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**AGPA MEMBERS PROVIDED EARTHQUAKE TRAUMA TRAINING “VIRTUALLY” TO
CHINESE PSYCHOLOGISTS FROM A DISTANT NEW YORK CITY**

NEW YORK, July 23, 2008 – Twenty Chinese psychologists at Southwestern Caijing University, preparing to respond to the post-earthquake relief effort were trained in advanced trauma work Friday by specialists thousands of miles away in New York City. Working in a virtual classroom, made possible by the Internet-based program, Skype, trauma experts from the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA), a national professional organization of more than 3,000 group clinicians, served as trainers.

“We presented our highly-developed training curriculum face-to-face, despite the geographical separation,” said psychologist, Dr. Suzanne Phillips, Co-Chair of AGPA’s Community Outreach Task Force. “Working with Chinese colleagues in planning and in carrying out this training was a valuable experience for both groups.”

Some of the Chinese psychologists have been providing relief to their college students who have lost family and friends in the May earthquake. Many are about to travel hundreds of miles to communities that were devastated by the natural disaster and wanted to further develop their ability to respond to the psychological needs of the survivors.

“We were pleased to bring to our Chinese colleagues all that we have learned from our work after 9/11, and more recent disasters, including the Gulf Hurricanes, the Asian Tsunami, and the California fires,” noted Dr. Robert Klein of Connecticut, a former president of AGPA. “We had our curriculum ready to roll out, and it was our honor to be asked to provide the training. We’re very good at caring for the caregivers.”

Funds to produce the educational materials and lesson plans for just such emergency circumstances had been provided by the New York Times Company Foundation and the Jacob and Valerie Langeloth Foundation.

“I think we have found a way to build bridges quickly to relief workers where ever they may be, as long as we all have access to the Internet,” said Dr. Jeffrey Kleinberg of Manhattan, and President-Elect of AGPA. “The professional world got a little smaller today.”

About AGPA

The American Group Psychotherapy Association is the oldest and largest professional association dedicated to the field of group psychotherapy, operating through a tri-partite structure: AGPA, a professional and educational organization; the Group Psychotherapy Foundation, its philanthropic arm; and the National Registry of Certified Group Psychotherapists, a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary association has approximately 3,000 members, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. The association has 31 local and regional societies located across the country. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning.

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