

# Group Assets

The Newsletter of the  
Group Psychotherapy  
Foundation

Winter 2007

## The Spirit of Giving

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

Many of us have wondered what factors are present in the psychology of the philanthropist, commonly known as the “giver.” On the basis of past interviews for the *Group Assets*, an independent survey of some randomly chosen donors to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation, and my personal experiences, I have observed several common motivators of why people evidence the spirit of giving.

Number one on my list is that givers follow the example set by parents or parental figures who have incorporated community, religious and social commitment as part of a child’s upbringing. This equates to Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. While we have met siblings who differ remarkably in their generous or avaricious behaviors, the cutting edge of the personality who exhibits a charitable nature, social awareness, and indebtedness to others reflects an altruistic, generous individual who gains personal satisfaction and self-respect by sharing a commitment for one’s fellow citizens. It is interesting to note that these are the very factors that impinge on the qualities of a good group member, who interchanges intellectual and emotional properties with others.

Parental influences are cited as initial factors for donors Lenore and Robert Davis and Cindy Miller Aron,

MSW, CGP. “Robert comes from a tradition of philanthropy,” writes Lenore Davis. “His father is a self-made man—an immigrant who worked extremely hard and became very successful. From early on in his career, he made it a point to support and donate to worthy organizations, mostly Jewish in support of Israel. Robert grew up very aware that charitable giving was an important value to his father. When Robert took over the company a few years ago, the philanthropic baton, so to speak, was also passed to him, and many people came knocking on his door asking for contributions. It gave Robert and me a chance to sit down together and think about what was important to us, whom we wanted to help and which organizations shared these values. While continuing support for Israel, Robert’s company, and Robert and I personally, have also directed money to organizations that we feel truly reach out and help people who can be helped, and we have personally and through the company been giving to support education for the poor, and programs at AGPA, including the Scholarship Fund. We feel there is no better way to help than to address people’s needs through the professionals who can directly help them, and we have the greatest confidence in AGPA—so that was an easy choice!”

Lessons learned as a child also influence the giving habits of Cindy Miller Aron. “Giving to others was woven into the fabric of my childhood. My father, a social worker, and mother, a musician, spent their entire lives devoted to giving. Most years I do not have much money and, at times, have simply given \$10 to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation. One year, I donated \$1,000 in memory of a mentor. It is my belief that giving whatever we can, when we can, is essential to our sense of well-being and to the future of our profession. My beloved father is no longer alive. Each time I give to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation, it is an example of his remarkable legacy. He continues to touch lives through me and through the Foundation, and I am grateful for the opportunity.”

There is no doubt that people donate to causes that have personal meaning to them. Such is the case with donors Barbara Ilfeld, MSN, RNCS, CGP, and Fred Ilfeld, MD, CGP. “We make mutual decisions to give to entities dear to our hearts that have demonstrated wise utilization of monies and a defined need and intention for the monies. The Group Psychotherapy Foundation is most definitely an organization that embodies these purposes and our values as fully com-

*continued on back*

## Fulfilling the Promise

### Founders Circle

**Leaders**  
(\$100,000+)

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(50,000+)

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## Group Psychotherapy Foundation Supports AGPA Annual Meeting Events

In addition to providing numerous scholarships that enable group psychotherapists to attend the AGPA Annual Meeting, the Group Psychotherapy Foundation underwrites a number of Annual Meeting activities, including the Mitchell Hochberg Memorial Public Education Event, the Friday evening party, and the Awards Luncheon. Attend these GPF Events at the March 5-10 AGPA Annual Meeting—The Promise of Group Therapy—to be held at the Hilton Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas.

King Davis, PhD, Executive Director of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and the Robert Lee Sutherland Chair in Mental Health and Social Policy at the University of Texas, School of Social Work, will present the Mitchell Hochberg Memorial Public Education Event. His presentation—Better But Not Well: Policy Approaches to the Elimination of Disparities in Mental Health Care—will explore both the history of disparities, as well as the efficacy of cultural competence as a policy and service framework for approaching and resolving the dilemma of disparities. Dr. Davis will offer a market

based definition of cultural competence and apply that definition to the barriers associated with racial, ethnic, and language disparities. Dr. Davis recently served on the Surgeon General’s Workgroup on Mental Health, Culture, Race and Ethnicity and helped write the report on cultural competence for the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003). The Mitchell Hochberg Memorial Public Education Event will be held Wednesday, March 7, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Join the Group Psychotherapy Foundation on Friday, March 9, beginning at 9:00 p.m., when Hotcakes, celebrating more than 20 years as one of America’s hottest dance bands, defines what a great dance band should be. Enjoy the nonstop beat of one great song after another, coupled with outstanding vocal harmonies. With their ability to cover an evening of country and western to popular jazz standards from Armstrong to Sinatra, Hotcakes is the definitive party band. Hotcakes has shared the stage with such greats as Willie Nelson, Little Richard, George Strait, Talking Heads, Dixie Chicks, Hall & Oates, Michael McDonald, REO Speedwagon, Lorrie

Morgan and Tanya Tucker. This event is included with the five-day Institute and Conference package or three-day Conference registration.

Another treat is in store for Annual Meeting attendees who attend the Group Psychotherapy Foundation Luncheon on Saturday, March 10, from 12:15 to 2:00 p.m., when vocalist Ruthie Foster entertains. Foster has been the pride of Texas for many years, but it has only been in the past few years that the rest of the United States has begun to discover this talented guitarist/singer/songwriter. A vocalist with the ability to wail like Mahalia Jackson or lightly touch a note like Shawn Colvin, Foster has created her own unique, attractive blend of music style that simply deserves to be heard. Ruthie’s songs are a remarkable hybrid of blues, gospel, roots and folk music rich with honest spirituality and emotion. This event is included in the five-day Institute and Conference package or the three-day Conference registration.

Registration forms for the Annual Meeting are available online at [www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org).

## 2006 Contributors to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation

(Reflects gifts made from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006)

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## The Spirit of Giving

mitted group psychotherapists. We believe in the culture and purpose of the Foundation as it assures the financial stability and growth of the AGPA, an organization to which we are proud to belong to and support."

Saying "thanks," and giving back to one's chosen profession also motivated donor Andrea Pully, MEd, LPC, CGP. "Deciding to give a gift to AGPA was not difficult because it felt like giving back. Participating in AGPA has changed my life. I think about the contacts I have made at the Annual Meetings; the roadmap AGPA has given me as a

group therapist; the opportunity to learn by attending world-class training and by building my teaching skills through the process of presenting. All this has been priceless in terms of my self-development and professional development. All this has contributed to my ability today to give a financial gift to this deserving organization."

Another set of factors that motivates some people to donate stem from a life-threatening event that has produced an awareness of one's mortality, and the gratefulness that assuages one's narcissism. Witness the tremendous outpouring of donations in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The joke is often recounted of the person praying to God that if he makes it "across the bridge" he will repay Him with unending devotion and abstinence for wrongful behavior. Too often, however, these promises are broken.

While large charitable donations that garner tax deductions certainly play a role in replenishing the donor's ability to continue giving, the facts show that middle class America contributes strongly to their

charities. In fact, a December segment on ABC television's 20/20 revealed that Americans gave about \$260 billion to charity last year—that's about \$900 per person.

Perhaps the most important motivator, to both large and small donors, is that contributing helps others. Indeed, gifting to the Group Psychotherapy Foundation allows us to help others by: providing scholarships to many young group therapists so they can attend AGPA's Annual Institute and Conference; sponsoring the Mitchell Hochberg Memorial Public Education Event and other events at the Annual Meeting(see sidebar); assisting researchers in their studies of group process and applications; and responding to global disasters such as September 11, with programs dealing with PTSD; and publishing training manuals for the entire group psychotherapy profession.

As we begin a new year, we hope all our readers will continue to reflect the spirit of giving for which our profession is known.

### Group Assets

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