

Peer counselling centre

Harbinger is forced to suspend projects

By Denise Beattie

Harbinger, York's peer counselling centre, must suspend some projects and services until this year's budget is attained.

Just under \$12,000 has been set as a contingency budget, revised from the desired 19 to \$20,000. \$6,850. has so far been received.

As outlined by Sue Kaiser, currently the centre's one fulltime paid staff member, only \$6,000 of

the needed money is guaranteed. The University allocates this amount in May. The remainder is sought from the college councils and the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF).

Vanier is the only college thus far to allot money to Harbinger, giving the \$850 requested. Kaiser says that the amount asked from each college is proportionate to the population and therefore income of the college. Vanier's \$850 she considered "a

medium amount".

Harbinger's situation is precarious as the colleges do not have a clear idea of their own budgets before December when enrolment figures are official; they must estimate their budget on projected enrolment.

CYSF has inadvertently been a problem. Harbinger hopes for \$8,000 from the council but from June 5 to September 6, CYFS was not able to pull itself together

for the two-thirds attendance necessary to pass the annual budget. Kaiser feels that York's president Paul Hayden is "attempting to be thorough but his hands are tied. There is nothing to do without a council."

"The biggest problem is continuity," says Kaiser, speaking of Harbinger's dealings with student councils. Because the councils often change membership completely each year, Harbinger has to start from scratch to get funding.

The present funding problem, says Kaiser, is compounded by the fact that Harbinger overspent last year and a large portion of the university's grant went toward paying debts.

The \$12,000 contingency budget is adequate to pay one, rather than the usual two, fulltime persons for ten months, along with other Harbinger expenses. Given the present situation, says Kaiser, "we can't do all we want. We must cut back." Their educational program is among the areas which would be modified or curtailed.

Lindsay Cobb was last year's second fulltime Harbinger staff member. She was program coordinator undertaking such duties as speaking in classes.

Student volunteers make up much of Harbinger staff. Out of the 15-18 needed, five are returning from last year. Says Kaiser, "Harbinger is student supported with money and volunteers. It is their organization and there is room to get involved. Volunteers can do everything, depending on their interests."

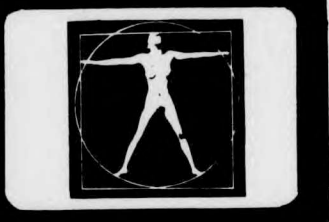
Possible projects for volunteers include counselling peers for personal problems or information, panel discussions and research.

Once chosen, volunteers are trained and gather as a collective for a weekend. Kaiser says that men make up about one third of the volunteers and students using the services.

Harbinger is located in 214 Vanier residence down the hall from health services. It is open 10:00 through 6:00, Monday through Friday. Telephone -3632 or -3509.

Harbinger's column

by Sue Kaiser



Harbinger is York University's peer counselling and referral service. Drop in at 214 Vanier residence, or phone 667-3059 - 3632. Open 10 am - 6 pm, Monday to Friday.

Do you need a VD clinic?

Do you need a VD Clinic?

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Would your class like a speaker on gay rights, abortion, herbal medicine, patient rights or home birth? Harbinger can take care of all these, and then some!

Harbinger has been on the York campus for about seven years, in one form or another. Originally, it dealt with drug crises. Today, our main areas of concern are sexuality and providing people with needed information about medical services.

Supported in large part by College Councils and CYSF (with help from the York Administration and donations), Harbinger trains student volunteers to provide information, referrals and peer counselling for the York Community.

Our approach is factual and supportive. There is no waiting, no appointment necessary and no forms to fill out. We try to have a man and a woman counsellor available in the office.

Peer counselling, which is Harbinger's approach, means that we work with you to find answers to your questions and problems. We treat the helping process as a communication between people, and not as control or direction by "counsellors" over "clients".

The Harbinger offices (214 Vanier Residence) are stocked with useful information. We have lists of capable doctors: women doctors, doctors who perform vasectomies, doctors for gay people, etc. Our useful contacts in the Toronto area include medical, legal and social services, gay movement and women's movement contacts.

Along with a lending (!) library on sexuality and related topics, we keep a stock of free pamphlets on the most asked for topics (vasectomies, VD clinics and birth control pills, to name a few).

We have a consistent demand for information on birth control and abortion. We use charts, models and printed information to help explain the mysteries of anatomy and conception. With some discussion, we can help you uncover the information which will help you decide which is the best method for you.

We counsel men and women on

all methods of birth control: the pill, the intrauterine device (IUD), the diaphragm, condoms, foam, tubal ligation, vasectomy and rhythm.

Women often come into Harbinger thinking they may be pregnant. Health Services provides pregnancy tests, and we will counsel women and couples on alternatives open to them.

In addition to information on services which will provide information on coping as a single mother, or adoption, Harbinger can arrange legal therapeutic abortions through several Toronto hospitals.

The more information you have about your body, the better able you are to ensure your own good health. If you want information or help with general health or sex-related problems, please phone, or drop by our office.

We will share what we know. And if we can't help you, we'll help you find someone who can.



Sue Kaiser of Harbinger

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