



NYS AIRS NOTES

APRIL 2008

New York State Alliance of Information and Referral Systems
"Bringing People and Services Together"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well it is early March and I am finding myself in Reno, Nevada attending the AIRS/UWA Disaster Response Team Training. For those of you who may not know, in 2006 the United Way of America (UWA) in partnership with the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) created a 2-1-1 Disaster Response Team (DRT). The team has been trained in advance and is prepared to be deployed as a volunteer unit to assist 2-1-1 systems following a disaster. 2007 saw the first deployment of the team to the San Diego, CA wildfires and the floods in Tulsa, OK. Each year the team meets as a unit to receive additional training and to do post deployment assessments. Needless to say it was a couple of busy days.

The reason I bring this up is that in 2007 AIRS put forward the concept of developing state disaster response teams. The state teams would be an asset to the national AIRS/UWA DRT, in that it would increase the pool of trained, ready to deploy information & referral professionals in times of disasters. The use of state disaster response teams would enable a timely and cost effective deployment to agencies needing assistance following local disasters. During the Disaster Intensive at the NYS AIRS Training Conference in October 2007 the value of such a statewide team became apparent.

Similar to DRT, state disaster response team members will be required to complete the following training:

- *National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) Certification*
 - *IS100*
 - *IS200*
 - *IS700*
 - *IS800A (2008 updated version)*
- *Crisis Call Management Training*
- *Disaster Response Training*
- *Disaster Taxonomy/Database Management*
- *AIRS Certification (CIRS/CRS)*
- *Mental Health/Suicide training*

Trainings at the state level will be made available through both AIRS and UWA national, regional and state conferences. Chairs of each state disaster response teams should be active members of the AIRS/UWA DRT and be responsible for coordinating and/or facilitating these state trainings. At present I am serving as the state chair and would like to hear from those of you who would be interested on joining this worthwhile effort. If you are interested please contact me at jplonski@covenanthouse.org.

I would also like to remind you that the 30th Annual AIRS I&R Training and Education Conference will be May 18 – 21, 2008 in Houston. As usual the number and diversity of the workshops planned seem to offer something of value to everyone. I hope to see as many of you as possible in Houston. Last year in Jacksonville we had an “al fresco” reception of conference attendees from New York as well as a few New York “wannabees” that was a lot of fun and an excellent networking experience. I don’t suppose that flamingo hats will go over so well in Houston so I am looking for something that says Texas to remind y’all of the evening. Not quite sure at this time what it will be but rubber duckies dressed as cowboys are tickling my fancy. Now it is a bit later and spring has sprung. It seems the piles of work seem to be sprouting all over the place faster than the crocuses the squirrels have planted in my lawn though not as pretty. I hope that all of you can take some time to enjoy the changing of the seasons. Springtime is a special time of renewal and growth so allow yourself a moment to breathe in the spring air and enjoy the spring flowers. For all the work each of you has done in the past year it is a moment you deserve.

I would also like to take this time to thank those of you who have renewed their memberships for doing so and would like to offer a welcome to those of you who are new members. If you have any suggestions about how we can make your membership more valuable to you please let me know.

John Planski
President

NYS AIRS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25

This year’s NYS AIRS Annual Meeting will be held in New York City. This meeting will include the election of board of directors to fill 2-year terms and the quarterly business agenda. The Annual Meeting also includes a special presentation on a topic of interest to I&R professionals and this year Leta Weintraub, Co-Chair of the 2-1-1 New York Policy Board, will update us on the 2-1-1 Strategic Plan for NY State. The presentation will address a statewide integrated system, building statewide coverage, organization and governance models, and financing the system. All members are invited to attend and guests are welcome.

NYS AIRS Annual Meeting
Friday, April 25, 2008
10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
281 Park Ave South, New York NY 10010
Main Phone 212.777.4800

RSVP to Judy Milone 212.801.1350

Light breakfast snacks provided
Lunch Buffet is “dutch treat”; please bring contribution of \$20 pp
(we do need a head count, so RSVP essential-thanks)

*281 Park Avenue South, corner E. 22nd Street, room A, ground floor.
Best subways are #6 or R or W to 23rd Street.
From Penn Station, walk one block west to 6th Avenue and take R or W to 23rd Street.*

NYS AIRS MEMBERSHIP—TIME TO REJOIN

The April issue of NYS AIRS Notes is traditionally sent to a large list of information and referral providers throughout the state. Along with the news in this issue, we're sending a reminder to all readers who have not renewed their AIRS/NYS AIRS membership that it's not too late to join. Membership in NYS AIRS provides tremendous opportunities to network with I&R peers across the country via the NYS AIRS and AIRS listservs. Members also receive discounts on training (both the national and our state Conferences), certification testing and publications. Dual membership in both national AIRS and the state affiliate NYS AIRS is possible through one easy payment. There are four membership levels – Premium (\$750), Enhanced (\$500), Standard (\$250/350 depending on budget) and Basic (\$50). The AIRS website www.airs.org offers a worksheet to help you calculate your overall cost savings at each membership level according to the products and services that you select.

These are exciting times for the information and referral field, with 2-1-1 information & referral systems covering 74% of the country and I&Rs making national news for assisting in post-disaster recoveries in their communities. Don't miss out on the opportunity to partner with NYS AIRS – we welcome your membership and the opportunity to serve your needs.

2-1-1 ADVOCACY DAY REACHES HIGH NUMBER OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES

February 26, 2008 marked the third annual Advocacy Day for 2-1-1 in New York State. Thirty five people from across the state visited 61 legislators, talking to them and their staff about the benefits of 2-1-1 and about the need for continued state financing of the effort. The day was co-sponsored by 2-1-1 New York State and NYS AIRS.

Several regions of the state organized themselves by boning up on all aspects of 2-1-1 information, and by making appointments to visit Senators and Assembly Members who represent their districts. The “ask” this year is for \$11 million statewide, as well as the \$3.7 million from last year's capital budget that did not pass (and therefore was not distributed).

After visits to legislators in the morning, the entire 2-1-1 delegation met to have lunch, generously provided for, [as was breakfast food and the meeting space], by NYS AIRS. Ken Curtin, Voluntary Coordinator from FEMA, gave an interesting presentation on 2-1-1's role in emergency disaster response. United Way of New York State's CEO Susan Hager rallied the troops for more visits in the afternoon.

The 10-member New York City delegation's experience of the day was probably similar to that of other groups. We found the day a bit whirlwind, but informative and effective. All the legislators we spoke with were receptive to the issues of 2-1-1; *the benefits 2-1-1 brings to their own constituents and constituent workers is not lost on them*. Importantly, in-person meetings establish relationships with elected officials and we learn about the needs of their communities.

One NYS AIRS member from New York City brought her social work student- a valuable exposure for this professional-in-the-making to see how advocacy is done. The student was impressed with the ease of access to legislators, and commented that the same does not happen with the city council of her native Washington, DC. Amidst all the criticisms the NYS legislature usually receives, this positive note was helpful to hear.

Most advocates return from a day in Albany a bit dazed from the pace and somewhat wondering: “was it all worth it?” On reflection, however, they all say “Yes!” -- Yes to meeting with people as important as our state reps and having an opportunity to make 2-1-1 more well recognized. Of course, we must monitor the budget as it unfolds over the next several weeks to see how it addresses 2-1-1’s needs.

We encourage you to participate in Advocacy Day 2009. Putting a voice and a face to 2-1-1 is a great opportunity to educate others about the program, the good it has already done and the promise it holds.

--Judy Milone, Advocacy Day Committee
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, New York City

UPCOMING CERTIFICATION TESTING DATES

AIRS certification examinations will be held at the AIRS Conference May 18-21 in Houston and will also be available at the Annual NYS AIRS Education and Training Conference in October.

Certified Resource Specialist (CRS), Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS), Certified Information and Referral Specialist - Aging (CIRS-A) are professional credentials awarded internationally by AIRS to individuals who complete the certification program and pass the examination for Information & Referral Specialists. It is an acknowledgment of demonstrated competence in the field of Information & Referral.

Costs:

- The basic cost of a Certification application for AIRS members is \$75 at the basic level, \$72 for standard level members, \$68 for enhanced members and \$65 for premium members OR \$225 for non-members.
- An examination re-take is \$40 for AIRS members and \$75 for non-members.

The Certification Application Form is for all applicants whether they are new or retaking the exam and is available at www.airs.org. Completed applications, supporting documentation and payment **must arrive at the AIRS office at least 30 days prior to the test date.**

ITEMS OF INTEREST

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PAYMENTS MAY MISS SOME LOW-INCOME WORKERS, SENIORS OR VETERANS

According to the Internal Revenue Service, some low-income workers, as well as Social Security and Veteran benefit recipients may qualify for federal economic stimulus payments this year, but not receive them unless they file a tax return. Most taxpayers will not have to do anything to receive the payment sometime in May. But others, who might not otherwise be required to file an income tax return, must file in order to receive the payment. To locate a free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site, individuals may call 1-800-906-9887 or for an AARP tax preparation site for those 60+ years call 1-888-227-7669. To view the IRS press release on this issue, visit <http://www.irs.gov/irs/article/0,,id=179096,00.html> .

EVENTS

NYS AIRS ANNUAL MEETING

April 25, 2008

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Hosted by the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, 281 Park Avenue South, Manhattan, corner of 22nd Street. 212.777.4800

Business meeting, elections and special presentation on the 2-1-1 Strategic Plan for NY State. All NYS AIRS members welcome to participate.

2008 AIRS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Deep in the Heart of Texas – Exploring New Frontiers of I&R

May 18-21, 2008

The Westin Galleria & Westin Oaks, Houston, Texas

This 30th Annual I&R Training and Education Conference is a must-attend event for I&R professionals, new and old hands alike. http://www.airs.org/events/events_conference.asp

16th ANNUAL NATIONAL VOAD CONFERENCE

Pathways to Partnership

May 5-8, 2008

Peabody Hotel and Statehouse Convention Center, Little Rock, Arkansas

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) Conference focuses on building and enhancing VOAD leadership and knowledge in disaster preparedness, planning, response and recovery.

Contact 202.955.8398 or visit www.nvoad.org to register.

NYS AIRS QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

July 25, 2008

Family Enrichment Network, Inc.

24 Cherry Street

Johnson City, New York 13790

All NYS AIRS members welcome to participate.

NYS AIRS NOTES is issued in April, August and December. To submit articles or events for consideration, contact eeberhardt@unitedwayli.org. For current news and events between issues, please check the NYS AIRS website at www.nysairs.org.

NYS AIRS Notes is best viewed in "print layout" format. Please note: Only the primary contact person listed on the NYS AIRS membership application will receive this newsletter. If you are an agency member, please feel free to distribute copies to your coworkers

NYS AIRS Communications Committee:

Elizabeth Eberhardt, United Way of Long Island

Cathleen Kelly, Mental Health Association of New York City

Shye Louis, 2-1-1/Life Line

Karen Butler Easter, Reachout of St. Lawrence County

Michael Cush, VISIONS

Ted Miroulis, Paetec Communications

JOIN US



NYS AIRS Annual Meeting

**Friday, April 25, 2008
10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**@ Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
281 Park Ave South, New York NY 10010**



New York Alliance of Information and Referral Systems
c/o United Way of Long Island
819 Grand Blvd.
Deer Park, NY 11729