

SUMMER 2013 NEWSLETTER SPECIAL ISSUE



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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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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.

STATE OF THE NETWORK: 2013 FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Patricia J. Gibboney, CFRE

As I reflect on the past 12 months in the life of The Spirituality Network, a familiar quote comes to mind: *Some people want things to happen, some people wish that they would happen, but there are those people who make it happen.* At some time in our life, we all fit into one of those three categories. However, I would like to pay tribute to *those people who make it happen.*

The mission of The Spirituality Network is to offer resources and spiritual enrichment opportunities to those individuals who are searching for the God of Life. We provide a safe haven for those seeking spiritual growth. During the past year we have served as facilitators for directed retreats, including the Retreat for Busy People, at several congregations. We have provided spiritual directors for those individuals seeking companionship as they embark on their spiritual journey. We have offered programs that included an 8-week dream work seminar, the monthly Sacred Feminine discussions, and workshops sponsored by the Wellstreams Training Program. The annual Arti Gras event, celebrating art and the spirit, was again the highlight of the pre-Lenten season. We continue to partner with and support Always We Begin Again (AWBA), Wings & Prayers Quilting Ministry, and Women to Women.

Perhaps our biggest challenge this year was the undertaking of the Living Faith Award Breakfast, an event that has been sponsored by the Metropolitan Area Church Council (MACC) for the past 21 years. On May 16, 2013, The Spirituality Network officially accepted the leadership of this event, with 225 individuals witnessing the ritual of blending yellow colored water, a symbol of MACC, and blue colored water, a symbol of the Network, as the colors mixed to become green, a symbol of new growth. We are most grateful to MACC for endowing us with this event. We appreciate all of the positive feedback that we have received regarding the individuals who were honored as well as the contemplative spirit that was felt by those in attendance. We are already beginning to make plans for the May 15, 2014 Living Faith Award Breakfast!

Our programs, events, and activities are successful only because of the many individuals who made them happen. I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the volunteers, donors, committee members, the Board of Directors, and Wellstreams Advisory Council, all of whom see what needs to be done and somehow make it happen. A very special note of thanks also goes to Sandra Kerka, our volunteer bookkeeper and Corrine Hughes, our regular Thursday volunteer. There is no assignment too great or too small for them to undertake. And to Sr. Carol Ann Spencer and Amanda Cushing, both of whom are the backbone of The Spirituality Network, my endless gratitude. Without their passion and dedication to our mission, nothing would ever happen!

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHAIR

Over the years, I've read different perspectives of the Gospel account of the loaves and fishes. I'm sure you know the story well. Jesus has healed the multitudes and fed their souls. Soon, the disciples were wanting Jesus to send them away. Jesus responds simply. "Feed them."

What started with five loaves and two fishes resulted in 12 basketfuls of leftovers. Was this a holy act? Or merely generosity multiplied? Does it really matter? Wasn't it truly miraculous either way?

On May 16, I experienced what I consider to be a similar miracle at the Living Faith Awards. I recognized two things in common among all those who were being honored. Great humility and everyday faith. To a person, the honorees wondered why they were chosen. On the surface, their stories did not seem extraordinary. In fact, they were often quite common... not unlike the common meal of bread and fishes that the people of Jesus' time and place would have experienced. However, as each shared his or her remarks, the true nature of their stories revealed a depth of faith (even when self-doubt nagged at them) that resulted in inspirational action.

As I've thought about it more, isn't that what God has called us to do? Jesus takes the ordinary (us) and turns us into something holy. I don't know if it happens all at once or over time. But again, in the grander, eternal scheme of things, does it really matter?

We may not all agree on our visions of the destination, or even the journey itself. Perhaps the best we as imperfect earthen vessels can hope for is that we listen for and discern the truth and then respond as authentically as possible.

As I wrap up my time on the board and as chairperson, I want to express some appreciation for those who've joined me on this journey with the Spirituality Network:

- To all of the volunteers... we could not do this work without you. I challenge you to look earnestly at the gifts and talents you've been given and continue to find ways to share them with the Network and those the Network serves.
- To the Network board... you've never failed to lift me up, even when times were at their darkest or most trying. Your spirit moves me.
- To the staff of the Network... you are nothing short of amazing. I've rarely met a mightier group of dedicated women. You go above and beyond in everything you do.

I'm not yet sure where the next steps of my journey lead, but I hope to walk many of them with you.

Do Justice
Love Mercy
Walk Humbly
Alex Rodriguez

SPIRITUALITY NETWORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nationwide Insurance

Jacquelyn Dean
Educator, Spiritual Director

Rick Wicks
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Women to Women

Elizabeth Bartley
Spiritual Director

Joan Supel, OP
Dominican Sisters of Peace

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Spiritual Director
Board Member Emeritus



WELLSTREAMS ANNUAL REPORT

Carol Ann Spencer, OP
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. The Wellstreams Program began in January 1996.

After completing six semesters, 20 interns in our eighth class graduated on Wednesday, May 8, 2013. The interns and faculty were joined by many family members and friends who had been an important part of the 3-year process of training through their support and encouragement. The graduates were reminded that they were taught both professional skills and the importance of reverencing and respecting their own life stories and that of others. They were encouraged to be faithful to their own Emmaus Journey and to pay forward by sharing with others the fruits of their study and contemplation. Wellstreams exist because women and men, like the graduates are willing to make this journey into the unknown, into one's own sacred interior. The trip is both exciting and scary; it is revealing and never ending. It is truly a journey of wholeness and holiness. The closing ritual ended with the graduates turning toward their family and friends to receive a blessing. Here are several lines of that blessing:

May an abundance of gratitude burst forth
As you reflect upon what you have received.
May you always be open, willing,
And ready to share your blessings with others.
May you never forget the Generous One
Who loves you lavishly and unconditionally

(Excerpts from a "Thanksgiving Blessing" by Joyce Rupp)

Our ninth class concluded its first year of Wellstreams with a Discernment Retreat on June 7 -8. It was an opportunity to take some time to look over the first year and to move toward the second phase of the program, which is the Practicum. This part of the program entails opportunities to do spiritual direction or companioning under supervision while continuing to grow in the knowledge, skill and art of spiritual direction.

In September, we will begin taking registrations for our tenth class of Wellstreams. That class will begin in August, 2014.

During this past year the Wellstreams Advisory Council worked on strengthening the composition of the council by writing a detailed description of its function and devising a plan for a 3-year cycle for membership. The council is an ecumenical group with representatives of staff, Wellstreams

faculty, local clergy, spiritual directors from certified training programs, including graduates of the Wellstreams Program., along with two ex-officio members and a liaison to the Spirituality Network Board. The Advisory Council also spent some time looking at our website and planning for some changes and additions. In May, the council evaluated the present program after the evaluation were completed and will continue to do so in the fall. The Advisory Council will also meet over the summer to plan for a gathering in October with the Wellstreams graduates, which will be partly continuing formation and partly a marketing event for the next class with some fundraising. The tentative date for this event is October 26, 2013. A retreat facilitation program for Wellstreams graduates was successfully implemented and completed as a pPracticum in August 2012. The next practicum is planned for August 2013. There is still some space available in our directed retreat August 17-24 at Our Lady of the Pines in Fremont, Ohio.

We are grateful for the wonderful participants, faculty, supervisors, Wellstreams Advisory Council, and the Spirituality Network Board who are our greatest assets. This program continues to meet a need for all those women and men who have a desire to enhance their own spiritual journey and wish to discern their call to share with others, along with providing other resources for spirituality and prayer groups in the various denominations that are represented. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the program is providing a safe and sacred space for each to attend to one's inner growth, along with the support of many companions on the journey.



Wellstreams Class of 2013. front row: Diana Shirley, Bonnie LaFleur, Chris Harnden, Janice Burns-Watson, Teresa Golamb, Melissa Schroeder, Karen Self; middle: Sr. Carol Ann Spencer, John Hinton, Taye Moody, Christine Widrig, Susan Younger; back row: Rosalyn Widrig, Douglas Argue, Felicia Maxwell, Lisa Deak, Linda Cannon, Melanie Thomas, Nancy Bolen, Donna Rimmer, David Ziels.

PROGRAM REPORT

Amanda Stone Cushing
Program Coordinator

This year, the program committee worked to answer your requests for more opportunities to explore contemplation by offering programs with several different approaches. Each program invited a different perspective on contemplative living and prayer:

- We explored **BLESSINGS** with Maxine Shonk, OP, through **SILENCE** and sharing, and became more attentive to God's abundant blessings throughout life.
- We explored the wisdom of **DREAMS**, discovering a rich resource of insight and self-knowledge.
- The 13th annual Arti Gras! and the second edition of the online series, Creativity as a Spiritual Practice, celebrated the well of **CREATIVITY** within each person, offering participants the chance to embrace their inner artists.
- At our Lenten day of reflection, attendees practiced Lectio Divina as we prayed with **SCRIPTURE** learning how to hear it in our hearts.
- The Sacred Feminine Discussion Group provided a place for women to share **WISDOM** and embrace their Divine Image within.
- Busy Persons' Directed Retreats introduced the practice of **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION** and **DISCERNMENT**.
- Days of **RESPITE** and time for **RETREATS** were available for people in ministry, providing reconnection and refreshment for their spirits.

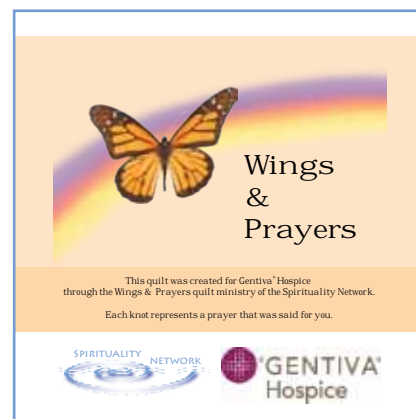
In addition to programs and events, the program committee worked together to conclude our task of creating Program Guidelines for the Board of Directors. These guidelines help us as we plan future program offerings so that we are always mindful of the mission and vision of The Spirituality Network. Within our mission is the desire to foster greater peace, hope and acceptance in our community. In the coming year we will begin to explore interfaith spirituality in order to deepen our respect and understanding for a variety of faith traditions, while continuing to offer opportunities to deepen in Christian spirituality.

Program Committee: Linda Bryant, Jackie Dean, Pat Gibboney, Donita Harris, Jan Hoffman, Katherine Murphy, Dan Schleppe, Sara Ward, Linda Wolf



WINGS & PRAYERS QUILT MINISTRY

Begun in November 2010, the Wings & Prayers quilting ministry continues to provide comfort to central Ohio hospice patients with the gift of a lap quilt. On average, we finish 3-5 quilts per gathering and have completed almost 60 quilts from this ministry. Earlier this year, the group received a \$250 grant award from the Puffin Foundation and used this money to purchase much-needed batting and backing. Although we have a "core" group of 5-7 members, we are eager to welcome new members to our second Saturday of the month morning gatherings at First Congregational Church. If you know of anyone with an interest in learning to quilt or with quilting experience, please encourage them to join our efforts by contacting Mary Ellen George at kmgeorge@wowway.com or 614/878-1920.



ALWAYS WE BEGIN AGAIN (AWBA)

Providing spiritual care to caregivers and those with chronic disease

AWBA's most recent board meetings have been devoted to developing a 3- to 5-year strategic plan. As we prepare to enter our third year of ministry, we have enough of a back story to begin establishing realistic goals for an increasingly clear vision for the next 3-5 years. The following are some areas that seem to carry the most energy as we begin this process:

- At the center of our strategic plan is programming. Without programming we have no mission. We are creating goals for expanding existing offerings as well as establishing partnerships and collaborations with other like-minded individuals, agencies and nonprofits. That networking continues to grow as conversations take place and program proposals are drafted with these agencies and groups for fall 2013 and early 2014.
- We desire to add an additional three board members this year and seek professionals in the fields of marketing and medical care as well as caregivers themselves who are passionate about our mission.
- No nonprofit remains in service without a strong fundraising plan. We have been blessed with individual donors supporting us through financial and in-kind donations. We could not have begun offering lower fees this year without the generosity of our donors. Our participants repeatedly express their gratitude for the financial help that makes AWBA events affordable for all. We will continue to reach out to our supporters in that way while also beginning to look at funding support by corporations and community organizations as well as partnership for some events.

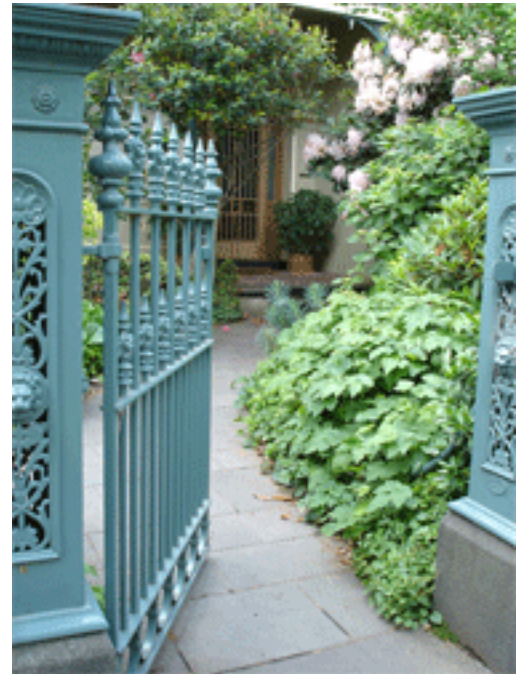
The Network has played a vital role as our fiscal agent. Although AWBA has been a registered nonprofit with the State of Ohio since its inception, we delayed filing for our own 501(c)(3) until we were financially more solvent. Our donations have been processed through The Spirituality Network so donations are tax deductible. We have recently filed our paperwork with the IRS and should hear a decision in a few months.

Our monthly newsletter, blog, and website continue to expand their readership to keep us connected to a growing base of people from our immediate area as well as across the United States. If you do not already receive the monthly newsletter, this is a great way to stay connected. You can register on the home page at www.myawba.org. You can also register to follow our blog at www.myawba.blogspot.com.

We seek your input, ideas, wonderings, and questions to remain connected to those we serve. E-mail us at director@myawba.org.

With gratitude,

Judy Smoot
Executive Director, Always We Begin Again
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WOMEN TO WOMEN A LISTENING CIRCLE

The Women to Women Program, in its 26th year, continues to evolve.

- We currently operate at three sites: Holy Rosary/St. John Community Kitchen, the Columbus Housing Network at Fifth Avenue apartments, and the YWCA Family Shelter on Fifth Avenue.
- Two other sites are being explored: one at Corpus Christi Center of Peace and one at Grace Lutheran on the hilltop.
- We have formed a Collaborative Circle or advisory board to tend to organizational issues as they arise. Current members are Carol Bensing, Linda Bryant, Barb Dusterberg, Catherine Loveland, Ruthmary Mangan, Mary Jo O'Brien, Jeanne Purcell (liaison to the Spirituality Network board), Maxine Shonk, and Noreen Malone (spiritual director for the circle). Each member has her area of responsibility.
- Each site has a point person who coordinates all activities and reports to their liaison on the Coordinating Council (Barb Dusterberg).
- In recent months much energy has gone into bringing Women to Women into some financial sustainability. Three grants have been awarded:
 - Shalom Fund with Dominican Sisters of Peace \$5,000
 - Mary's Pence \$1,500
 - Sisters of Charity of Nazareth \$5,000 (to be received in September)

The Spirituality Network is an ecumenical outreach addressing the "thirst for the God of Life." Founded by Christians, our aspiration is to be a community of acceptance and inclusion. We seek to create hope, peace, and purpose in our community.

We Believe:

- That God's love is unconditional
- That each person is drawn into relationship with God through the circumstances of human experience
- That a healthy, ongoing relationship with God, self, and all of creation moves one to respond authentically to the needs of others
- That a contemplative life stance must be rooted in prayer, nonviolence, and a radical passion for truth

We Provide:

- Education and formation through the Wellstreams Program
- Spiritual direction referrals for groups and individuals
- Retreat planning and facilitation
- Programs to foster the spiritual life, including continuing education and professional enrichment for those in caring ministries
- Outreach to the underserved in society, through programs, scholarships, and other enrichment opportunities

We Serve:

- Both those with and without formal faith affiliations
- Both those with and without ability to pay.

The Spirituality Network, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.

- A sustainability workshop was led by Mary McRury on May 28 for a "Sustaining Circle" of about 20 women who included companions as well as women from the participating population. A follow-up session is being planned.
- Thanks to the leadership support from both Pat Gibboney and Margaret Ormond, OP, Prioress of the Dominicans of Peace, a grant writing circle has been formed to research and submit future grants.
- Future planning includes possible fundraising efforts to benefit the Women to Women program.
- As a result of this year's activity, we have seen a notable shift in the sense of ownership of Women to Women program on the part of Companions and Participants alike.

