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For Immediate Release

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Response Hotline Seeks Volunteers to Answer The Call!

**Telephone Crisis Counselor Opportunity Offered
as “United We Serve” Community Service Activity**

Stony Brook - July, 27, 2009 -- RESPONSE of Suffolk County, Inc., a non-profit agency providing crisis intervention/suicide prevention services, is offering a free volunteer telephone counselor training program in conjunction with the nationwide “United We Serve” initiative. Part one of the training will be held on Saturday, October 17th and Sunday, October 18th, from 9:30 am - 4:30 pm, and continues on Saturday, October 24th and Sunday, October 25th. Trainees must attend all sessions. Training will take place at the Wang Center on the campus of Stony Brook University. No experience is necessary, only a sincere willingness to learn and grow, and the ability to make a six-month commitment of 4 hours a week is required.

The “United We Serve” initiative was conceived as a way to directly involve Americans in meeting the growing social needs resulting from the economic downturn. While any kind of volunteer service is encouraged, the effort focuses on four key areas -- education, health, energy and the environment, and community renewal. With the knowledge that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things when given the proper tools, [President Obama is asking us to come together](#) to “help lay a new foundation for growth.”

“Over the last eight months, many of the calls to Response have been related to the stress and anxiety associated with the current economic climate. Our volunteers provide our callers with vital emotional support and life-saving referrals,” said Meryl Cassidy, LMSW, Executive Director for RESPONSE. “Volunteer crisis counselors are especially needed to help with the increased call volume anticipated for the upcoming holiday season.”

Response provides two types of telephone assistance lines and both are heavily dependent on volunteer talent. The crisis intervention hotline takes over 12,000 calls each year about a wide range of subjects – substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, family conflict, grief, suicidal thoughts among many others. The support line provides over 2,000 telephone “visits” yearly to individuals who are homebound or have limited social support due to a physical disability or mental illness. Training for both the hotline and support line counselors includes lecture, role-playing exercises, and private and group supervision. College credit is available and bilingual volunteers are especially needed.

Response volunteers demonstrate the power and potential of citizen service 24 hours a day. Make a difference in our community – one phone call at a time. Volunteer as a telephone counselor with RESPONSE of Suffolk County and become the caring voice on the other end of the phone! Those interested in attending the up-coming training can visit www.responsehotline.org for more information or call the hotline at 631-751-7500.

Response of Suffolk County is a nationally accredited community based agency that provides crisis intervention/suicide prevention services through its hotline and online programs. The agency’s mission is to prevent self-destructive behavior by helping people feel understood and supported.

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