

MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



An Open Letter to TIP Volunteers

Hello TIP Volunteers:

35 years ago this month, the first class of TIP volunteers graduated from the TIP Training Academy in Oceanside, Ca. We knew at the time that TIP was a good idea, but we didn't know if residents would volunteer for this challenging volunteer position. And even if we could find willing volunteers, there was skepticism in the professional mental health community about whether nonprofessional helpers were capable of helping those in crisis.

It didn't take long for us to realize that not only were citizens willing to be TIP volunteers, but they were extraordinarily skilled crisis interventionists. Today, 35 years later each of you continues to put a good idea into action. Without your willingness to respond to TIP calls there would be no TIP. TIP would just be another forgotten idea.

Over the years, we have come to accept the fact that despite our best recruitment efforts, only a very small % of the population will volunteer for TIP. That's not surprising. Unlike most community members, TIP volunteers like you have BOTH courage and compassion in good measure. You have the courage to respond to help strangers in emotionally fiery situations, and you have the compassion needed to stay by their side knowing you can't take away their pain.

In short you are very special people. I hope each of you realizes that. I have worked with TIP volunteers for many years, and I'm as awed today as I was 35 years ago.