

groupassets



EDITOR'S NOTE



One definition of assets is defined as a useful or valuable thing. We certainly hope you can see the value in the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health and invite you to become more involved with us. This summer issue is all about engaging with the work of the Group Foundation. Opportunities are abundant through scholarships, honoring those who have touched your life, and made a difference in the world, through the different awards and grants. We hope you will take advantage of the rich offerings yourself or introduce someone who you believe would benefit from a connection to our community. The “who, what, and how to” are all defined in this issue. In this issue, you will also have the opportunity to learn what the Group Foundation is doing to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the programs of the Foundation, as well as its leadership. Please take the time to read this article and get involved in the work. As always, we welcome your involvement, comments, and/or questions. Stay safe, enjoy your summer, and see you again in autumn.

Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, FAGPA

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: What the Group Foundation is Doing and How You Can Be Involved

A philanthropic organization dedicated to changing lives through therapeutic group work by advancing the most effective and innovative approaches to group therapy education, training, research and community outreach.

This is the mission of the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health. Integral to this mission is the need to educate clinicians about systemic racism, social injustice, and the concerns of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) clients they see in addition to the needs of BIPOC members of AGPA.

We are at a moment in time where there are increased needs in our society to address racial and social justice in ways that support good mental health. Racial discrimination and racial trauma can negatively impact mental health. The Group Foundation is deeply committed to insuring access to quality mental health training, specifically in the area of leading groups. We want to share with our donors and readers the activities we are initiating in order to keep you informed, to be fully transparent in the work being done with your support, and to also invite each of you to engage with us in this work in whatever ways you see fit.

A first step is that we have launched a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Fund to invest in a diverse, culturally responsive mental health community and workforce, with a focus on anti-racism work. The Group Foundation sees the support of training to be two-fold to achieve the goal of broadening a workforce that is equipped to address racial and social justice issues that endanger mental health:

- To increase the availability of training for group leaders in areas of cultural diversity, anti-racism, and cultural/generational trauma to insure they have the skills to work with diverse populations in a culturally responsive manner; and

- To provide access and remove barriers to training for culturally diverse therapists, as well as those providing mental health services to culturally diverse populations, especially in lower socio-economic and underserved areas.

We recognize that we need a broad level of input to determine the use of the funds. It is for this reason that we are establishing a committee whose purpose will be to recommend to the Board

priorities for the DEI Fund. While the DEI Committee will primarily consist of BIPOC Co-Chairs and members from the Foundation Board, it will also include consultants to the committee who are not Board members who will be invited to ensure access and involvement to those who are interested in helping to guide our work. The DEI Committee's charge will be to advise the Board on the most valuable and useful ways to provide funding support to programs that will best advance anti-racism initiatives.

The following are some of the potential ways funding could be used:

- Provide scholarships to diversity candidates, including reparations-based scholarships that would provide a consistent level of educational cost reductions through adjusted fees in recognition of the reduced equity held by such candidates due to racial injustice and economic discrimination;
- Expand scholarship support beyond AGPA Connect registration, to include Certified Group Psychotherapist (CGP) application fees, support of consultation hours for certification, e-learning registration fees, and first-time AGPA memberships; and
- Expand the catalog of diversity, cultural responsiveness, cultural and generational trauma, and anti-racism trainings by supporting educational activities provided through AGPA and its Affiliate Societies.

The DEI Committee welcomes feedback and additional suggestions about potential funding in this area.

We also recognize the need to have leadership that is diverse so we can change the systems in which program consideration and decision-making is taking place. The Group Foundation Board is committed to inclusion and establishing a path to ensure equity on the Board through collaboration with BIPOC members of the group community, as well as students and early career professionals. The Board recognizes the need to develop new leadership in the Foundation that includes BIPOC members, as well as members from younger generations, and the need to not just invite participation of individuals to look diverse, but to thoughtfully and intentionally engage in orientations, activities, social events, and meetings that ensure a meaningful and inclusive experience for all. We also recognize that we need outside expertise to help us consider these issues. AGPA retained a DEI consultant, Kumea Shorter-Gooden, PhD, who has also been advising the Group Foundation. Dr. Shorter-Gooden is a clinical psychologist who is highly experienced in helping organizations and associations become more inclusive and progress in their anti-racism work.

To this end, the Group Foundation Board of Directors at its recent spring meeting established four seats on the Foundation Board specifically for Emerging Leaders from the BIPOC, Early Career Professionals, and/or Student communities. These four positions hold full voting rights, but do not have a minimum contribution requirement to the Foundation, as is the case for Board members who are more fully established in their careers. Establishing four positions for individuals who would simultaneously join the Board was done with the express purpose of making entry to the group easier by providing new members with a cohort with which to join the Board. Additionally, an aim will be that minimally two to three of these seats will be filled by BIPOC members. The Foundation Search Committee, chaired by Keith Rand, LMFT, CGP, FAGPA, Vice-Chair of the Board, will be responsible for preparing a slate of emerging leader Board members for consideration by the Board of Directors; the first slate of additions will be recommended at the fall 2021 Foundation Board meeting. We invite your recommendations for potential Board members for these new slots.

These are just our initial steps in our work to be an anti-racist organization and support anti-racist efforts in the mental health field. We understand there is much work to be done and that, indeed, it is an ongoing process. One of the key reasons for our writing this article is to be transparent in the steps we are taking and to invite feedback along the way. The Group Foundation stands ready to engage in this work, and we welcome your involvement and your ideas as we move forward. Please be in contact with us with your thoughts and your interest in involvement through the Foundation office at dfeirman@agpa.org

CALL FOR CANDIDATES

Group Foundation Emerging Leaders Board Members

The Foundation Board is making a change to its membership and creating four Board of Director positions for emerging leaders from the BIPOC, Early Career Professional, and/or Student Communities. The Search Committee, chaired by Keith Rand, LMFT, CGP, FAGPA, is currently accepting recommendations for candidates for these positions; please reach out to Keith c/o dfeirman@agpa.org. Self-nominations are welcomed!

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

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Apply for a Scholarship Today

Attending AGPA Connect allows recipients to learn and grow personally and professionally, making connections that will last a lifetime. Through the generosity of its donors, the Group Foundation will again offer multiple funding opportunities to attend AGPA Connect 2022 in Denver, Colorado.

To apply for a scholarship, visit AGPA's website at www.agpa.org/Foundation/scholarships, where there is detailed information and required application forms. Application deadline is November 1, 2021. Additional questions? E-mail tamzennaegle@agpa.org.

If you are interested in contributing to the Group Foundation to help qualified candidates attend AGPA Connect 2022, contact the Foundation office at 212-477-2677 or visit the website and click on "Donate Now."

Applications Being Accepted for New Endowed Scholarship

This year for the first time, we are accepting applications for a new scholarship in the name of AGPA member Karen Travis, LCSW, BCD, CGP, FAGPA, immediate past Chairwoman of the Foundation. The endowment,

funded by Ms. Travis and her family and friends, will support an annual scholarship for an early career professional working with underserved populations, and who is either currently running groups or with a strong interest in doing so, to attend the annual AGPA Connect to provide them with access to training and educational resources. Travis has been a dedicated member of the AGPA community and champion of the Foundation for decades, serving two terms as Chairwoman for a total of four years, in addition to holding a number of governance positions since 1992. She has also been active in her local Affiliate Society since the mid-1980s. The Foundation is happy to see her honored with this new scholarship in her name.

Additional Foundation Awards and Grants

In addition to its extensive Scholarship Program, the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health presents the following awards:

- The **Social Responsibility Award** recognizes an AGPA member or group of members, an Affiliate Society, or an affiliated organization of mental health professionals who has provided an exceptional service that ultimately benefits the public-at-large (deadline for nominations October 1, 2021).
- The **Humanitarian Award** is presented to an esteemed individual whose ability and position, either personal, corporate, foundation, and/or politically based, has enabled them to do work reaching into and providing vitally needed services to a community (deadline for nominations October 1, 2021).
- The Foundation supports Research that demonstrates the effectiveness of group psychotherapy and is soliciting proposals for original critical research reviews, either qualitative or quantitative (particularly meta-analyses), that focus on some selected area

of group psychotherapy (deadline for nominations November 1, 2021).

- The **Alonso Award for Excellence in Psychodynamic Group Theory** reasserts, in a concrete way, the value of original thinking about psychodynamic group theory. Individuals may qualify in a variety of ways. Suitable entries include doctoral dissertations, videos, published papers, and other creative research (deadline for nominations December 1, 2021).

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Detailed award and grant descriptions, as well as listings of past recipients, are posted on AGPA's website at www.agpa.org. For additional information, contact Diane Feirman, CAE, Public Affairs Senior Director, at 212-477-2677 or dfeirman@agpa.org.

New Endowment Fund

The Group Foundation is pleased to announce the establishment of an endowment fund in the name of Jay Erwin-Grotsky, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA (1955-2017). Funded by the Austin Group Psychotherapy Society and Jay's friends and colleagues, the Jay Erwin-Grotsky Memorial Fund serves to honor Jay and his steadfast devotion to group psychotherapy, community, and interpersonal growth by supporting an annual program at AGPA Connect.

The program will focus on areas about which Jay was passionate, including the LGBTQ+ community, with special care and concern for adolescents, and the use of Modern Analytic Theory in groups. It seems only fitting, with Jay's notability as a leader in the organizations and his commitment to group therapy education, that he be recognized in this way. The inaugural program in Jay's memory supported by this endowment will take place at AGPA Connect 2022 in Denver, Colorado.