In planning this spring issue of Group Assets, I had no idea that we would be addressing the catastrophic effects of the coronavirus. Little did we know that many of us, including myself, would be battling this disease. We as a group need each other more than ever. As Darryl Pure, PhD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA, Chair of the Group Foundation points out, the work of the Group Foundation is vital to our recovery personally and professionally, and is also critical to the mental health of the communities we serve. It deserves our continued appreciation and support.

Connie Concannon, LCGW, CGP, DFAGPA
Editor, Group Assets

Building Foundations to Support Communities in Times of Need

DARRYL PURE, PhD, ABPP, CGP, FAGPA
Chair, Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

These are unprecedented times as the world reels from the effects, physical and psychological, of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen our group therapy community respond to mental health needs in the midst of these challenges.

We call ourselves the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. It has never felt more accurate and appropriate than now, when we are seeing so many ways in which our donors’ gifts over the past few years have helped lay the foundation for the response that has been taking place. We talk about how gifts are used to shore up our infrastructure, which doesn’t sound incredibly exciting. But in reality, it has meant that we were ready to stand up and respond to the needs of those affected by the pandemic. And as much as this is an article about the Foundation and the work it supports, I am just as aware that it is about the AGPA community, so many of whom are making up our donor community in support of the field they love. We work together as is the case with any good group. So, as I move through what has been done, I want to acknowledge the partnership of the organizations making it possible.

Thanks to ongoing technology grants to AGPA, a website has been developed that has been used to share medical updates, training availability, self-care and resilience resources, and practice regulation changes so clinicians can focus their energy on treatment issues. E-Learning platforms were in place to deliver webinars on areas such as transitioning to teletherapy and caring for front line caregivers. These are now recorded webinars that are available for anyone in need of the valuable information included in them. A website has been developed that has been used to share medical updates, training availability, self-care and resilience resources, and practice regulation changes so clinicians can focus their energy on treatment issues. E-Learning platforms were in place to deliver webinars on areas such as transitioning to teletherapy and caring for front line caregivers. These are now recorded webinars that are available for anyone in need of the valuable information included in them.:

• Care and Self-Care in the Age of COVID-19: Challenges and Coping Strategies
• Promoting Our Colleagues’ Wellbeing: Group Work with Healthcare Providers
• Technology and Telehealth Practice for Individual and Group Psychotherapy
• Theory and Practice of Online Group Therapy
• Supporting Group Leaders in Supporting the Wellbeing of Healthcare Providers

As one Foundation Scholarship recipient said: “I am moving towards working remotely. I cannot express enough appreciation for all of the resources that have been shared regarding providing group using online platforms. I feel lucky to be a part of a professional association with such expertise on what would otherwise be overwhelmingly uncharted territory.”

Speaking of scholarships, the Foundation support at AGPA Connect for students, new professionals, and agency staff provide valuable experiential training and an ongoing connection to AGPA throughout the year. Attendees have indicated the training received at AGPA Connect 2020, coupled with the ongoing connections following the meeting, have made it possible for them to serve their clients and communities during the pandemic. Just a few comments that we have received:

“Even after the conference, I see how AGPA people support each other. Especially in the time of communas, I feel like we are still learning and re-growing together as a large virtual/online group.”

“Each year that I have attended AGPA, I have felt a personal and professional ‘recharging up,’ which impacts my teaching and work with clients. Coming home from the conference this year after a very long COVID-19 world, I feel grateful for how my experiences at AGPA have sustained me through this challenging time.”

“The hearts and minds of those attending a conference about connection and care are some of the most needed as we sustain through these uncertain waters and work to create a new future together.”

Connection is an important theme running through our world today. We need to physically isolate, and yet it is important to remain socially connected and to support one another. The AGPA and AGPA Connect e-communities, also supported by the technology grants, have been providing a forum for group therapists to support each other emotionally and through the sharing of information that has been immensely helpful. Wrote another scholarship recipient, “The AGPA community became a place of information, support, and solidarity. As many people around me were still making light of the threat of COVID-19, I felt that the AGPA leadership and community were modeling a response that was both caring and responsible.”

Nor is our work focused on our community alone. An annual grant from the Group Foundation maintained community outreach structures that have been called upon to provide support to local communities affected by the pandemic, including trainings and support groups for frontline caregivers in systems such as hospitals, public health systems, and college counseling centers. These grants have also supported programs for the mental health professionals doing the work.

I took on the position of the Chair of the Group Foundation because I believe that good mental health can improve quality of life and well-being and that group therapy plays a key role in its effectiveness. I believe that we could make an impact in the world through the power of group. Right now, in challenging circumstances, we are making an impact, and it is thanks to the donors of the Group Foundation, the members of AGPA, and the strength of our organizational communities.

LEGACY SOCIETY
We appreciate the provisions these planned gift donors have made for the Group Foundation.

Ramon Alonso
Shari & Allan Baron
Patricia & Marle Barth
Richard Beck
Marsha Block & Leonard Walter
Trish Cleary & Diana Kunkel
Phyllis Cohen
Eleanor Counsellman
Jerry & Nancy Coss
Katie Griffin
David Hawkins
Barry Helmman & Susan Marx
Sally Henry
Jeffrey Hudson & Robert Blodgett
Susanne Jensen
Cecil Keeper
Barbara Keezell
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Jan Morris
Jeanne & Matt Pasternak
Rhea Pledger
Keith Rand & John D’Amico
Kathy Reddy
Joseph Shay & Laura Zimmerman
Karen Travis
Lorraine Wodiska
Elliot Zetiel & Mary Susillo

Connie Concannon, LCGW, CGP, DFAGPA
Editor, Group Assets
2020 Contributions to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

GIFTS ACKNOWLEDGED HERE ARE FROM JANUARY 1, 2020 THROUGH APRIL 15, 2020

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Francis Kaklauskas

2020 Contributions to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health

TRIBUTE GIFTS

The following individuals were honored by the contributors listed in a program with their name at the recent AGPA Connect Meeting in New York (donors are listed in italics).

Nina Brown
Mayretta Andrews-Sachs
Carolyn Angelo
Martha Black
Gary Berliner
Mary Druly
Molly Donovan
Barry Wegman
Emily Lipe
Beatrice Liebengraber
Fanaoo Mohyuddin
Reginald Hettles
Robert Sackman
Roy O. Segalas
Joe Tarantolo
Karen Travis
Steven Wagoner
Lorraine Wodiska
Eleanor Counselman
Mayretta Andrews-Sachs
Aron Black
Marsha Block & Leonardo Walter
Kelley Botte
David Cantor
Arnie Cohen
Susan Cohen
Jennifer DeSousa
Jerry & Nancy Garms
Barbara Gilmore & Haim Weinberg
Jeffrey Hudson & Robert Blodgett
Mary Harry
Susanne Jensen
Kaleo Counseling PLLC
Cheryl & Robert Kaller
Elizabeth Knight
Cap Gentrelppeau
Dorothy Le Pere
Molly Lesscz
Linda Mahon & Philip Flores
Ona Metz
Jeanne Pasternak
Scott Ruan
Elizabeth Shaprio
Joseph Shy
Karen Travis
Kathleen Ulman
Steven Van Wagner
Elliot Zeidel & Mary Susillo
Molly Leccia
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Shari Baron
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Gary Burlingame
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Justin Hecht
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Elizabeth Knight
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Michael Casillo
Mark Clifford
Teresa Corral-Clark
Travis Courville
Eleanor Counselman
Marcia Cox
Kevin & Maggie Credore
Barbara Dazzo
Aron Fink
Christine & Mark Fitzstevens
Mary Harry
Leonard Walter

Research Grants Awarded

The Group Foundation awarded two research grants in 2020 for clinical research reviews that demonstrate the effectiveness of group psychotherapy. Recipients were:

- A Meta-analysis and Systemic Review of Psychoeducational Groups for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. Principal investigator is Tammi Dice, PhD, Assistant Dean, Old Dominion University, and Co-Investigators are Steven Myran, PhD, Associate Professor, Old Dominion University, and Alexis Wilkinson, MSED, Doctoral Student, Old Dominion University.
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