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Spring 2006



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Who Become GPF Benefactors?

An Interview with Lenore and Robert Davis, Hayward Industries

Fern Cramer Azima, PhD, DFAGPA, Editor, *Group Assets*

Who becomes benefactors of the Group Psychotherapy Foundation has been of considerable interest to me, especially when they come from outside the group therapeutic community. Lenore and Robert Davis of Hayward Industries are such a couple.

For this interview, I met with Mrs. Davis and Elliot Zeisel, PhD, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA, for lunch. Unfortunately, Mr. Davis was unavailable at that time. Lenore is a young attractive woman who answered my questions with honesty, spontaneity, and good humor.

Cramer-Azima: Can you tell me how and why you have chosen to endow the Group Psychotherapy Foundation so handsomely?

Davis: Elliot introduced us to the functions of the Group Psychotherapy Foundation. My husband Robert and Elliot have been friends from childhood. At a certain point in Robert's life, he became involved in group therapy and received great benefits. He was impressed with the power of the group's dynamics. Robert received so much from this process that he and I felt that it only fitting to give back and reciprocate to a group organization that carries on helping others, and in many cases leading to life changes.

Cramer-Azima: What specifically about AGPA impressed you and led you both to support us?

Davis: Talking with Elliot and Marsha Block, CAE, CFRE, we learned that the organization offers education, research, and training of young and advanced therapists.

Cramer-Azima: Can you share with us some of your own and your husband's background that fostered your altruism.

Davis: Although I believe in government funding, I became aware of the need for others to also help. Some 14 years ago, I was involved in a non-profit Chamber Music School. As a classical pianist, I was

involved in an outreach program mentoring students. I began talking to family, friends, and strangers about the program of helping the musical training of these students. I learned that people who really believed in the concept were the first to donate their time and money, and that was the way that my solicitations began.

My husband is the son of immigrant parents who successfully built up the firm, known as Hayward Industries. Robert joined the family business. The philosophy of the family was to return to the American society and to Jewish organizations who needed their support. As they had been helped by groups, so did their altruism and generosity grow.

Cramer-Azima: How do you and your husband mentor your children to learn the delight in the pleasure of giving?

Davis: We try to pass onto our children the responsibility to help others who may be less fortunate. My children—ages 13 and 16—have been involved in programs for the homeless, volunteering for Planned Parenthood, writing editorials for their schools on sex education and the above subjects. We have tried to let them understand what is meaningful in their lives and to follow through with action. They have even been involved in fund raising to follow in our footsteps.

Cramer-Azima: What legacy would you like to be remembered for?

Davis: Certainly it would be a psychological legacy. We are just passing through and we must make our life count in meaning and satisfaction.

The question I raised in the title of this article, I feel has been well answered. Lenore and Robert Davis are representative of a family whose responsibility to their community includes repayment for the rewards they have reaped, and are now able to endow organizations such as our own, to carry on the education, training and therapy of others to improve their lives. The Group Psychotherapy Foundation thanks them for their generosity.

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