



November 30, 2010.

## Dear CGPA Members and Friends,

CGPA has arrived at a defining moment in our history. Faced with many serious challenges including declining membership, diminishing human and financial resources and closure of local sections and training programs it is easy to feel pessimistic about our future. But I don't see these developments as evidence that CGPA is failing. Rather I see them as "symptoms" of the increasing need for a new paradigm of thinking and operating as an organization.

CGPA has unquestionably enjoyed great success over the past 31 years and should feel proud that it has managed to remain relevant through many uncertain periods in the Canadian non profit sector.

But conditions are changing very rapidly now. With the incredible impact of technology, increased competition and the financial challenges faced in within the health care sector the time has come to pause to reflect and then chart our course for the future. More than ever we need to join together with a focus on our mandate so that we insure that our organization and our important work is truly sustainable.

With these concerns in mind, last spring Jim Merchant, your past president and I made application to **Endeavour Non Profit Volunteer Consulting** ([endeavourvolunteer.ca](http://endeavourvolunteer.ca)) in the hope that we might be selected to receive their assistance in mapping a course toward sustainability for CGPA. We were excited (and I admit, somewhat daunted!) when we were notified that our application had been accepted out of many who applied.

Since then we have met once with our excellent consulting team. Our CGPA/Endeavour team consists of seven consultants and two project advisors all with different areas of expertise led by our very capable Engagement Manager, Suthan Sukamar.

( see photo of some of the team members

at:<http://www.endeavourvolunteer.ca/photos/album.php?id=5542963475810820561&photo=72>

Our first meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup> was very productive and hopeful. Once the group came together and possibilities were discussed the excitement and optimism was palpable in the room.

Members of our Endeavour consulting team have since been observing groups at St, Michaels and Mt. Sinai so that they can better understand our work and experience first hand the power of group therapy. (thanks to Kaz Khorsani and Melyn Leszcz for facilitating these opportunities) They have also been meeting together as a team to formulate a statement of work outlining the strategic planning project they will undertake with CGPA. Once this is formalized I will post the highlights on our website for your review.

We are definitely in the midst of a major transition and with transition comes uncertainty but I am confident that this collaboration will provide us with the opportunity we need to

support in this process!

## Conference 2010

This year's conference in **Halifax** was definitely success on many levels. It was our first ever visit to Atlantic Canada and the energy and excitement were palpable. All of the training components of the program were fully enrolled including Essentials of Group Therapy, the Institute Group and the Post Conference Process Group. In fact our biggest challenge was lack of space in the "ever expanding" introductory session!

Scott Rutan did a superb job on both the keynote address and his public lecture.

As always his talks were highly relevant and compelling to witness..

The excellent workshops this year covered a wide range of topics and were geared for clinicians at all levels of experience.

Our sincere thanks go to all of our workshop presenters who so generously shared their work with us and created safe and creative spaces for learning.

Also many thanks go to our conference organizing committee members- Karen Redhill Feinstein, Jackie Kinley, Ward Yuzda, and Marie Kavanaugh for their hard work and commitment this past year. "Team Halifax" as it came to be known, was highly collaborative and their hard work and attention to detail were apparent in all aspects of the academic and social programs

We would be remiss if we did not also acknowledge Doreen Ostrowski, our conference planner, for her incredible support, and assistance ( start to finish!) with this year's conference.

## Student Sponsorships

Six graduate students from the fields of psychiatry, psychology and social work attended this year's conference in Halifax. Our primary goal of introducing these new professionals to the fascinating world of group psychotherapy and sharing our passion for it with them was definitely successfully met. I would like to thank both the Canadian Group Psychotherapy Foundation and Toronto and Winnipeg sections for their support of these sponsorships. This initiative is an **extremely important** one as student attendance is essential if we are to insure that group psychotherapy practice is sustainable into the future.

Shauna, Sutherland, a graduate student in clinical psychology currently attending the University of New Brunswick and sponsored to attend the CGPA conference this year submitted this heartfelt reflection on her experience:

*"The 2010 CGPA conference was one of the most intense and inspiring learning experiences I have had in my academic career to date. I was given the opportunity to take part in workshops, presented by some of the most well respected professionals in the field, which were not only educational but experiential as well. Attendees had the opportunity to experience what it feels like to be the member of a group from the client's perspective. In addition to this, the various social activities and breaks between workshops provided me the opportunity to be mentored by group psychotherapists from a wide range of disciplines. I hope to take some of the connections I have made at the conference with me throughout my career, and I absolutely plan on attending the CGPA conference again in the future. Living on a graduate student's budget, I may not have been able to take part in such an amazing educational experience if it hadn't been for the generous sponsorship I received from the Toronto section of the CGPA. I would like to thank you for providing me with such a memorable opportunity."*

**Magical Mystery Bus Tour-** For those lucky folks (myself among them!) who signed up for the Saturday post conference bus tour, it was a memorable day of beautiful scenery, music and surprises! Our congenial bus driver Terry took the wheel and steered the course through Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg and Mahone Bay while our volunteer tour guide Jackie Kinley, shared highlights of the local history as well as many interesting anecdotes about her beautiful province. Allan Sheps provided the group with song sheets and capably led the group in rousing renditions of our individual favorites. Toward the end, our incredible tour took a surprising detour as Terry steered the bus toward Jackie's parents lovely seaside vacation home near Lunenburg. There we were greeted with incredible warmth and hospitality and served fresh cookies and coffee while taking in the beautiful ocean vista.

It was a truly memorable day and a fitting end to a great conference. Our thanks again to Doreen Ostrowski for organizing it and to Jackie and Allan for their efforts in making the day so fun and memorable!

**Training and Education Update-** At our November CGPA council teleconference I proposed that the CGPA training and education committee be reorganized to form a unified committee with representation from all of our branches of training and education . This collaborative committee will include representation from the national conference training committee (academic program committee) , the local training programs, and the institute committee.

The establishment of a unified national training program has long been an identified CGPA priority and was again highlighted in our national survey as a key priority for our members.. It is clear that in order to finally achieve the goal of having an integrated national training program that will be necessary to work together to consolidate our resources.

Our longterm sustainability depends on our ability to shore up our resources and work together on this. A preliminary meeting of the committee will be planned for December .

In light of these proposed changes and in recent discussions with Dawn McBride and Pam Wener our current co chairs of the Training and Education committee they have decided that the timing is right to step down from their current roles .

With the changes happening in the structure of the committee and with their other commitments they felt it was an auspicious time to make this transition. ( Pam is currently in the midst of completing her doctoral studies and Dawn has an extremely busy year ahead as she prepares for a year long sabbatical. )

I would like to acknowledge Pam and Dawn for their incredible volunteer contributions to CGPA over these past 4 years . They have put a tremendous amount of effort and energy into their roles and have made important contributions that will be foundational to our work as we move forward. . On behalf of CGPA I want to extend our most sincere thanks to both of them. They have kindly agreed to be available for consultation with new committee and we are grateful for their support and look forward to a continuing connection.

## **Calgary Group Therapy Training Program Closing**

At this year's conference in Halifax we sadly learned that the Calgary Group Therapy Training Program is closing its doors at the end of December. After 26 years of providing exceptional training to the Western Canadian health care community it was felt that the timing was right to close this chapter.

On behalf of CGPA I would like to thank Anne Mahoney and all of the faculty of the CGTTP for their incredible contributions and commitment to CGPA and to group therapy. Training in Canada. Your efforts have had far reaching and positive effects in the lives of those who have been trained and in those whom they have served.

As CGPA now moves forward in our current strategic planning initiative with Endeavour, and in our reorganization of the training and education committee there is no question that a renewed focus on developing an integrated approach to offering training will be of the highest priority. ..Stay tuned.....

## **Upcoming Events**

The Society for Psychotherapy Research is hosting a conference at the Banff Centre from September 22-24/2011

The call for submissions deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup>.. Conference details, including the call for submission and submission guidelines, can be found online at

<http://www.psychotherapyresearch.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=287>.

This years American Group Psychotherapy Association annual conference is being held in New York City from February 28<sup>th</sup> to March 5<sup>th</sup>2011. Their theme this year is "Group as a Source of Resilience and Change" Details can be found at:

[http://www.agpa.org/mtgs/2011\\_annmtg/annualindex.html](http://www.agpa.org/mtgs/2011_annmtg/annualindex.html)

The International Congress for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes is holding their annual congress in February in Cartagena, Columbia . Their 2011 theme is "Between Worlds and Cultures : Social Transformation"

See details at <http://www.iagpcongress.org/>

**Group Therapy in the News;** Just wanted to share this with you all.

Thanks to Heidi Greenfield for passing it along to me .

It is an interesting' piece from a recent National Public Radio program - an interview with Judith Coche and Tony Shepperd titled "Is Group Therapy Effective ?" Have a listen.

<http://www.wfpl.org/2010/08/13/is-group-therapy-effective/>

With my best wishes to all for a happy holiday season and peace and good health in the new year,

,

Terry Simonik  
President, CGPA

**\*\*Next update is scheduled for early February\*\***

