

Group Assets

The Newsletter of the
Group Foundation
for Advancing Mental Health

Winter 2014

The Passing of the Torch: New Leadership for the Foundation

Connie Concannon, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA, Assets Editor

I want to wish all of you a very Happy New Year. This is the time of year when we reflect on what we have accomplished and look forward to the new possibilities that lie ahead of us. The new year of 2014 will mark an important change for our organizational



Mahon

community. This is the year that Lisa Mahon, PhD, CGP, FAGPA, Chair, and Elliot Zeisel, PhD, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA, Vice-Chair, will be moving off their leadership positions and will be passing the torch to Phyllis Cohen, PhD, PsyD, CGP, L FAGPA, who will serve as Chair, and to Jeffrey Hudson, MEd, LPC, CGP, FAGPA, who will serve as Vice Chair. In acknowledging this transition, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Lisa and Elliot for a job well done and to welcome Phyllis and Jeff to the new roles that they will assume following the Annual Meeting in Boston.



Cohen

I have a deep respect for the willingness and dedication that it takes to serve as a leader in an organization that is dedicated to fundraising and all the challenges that it



Hudson

brings. The Group Foundation has been very fortunate to have Lisa and Elliot facilitate us through the process of realizing our goals and keeping a light shining on our shared values and the mission that the Group Foundation has embraced. I remember when Lisa was

asked to serve as our Chair more than six years ago. Along with being gracious, warm, and reflective in whatever task she took on, she also had a shyness about her that, at times, made it difficult to be in the spotlight. During her tenure, I watched her blossom into a strong, vocal leader who was clearly comfortable in large public presentations where she showed both her expertise and grace. This was an example of how leaders can change groups, as well as how groups can change leaders.

Here's how Lisa recently spoke of her experience serving as Foundation Chair.

"My appreciation for our members' generosity has grown tremendously during my tenure, and I'm not just talking about money. I have been struck by how kind and responsive so many people have been to my requests to talk about the Foundation or to ask them for a gift. Our members and the outside community that supports us have been extraordinarily generous of both money and spirit.

"And I must say that I had not anticipated how much I would enjoy working with all the members on the Group Foundation Board. I have felt held by a wonderful community of dedicated people so that I never had to feel like I was in this alone or that all the responsibility was on my shoulders. We have a Board and staff with tremendous talents; this truly has been a working Board. It's much like I think about being a group leader, you do your job and step back and trust that the group does theirs, and this is

exactly what this Board does. I wish there was room to name all the Board members and all the ways they give. I hope our AGPA members appreciate what the Group Foundation Board members are doing because fundraising is not always easy and requires stepping out of our comfort zones. I am grateful to be a part of this Board."

Elliot Zeisel brought the same warmth, dedication, and thoughtfulness to his leadership position in the Group Foundation. In interviewing Elliot for an article I wrote for Group Assets, I learned a great deal about why he was so effective in fundraising and how he engaged those he met in his community, both inside and outside of our organization, in supporting the Group Foundation's mission. When asked, "How do you begin the conversation when you are asking for donations from potential contributors?" Elliot replied: "I don't ask; I share my passion for believing in group. I let them know how I have been moved and transformed by living and working in groups in both my professional and personal life and why I am committed to this work." He went on to say that as you share with others, they begin to reflect on their own experiences and connect to what it meant to them to get the help and support that they needed at a difficult time in their or their family's life. They connect to the need and the power of being a part of a community that supports people during good and bad times. This shared experience is the seed that is planted that pulls them to want to join with a larger community that supports these values.

Looking ahead, Phyllis, who has been a vital part of both AGPA and the Group Foundation for decades, has been a vital part of some of our most creative work in the Foundation, including creating the "Honor Your Mentor" program with Trish Cleary, MS, LCPC-MFT-ADC, CGP, FAGPA. She is always looking for ways to support the sustainability and vitality of the Foundation, knowing that it supports the continued work of AGPA in providing the highest quality of group psychotherapy training and education.

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Our sincerest appreciation is expressed to these endowment donors in support of our program.

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She is tireless in promoting excellence in standards of practice in group therapy and has been a major contributor to the field. I asked Phyllis what inspired her to take on the responsibility of Foundation Chair. Phyllis said, "I'm inspired by the tremendous sense of pride I feel with all we have accomplished. I want to continue to build on all we created to pass it on to the next generation of group." Within the Group Foundation Board, Phyllis has been one of the most passionate supporters of the Education and Scholarship Program, reflecting her

continued on back

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Amelia Canally's child's birth (Jeffrey Hudson)
Trish Cleary & Diana Kunkel (indicated with * in contributor listing)
Phyllis Cohen (Barbara Goldstein Amster, Stephen & Fredrica Friedman)
Connie Concannon's Distinguished Fellowship (indicated with * in contributor listing)
Lucy Holmes' granddaughter Lia Grace Mastriano's birth (Elliot Zeisel)
Robert Schulte's Fellowship (Trish Cleary)
Angela Stephens' 30th Anniversary with AGPA (Jeanne Pasternak)
Kathleen Ulman (indicated with * in contributor listing)
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New Leadership

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commitment to the next generation of group therapists. She will be bringing that passion with her in her role as Chair, as well her rich history and contribution to

the field of group psychotherapy.

Phyllis is fortunate to have Jeff joining her in this shared mission. Jeff already has the reputation of being a dynamic and loved leader, who has been a trailblazer in bringing the work of the Group Foundation to the Affiliate Societies, as well as incorporating the vital role they play in supporting the Foundation's mission. He has served as a consultant to the Affiliate Societies on starting local fundraising and building awareness for the need for high quality training in group psychotherapy for students and new professionals; he is a natural fit for this leadership position. Jeff spoke to his vision for the future.

“As a Board Member of the Group Foundation, I have really enjoyed working with the local societies

to build support for the Education and Scholarship Program. I look forward to serving as Vice-Chair and especially to continuing our efforts to provide financial assistance to deserving students, new professionals, and agency clinicians to attend the Annual Meeting. Through this program we are planting seeds for the next generation of group leaders.”

We are very fortunate to have a rich source of leaders, past and present, who have contributed to supporting our shared goals and values. We have much to be thankful for and much to be excited about. It's a reminder that a high standard of group psychotherapy training and education not only creates effective clinicians, but also fosters the qualities that create effective leaders.

Group Assets

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