

# groupassets



## EDITOR'S NOTE



*Our feature article addresses issues that arose in the course of my conversations with attendees at AGPA Connect 2023 about the Group Foundation. I explore the issues and try to provide some answers. It is important for all of us, even those who are on the Group Foundation Board and those who understand the Foundation's mission, to be reminded of what we stand for and what we do. We are growing and changing as a philanthropic organization and broadening our Board of Directors with more diversity. We want each person to know you are seen and heard. While there can be shame involved in talking and making decisions about money, we do not want anyone to think their donation is not counted. No gift is too small; it all adds up. If you are not a donor, we hope you will give when and if the time is right for you. The Group Foundation thanks all its current donors. Until next time, I wish all of you a happy springtime.*

## Hallway Chats at AGPA Connect

**Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, AGPA-F, Editor**

In this *Group Assets* issue, we hear from a sampling of AGPA Connect 2023 attendees regarding their understanding of the Group Foundation and what compels them to give, or conversely, what would motivate them to become a donor. The interviews were with people from three countries, consistent, long-term AGPA Connect attendees, people having attended only a few AGPA Connects, and first-time attendees. Being back in person and having these conversations face-to-face instead of emailing back and forth was, indeed, delightful. Everyone was willing to engage, and I am grateful for their time in a very busy schedule at Connect. I have included some direct quotes from those we interviewed throughout this article.

We at times think we know a person, place, or thing and then when asked to put into words what those things might mean, it gives us pause to think. If you're not clear on the Group Foundation's mission and purpose, I hope after reading this article you will have a much better understanding. I know the conversations we had at AGPA Connect will give the Group Foundation's leadership some insights into how we can better serve the group therapy field, as well as communicate our work to donors and recipients of our scholarships, awards, community outreach, and programming grants.

"I have heard it spoken about throughout the conference. I think the Group Foundation contributes to the Scholarship Program and people donate to the Foundation. Work paid for me to attend this year, but they may not have funds for next year. I will be back, and next year I may have to apply for a scholarship to help with cost and pay some out of pocket. As a young professional, I do not have the funds yet to contribute. The Group Foundation could do more outreach. I believe there are too many emails that really do not explain what the Foundation is; there are concepts used that people do not know the meaning of."

"My concept of the Group Foundation has changed drastically over the years. At first, I didn't have a clue why the Foundation was raising money. It looked like an exclusive club with members who had money to donate. Was I wrong! To clearly understand AGPA's system and the legal structure of all three boards—the AGPA Board, CGP Certification Board and the Group Foundation Board—was eye opening."

It is important to be reminded of the Foundation's history with AGPA, which began in 1982. Actually, it is more accurate to say that the Foundation was activated in 1982 because it already existed as an entity but didn't yet do anything. Initially, the Foundation was established with the goal of purchasing a headquarters for AGPA, as well as funding some education and research. The Foundation accomplished this initial goal in establishing ownership of what was the primary Association office for four decades, a substantial cost-savings in terms of expenses over the years, but also an investment that has grown in value and will eventually be a long-term source of endowed funding. Over the years, the Foundation has turned into so much more, by serving as the charitable arm of AGPA to support the advancement of the group therapy profession in improving mental health in communities. In the simplest explanation possible, AGPA provides programs, such as education (in-person and virtual) and community outreach, and the Foundation provides funding to make them a reality.

In 2002, only seven endowed scholarships existed; now there are 20, which gives many more opportunities to group therapists, including those new to the field. Through an endowment built through a capital campaign, as well as the annual generosity of our donors, the Foundation provides an educational grant to AGPA for AGPA Connect and e-learning programming and supports scholarships for 100-200 AGPA Connect attendees every year. Research in the field, technology platforms that have made e-learning

programs possible, and community outreach in times of disasters are also funded through grants from the Group Foundation. And as you have previously read in this newsletter, the Group Foundation is now also supporting AGPA's and the group therapy field's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Some of the people I interviewed are current donors to the Foundation; some were donors at some point but do not currently contribute; and some have never given. Additionally, some of the people I spoke to were recipients of Foundation funding. I've combined these concepts here because there are many intersections between benefiting from Foundation support now and giving later or giving previously and benefitting now.

"Who knew that registration fees do not cover the yearly cost of Connect? Not me! This is only one responsibility the Group Foundation fundraising takes on. Scholarships is another. Plus putting community outreach in action during traumatic events in our country. I began donating to the Foundation because of how much AGPA Connect means to me, and because of community outreach and scholarships to train new mental health leaders in the effective use of groups. I am now a regular donor!"

So much is related to individual circumstances that change at any given moment, one of the reasons why Foundation funding is so important. A number of people noted that because of the pandemic and all that it brought to their lives, they were less inclined to attend AGPA Connect virtually and became disconnected from both AGPA and the Foundation. Another common denominator that people spoke about relating to their connection to both organizations was where they are in their lives and their practice settings. Many people are raising children or

*Continued on back page*

First, I would like to say what a rich and rewarding week AGPA Connect 2023 was. Hats off to the staff, AGPA Connect Committee, and the Faculty. The Group Foundation was able to provide 20 endowed scholarships, 116 tuition scholarships, and sponsored 22 events through endowment funds, as well as tribute campaigns (please see the listing of Tribute Gifts in this issue).

In my conversations, there were common themes of what people knew about the Group Foundation and what they did not know. Most people knew about support for scholarships, education, and community outreach through AGPA. Many people did not know, however, about the Group Foundation's relationship with AGPA, as well as details on how funds are spent in support of the programs.

## LEGACY SOCIETY

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

Ramon Alonso

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## TRIBUTE GIFTS:

The following individuals were honored by the contributors listed with a program in their name at the recent AGPA Connect Meeting in New York (donors are listed in italics)

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					<i>Elliot Zeisel</i>

## Group Foundation Honors Scholarship and Award Winners

The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, the philanthropic arm of the AGPA, celebrates its 2023 scholarship and award winners. A myriad of awards that support the training of group therapists and the use of group in communities to effect change are distributed through the Foundation. Those recognized included:

- **D. Thomas Stone, PhD, CGP, AGPA-F**, received the Social Responsibility Award in recognition of his outstanding community outreach activities on behalf of the group therapy community, particularly his extensive work in the San Antonio area providing programs supporting frontline workers during crises in the area.
- **Marianne Dolan Weber** of the Heartfelt Wings Foundation received the Humanitarian Award in recognition of her support of vitally needed services to a community, in particular the Camp Galaxy program that over the years has been offered to more than 500 children whose parents are deployed members of the military.
- The Alonso Award for Excellence in Psychodynamic Group Theory was given to **Ole Østergård, Cathaina Frandse**, and **Kristian Valbak** for their paper “Psychological Mindedness, Personality Structure, and Outcomes in Short-Term Group Analytic Psychotherapy,” which appeared in the April 2022 issue of the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*.
- 136 individuals received scholarships to attend AGPA Connect 2023, supported by endowed scholarship funds and private donations.

Please see the Group Foundation Luncheon Program ([bit.ly/3LikAZf](https://bit.ly/3LikAZf)) for the complete list of endowed scholarship recipients and programs at AGPA Connect, as well as for a list our generous donors who make the programs possible.

### HALLWAY CHATS AT AGPA CONNECT *Continued from front page*

putting them through college, or their practice setting does not pay for continuing education or paid time off to attend extra trainings, particularly in person. As one person told me, their family helped them to attend AGPA Connect in New York City this year. I spoke with this individual shortly after the Saturday luncheon. They said, “If there was money to give, the Saturday lunch performance would have motivated me to donate. You make me cry, you get my money.” (This reminds me to mention that the Group Foundation also sponsors the dance and the luncheon at AGPA Connect, important times of connection during the meeting week.)

“The Group Foundation funds programs to help people who cannot be here otherwise. I think that it also helps with group treatment research. I give because I really believe in the Foundation, group psychotherapy and what it does for the AGPA.”

It was clear in our conversations that people give because they believe in the cause and mission of the Group Foundation. Specifically, the reasons were: scholarships, training mental health leaders, community outreach in disaster times, feeling connected to the area of giving, or donating to a specific endowed scholarship or fund. I ask *Group Assets*’ readers to engage with us and let us know what we should be doing to stay true to our mission:

*The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health is a philanthropic organization dedicated to changing lives through therapeutic group work by advancing the most effective and innovative approaches to group therapy education, training, research, and community outreach.*

“The Group Foundation is very hard to name. I do not associate it with AGPA. I think the Foundation makes efforts to move mental health forward by offering scholarships. Maybe it helps AGPA advance mental health. I don’t think it signifies group work enough. In reflecting as we talk, it feels disconnected. I received a scholarship years ago when I first started out. I want to eventually contribute to the Foundation but for now I have to decide where money goes during this particular time of inflation.”

Through the content generated from my interviews, I hope to spark more conversation around the Foundation as we want AGPA members and nonmembers to understand our mission and what we do and support. If more information is needed or you want to discuss the Foundation further (whether a donor or recipient of funding, or someone interested in either) please do not hesitate to contact me at [karendotcom@prodigy.net](mailto:karendotcom@prodigy.net) or the Group Foundation office via [dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org).

## 2023 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GROUP FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH

GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2023, THROUGH MARCH 31, 2023

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