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She's at the other end of the line Ozone House volunteer Angela Williams is ready to listen

News Staff Reporter In the phone room at **Ozone House** in Ann Arbor, Angela Williams enjoys getting to know her coworkers, most of whom are students in their early 20s. Williams, 72, volunteers Tuesday mornings on the crisis line.

"I just like people," she says. "I don't mind too much whether they're old or young. I suppose I particularly enjoy young people," she says. As a crisis line volunteer, she helps help at-risk youths who call for help.

The crisis line is staffed by three volunteers at a time who each do a four-hour shift, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. In the evenings and on weekends, the line is forwarded to a state-wide central crisis line. The crisis line is one of the services that **Ozone House** provides to young people and their families. It also offers emergency shelter for runaways and "throwaways" (youths who have been thrown out of their homes), youth and family counseling, transitional housing, a drop-in center in Ypsilanti and many other programs.

Williams, of Ann Arbor, decided to volunteer for the nonprofit after she retired from the Ann Arbor Public Schools. She retired from Mack School in the summer of 1999 and did 40 hours of training to be a crisis line volunteer in January 2000. She says it might have been fun to volunteer in a school in retirement, but she decided to help at **Ozone House** because it is "more of a learning experience."

"Being a crisis line volunteer is fascinating and tantalizing sometimes," says Williams, because "you're the one who gets the first story frequently." A young person may call and say, "I'm having trouble with my mom and stepdad, and things aren't going well at school, and you say, 'can you tell me a little more about what's going on,'" says Williams, who adds they then have a 30-45 minute conversation.

"Then you come up with a plan, which is usually, 'why don't you come in for an intake.'" The intake worker helps the person to clarify goals, things like where to live and how to find a job, depending on the person's age and situation. No matter what, Williams says, "my bottom line is always try to get a contact number if you can," which is sometimes difficult if the youth is calling from another person's **house** or cell phone.

A lot of phone calls are not crises. Volunteers field calls for case managers or the executive director, check on the time of an interview or appointment and give a lot of referrals, says Williams. She and the other volunteers help each other handle calls, such as providing information about resources to offer the caller, depending on their circumstances. "Very frequently a call is from a parent who is worried or unable to continue parenting as they think they should through the teen years," says Williams.

Williams also serves on the board of **Ozone House**. A lot of the board's focus is fundraising, says Williams, "and that's something for which I have no talent, and I really dislike it." She feels it's worth the effort, though, when she talks to a teen who needs counseling, or an anxious parent of a teen on the crisis line. "You can hear that sigh of relief" when you tell them that all the services are free, she says.

"The most exciting thing, I think, is to see how the staff of **Ozone House** hang in with the young people," she says. They become "self supporting, motivated citizens who are managing to take classes, keep a job and somewhere to live, and it takes an awful lot of support if you don't have a home that's giving you help with those kind of things."

Mary Jo Callan, executive director of **Ozone House**, says Williams is "so generous with her time," picking up shifts when needed, and a role model to other volunteers and employees. "She's an inspiration to those of us who aspire to have so much integrity and make a difference in the community."

Williams feels strongly about housing. In addition to her work with **Ozone House**, she serves on the board of Religious Action for Affordable Housing, which aims to raise funds and awareness of the need for affordable housing. She also volunteers at her church, St. Aidan's Episcopal, when it hosts the men's rotating shelter from the Delonis Center. "Housing is, in many ways, the correlation of nonprofits. People don't realize how absolutely basic it is to have somewhere to live ... I mean, if you stop and think, you know it's basic. It's really very hard to get a job or do anything if you don't have a home address."