Telling Our Story
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Over the last 30-plus years, the Group Foundation has grown and matured, and along the way so has our story. We have so much more to tell about the work that we have done and all the young professionals who have been able to reach out to by funding hundreds of scholarships for the Annual Meeting. They now have their own stories to tell about their experiences, many of which we have shared with you over the years. Reading their stories is always moving and inspirational.

As group psychotherapists know, the telling of one’s story—putting our voices out in the world—is a connecting and powerful experience. Our story shows our uniqueness, our passion, and our purpose and provides the map that marks our life journey. In her book The Story of Your Life (1996), Mandy Aftel said it this way: “Telling someone about your experience breathes new life into it, moving it out of the inchoate swirl of unconsciousness into reality. It takes on a form, and allows us to examine it from all sides.”

While we see the value of the “telling the story” in individual lives, through the process of strategic planning, AGPA has learned that it’s equally important for organizations to have a story to tell about their journey and purpose. In the business world, the process of creating this story is called “branding.”

Leading up to and as part of our 30th Anniversary, the Foundation Board, knowing we needed help in developing and defining our organizational story, hired consultants who were experts in branding for nonprofit organizations to lead us in this process. The first thing they communicated was the importance of spending time and energy in researching, defining, and building our brand, including actively considering what activities we want to fund that are in line with our mission. The brand is a foundational piece in the marketing form, and allows us to examine it from all sides.”

This is the broadest and most inclusively held value that is reflected in our efforts to build and strengthen community networks. We do this by our outreach work and our efforts to build a partnership that promotes the work done by AGPA members and CGPs to strengthen communities. Our work in Disaster Response is a great example of how we mobilize as an organization to bring aid to those communities suffering trauma. There are so many moving stories from our work following 9/11, and all the way to China, where we worked with mental health providers in the aftermath of a terrible earthquake. We have used what we learned from these experiences to create and deliver our Trauma Modules in preparation to help train mental health workers, and members have continued to go to China to continue to teach and train mental health professionals. These are just a few examples of our efforts to build partnerships and strengthen communities both nationally and internationally.

The next identified organizational tenet—stated as “Strengthening the community of practitioners is vital for effective mental health delivery”—is the most active part of our work and is the heart of our organization because it is fueled by our educational programs. We have been able to support this goal by “Professional Development, scholarships and research to advance group therapy through funding professional and public education and ground-breaking research.” Our Scholarship Program is exemplary in supporting this goal. We have made it possible for hundreds of new professionals to attend the AGPA Annual Meeting, and by doing so, we have been able to underwrite a large part of the programming and public events at the conference. This has allowed the conference to grow and to adapt to the changing face of group psychotherapy while supporting the integrity of the rich learning environment that the Annual Meeting is continued on back
Communicating our shared belief that “The power of many other ways the Foundation has supported this transformational qualities of group work. There are engaging and informative, while communicating the cant projects to realize this goal. Just look at the new the wider community of professionals and the general public.

The work is described ing our work to the continued “Advancement of the Gifts acknowledged here are from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014.

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• The message, and here are just some of them:

the most meaning in the narrative as you share the work we do with the support of others.

The next award-winning website to see this in action. It’s both engaging and informative, while communicating the transformational qualities of group work. There are many other ways the Foundation has supported this message, and here are just some of them:

• The Group Works! how-to;

• Curriculum development in revising the Core Course, and creating new training modules; and

Research development

As we write this, I am again amazed at how much we have accomplished and how our story has grown. We have created some wonderful new chapters that will reach out beyond our membership to the greater world of group therapy within the wider community of professionals and the general public.

The Foundation is active in funding significant projects to realize this goal. Just look at the new award-winning website to see this in action. It’s both engaging and informative, while communicating the transformational qualities of group work. There are many other ways the Foundation has supported this