



The Community of Hope International Connections



Fall 2015



A letter from the president and founder:

To all my Community of Hope Brothers and Sisters,

For days I prayed, waited and heard nothing. Finally when I let go of 'me' I heard these words: "Start a community called hope and I will provide the rest."

Within a few days unexpected pieces, people and places rearranged my life and reframed my future, God was in charge. I finally began to "Listen with the ear of my heart"; my life was forever changed.

Now, 21 years later, I pause on this amazing path to pour out my heart of gratitude and God's grace to each Community of Hope lay chaplain, leader, clergy and the devoted leaders in the many churches and institutions across our land and Africa. Because of your trust, hard work, love and commitment the Community of Hope continues to grow in every corner of God's kingdom.

Rooted in the practices of the Rule of Benedict, we are called to be the light of God's love as we go about each of our ministries. My Thanksgiving prayer is that the Divine spark of the Holy Spirit within each of us ignites the fire of peace, renewed hope, reconciliation and ceaseless prayer so that we may all be one.

In the love of Christ,

Helen

WITH GREAT JOY WE WELCOME THESE NEW CENTERS:

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Huntsville, TX

August 2015

Christ Episcopal Church

Luray, VA

October 2015

Iona-Hope Episcopal Church

Ft. Myers, FL

October 2015

Chandler Health Care Center

Circle of Care. San Antonio, TX

October 2015



Inside this edition:

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A note from Carla Cooper, COHI Board Development Advisor:

As announced in our last edition, COHI has been blessed with a most exciting challenge between now and the last day of 2015. We have the opportunity to add as much as \$30,000 to support our centers (existing and new), our curriculum (in English and Spanish), our annual conference, and our communications and outreach. Thanks to the generosity of a COHI friend, every single dollar we raise between now and the end of the year will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$15,000. Please join us in taking fullest advantage of this wonderful invitation by making a gift. Remember, the size of your gift counts far less than the fact of your gift. Please go www.cohinternational.org for more information and watch your mail for a special letter. Together, we can do this! Every single day, the gift of COHI depends on all of us in so many ways. Today, thank you for considering how you can best help answer the COHI 2015 Challenge.



Have you visited
“In Our Own Words”
at www.cohinternational.org?



We have embarked on an on-going and community-wide effort to gather brief testimonies, which capture in personal and singular ways the transforming power of COHI. Written, audio and video testimonials are now on the COHI website for all to read, listen to or watch.

Carla Cooper

A Testimonial to the Transforming Power of COHI

Before I came to St Luke’s, I worked at University of Houston System in many capacities. I had many colleagues, of course, but one of them stood out for his goodness and joy of life, a very talented young man named Karl Kabus. Toward the end of my time at St Luke’s, Karl was diagnosed with AIDS, which we all remember in those days meant just one thing. I was strongly called to stay with Karl through his journey, but I admit I felt a huge inadequacy and fear of what was to come and how I “would do.” A pitifully wrong concern, of course. But I had a new friend, and I asked her to help me help Karl. Helen was wonderfully engaging, and the three of us enjoyed such good visits and shared pizza and laughter and tears.

But Karl became sicker and sicker, and one night towards the very end, he was admitted to Park Plaza Hospital in Houston, which in those days was a place where many many AIDS patients went to die. I was in his dimly-lit room one evening along with Karl’s mother, who had come down from their very small town in Kansas, where Karl was born and raised. I could see she was being engulfed in waves of fear and horror and discomfort and love and more fear. I was, perfectly honestly, not at that moment a very robust instrument of the love of God. But into the room comes Helen, who literally climbs up on the bed and gathers Karl into her arms. She holds and nurtures him, as he moved in and out of consciousness. And as she held him and caressed him, she beamed her radiant smile at Karl’s mother with all the kindness in the world, and she said, “Look, look at your beautiful son.”

It was a moment of connection, of healing, of community, and of the perfection of love.

I will always remember that moment and be grateful for who made it possible and for what it invited me to participate in. I understood in a most powerful way what the Community of Hope was, is, and must continue to be for this suffering world.

Carla Cooper

Note: We chose to share Carla Cooper’s testimonial because it describes so beautifully the nature and mission of Helen Appelberg since the beginning of Community of Hope. Perhaps this testimonial will give the reader a clearer understanding of the mindset and goals of the Community of Hope International leadership.



News from the Regions



ATLANTIC REGION

MARLEEN McCABE



Circle of Care at Pohick Episcopal Church, Lorton, VA September 23, 2015



WEST TEXAS REGION

LIN BOUDREAUX



In September, the West Texas Region held a meeting of representatives from many centers in the region at Christ Episcopal Church in San Antonio. Attendees heard inspiring talks by Rev. Patrick Gahan, rector at Christ Church and Maria Wellisch, Vice-President of Corporate Education, Morningside Ministries.

HERITAGE REGION

BEVERLY DAVIS AND PAT BEACHY



Forty-three people attended the Heritage Region Retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in Beaumont on September 25-26. Attendees represented COHI centers in Austin and Round Rock in the west, Houston and suburbs in the center, and Woodville in the east. Praying the daily office, fellowship over meals, enjoying nature, and receiving a word of instruction, inspiration and encouragement from Fr. Peter and Brother Michael made the weekend a great success. We are ever thankful for the stability, humility and hospitality of our favorite Benedictine monks!

Beverly Davis

GEORGIA REGION

HARMONY KISER



18 new Lay Pastoral Caregivers were commissioned at Grace Episcopal Church, Gainesville, GA - September 27, 2015

Front row, L to R - Priscilla Rankin, Elizabeth Mavis, Candy McCann, Suzanne Carroll, Nancy Richardson, Bobbie Ingenito, Jenny Massey, Mary Broome, Laura Masterson (facilitator)
Back row, L to R - Polly Jones, Charlie Bradley, Pat Guthrie, Cheryl Kelley, Roc Carroll, Ann Measom, Phil Dennis, Robin Braden, Sarah Roberts, Kathy Oxford.

Harmony Kiser



In Closing...



Make your plans now to attend COHI's 19th Annual Conference: June 6, 7 and 8, 2016
with featured speaker Michael Casey, Australian Trappist Monk and foremost writer on
Benedictine Spirituality.

"To hear what others are attempting to communicate requires that we put aside our own agenda and concentrate on the other person as if no one else existed in the universe and as if nothing were so important to us as hearing what the other person wishes to communicate."

(From *The Art of Winning Souls: Pastoral Care of Novices* by Michael Casey, OCSO. Cistercian Publications & Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2012. p. 141.)



New materials available - Contact your Regional Representative to obtain a copy of:

1. COHI Circle of Care trifold brochure - a guide to Circle of Care.
2. Facilitator's Guidelines for teaching the video modules contains many helpful ideas to enhance your use of the video modules as well as the written modules.
3. Three revised written modules.



This is your newsletter!

News from you and your center is always welcome and encouraged! Please contact your Regional representative with news from your center: Upcoming classes, commissionings, stories that touch the heart, retreats and pictures of all of the above.

The deadline for the next newsletter will be January 25.

A commissioning service was held for the class of 18 at Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville, GA. The following words were in the service bulletin:

"The Community of Hope awakens us to the awareness of God in our lives and in our communities. Community grows as care givers come together regularly to pray, to listen to God, Scripture, and each other. We come to recognize and understand our spiritual gifts and the value of relationships. As we grow we experience the unfolding of pastoral identity as the ministry of presence to those we serve. The ministry of presence is a gift of grace to both care receivers and care givers. The roots of community deepen as we gather monthly in the Circle of Care to pray, share, enjoy continuing education, and provide each other with mutual support and encouragement."



Always keep an eye on our COHI website!
www.cohinternational.org