

groupassets



Every Gift Counts

Maryetta Andrews-Sachs, MA, LICSW, CGP, AGPA-F

We depend on your generosity to help us bring more people into our community of group therapists. We know the enormous value of groups – and yet seemingly ancient fears and a lack of opportunities have blocked so many therapists from getting trained in this effective modality. I live in Washington, DC, where there are tons of therapists and not enough group therapists, unlike most U.S. cities. I have heard it said that if every therapist in the U.S. ran one group, this would greatly improve our country's access to mental health services (see press release at tinyurl.com/49wy87x7). I dream of a future where the licensure and laws allow groups to be more available in rural areas as well. We need to teach colleagues and potential clients about the effectiveness, the vitality, and the richness of being in a good group. EACH OF US NEEDS TO BETTER RELAY THE POWER OF GROUPS TO OTHERS. Please develop an “elevator speech” to pull out while you go about your day and **pitch group therapy**. And please donate to the Foundation so that we can continue to give lots of scholarships!

Meanwhile, we are announcing three new Endowed Scholarships for the 2026 AGPA Connect. The first is the **Lorraine and Dan Wodiska Family Scholarship**. I asked Lorraine for some comments about this generous gift:

“Affirming belonging and support for transgender colleagues at every stage of their professional journey.”

This scholarship is dedicated to supporting AGPA attendees who identify as transgender. It is intended for students, early career professionals, and agency attendees. The scholarship will cover up to a six-day registration for the meeting as well as a travel stipend.

“Trans issues have been part of my family's story for more than 50 years. My mother was deeply engaged with the trans community in the 1970s at a time when the language was different and the world offered few resources and less acceptance. She offered presence, friendship, and advocacy at a time when it was most needed.

“Today, that story continues. One of my grandchildren identifies as transgender. Through both intimate family history and personal experience, I have witnessed the courage it takes to live authentically – and the pain that comes when society, or even beloved communities, do not fully see or protect that authenticity.

“With this scholarship, our family seeks to respond to those voices. We wish to create a safe space where transgender colleagues feel seen and truly welcomed within AGPA. More than financial support, it is an embrace—a

way of saying: “you belong here, your voice matters, and you are not alone.”

A second wonderful endowment is the **Jacob and Zerka Moreno Foundation Scholarship**. Shelley Firestone, the founder and Board Chair, and others started this Foundation in 2021 with the mission to spread the Moreno legacy and enhance the visibility and use of psychodrama. She described to me her discovery of psychodrama later in her career and her excitement about exposing her beloved AGPA community to this modality. “I especially want new professionals to be exposed early in their careers to the power and effectiveness of psychodrama along with the compassion and wisdom of process group psychotherapy.” Shelley is “on fire” about both psychodrama and group work.

Personally, I vividly recall attending an international group therapy conference in Rome years ago – and learning that psychodrama was much more widely used in Europe and South America. Why is this? But to do psychodrama well, just as with group therapy, one needs good training, so bringing psychodrama to AGPA Connect to expose more people to this modality is truly a gift and an opportunity. This scholarship will provide support to a psychodrama student who would not otherwise be able to attend AGPA Connect, and

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Remembering Robert “Dr. Bob” Hsiung

Editor's Note: Robert "Dr. Bob" Hsiung MD, AGPA-F, passed away in Noboribetsu City, Hokkaido, Japan, from complications following a bicycle accident while on a bicycle tour of the Hokkaido countryside. Dr. Bob was a long-time member of AGPA, and a generous supporter of the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. He endowed the iScholarship, which supports an innovative three-year scholarship that provides mentorship and financial support for a candidate interested in the internet, social media, technology, e-learning, e-health, and telemedicine and increasing engagement with AGPA, through support of attendance at AGPA Connect and additional activities to promote professional development and engagement with the group therapy community. He was also dedicated to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, was the founding Chair of the Group Foundation's DEI Fund Committee and a generous donor to the fund. His closest colleagues memorialize him here.

In this reflection, we memorialize our friend, collaborator, mentee, and fellow group member, Robert “Dr Bob” Hsiung. True to Bob's spirit, when the editors invited this memorial piece, we formed a group to do it.



Robert "Dr. Bob" Hsiung

Barney Straus

Dr. Bob Hsiung, “Dr. Bob” was always on the cutting edge of technological innovation in group work, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the Transmodal Continuous Online Group (T-COG), an event that Bob led for over 20 years, which was a shining example of his unique combination of patience and creativity. The addition of Zoom and in-person meetings revolutionized the T-COG. Despite these significant developments, Bob continued to innovate. He recently added AI as a co-consultant to the T-COG! Those of us who participated in the T-COG over the years will really miss Bob's leadership and commitment to this most creative form of group work.

Teresa Lee

I know Bob best from co-leading with him various Asian American therapist support and process groups over the years. With the guidance of our group consultant, we learned to navigate our partnership – discovering both the tender and more biting edges of our personalities. Over time, our collaboration also grew deeply personal. I invited him to my wedding, and after all the formal speeches were given, he rose to give an impromptu toast. I can't recall his exact words, but I remember his presence – standing as the only older Asian man to speak that night – softening the fatherless void that no flower garlands or tealights could camouflage.

Sophia Chang-Caffaro

Over the years of working with Bob as his consultant,

I observed that he cultivated a distinctive approach to facilitating his weekly interpersonal process group (with his co-leader Dr. Lee). He integrated his provocative interpersonal style with thoughtful consideration of its impact on members and the therapeutic outcomes he sought to achieve. His open-minded and flexible, yet at times deliberately confrontational, stance allowed for intense group dynamics to emerge and provided members with the safety to project, trusting that their experiences would be skillfully contained and utilized in a constructive manner. Bob demonstrated deep and genuine care for those around him and found a way to bring his full self into the group.

Joe Wise

I miss you Bob so much. Your loss is so unexpected. We even have a chapter sent for review and a journal article too. I have to carry on without you. Bigger still, there's the T-COG, to which you invited me on staff about seven years ago and allowed me to be the Director last year. We had talked about ways to innovate (especially playing more with AI) and being more inclusive. Bob, I miss your steady presence, in that we started as professional collaborators, but you were really there for me personally when I asked you just a few months ago in Chicago. AGPA and Group Relations will not be the same for me.

Jeffrey D. Roth

Bob recruited me to consult with the members of his innovative online forum, Psychobabble, in the early 1990s. As psychiatric colleagues connected to the

University of Chicago, we became close colleagues and his interest in my work with groups led him to become involved first with the group psychotherapy community, and later with the group relations community. He invited me to collaborate with him to create the Continuous Online Group in the early 2000s. His pioneering work in bringing mental health into cyberspace inspired me to follow his lead and study both virtual psychotherapy groups and group relations conferences. I will particularly miss his support in the Large Group, where his courage in speaking to the unspeakable was a source of great comfort and wisdom.

Susan Convery

Bob says, “All is impermanence.” I hate it; hate it more now. I always hear him in the group unconscious – echoes, reverbs, his words popping out of other people's mouths. Uncanny. Powerful. He's so far ahead – too far! Take care! – saying what others aren't ready for. It takes my breath away. Keep breathing! A paradox, so progressive he looks regressive; a scapegoat, in the circle's center, making the large group feel small. A man, like any other man, unlike any other man. Bob, I accept your impermanence, and I long for your transcendence, in this world and beyond.

Bob offered each person a different face. His life read “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” and our shared memories bring those fragments together into a fuller, multifaceted picture of a man who relied on his spreadsheets and thrived in chaos. We love and miss you greatly.

2025 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GROUP FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH
GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

Our thanks and appreciation to the donors whose support makes our programs possible. In recognition of our belief that gifts of all sizes are important and contribute to our mission to advance the field of group therapy, the Group Foundation will be presenting its donor listing in alphabetical order. We will continue to explore ways to acknowledge and thank our donors and welcome your feedback.

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EVERY GIFT COUNTS
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who demonstrates both promise and passion for the theory and practice of psychodrama and sociometry. It will introduce psychodrama students to the therapeutic expertise at AGPA Connect and the AGPA culture of compassion and hopefully inspire them to contribute to the visibility of psychodrama within AGPA, perhaps one day offering their own workshops in psychodrama and sociometry. The award covers their registration and provides a travel stipend for one psychodrama student every year.

Shelly noted that the Moreno Foundation has an educational program with great events all year long online. You can register at www.morenolegacy.org, or reach out to her at firestone49@juno.com or 312-671-3110.

A third endowment is the Institute for Individual and Group Psychotherapy Scholarship. This institute was established in 1977 by Reuven Bar-Levav, Natan HarPaz, and Pamela Torracco to encourage therapists to train and

use the combined model of therapy. David Baker, who helped facilitate the establishment of the scholarship, stated: “Our treatment program has closed, so we wanted to make sure the archives and the legacy get passed on to others – through the scholarships and open access to our extensive psychotherapy treatment library.” This treatment library is a great resource that can be accessed on their website at www.iigp.org/library.

This scholarship is available to graduate students training in psychodynamic group therapy as well as early career therapists who are using this model. Since we believe the therapist is the primary instrument of change and the therapist’s mental health is critical, preference will be given to those who have been in individual or group therapy themselves and in respect to the Institute’s geographical origins, preference will be given to those who reside in Michigan. The scholarship will cover up to a six-day registration for the meeting as well

as a travel stipend.

I recall Anne Alonso saying that we go to individual therapy and talk about our problems, and then we go to group therapy and have our problems. To be able to combine these is a powerful and effective process.

We always need to keep stretching our thinking and expanding our expertise – and Connect is one of the best ways to do that. And scholarships – supported by your donations and by endowments such as the above – are a key way to do that. It is heartening to me to read the varied and personal reasons why endowed scholarships are established. Of course, we also have our many generous donors to our Education and Scholarship Fund, which provides another 100-150 (or more) tuition-support scholarships annually. We are excited and very appreciative for the creativity and generosity of these donors - and to each of you – toward that end. THANK YOU!!

Scholarships Available for AGPA Connect 2026

Attending AGPA Connect allows recipients to learn and grow personally and professionally, making connections that will last a lifetime. Through the generosity of its donors, the Group Foundation will again offer multiple funding opportunities to attend AGPA Connect 2026 in New York City, March 2-7, 2026.

To apply for a scholarship, visit AGPA’s website at agpa.org/ scholarships where there is detailed information and an online

“Because of you, the world has gained more group therapists, and more patients will be served through this unique and important modality”
AGPA Connect Scholarship Recipient

application form. The application deadline is November 15, 2025. Additional questions? E-mail info@agpa.org.

If you are interested in contributing to the Group Foundation to help qualified candidates attend AGPA Connect 2026, you can do so at portal.agpa.org/fundraising/give.

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