

PHOTO BY LINDA KIEWER



GUEST EDITORIAL

BY ALLANYA GUENTHER

Crisis or opportunity?

Phoenix Rising Foundation's executive director says the agency's crisis is a chance to make things better

Since word of Phoenix Rising Foundation's crisis, several people have asked me how I have managed to personally survive the unrelenting stress of the past six months. At times, I have not been so sure that I am, in fact, surviving. At one point I did give up—emotionally—but continued to do my duty, which included suggesting to the board that it fire me and hire a consultant.

However, the board ignored my self-doubts and reaffirmed its confidence in my ability to make the right decisions; together, we committed to bringing Phoenix Rising back from the brink of extinction.

Times of crisis force us to get in touch with our deepest fears as well as our dormant strengths. Crisis provides us the opportunity to change. Crisis brings sources of support and help that are a complete surprise. It also brings a backlash of criticism and sabotage—again, often surprising. We have all lived through crises and, hopefully, learned something along the way.

Perhaps the most meaningful lesson I have learned from crises is that what happens to you is less important than how you perceive what has happened.

So, are the recent events affecting Phoenix Rising Foundation a crisis or an opportunity? It's a crisis if all we can do as a commu-

nity is look backward and cast blame. After the stones are thrown, what then? But it is a golden opportunity if we recognize that Phoenix Rising is being presented with the chance to change course, strengthen its community foundation and move forward to become an even more important community asset than in the past.

Phoenix Rising Foundation has served this community for 22 years. How many thousands of people have been helped in that time? Are you one of them? Is your lover, sister, uncle, parent or best friend someone who has been touched and healed by the services the agency has provided?

Network Behavioral HealthCare Inc. is offering incredible, generous support. But it will never replace the need for a commitment from all of us—the community that Phoenix Rising serves. If we cannot commit to this together, opportunity will pass us by. And Phoenix Rising Foundation will become a victim of a crisis.

As Jerry Garcia once said, "It's just incredibly pathetic that someone has to do something, and that someone is us." Let's rise to the occasion. Let's seize the opportunity and overcome the crisis. Get involved. Phoenix Rising Foundation needs you.

■ To learn how to help, call Phoenix Rising Foundation at 223-8299.

FOUNDERS • Jay Brown, Renée LaChance
PUBLISHER • Marty Davis
NEWS EDITOR • Inga Sorensen
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR • Will O'Bryan
COPY EDITORS • Christopher D. Cuttone,
 Will O'Bryan
STAFF WRITERS • Marty Davis, Patrick Collins,
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CALENDAR EDITOR • Debby Morgan
CONTRIBUTORS • Beren deMotier,
 Allanya Guenther, K.H. Kimball,
 Rosemary Morrow, Alexander O'Fallon,
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