning signs of suicide. Our hope is to educate case managers, therapists, physicians and the average caring person on how we can all prevent suicides and how to live peacefully when we are not able to stop someone from taking their own life.

We’re confident that with all of us working together, each one of us making our own special contribution, we can not only achieve what is expected of us but also surpass what is needed of us at this time in history.
San Francisco Suicide Prevention has been helping callers get through their darkest moments since 1962. Its founder, Bernard Mayes, envisioned an agency capable of providing telephone intervention and emotional support to anyone experiencing a suicidal crisis. The agency has evolved considerably from its humble beginnings in a dark, dingy and dank basement at Geary and Larkin. Our programs have grown beyond one local crisis intervention hotline, consisting of a single red rotary phone, to meet the perpetually changing needs of the community on a local, statewide, and national level. As crises arose, we mobilized to meet the challenges. In 1989, in response to the AIDS epidemic, SFSP established the AIDS/HIV Nightline, a national emotional support line that continues to be the only program of its kind. In 1998, SFSP created the Youth Risk Reduction Program in order to reach out to youth in schools and youth organizations with our message of harm reduction, self-care, and peer support. And in August of 2006, Línea de Apoyo began taking calls from people in need in the Spanish-speaking community throughout California. This April, SFSP crossed the digital divide to reach another segment of the population in need of emotional support and crisis intervention. Our online chat service began helping youth ages 25 and under.

**OUR PROGRAMS**

**NIGHT COVERAGE**
415/984-1900
This program ensures a 24-hour full spectrum of care for clients of other agencies after closing time. Special arrangements for reporting are available to the partner organization.

**TTY SERVICES**
415/227-0245
All telephone services are available by TTY for the deaf and hard of hearing.

**DRUG & RELAPSE LINES**
415/362-3400
The Drug Line offers 24-hour counseling, information and a wide range of referrals to people with alcohol, drug or other addictions, and those struggling to avoid relapse. Friends and family of people faced with addictions can call for emotional support and referrals.

**LÍNEA DE APOYO**
800/303-7432
Spanish-speaking volunteers offer expanded services for bilingual, bilcultural and mono-lingual Spanish-speaking callers who need emotional support and crisis intervention services. Trained counselors also provide callers with referrals to other community agencies for mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment and HIV-related issues. Every year, Línea de Apoyo answers more than 1,000 calls.

**GRIEF PROGRAM**
415/984-1900
The Grief Program offers eight-week Survivors of Suicide support groups for individuals bereaved or affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. “Living with Suicidality” is a support group for friends or family members who are the primary support for an individual who is chronically suicidal.
Staff members offer training to students and staff of local schools and youth agencies. The curriculum is designed to teach youth how to deal with stress and how to help their friends during a crisis. Staff members are also available to schools following a suicide. More than 10,000 youth are trained every year.

Specially trained volunteers provide emotional support and crisis intervention services to clients who prefer communicating through SFSP’s instant messaging service. The agency website also provides a direct link to emotional support and referrals via email. www.sfsuicide.org

San Francisco Suicide Prevention staff members can train local agencies, classes, religious organizations and a variety of other audiences on effective methods of lowering suicide risk for individuals and communities. Courses range from one hour to two days in length.

Trained volunteers answer calls from people in need of emotional support, and concerned family members and friends. Counselors also provide referral information to community agencies as well as assistance and intervention in crisis situations. The lines have been answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week since 1962. All calls are confidential. The Crisis Line answers more than 30,000 calls every year.

The Nightline is staffed by trained and knowledgeable volunteers. Since 1989, the HIV Nightline provides emotional support, information and referrals to people with concerns about HIV during the nighttime hours when other agencies are closed. The program also provides emotional support to those whose loved ones have been affected by HIV. As the only HIV service provider open 24 hours a day, the Nightline answers more than 10,000 calls every year.
San Francisco Suicide Prevention would like to thank the individuals, corporations and foundations listed below who have donated funds received between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. This year you have saved lives. You will never know the names of the people you’re helping, but you’ve made a remarkable difference in their lives. You have enriched the lives of complete strangers—mothers, fathers, sons, or daughters—whom this agency has been able to help because of your kindness and selflessness. Your gift was immediately put to work. The generous donation you’ve made is allowing us to offer more life-saving programs than ever before. We try to be accurate. If you notice an error or omission, please call our office and let us know. But first, please forgive us—your donation is very important to us.

### MICHELANGELOS $10,000 OR MORE

City and County of San Francisco • Kaiser Permanente • Louis R. Lurie Foundation • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline • Link2Health • Richard & Rhoda Goldman Fund • Silva Watson Moonwalk Fund • State Street Foundation • The Henry Mayo • Newhall Foundation • The Marced Foundation • The Tom Merit Hancock Family Fund • United Way of the Bay Area

### LEONARDOS $5,000 TO $9,999

Anonymous Individual • Anonymous Family Foundation • Broadway Cares Equity Fights AIDS • Macys • OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions • The Louise and Claude Rosenberg, Jr. Family Foundation

### RAPHAELS $1,000 TO $4,999

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San Francisco Suicide Prevention depends on individuals, corporations and family foundations. The agency handles over 80,000 client contacts on a budget of just over $800,000. That is $10 per hotline call or $10 per youth trained in a classroom. Because we utilize volunteers, we are able to keep our community services cost-effective. Please help by making a donation.

By mail
Send a check payable to
San Francisco Suicide Prevention
PO Box 191350
San Francisco, CA 94119 (Wow!)

By internet
Visit www.sfsuicide.org and hit the donations button. (Voila!)

Cars and boats
Call Donate for Charity at 866/392-4483 and designate San Francisco Suicide Prevention as the beneficiary. (Yes!)

By Phone
Call (415) 984-1900 x106 and ask for David Paisley. (Hi!)

Community Thrift
Clean out junk and designate SF Suicide Prevention at Community Thrift, 623 Valencia at 17th. (Better than a garage sale!)

Planned Giving
Want to create your legacy to the community? You do not need to be rich or famous to leave a legacy. Anyone can make a difference through our Bernard Mayes Legacy Fund. Here are four ways to leave your mark on the community.

• Life Insurance Policies
• Bequest in your will
• Retirement Charitable Gift Annuities
• Charitable Trusts

For more information about planned giving, contact Eve Meyer, Executive Director at (415) 984-1900 x101 or evem@sfsuicide.org. (Thanks!)