

groupassets



EDITOR'S NOTE



The Group Foundation is always elated to support scholarships to attend AGPA Connect. Receiving a scholarship is an honor, whether it be an endowed or tuition scholarship. In this issue of Group Assets, you will read what scholarship recipients have to say about their experience attending the AGPA Connect 2021. Also, in our Faces of the Foundation column, you will hear from a donor who is not an AGPA member, nor in the field of mental health. We celebrate Bill Haydon and thank him for his generosity to the Foundation.

I'm always interested in hearing from our donors and AGPA members, so please reach out to me at karendotcom@prodigy.net on any issues relating to the Foundation and Group Assets.

Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, FAGPA

The Gift of a Scholarship to AGPA Connect

Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, FAGPA

It is hard to believe AGPA Connect 2021 is over and the planning for 2022 has begun. On behalf of the Group Foundation, I want to thank the AGPA staff and all of the committees and volunteers who made this year's virtual AGPA Connect possible. I would imagine there were some glitches or trying moments running our first virtual Conference, but from where I sat, things seemed to run seamlessly. Certainly, we missed being in person, and we eagerly look forward to reviewing and awarding scholarships for an in-person AGPA Connect 2022, to be held February 28 to March 5 in Denver, Colorado.

Donating to a cause that is believed in for its mission and impact on society is a very rewarding experience. I've had the privilege of reading the letters of appreciation sent by those who attended the meeting on scholarships that were made possible by donors to the Group Foundation, and I want to share some of the recipients' words with you. I hope that hearing what scholarship recipients have to say of their experience will create good feelings about your contributions to the Foundation.

In reading the anonymous letters of thanks, I noted themes, connections, differences, and often-used words. The 2021 scholarship awardees are a group—a group that did not have the chance to meet in person, making history as the first to attend a virtual AGPA Connect, perhaps ending up in Institutes and/or workshops together forming subgroups.

There were eight words/phrases that appeared throughout the letters: incredible; grateful; connected; thank you; feel more confident; appreciation; amazing opportunity; and exhausted.

Themes that emerged throughout the letters were: vulnerability; deepened sense of trust; empathy; the importance of being a participant in a group; sharing information with others; the value of experiential learning; and connection to peers. Doubtless, through these letters, group theory is present and unfolds for us to see as clinicians. We truly know the power of group, and these scholarship recipients say it decidedly. Following are some quotes to help seal the deal of the importance of giving to the Education and Scholarship Fund of the Foundation; their words say it the best.

"It was a corrective emotional experience I'll never forget. When leading groups, I will always remember what it feels like to be in conflict with another member, what it feels like to be dropped by the group, and then what it's like to be lifted up by the entire group."

"In addition to this incredible experience, I also wanted to share my personal experience, as I have shared my professional experience. I would like to see more diversity (meaning more people of color not only presenting, but also in the group setting. Which I believe is being improved). I was thrilled to see a POC speaking during the plenary and in one

of my Institutes. At times I felt like there was an elephant in the room, and the elephant was me. However, I did appreciate one of the presenters acknowledging it, in which I almost felt like people were able to breathe."

"Probably my favorite part of AGPA Connect was the opportunity to connect with other clinicians from all over the world. I loved learning about the many similarities that we all share inside those Zoom rooms. I was inspired and motivated by so many of the people whose paths I crossed, even if it was just briefly. I also enjoyed seeing the differences as we all navigated such an intimate space. There is no perfect space, there is no perfect group. I would be lying if I said that there were no awkward times, negative interactions, or uncomfortable spaces. I would also be lying if I said that everything was perfect and there was no room for improvement or growth within this conference. I think there is always room for growth, and ways to make ourselves better as people, professionals, group therapists, and organizations. However, I do believe AGPA Connect is truly a one of a kind space and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share that space during AGPA Connect 2021."

"Overall, I came away from the experience on fire about the power of group therapy and its potential for massive change in the lives of people."

"The experience of Connect 2021 will allow me to better facilitate conversation/processes dealing with race in America."

"Even though there will be times when I will feel triggered by clients as a therapist, I believe that by examining my own feelings and thoughts in the moment, I will be able to build a trusting and lasting connection with them both individually and as a group."

"Every single session that I attended added to my growth as a clinician and a professional, and most sessions added to my growth as a human."

"I also would like to mention how deeply I was moved by the emphasis on diversity."

"When I came back to the home that I actually never left (both literally and metaphorically), it was not the same home and it was not the same person who was sitting on that same chair in front of the computer: It was much more of that same person who was sitting there all along."

Our message to our 2021 Scholarship Recipients: Thank you for letting us know the impact the AGPA has had on you as a group therapist. We look forward to seeing you in Denver!

We'll be sharing more of the letters on the Group Foundation website and through our communications, so keep an eye out. In the meantime, please know what a gift you have given to someone in helping them attend. 🍎

FACES OF THE FOUNDATION

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill Haydon has been a contributor to the Group Foundation for a number of years. He and I recently had a conversation about how and why he got involved in the Foundation and his continuing support of our work. Below are excerpts from that discussion, lightly edited for clarity. A complete version of the interview can be found in the Faces of the Foundation gallery on the Foundation website at <https://www.agpa.org/Foundation/donors/the-faces-of-our-foundation>, along with past profiles of donors.



TRAVIS: Thank you for being a dedicated donor to the Foundation. We just held our first virtual AGPA Connect, and because of people like you, we were able to provide 90 scholarships to students and new professionals so they could participate. How did you first hear about us?

HAYDON: I first learned about the Foundation through Mary Nicholas. I had known Mary for many years. We'd occasionally get together for breakfast or lunch, and she just started talking about the Foundation in such an excited and enthusiastic way. She didn't solicit or push me [I hope that doesn't hurt her credentials]. So, it was almost like I found it on my own just by listening. I thought that's something I could totally get behind. It sounded like a great entity, and it provided a way for me to contribute back.

TRAVIS: Can you explain?

HAYDON: It was my own personal experience with group therapy for an extended period of time, how it benefited me and helped change my life that attracted me to the Foundation. I think group therapy is underappreciated, if it's known at all. The only time people really ever hear about group therapy is when Woody Allen talks about it in one of his old movies. It's like a bunch of writers got together and commiserated about something they don't really know about and then wrote about it.

TRAVIS: What motivates you to continue contributing to the Foundation?

HAYDON: There's so many benefits to group therapy. I remember how powerful it was in my life, and I want to make that available for other people. Group therapy doesn't have to be long-term. It can also be used as triage.

I remember Mary telling me the story about the power plant explosion in Connecticut and how group therapists helped those dealing with the trauma. I remember when that event happened. I know that 'bandwidth' is a non-professional term, but group therapy provides bandwidth so more people can have access to help. Think about all the people who were traumatized from that plant explosion who were able to be with other people in a safe space who experienced the same thing. There's something that organically happens in group. I don't know what it is, but it just does happen, and I really think that that's very important. You're able to unwind something with other people. I really feel group therapy is a great model for accessing support and helping people change their lives for the better.

TRAVIS: I'm really glad to know that group therapy touched your life. In talking with Mary, or reading about the Foundation and learning about what we do, are there specific programs that are more important to you than others?

HAYDON: Not really. I think you know where to allocate money and how to manage it properly. You're in the position to set up criteria so that the monies are best used.

TRAVIS: Are there certain things that you would like to see the Foundation do going forward?

HAYDON: I think a lot of people are not really aware of the existence of group therapy, so I think the Foundation could create more awareness. I want people to appreciate the human experience of a group. Group therapists are impacting the world and doing greater good. People should know that.

LEGACY SOCIETY

We appreciate the provisions these planned gift donors have made for the Group Foundation.

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GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2021 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2021

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Shame and Humiliation in Group Therapy: Be Careful What You Wish For and Introduction to Modern Group Process in the Current Climate

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Am I My Brother's Keeper? An Exploration of Sibling Dynamics: How They Influence the Roles We Take and the People We Become in Groups

Supported by a bequest from their estate

Group Foundation Honors Scholarship and Award Winners



JONATHAN RYAN

CRAIG HAEN

SUZANNE PHILLIPS

LEONARDO LEIDERMAN

THE DANA TAI SOON BURGESS DANCE CO.

The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, the philanthropic arm of the AGPA, celebrates its 2021 scholarship and award winners. A myriad of tuition and monetary awards, supporting the training of group therapists and the use of group in communities to effect change are distributed through the Foundation. Those recognized included:

JONATHAN RYAN, CEO and President, Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES), received the **Humanitarian Award** for his dedication to the inalienable right of all people to migrate in order to better their way of life and the visionary leadership he has provided at RAICES to carry out its mission to defend the rights of immigrants and refugees, empower individuals, families, and communities and to advocate for liberty and justice.

CRAIG HAEN, PhD, RDT, CGP, LCAT, FAGPA, and SUZANNE PHILLIPS, PsyD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA, Co-Chairs, AGPA Community Outreach Task Force, received the **Social Responsibility Award** in recognition of the extensive work they have done as Co-Chairs of the AGPA Community Outreach Task Force over the last year in response to the pandemic and other events, as well as their work overall in responding to communities affected by trauma.

LEONARDO LEIDERMAN, PsyD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA, received the **Alonso Award for Excellence in Psychodynamic Group Theory** for his work on the *Psychodynamic Group Therapy with Hispanic Migrants: Interpersonal, Relational Constructs in Treating Complex Trauma, Dissociation, and Enactments* article.

The **DANA TAI SOON BURGESS DANCE COMPANY** received the 2021 **Aaron Stein Memorial Award** for its innovative and creative use of group techniques to benefit communities.

More than 90 individuals received scholarships to attend AGPA Virtual Connect 2021, supported through endowed scholarship funds and private donations.

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