

# groupassets



## EDITOR'S NOTE



A warm hello to each of you reading Group Assets. Good summertime wishes to you, and if you are traveling, safe journeys. So much continues to happen in our seemingly divided world. As I write this on the day after the fourth of July, a celebration of our country, our home, "our group" we call the USA, there has been another mass shooting, and we mourn so many tragedies not only in the United States but all over the world.

In this issue of Group Assets, Robert "Dr. Bob" Hsiung, MD, Chair of the DEI Fund Advisory Committee, and Diane Feirman, CAE, Public Affairs Senior Director, present us with hope as they take us on a journey of progress with this DEI initiative that the Group Foundation embarked on in collaboration with the Tri-Organizational Board's strategic planning. As you read, it will be clear this committee has been diligently working. I would like to underscore "DEI-fication," the term defined as the embracing of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the work of a group. I particularly like the word "embrace," as it indicates a welcome, an acceptance, a support. The article is one of transparency, which

helps promote trust and safety. Bob and Diane let you know what the DEI Fund Advisory Committee is doing and where your gifts are being utilized. The Group Foundation is committed to AGPA, our donors, and our desire to work closely with and for diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our structure and programs.

In the Faces of the Foundation column, we get to hear from our long-term, dedicated, and active Board member, Mary Nicholas, PhD, LCSW, CGP, AGPA-F. Mary takes us on a journey of understanding her connections to the Foundation and why our work is important to her. I had the pleasure of working with Mary for years on the Scholarship Committee. Mary, thanks for your passion towards community outreach and the Scholarship Program.

As always, we want to hear from you with any suggestions, opinions, or ideas. Contact the Foundation at [dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org). Stay safe and enjoy your summer; we will return with the next edition of Group Assets in the fall. We look forward to being together in person at AGPA Connect 2023 in New York City.

## The DEI Fund Advisory Committee and DEI-fication

**Robert "Dr. Bob" Hsiung, MD, Chair, DEI Fund Advisory Committee, and Diane Feirman, CAE, Public Affairs Senior Director**

The Group Foundation started a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Fund to invest in a diverse and culturally responsive mental health community and workforce, with a focus on anti-racism work. The Fund had a successful launch, raising almost \$80,000 in its first two years of existence, and it will continue to raise funds to further its mission.

Raising funds is important, and so is spending them. The Group Foundation Board established the DEI Fund Advisory Committee and charged it with identifying the most valuable and useful ways to provide funding support to programs that will best advance anti-racism initiatives and recommending to the Board priorities for expenditure of the DEI Fund. (See the DEI Fund Advisory Committee membership on page 2.)

The Committee met monthly beginning in January 2022. To remain aligned with the tri-organizational DEI work and strategic planning, it used as its guide the core areas that were identified in the Tri-Organizational Report on Systemic Racism, which was summarized in the Spring 2022 issue of AGPA's newsletter, the *Group Circle*:

- Racial Diversity of Membership/Leadership and Access to Certification
- Microaggressions (Often at AGPA Connect)
- Openness to Alternative Models and Cultural Approaches
- Accountability and Transparency of Leaders
- Systemic Racism

The Committee also used the framework of the key strategies and recommendations that have come out of the tri-organizational strategic planning process, with the underlying assumption that change could most efficiently and effectively take place within the existing programs of the three organizations. We would not try to build something completely new, but would look to transform the systems in place by providing funding for DEI-focused initiatives within the following programmatic areas:

- Membership—Access, Engagement, and Healing
- Certification, Recognition, and Leadership
- Education, Learning, and Research



### • Structure and Leadership

The Committee began with brainstorming sessions in which it generated a broad range of ideas that would advance anti-racist efforts within the organizations and hopefully extend to the mental health field in general. The Committee then ranked that list to prune its initial 101 ideas down to a manageable 23. Subsequently, the Committee members each "spent" the \$50,000 in the Fund after its first year by distributing it among those programs, and their individual allocations were averaged to come up with the final recommendations to the Board for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

"DEI-fication" is the embrace of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the work of a group. Our process demonstrated all three: Diversity was apparent in the social identities of our members and in the range of the ideas we generated and the funding we recommended. Equity was promoted, perhaps paradoxically for the Group Foundation, by asking committee members for their input individually before having group discussion. Every member had an equal opportunity to express themselves. There was no competition for airtime (though there may have been differences in ability to access the online tools we used). Every member also had an equal say. The Committee's recommendations were simply the average of the recommendations of the Committee's members. Inclusion was fostered by meeting at multiple times to accommodate those with different commitments. It was tempting, and it would have been easy, to meet only at the time that worked for the most members and to leave the rest behind. The use of online tools (a Google Doc and a Google Sheet) also enabled the inclusion of input from those who could not make any of the meeting times.

The Committee's recommended programs and activities (outlined on page 2) were submitted to and approved by the Group Foundation Board of Directors at its May meet-

## FACES OF THE FOUNDATION

### REFLECTIONS OF AN OUTLIER

**Mary Nicholas, PhD, LCSW, CGP, AGPA-F**

Living in Connecticut has always made me a bit of an outlier in AGPA and the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health Board. Even though I have been on the Board of AGPA and participated on AGPA committees, I have not been closely identified



with an Affiliate Society, which is often the primary reference group for AGPA members. Another feature of my outlier status is that I have been one of the few group therapists in AGPA who has been trained in psychodrama, as well as psychodynamic group therapy. In addition, when I wrote *Change in the Context of Group Therapy* (1984), I had also developed expertise in Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Neurolinguistic Programming, and Ericksonian hypnosis. I have continued to integrate these methods into my groups.

I have tried to be innovative. I have fond memories of some pretty wild workshop presentations at AGPA Connect with my dear friend Jim Collins, MSW (now deceased). In one session, called Hot Moments, Jim would video me leading a demo group after which we would play the video, zero in on "hot" moments in the session, and the audience would pick my work to pieces. Lots of learning and laughter occurred. Later, I came up with the idea of members selling their art to benefit the Foundation; the sale of my watercolor cards has become a profitable annual ritual at the conference.

In Foundation meetings, I often bring up things that others are not saying, which I am told people appreciate. I have happily contributed as generously as I could to the Foundation but did not feel compelled to spend thousands of dollars attending the New Mexico retreats. I was never made to feel less valuable because of this choice.

I have been very moved by the work since 9/11 of the AGPA Community Outreach Task Force, which helps communities worldwide form groups to respond to the trauma caused by natural or man-made disasters. I recently donated a special gift to the Foundation's Leadership Fund, with a view toward increasing the visibility of this increasingly needed use of group and the incredible work of Craig Haen, PhD, LCAT, CGP, AGPA-F, Suzanne Phillips, PsyD, ABPP, CGP, AGPA-DF, and many others.

Dear to my heart is the Foundation Scholarship Program. As Co-Chair of the Scholarship and Awards Committee for several years, I have reviewed stacks of worthy applications each year from talented group therapists worldwide to attend AGPA Connect. I love that we give them all full or partial tuition. Recently, thanks to our new DEI initiatives, we are working to ferret out any hidden racism in our efforts to provide more affordable access to all who want to improve their knowledge and skill in group therapy.

All of the Foundation Board members I have gotten to know over the years are warm and smart with a good sense of humor. Sadly, they are mostly my age (pretty old!), female, and White. I am thrilled with the Foundation's recent establishment of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fund, spearheaded and to be administered primarily by BIPOC members, as a part of an organization-wide effort to become inclusive and anti-racist.

I look forward to continuing on the Board of the Group Foundation as an enthusiastic outlier.

Nicholas, M. (1984). *Change in the context of group therapy*. Brunner/Mazel.

## 2022 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GROUP FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH

GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022

<p><b>Leaders</b> (\$10,000 &amp; above)</p> <p>Marsha Block &amp; Leonard Walter Estate of Nanine Ewing Heartfelt Wings Foundation Robert Hsiung Mary Nicholas &amp; Richard Jennings</p>	<p><b>Facilitators</b> (\$1,000 - \$2,499)</p> <p>Anonymous Ramon Alonso American Group Psychotherapy Association Kathleen Ault Austin GPS Aaron &amp; Lara Black Gail Brown Bonnie Buchele Gary Burlingame Cathi Cohen Eleanor &amp; Chuck Counselman Barbara Dazzo Jerry &amp; Nancy Gans Martha Gilmore &amp; Haim Weinberg Barbara Keezell Robert Klein Leo &amp; Sharon Leiderman Northeastern SGP NSGP Foundation Rhea Pledger Anna Rickell Edward &amp; Karen Scharf Angela Stephens Karen Travis Robert Unger Steven Van Wagoner</p>	<p>Mary &amp; John Dluhy Eastern GPS Hank Fallon Florida GPS Don Fuhrmann Robin Good Thomas Hallinan Barry Helfmann Lawrence Kron Jeff Mendell Marcia Nickow Scott Phillips Charles Pohl Margaret Postlewaite &amp; Gerard Kiernan Jordan Price Phyllis Rifkin-Russell &amp; Steven Russell Tony Sheppard Joan-Dianne Smith SaraKay Smullens D. Thomas Stone Tracy Straus Ginger Sullivan Linda Williams</p>	<p>Sara Emerson Chera Finnis Myrna Frank Lynn Friedman Joel Frost Jeanne Gavrin Dale Godby Thomas Hurster Marti Kranzberg Leslie Lothstein Stanley Masinter Robert Mendelsohn Michael Murphy Patty Olwell John &amp; Hilde Pully Keith Rand &amp; John D'Amico Liz Rosenblatt Michael Russo Michael Sally Jason Seidel DeLinda Spain Stamelman/Hocky Family Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation Nancy Wesson Yong Xu</p>	<p>Brenda Boatswain William Braun Suzanne Brennan-Nathan Simon Bresler Jessica Brodie Phil Broemel Karolina Burda Arthur Byk Claudia Byram Alice Byrne Matthew Calkins Michael Cascio Vera Cerny John Chebultz Angelo Ciliberti Brian Clougherty Michelle Collins-Greene &amp; Les Greene Elaine Cooper Joleen Cooper-Bhatia Paul Cox and Catherine Brennan Kevin Credeur Maggie Credeur Robin Dean Jennifer DeSouza Rita Drapkin Diane Feirman Barbara Feld Shelley Firestone Michael Frank Eva Fyer Susan Gantt Erica Gardner-Schuster Aviva Gaskill Cheryl Gerson Franklin Gittess Cristine Glendening Kimberly Grayson</p>	<p>Micki Grimland Lynn Hamerling Donna Harris Daniel Harrop David Hawkins &amp; James Boyles Fanita Henderson Steven Henne Phillip Horner Ann Horton Yoon Im Kane Jacinto Inbar Miriam Iosupovici Vann Joines Jennifer Joseph Anthony Joyce Nick Kanas Geoffrey Kane Terrence Kava Elizabeth Knight Joseph Kobos Yair Kramer Seth Labovitz Allen Lambert Elaine Leader Jonathan Lebolt Mindy Levine Gregory MacColl R. Tracy MacNab Michelle Maidenberg Lawrence Malcus Donna Markham Anne McEneaney Judy McLaughlin-Ryan Mary McRae Andrew Melaragno Pamela Menter Pamela Millis Katherine Mitchell Farooq Mohyuddin</p>	<p>David Moore Penelope Moore Joseph Moreno Dayne Narretta Reginald Nettles Toby Newman Leah Niehaus Ronaldo Nierman Owen O'Brien David Panzer Michael Patti Lynn Pearl Robert Pepper Rena Pollak Scott Reinhardt Harold Rice-Erso Carole Riggs Shari Rosenblatt Marie Rothschild J. Scott Rutan Joan Scherf Deborah Sharp Zipora Shechtman Debra Sloane Sarah Small Bettsie Specia Katie Steele Alyson Stone Suzanne Stutman Deborah Szanto Nina Thomas Matthew Tomatz Thomas Treadwell Marcée Turner Alessandra Urbano Stacy Watkins Daniel Workman Catherine Wray</p>
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### THE DEI FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND DEI-FICATION *Continued from front page*

ings. Additionally, there are two strategies we considered important to apply across all programmatic areas, as well as key groups to approach for a priority way to identify recipients for scholarships, memberships, certification, venues for trainings, and content. These are:

- Reach out to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to collaborate on offering group training, consultation, etc., potentially including Hispanic-serving and Native American-serving institutions.
- Develop a liaison relationship with the graduate programs of HBCUs; offering scholarships and/or grants to faculty/students focusing on research of non-Eurocentric models for group psychotherapy.

The next step in the process is implementation of the items, including guidelines and processes for funding requests. We wanted to share this work with AGPA members and Group Foundation donors for several reasons. First, we want to remain transparent in the work we are engaging in with your support. We also want to invite you to work with us, whether through connecting us with an institution or organization that could benefit from the funding outlined (e.g., a HBCU, an agency serving primarily BIPOC communities, an AGPA Affiliate Society), you or a colleague who is interested in receiving such funding or contributing to the Group Foundation to ensure this work continues. Please reach out to us via email at [dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org) or phone at 212-297-2143. We want to hear from you.

#### Membership—Access, Engagement and Healing: \$4,300

- Spend money to make a more DEI-friendly website
- Provide a DEI reading list to AGPA members and AGPA Connect attendees and post it on AGPA's website; organize this list into varying levels, such as introductory and advanced
- Waive AGPA membership fees for students and early career members

#### Certification, Recognition and Leadership: \$5,700

- Expand scholarship support to include Certified Group Psychotherapist (CGP) application fees, support of consultation hours for certification and education
- Conduct ongoing DEI education for leadership, before starting AGPA Connect, and/or as part of CGP certification (e.g., annual DEI education modules similar to what health care organizations require each year for employees)

#### Education, Learning and Research: \$20,800

- Provide funding to Affiliate Societies to provide training on culturally responsive group leadership and expand the catalog of diversity, cultural responsiveness, cultural and generational trauma, and anti-racism trainings by supporting educational activities provided through AGPA and its Affiliate Societies
- Provide scholarships to culturally diverse candidates (please note that this is in addition to the existing scholarship program, which is also considering suggestions to reconsider requirements and barriers), including
  - Reparations-based scholarships in acknowledgement of the continuing injustices and inequities from the US history of enslavement
  - Scholarships for candidates with reduced equity due to racial injustice and economic discrimination from a broad range of groups
  - Expand scholarship support to include e-learning registration fees
- Pay/offer to pay/supplement honoraria of/give discounts to diverse (capital D - i.e., broadly defined and inclusive) (including non-AGPA) e-Learning and AGPA Connect presenters.
- Supplement honoraria to AGPA Connect presenters who present on DEI/alternative models
- Fund anti-racist research into alternative models and cultural approaches, and as part of AGPA Connect hold group discussions and brainstorming sessions to develop
- Sponsor non-Eurocentric model presentations; different orientations and DEI need more visibility.

#### Structure and Leadership (Representation matters): \$9,700

- Locate BIPOC group therapists in AGPA who can provide trainings and mentoring for BIPOC to develop groups on an ongoing basis. Pay those trainers well as a form of restorative justice.
- Help pay for mentorship/role-modeling/guidance to increase access to leadership and/or help pay for expenses related to participating on organizational Boards (e.g., extra hotel nights for leadership meetings)
- Address systemic racism: funding for members (or discounts on membership/AGPA Connect) for those who are volunteering time to help DEI work in the organization

Rollover to 2023-24 Fiscal Year: \$9,500  
Total: \$50,000 (raised in first year)

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