



SPECIAL
ISSUE

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER
2009

from the Executive Director

Patricia J. Gibboney, CFRE

We all know that SUCCESS begets SUCCESS. During the past year we have been witness to many forms of success and we have all of you to thank for this. Let me share with you some examples.

Our programs, under the capable leadership of Amanda Cushing, continue to flourish, attracting new participants each time. The Taste and See event held last October offered a variety of breakout sessions to men and women searching for a day of spiritual enrichment. Our continuing education series, the Days of Reflection for Clergy, the monthly Sacred Feminine programs, and the Retreats for Busy People have been well attended, with feedback from the evaluations indicating that the participants greatly value these offerings. In February, Arti Gras attracted more than 100 individuals who enjoyed a day of art and the spirit.

May 13, 2009 was graduation day for the 14 women who successfully completed 2 ½ years of study and training in the Wellstreams Program. Carol Ann Spencer, O.P, has skillfully directed this program for 12 years. Contemplative prayer experiences, information sessions to promote spiritual direction, and workshops/seminars have been very well received during this past year. Inquiries about the Wellstreams class beginning in August 2010 have already begun.

We are all aware of the challenges that we are currently facing during this tough economic time. None of us are immune to the uncertainty of the future. But, with the support of one another, we will pull through this together. The Spirituality Network has been blessed with the dedication of an amazing Board of Directors, tireless volunteers, generous donors and supporters, as well as the devoted time offered by our spiritual directors. We are most grateful for the partnerships that are being and have been developed with numerous congregations and community groups. As we all continue to work together on behalf of the mission of The Spirituality Network, we can enjoy the SUCCESS of our efforts.

Stay in touch with us on **Facebook!**

Visit www.facebook.com, and search for The Spirituality Network, Columbus, Ohio.

Become a fan today.

The Spirituality Network, Inc.
provides:

- Education and formation through the Wellstreams Training Program
- Spiritual direction referrals for groups and individuals
- Retreat planning and facilitation
- Programs to foster the spiritual life
- Connection to a variety of spirituality resources in central Ohio

As an ecumenical organization, the Spirituality Network serves people both within and outside of religious institutions.

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Macrina Wiederkehr's book, *sevensacredpauses*, is subtitled "living mindfully through the hours of the day." Makrina reminds all of us that these pauses invite us to reflect on the gift of being—a gift which is often "crowded out" by our doing. "No matter what you are doing, you can pause to touch the grace of the hour". Living mindfully through the hours of the day has always been a challenge for me, and paying attention to my being always seems to be secondary to whatever I am doing. As my year as chairperson of the Network Board comes to a close, Macrina's reminder to pause to touch the grace that is available seems even more poignant and powerful. As I pause to reflect on a year of "being and doing" with this particular board and all my interactions with those persons who comprise The Spirituality Network, I am overcome with several awarenesses that hold significant grace:

- The vigilance of the board commitment to living the mission and vision of the Spirituality Network and at the same time, implementing our strategic plan, which constantly calls us to remember who, how, where, and why we serve.
- The amazing passion, wisdom, and creativity that Pat Gibboney, Carol Ann Spencer, and Amanda Stone Cushing bring to their work. We are blessed beyond measure by their leadership and presence.
- The Network's enduring commitment to reach out to all those who live in the margins of society and those who hunger and thirst to know God and to be companions to each other—for we are one and the same.
- The faithfulness of those dedicated to the sustainability of the Network in times of economic struggle to being good stewards of our resources, while also giving back and paying forward. I continually notice the invitation to surrender and trust, but also to give abundantly where and when we can.
- The gratitude I have to Linda Bryant, who has served as board secretary and much more for the past 3 years, who will leave the board in June; for Loretta Farmer, who graciously and generously serves as spiritual director to the board; for Dan, Barb, Wayne, Jackie, Alex, Nancy, Donita, Maxine, Tom, Katherine, Ron, and Joe who consistently bring honesty, vision, compassion, and prayerfulness in considering the difficult questions and decisions necessary to live in the present and plan for the future.

I could go on and on, as it's amazing all the noticings that appear when one simple pause is taken. Not surprisingly, that's what being contemplative means—being with what is given in the moment. I would invite each of you reading this reflection to stop and pause and see how quickly you touch the grace of the moment or hour or day. Consider "opening your eyes to the sacred path you travel every day." Pause to reflect on your relationship to the Network and pray for each and every seeker who comes to mind. Continue to be involved in any way possible in its sacred work. Continue to bless the Network by your presence, your prayer, your time, your spiritual and financial gifts. Most of all, promise yourself that you will pause!

I consider myself richly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in the role of chair. I have been transformed by the legacy and witness of all of you who have walked before me and with me who, in Macrina's words, "greet the hours with joyful awareness and faithful presence." I am ever grateful...



Program Coordinator's Report

Amanda Stone Cushing

"Let something essential happen to me, something awesome, something real. Speak to my condition, Lord, and change me somewhere inside where it matters." Ted Loder, *Guerillas of Grace* (© 1981, Minneapolis, Augsburg Books)

During difficult times, we are more likely to seek meaning and purpose in our lives, to long for an experience that touches our souls. Over this past year with its economic distress, we had the privilege of helping hundreds of people explore and discover ways to answer that longing.

Some came to us seeking spiritual direction. The referral process helped more than 40 individuals connect with a spiritual director to help them grow in their awareness of God's presence and action in their lives. Others came to events and programs to explore spiritual practices. Still others were served when we responded to their requests for programs at churches, workplaces, and retreats.

Arti Gras! Celebration of Art and Spirit, in its ninth year, provided opportunities for more than 100 people to explore the creative process in prayer. Our second annual Taste and See had over 50 attendees who experienced a variety of prayer and spirituality practices. The Connecting in the Spirit monthly gatherings for contemplative prayer offered a time of quiet reflection in the midst of life's busy-ness; and our continuing monthly series, Further Exploration of the Sacred Feminine, explored women's experiences in various cultures and presented a survey of women mystics.

The people who tend to our souls also need time to renew and refresh their own spirits. We were pleased to minister to those who minister every day through 2 days of reflection for clergy, three half-day retreats for hospital chaplains, and two retreats for spiritual directors. We will continue to provide these opportunities as well as explore ways that we can offer spiritual nurture to caregivers.

I've been touched "somewhere inside where it matters" by all of you who sought an answer to your longing. You have been a source of meaning and purpose in my life. I look forward to "something awesome, something real" in the year to come.

Arti Gras! 10

The year ahead holds a special celebration: the 10th anniversary of Arti Gras! The program committee is working on developing this exciting milestone so watch for further details.

Gratitude

To Becky: "May you experience each day as a sacred gift, woven around the heart of wonder." John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us* (© 2008, New York, Doubleday)

Our special gratitude goes to Becky King, our program intern this past year. As her field education site, the Spirituality Network was blessed by Becky's superior gifts of spirit. She developed and facilitated a number of offerings for us including

- Five-week Lenten study of Spiritual Disciplines
- Workshop on writing a spiritual autobiography
- Sacred Feminine exploration of Julian of Norwich
- Beautiful 1-day retreat for the MTSO community



Becky graduated in May from The Methodist Theological School in Ohio, earning a Master of Divinity with a specialization in spirituality.

Summer Sabbath: A Self-Led Day of Inner Refreshment

Take a personal retreat day for prayer and reflection while supporting The Spirituality Network.

You are invited to choose a time and place for "inner refreshment" through a self-led retreat. We will send you an outline to follow for your day of prayer with scripture references and suggestions for contemplative reflection.

Set aside Saturday, August 1, 2009 for your personal retreat (or you may choose another day this summer).

Determine the amount of money you might have otherwise spent on a Saturday for entertainment and refreshment, then send a donation in that amount to The Spirituality Network in gratitude for the support that it lends to your life.

Send your donation, by July 25, 2009 along with your NAME, E-MAIL ADDRESS, and PHONE NUMBER to The Spirituality Network, ATTN: SABBATH, 444 E Broad St, Columbus, OH 43215



Wellstreams Annual Report

Carol Ann Spencer, O.P.
Coordinator of Wellstreams
www.wellstreamscolumbus.org

Wellstreams is a two-phase program designed to enhance the personal spiritual growth of participants and provide training in spiritual direction and companioning. The program is open to women and men of all faith traditions who have a desire to enhance their own spiritual journey and wish to discern their call to share with others.

Our sixth class, which began in August 2006, completed their program on May 13, 2009 with 14 participants graduating. Our seventh class will complete the first year of the program with a discernment retreat on June 12-13, 2009. They will begin the practicum part of the program in September of this year.

One of the new parts of the Wellstreams Program for the class that just graduated was an optional sixth semester in which they could choose to participate in some additional topics that are helpful in companioning. These topics were also open to others in the helping professions. The attendance was good and the classes were well received. This will now become a regular part of our program.

Over this past year we offered several 4-week courses based on some of the content of Phase One to give the public a taste of what Wellstreams has to offer. Even though the attendance was small, participants seemed to enjoy these introductions. We intend to offer the other two courses this coming year.

Registration for a new class will open in August 2009. The eighth class will begin in August 2010. Be sure to check out all of this on our web page. We are grateful to our web mistress, Liz Kuhn, for all that she has done to make this possible. You will find us at www.wellstreamscolumbus.org

We are also grateful for the wonderful participants, faculty, supervisors, and the Network and Wellstreams Boards who are our greatest assets in our training program. This program continues to meet a need for spiritual directors and companions, along with providing other resources for spirituality and groups in the various denominations that are represented. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the program is providing a safe and sacred space for each person to attend to inner growth, along with the support of many companions on the journey.

Photo by Dean Gyorgy: Wellstreams graduates, May 2009. Front row: Kathie Houchens, April Warren, Martha Gostely, Susie O'Neil, Vickie Murphy, Sr. Carol Ann Spencer. Middle row: Margot Gyorgy, Marybeth Corbett, Susan Taylor, Annie Dalby. Back row: Betsy Buchal-Condon, Becca Schott, Sandy Oppermann, Mary Anne Evans, Susan Ortman-Goering



The Spirituality Network is a 501(c)3 nonprofit ecumenical organization founded by Christians of the contemplative tradition.

Beginning in 1986, the Spirituality Network was envisioned as an interfaith outreach to address the "thirst for the God of Life." Though the Network was founded and has been sustained primarily by individuals from the wide spectrum of Christian faith, our aspiration is to be a community of acceptance and inclusion.

It is therefore, our vision that:

The Spirituality Network will be an inclusive resource for individuals and groups in Central Ohio who share a desire for spiritual growth and for helping others on their spiritual paths. Through a rich and diverse network of resources, we seek to provide a lasting sense of hope, peace, and purpose for our community.

Our programs include:

- Wellstreams Ecumenical Program of Spiritual Formation and Training
- Spiritual Direction Referrals
- Retreat Planning and Facilitation
- Continuing Education for Spiritual Directors and those in companioning ministry
- Women to Women Listening Ministry

To receive updates on Network and community events via e-mail, go to spiritualitynetwork.org and click on "Join our Google Group" box in the lower right corner.