

"Everybody needs Harbinger"

Harbinger gets new budget, co-ordinators

By MAXINE KOPEL

Harbinger, a counselling referral centre that deals with sexuality, drugs, legal and medical problems and general self - health information, is opening the year with new co-ordinators and a new budget.

Program co-ordinator Lindsay Cobb and administrative co-ordinator Sue Kaiser told Excalibur there will be "no changes as far as basic programs this year, but there will be far more outreach: more classes and workshops."

Kaiser, a former child care worker at Metro Children's Aid Society, and Cobb, a former Harbinger volunteer, were hired by a board as the new co-ordinators. The past program co-ordinator, Carol MacBride, has returned to school, and former administrative co-ordinator, Bill Robinson, was not rehired.

Cobb and Kaiser feel "everybody needs Harbinger.... we would especially like to see first year students come in and get information on birth control.

"We would rather educate people on birth control in general instead of handling crises, because

we want to reduce the number of crises. People may have had sex education in high school but it doesn't connect."

Harbinger however, is not for women only. Men seek information concerning VD, birth control, and peer relationship problems.

Once financially threatened, Harbinger may be getting back onto its feet. It will ask CYSF and the college councils for money, and the administration for long - term funding. Cobb said "Harbinger wants base funding over a period of years which will give continuity and allow for basic services. This way we don't have to spend so much time in pursuing funds." But vice-president John Becker said Harbinger will always have to do its own fund raising and will always be under financial pressure. He said Harbinger will receive over \$6000 from the administration this year because it provides services other York staff would have to do otherwise, such as abortion referral.

Kaiser said the administration is re-examining student services, including Harbinger, to determine what services should be



Lindsay Cobb and Sue Kaiser plan ahead for Harbinger.

funded. She said, "Harbinger has to prove itself statistically. If it closed - and I don't want the possibility in anybody's mind - students, especially women students, would feel it. You're not aware of how much you need Harbinger until you need it."

Cobb and Kaiser hold the only paid positions at Harbinger since

the rest of the staff is composed of 10 to 15 trained volunteers who commit their time throughout the year. These volunteers serve as a collective, and play an important role in Harbinger's internal affairs. Writers for the weekly column, speakers, researchers for health issues, and people into graphics and media are needed to expand the

community's awareness of Harbinger.

Cobb said, "Harbinger wants to develop a total program of outreach, including posters and a table once a week in Central Square... we want to be more visible and accessible."

Harbinger is fighting the myth that it deals only with homosexuality because of its affiliation with the Gay Alliance at York (GAY). But the service is equally involved with the York Women's Centre and Breakthrough, a York feminist magazine, and does deal with both heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Harbinger is open Monday through Friday from 10 to 6 at 214 Vanier Residence, phone 667-3632 and 667-3509. As Lindsay Cobb says, "Come see us first...."

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