

SUMMER 2010

NEWSLETTER

SPIRITUALITY NETWORK

ASSISTING THOSE WHO THIRST FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

SPECIAL ISSUE

from the Executive Director

Patricia J. Gibboney, CFRE

As I reflect upon the past 12 months, there is so much to be thankful for.

We have touched the lives of hundreds of individuals through retreats, programs, and spiritual direction as well as those seeking a safe haven for their spiritual growth. We have been blessed by the generosity of so many who have shared their financial resources, their tremendous expertise, and their valuable time with us.

We have all been affected by the economic challenges of the past year but at the same time have recognized that the offerings of The Spirituality Network are needed now more than ever. We have responded to requests from clergy who appreciated a day of personal spiritual refreshment, and we have developed programs for those who serve as caretakers and other professionals who walk the journey with seriously ill and terminal patients. We continue to seek out new partnerships with congregations and community organizations that are looking for resources connected to spiritual deepening.

A dedicated Board of Directors who are passionate about the mission of The Spirituality Network has richly blessed us. The tireless efforts of Amanda Cushing, Program Director, and Sister Carol Ann Spencer, OP, Director of Wellstreams Training Program, have made significant contributions to a very successful year. And, without the hard work and commitment of our volunteers and supporters, we would not be the vibrant organization that we are today. I would particularly like to personally thank Sandra Kerka, newsletter editor; Liz Kuhn, web mistress; Marianne Riehl, bookkeeper; and Corrine Hughes, longtime weekly volunteer, for their selfless gifts of time and expertise. We consider these four ladies an extension of our staff.

Together, with all of you, we have met the challenges of the past year and turned them into opportunities. The Spirit continues to guide The Spirituality Network forward.

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

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

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.

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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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from the Chair

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What a gratifying and exciting year it has been for me to serve as chair of the Spirituality Network Board! As our year began, Network Director, Pat Gibboney, shared a thought-provoking article titled "Creating a Case for Sustainability" by Sally Patterson. The article served to heighten the consciousness of the Board as we reflected on and responded to the challenges nonprofits are facing today as highlighted in the article. Subsequent Board discussions led us to revisiting the Strategic Plans created by the Board 3 years ago to check our progress to date, to consider their relevancy in light of the dramatic changes occurring in this difficult economy, and to ensure that our strategic plans continued to support our sustainability and the long-term vitality of the Network from both a mission-driven perspective as well as a financially sound perspective.

As we attempted to revisit and revise our plans and to align them with strengths and weaknesses we had identified, it became clear that it would be beneficial to fully engage the Board in reflecting on what it is that sustains us as the Spirituality Network. Our short-term goal became to invest time in monthly strategic conversations based on predetermined questions to help us clarify, solidify, and promote the ability to articulate who we are. Engaging the Board in this way has provided an opportunity for both individual reflection and communal sharing. This experience has served to deepen our personal and collective understanding of:

- marginalization
- what spirituality means and how it is fed
- what it means to be a network
- identifying our unique strengths and the particular niche we fill
- how we can pursue financial sustenance while remaining true to our mission

Our conversations have been rich, inspiring, challenging, sometimes profound, and always sacred. For me, it has been deeply gratifying and humbling.

We know that change is certain and the future is unpredictable. Perhaps we know that more clearly today than ever before. It is a precarious time for all nonprofits. Investing the time and energy to rediscover our strengths and find the opportunities in our weaknesses has provided increased clarity for our future direction and will serve us well. At a Board Retreat in August, we will utilize the insights we have gained to reformulate our Strategic Plan with a renewed sense of purpose and direction that both realistically and idealistically supports the sustainability and vitality of the Network.

It is my blessing and privilege to serve with such committed individuals on the Board whose sincerity, integrity, and belief in the mission and vision of the Spirituality Network is truly an inspiration. I am very grateful to be a part of "assisting those who thirst for spiritual growth." There is nothing more valuable in this or any other time.

Peace and grace,
Katherine Murphy Mertzlufft
Spirituality Network Board Chair



Program Report

Connecting on the Journey

At a recent board meeting, we were asked to reflect on the question: "What does it mean to be a network?" The response varied from person to person and yet at the heart of each answer was the idea that a network, above all else, connects. The Spirituality Network connects individuals, churches, and groups with resources for their spiritual growth.

The program committee worked diligently to provide a variety of opportunities to connect with others on the journey while exploring and experiencing spiritual topics. With the disappointment of having to cancel Taste and See in October due to low registrations, we regained our momentum through planning a diverse slate of offerings for the remainder of the year. Connecting with new friends and reconnecting with long-time friends provided more than enough motivation to keep our spirits up!

The Sacred Feminine group explored:

- Women-to-Women Listening Ministry
- Women's Respite
- Images of Jesus as Mother
- Healing through Memoir
- Story Collage
- Eco-spirituality

Other program offerings included:

- Ignatian Spirituality
- Jungian Psychology and Spirituality
- Grief, Loss, and Bereavement
- Christian Approach to Reiki
- Journey of the Marble Heart: Writing as a Spiritual Practice
- Introduction to the Enneagram

The 10th Annual Arti Gras was a great success, providing more than 80 people with a day of art, spirit, and creativity. The traditional gift for a 10th anniversary is tin, so to celebrate we collected four large boxes of canned and nonperishable food which was donated to the Stowe Baptist Center on Parsons Avenue.

Drawing from our rich resource of qualified spiritual directors, we connected over 60 individuals with spiritual directors through our referral service this past year. This service provides reassurance and guidance to those seeking direction. Rather than simply picking a name from a list, the seekers are given referrals that meet their specific needs in faith life, prayer style, and personality.

Spiritual directors who are on our referral list have all completed a recognized training program, are in spiritual direction themselves, receive peer supervision, and abide by the Ethical Guidelines established by Spiritual Directors International.

Also drawing from our talented resource members, we provided speakers, group facilitators, and retreat leaders for 11 different requested programs in churches and organizations this year. Some of the topics offered were discernment in community; tending the roots of prayer; praying with scripture; Franciscan spirituality; men's and women's spirituality; social justice and the Gospels; contemplative approach to ministry; among others.

These programs served laypeople, clergy, chaplains, Stephen Ministers, and seminarians, representing many different Christian denominations.

Technology provided farther-reaching connections than ever before: Facebook and Twitter enabled us to connect to the wider world. With "followers" on Twitter from more than 26 countries on 6 continents and "friends" on Facebook in 5 different countries, The Spirituality Network of Columbus, Ohio has truly entered the Global Community.

A network comes alive through the connections that are made. We look forward to another exciting, enlivening year of connecting with you on the journey!

The Program Committee:

**Amanda Stone Cushing, Program Coordinator
Linda Bryant, Donita Harris, Katherine Murphy,
Daniel Schleppe, Linda Schoen, Jeanette
Tangeman**



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 seventh class, which began in August 2008, has just completed its fourth semester and the first part of its outside practicum—working with two directees, meeting with one's supervisor and participating in a weekly peer supervision group, along with other topics and/or themes. This summer each participant will be making a directed retreat as part of a requirement for the program, along with continuing work with the directees. The class will be on break from classes until September 8, 2010.

Currently, we are in the process of interviewing applicants for our eighth class which will begin on August 27-28. There is a possibility of about 24 candidates for this class. The Web page has clearly been a help in marketing our program as more and more persons are inquiring through finding the program on the Internet.

This past year we completed the four core courses (4 weeks in length) that were designed to give the public a taste of the content for Phase One of the program. These will be repeated in the future since they were well received.

The Wellstreams Board continues to look at how to market our program and to look at new sources for our scholarship fund. Currently, the Board is working on a survey to be done in the fall with all of our past graduates which will number over one hundred when the current class graduates in May 2012. The Board is interested in what the graduates are doing since they completed Wellstreams and what further inservice opportunities would be helpful to them.

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

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



Arti Gras 2010: Lessons from the Cosmos