

Fall 2008 Newsletter

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to our first GWish e-newsletter! With this newsletter, we hope to keep you better apprised of our work, and we invite you to forward it to others you think might find our work of interest.

We have an exciting year ahead! We have given our website a facelift; are embarking on two new grants; and we are launching into the second year of yet a third project.

To help with all of these new projects, I am very happy to welcome several new members of the GWish team. **Jan Bull** is our new Associate Director. Jan comes to GWish having provided over 15 years of management and consultant services in an interdisciplinary environment, including healthcare policy research and statistical analysis, and budget and grant management at George Mason and George Washington Universities among others. We are also pleased to have **Misha Kogan, MD** working part-time on several initiatives including development of an online repository of scholarly work on spirituality (SOERCE) as well as a grant to develop competencies in spirituality and health. Misha is geriatrician at George Washington University. He is interested in holistic care and spirituality in medicine. **Laurie Lyons, MA** will also be joining the team as an Instructional Designer to work with Misha on the SOERCE grant. Finally, **Carrie Barone** a PhD student in the GW school of psychology, will fill out the team as our new Executive Associate.



We will also have two scholars in residence working with us this year. **Rita Manfredi, MD** is an emergency care physician who will be helping us put together several future initiatives, and **Franziskus Knoll, MD** is a visiting physician from Germany.

Sincerely,

Christina Puchalski

Director, George Washington University Institute for Spirituality & Health

Assisi Retreat, 2008-- A Re-Energizing Experience



In our overly busy world of work, it is rare to stop and reflect upon the meaning of our lives and to explore our dreams and desires for the future. This is what led a group of healthcare workers to Assisi, Italy, in August to experience our third annual Retreat for Healthcare Professionals. Assisi is a place for those who journey inward to find what gives them meaning and peace in an otherwise hectic world.

Again, it was an awe-inspiring experience for all those who attended. Thirty healthcare

professionals gathered to explore what spirituality meant to them in their professional lives and to experience and practice compassionate presence. The week was filled with discussion, quiet meditation, singing, and visiting sites in Assisi. Those who attended came from many different spiritual and religious backgrounds, but all shared a common desire to explore deeply their life of service and caring.

A theme that predominated the year was "What is our call as healthcare professionals, called as we are to a life of service and altruism?" In the picture above, you see a young boy enamored of Francis of Assisi. So too were many of us as we reflected on his example of spiritual activism and dedication to a call to serve. Many of the participants concluded that by being irritants to the healthcare system in advocating for compassion, we too can reform and improve the healthcare system. Each year, our retreat offers a place for healthcare professionals to find quiet, community, and inspiration. If you are interested in journeying with us, we would invite you to consider being part of the [2009 GWish-Inner Harmony Art of Presence Retreat! \(pdf\)](#)

Re-ignite your original call to service --- Register for Assisi Retreat 2009!

Give yourself the gift of inner nourishment along with practical tools for integrating spirituality into your worklife. Experience a contemplative week in Italy this coming summer with reknowned healthcare educator Christina Puchalski, MD, musical intuitive Michael Stillwater, transpersonal psychotherapist Doris Laesser and theologian, spiritual director and Editor of Spiritual Life Journal, Edward O'Donnell. The retreat is interdisciplinary, created for anyone who wishes to deepen their sense of meaning and connection, regardless of faith. Partners welcome.

[Click here to see brochure and registration materials](#)

GWish Certificate Program and Summer Institute, 2009

Although we were not able to hold our certificate program this year, we are developing a 3-day Summer Institute which will have a certificate option. If you would be interested in program information as it becomes available, we invite you to join our listserv to receive information at www.GWish.org or email us at caring@gwish.org

New Grants and Projects

Initiative to Integrate Spirituality and Health to Create More Compassionate and Patient Centered Health Care (INSPIR-Year 2)

INSPIR builds on a 2004 pilot study to refine and test a model for working with teams and developing more standardized (and replicable) projects to integrate spirituality and health into the healthcare setting. The model will be tested for its effectiveness in patient outcomes, specifically to increase compassion and patient-centered care, as well as staff outcomes, such as team effectiveness, satisfaction, and retention. Funded by Arthur Vining Davis, the project currently has seven participating hospitals who have developed interventions and are ready to begin the study.



GWish Spirituality and Health Online Education and Resource Center (SOERCE)

The new emphasis on spirituality in medical school and other health professions education has resulted in the new discipline of spirituality and health.

As a result, more medical educators and other health professions educators are expressing a need for a core of scholarly and collaborative work to enhance the current courses, support the development of new courses, and collect current educational



resources and best practices in teaching spirituality and health.

Funded by the John Templeton Foundation, we plan to gather materials, develop, and pilot the basic the features of the Spirituality and Health Online Education Resource Center ([SOERCE](#)), which will be the single online location for educational resources to teach and learn spirituality, religion, and health. A bridge will be developed between SOERCE and the AAMC's [MedEdPORTAL](#) (MEP), a peer-reviewed resource center through which medical educators can have teaching modules peer reviewed and published as a scholarly work.

Submissions

If you have developed any educational material (case studies, learning objectives, etc) related to spirituality and health you would like to have considered for this resource, we welcome you to submit these to us. Any submissions are welcome, electronic format is preferred but submissions sent by mail are welcomed as well. Your submission will go through a peer review process. We will let you know if the material is acceptable and/or needs any changes. For further information, please contact Misha Kogan at hcsmrk@gwumc.edu or staff at 202.994.6220.

National Competencies in Spirituality and Health Initiative, Funded by the F.I.S.H Foundation

The purpose of this Initiative is to 1) formulate a common set of spirituality-related competencies for medical students, and 2) develop a competency-based instrument for program assessment that can be used by all U.S. medical schools.

More than two-thirds of U.S. medical schools have independently integrated spirituality and health into their curricula. Though such efforts have fostered creative approaches, they vary in scope and rigor. Currently no consensus-determined set of competencies or program assessment tool exists.

Providing national competencies and a program assessment tool has great value for medical educators and students, as well as their patients. National competencies provide a benchmark against which established programs can measure themselves. For some it will require that they raise the bar; for others the competencies will validate their curriculum. For new programs the competencies will provide guidelines for curriculum development.

The evaluation tool also will provide guidelines needed by licensing and accreditation organizations to incorporate spirituality-related competencies into their process, further legitimizing the field and encouraging development of spirituality curricula in all U.S. medical schools. After an initial growth phase that has seen the majority of U.S. medical schools integrate spirituality and health into their curricula independently, the identification of competencies is the logical next step in the evolution of national efforts this new field.

Giving to GWish

Help continue the Mission of The George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health by making a tax-deductible contribution to GWish. Follow the steps listed below:

1. Donations must be made via GW University and you may specifically designate the gift to go to GWish by entering "**GWISH**" as noted in step 4 below.
2. To make a donation, go to the [Online Giving site](#).
3. Select the amount you wish to contribute to GWish.
4. To designate your gift to GWish, please scroll to the last bullet under the section *I would like to designate* and enter "**GWish**" in the box entitled *Other*.
5. Fill out the remainder of the form and submit.
6. GWish will be notified of your donation. GW University will also send you a Thank You card.

If you have any questions, please contact GWish at (202) 994-6220.

Thank you for your generosity and your support of our Mission.