



Community of Hope International

Connections

www.cohinternational.org

Spring 2014



About the Founder

Twenty years ago this year, a newly ordained Episcopal priest in her early 60s asked a simple question: how can we who are called to care in this world of hardship and sorrow “run while we still have the light?” She lived this question deeply for some time and then late one evening she listened with the ear of her heart and heard these words: The Community of Hope. Thanks to Helen Appelberg’s creativity, leadership, and unfailing enthusiasm, the Community of Hope has grown from a first class of 12 lay pastoral caregivers in Houston TX to what is today an international enterprise of the Spirit, with more than 100 centers across North America. Rooted and still growing in Benedictine spirituality, this little “School for God’s Service” does two things exceptionally well: teaches the individual skills and disciplines essential to compassionate caregiving to those in need and, through the Circles of Care, provides the structures and resources that build lasting friendship and community. The COHI curriculum and model of practice and renewal, inspired and shaped by Helen and transmitted by so many, is now without question a demonstrated success. It really works. The challenge is that the world sorely needs more of what COHI can give. We just can’t stop now.

This coming June at Camp Allen, we have a unique opportunity to celebrate both COHI’s achievements and enormous promise---and to show our deepest gratitude to its remarkable founder. This conference represents a milestone occasion for all of us to help position the Community of Hope financially for the next twenty years. The goal is relatively modest, considering the impact of our mission, but it will take all of us, each in his or her own way, to ensure that Helen’s inspiration and our work together form a lasting legacy, a ground on which the Community will continue to thrive, nurturing and sharing its healing wisdom for the next generation.

Our goal in launching this campaign is to create The Helen Appelberg Fund, which will provide operating costs to support a much-needed new full-time COHI executive director as well as sustain all current services. This goal is ambitious but necessary if we are to transition from an all-volunteer entity to one with the small measure of permanent, effective infrastructure necessary for continued growth.

continued on page 2



*Don't Wait! Don't Hesitate!
Come listen, learn, honor and celebrate!*

COHI ANNUAL CONFERENCE JUNE 3-5, 2014
Register online at www.campallen.org

About the Founder (cont. from page 1)

The best news is that a generous anonymous donor has offered to match every donation made to honor our Founder! You will find a donation form in this newsletter, and we soon expect to have the capacity for secure on-line giving through the COHI website. In addition to making a personal donation, there will be other ways to help build the fund at the Conference itself, including a silent auction and through purchase of a number of special items that will be available at the conference, such as new dove-embossed notecards and copies of Sr. Joan Chittister's wonderful address to our 2012 conference, which we only have permission to sell for the 2014 conference.

Thank you in advance for considering a donation at this momentous time in COHI's life. Please know that each gift, whatever the size, is precious and will be received and deployed with love on behalf of our mission and in honor of our beloved Founder.

—Carla Cooper



Carla Cooper served as senior vice president and chief development officer of St. Luke's Episcopal Health System in Houston Texas from 1994-2005. She was founding director and CEO of St. Luke's Episcopal Health Charities from 1997-2005. She received her master's and doctor's degrees in English Literature from Purdue University and has taught and held leadership positions at the University of Houston System, the University of Iowa and the University of Texas School of Law. Since 1995, she has been an active member of the World Community for Christian Meditation.



Why the Dove???

In the summer of 1995 at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in the Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas, staff from Pastoral Care, Corporate Communications and Administration worked together to create the Community of Hope logo in order to publish the first brochure about the lay chaplain training program.



Three symbols were needed: one to identify the founding home, second to denote the faith practice and third to define the central theme. After a lively discussion the group chose combining the cross, the dove and the olive branch.

The cross is always visible on the tower of St. Luke's Hospital and appears in their publications; it is a Greek cross with four equal arms at right angles. Each arm has five perpendicular lines, similar to the Native American symbol for the sun. Those lines are found on the back of the Community of Hope cross. The dove represents the Holy Spirit, integral to the Trinity and basic in every Christian denomination. The olive branch symbolizes the olive branch carried by the dove to the ark, which brought hope that those on the ark would live and land was near.

Helen Appelberg



Inside this edition:

Regional News
Meet a Board Member
New Centers
The First COH Class
Ways New Centers are Formed
Silent Auction Ideas
Honor the Founder Donation
Form





News from the Regions



HEARTLAND REGION

Pam Heidt

Community of Hope training in the Episcopal Churches of the Ozarks (EChO) Regional ministry began in the summer of 2013. Two rural congregations have hosted the level one training and over 30 people from eight congregations have attended all or part of the training. The number commissioned or about to be commissioned as caregivers is smaller, about ten, but this still represents a healthy start for the program in these very small congregations. There is great enthusiasm for Community of Hope building here. Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics are being trained together at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Monett, Missouri. Community of Hope has truly been helping us to build community among our separated congregations and our denominational divisions.

The start-up was aided by the Community of Hope team from St. James' in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. They visited the congregations to promote the training and also drove up to teach many of the modules. Bishop Martin Field of West Missouri was also a great supporter of the initiative, as was Deacon Beck Schubert.

—The Rev. Edie Bird

What happens when two or three are gathered together?

The Western Missouri Southern Regional Ministry (SRM) is an example of small churches that have banded together so that they may have COH training. They are encouraged and led through training by Rev. Timothy Coppinger, Rev. Edie Bird and Paula Lively.

We at COHI refer to such groups as "clusters." Other regions have successful clusters. It is a blessing when small churches can work with each other to facilitate COH training for prospective lay pastoral caregivers. Churches that would not normally have the facilities, funds, trainees and facilitators can make COH training possible.



Pictured from left to right: Grace Chapman, Dan Philbrick and Anita Philbrick following their commissioning at St. Thomas à Becket, Cassville, Missouri

HERITAGE REGION

Beverly Davis



Twenty-four people representing 8 different Community of Hope Centers attended the Heritage Region Retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in Beaumont on April 11-12. As always, Fr. Peter and Brother Michael extended exemplary Benedictine hospitality to our Community of Hope lay ministers in preparation for Holy Week.





More~

News from the Regions



GEORGIA REGION

Harmony Kiser

This is a picture of the people from Church of the Holy Spirit in Cumming, GA, who joined in the Atlanta Diocesan-wide training for Module One, Benedictine Spirituality led by Br. Michael Gallagher on February 1 of this year.

From left to right: Putnam Smith, Pollyann Matson, Chad Cartwright, Linda Cartwright, Michael Arens, Herb Linsley, Beverly Clemmer, Janice Davis, Kathy Gibson, Beth Jones, Br. Michael Gallagher.



The Rev. Helen Appelberg traveled to Georgia in April to teach Module 15, the Retreat for the Diocesan training people and also included St. Aidan's COHI group.



Front row: Eileen Steffens, Becky Sullivan, Deb Stecher, Judie Borden, Harmony Kiser, Carol Keith, Laura Masterson, Nancy Ethier, Anne McManes, Deb Gerace, Helen Appelberg and Pam Blaesing. Second row: Rosey Dunn, Bill Williams, Jonathan Miles, Ann Frenslley, Allen Brown, Nancy Olexick, Kathy Bump, Wade Hembree, Davianne Charles, Mike Gerace, Betty Hood and Joe Rich. Not pictured: Elizabeth Hiatt and Kathleen Nixon-Lancelot.

WEST TEXAS REGION

Lin Boudreaux

The West Texas Region of the Community of Hope International held its annual retreat, March 22 and 23 at the Episcopal Conference Center on Mustang Island. There were 30 in attendance, representing 6 centers in the Region.

*“Taste and See:
Finding Jesus
in the Mystery
of the
Eucharist”*



The Rev. Brien Koehler was the speaker. In his retirement, Rev. Koehler serves as Chaplain to Nashotah House Seminary in Wisconsin and as Associate Rector of Christ Episcopal Church in San Antonio.



Meet a COHI Board Member

HARMONY KISER



Harmony Kiser was invited to join the COHI Board of Directors in 2013. She is the Regional Representative for the Georgia Region. Her parents must have been able to see into the future when they aptly named their baby “Harmony.” Perhaps her middle name is “Enthusiasm.”

After 40 years in the paralegal profession, Harmony retired to the quiet life of: active grandmother (she has 2 sons and 4 grandsons); graduating from Education for Ministry course; facilitating the first COH center in Georgia; coordinating Southeast Regional COHI Conference; for 25 years being Secretary of the Atlanta Steinway Society (The Atlanta Steinway Society sponsors recitals and holds events to raise money in order to give scholarships to needy college piano students); Facilitating the Atlanta Diocesan-wide COHI training; being an oblate at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, GA; participating in sing-alongs with other musicians at local nursing homes; and being a very busy piano teacher. In her spare time at her home church, (St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church in Milton, Georgia), Harmony is an adult Bible Study Leader, Vice President of St. Aidan’s Daughters of the King, and Children’s Sunday School teacher.



Harmony was responsible for pastoral care while on St. Aidan’s vestry in 2011 and felt her prayers were answered when she was made aware of Community of Hope. She has a great passion for Community of Hope and Benedictine Spirituality. Recently the Diocese of Atlanta has begun a Diocesan-wide COH training promoted by the Diocese of Atlanta’s “IMTE” (Institute for Ministry and Theological Education). Harmony is facilitating this training and Br. Michael led their first class (Module 1 – Benedictine Spirituality) and recently Helen Appelberg traveled to Atlanta to lead their last class (Module 15 - Retreat). This Diocesan-wide training involved a class of 20 people from 11 churches (1 Lutheran, 1 Presbyterian and 9 Episcopal) and the goal of this training is that these 20 will go back to their individual churches and begin a Community of Hope Center.

The Board is blessed to have Harmony as she brings harmony and her infectious enthusiasm to us all.

*A Warm and Loving Welcome to this year’s
New Community of Hope Centers!!*

CHAPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR EPISCOPAL CHURCH - Colorado Springs, CO

HOLY SPIRIT EPISCOPAL CHURCH - San Antonio, TX

ST. AIDAN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - Alexandria, VA

ST. PETER’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - Charlotte, NC

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - Cumming, GA



Remembering twenty years ago...the first Community of Hope Class, at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, Houston, Texas

There were twelve people in the first Community of Hope class, eight women and four men. Eleven were Episcopalians and one was Roman Catholic. I facilitated the class and was assisted by Rev. Scott Blick. We were all members of the class. We began our day at 8:30 am with Morning Prayer in St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital Chapel. We then went to the 6th floor to gather in our classroom for the day's teaching; each class was taught by a different faculty person. Following the class everyone went two by two to different hospital floors to make practice visits. After the practice visits we met in the cafeteria to share lunch and then returned to the classroom to debrief the visits. After debriefing each person took turns leading Compline. The class ended at two pm. Our study guide for The Rule was Esther de Waal's book: *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict*. In 1995 Joan Chittister's book was published and was soon adopted as our official book.

Helen Appelberg



A word from Cynthia Oliphant, COHI Start-up Coordinator.

So far, we have experienced three ways that new centers get started:

- An individual church
- Two or more churches combining together. ("Clusters" such as the Southern Regional Ministry in Missouri - see page 3)
- "Train the Trainer" centers. (Such as the Diocese of Georgia

with the recently completed Diocesan-wide training). In this model, COHI training is provided for many from various churches that have interest in lay pastoral ministry. After the training, trainees return to their own churches to begin a COHI Center at their church.

- Retirement Centers

With the newly available on-line modules, training opportunities are now open for churches that don't have access to "live" faculty to come in-house. I see this as a great tool for established centers to have "refreshers" periodically as part of their Circle of Care continuing education.

Silent Auction at our 2014 Conference



Join in the Fun and Fundraising by participating in the Silent Auction. There are three ways that you can be an important part of the Conference Silent Auction.

First: Donate (individually or in community with your Circle of Care) an item for auctioning. If you can't make it to the Conference but would like to donate an item, you can mail the item to Linda Astala, (1219 Pear Tree Lane, Houston, TX 77073, tel.: 281-443-1902, e-mail: astala@flash.net) or send it to Conference with a friend. In either case, let Linda know that you are donating the item as soon as possible.

Second: Come prepared to make a bid on an item that you've always wanted or would be lots of fun to have! If you win the item, credit card, check or cash will all work when it is time to pay.

Third: If you cannot come to the Conference and there is an auction item that you would like to purchase, have a friend who is at the conference bid for you and your friend can call you and keep you updated on the bidding.

Shhh.....

*A very preliminary
sample of what you will
be able to bid on at the*

SILENT AUCTION

- Several baskets of wine
- Nancy Denmark silver peace dove charm
- Handmade "Log Cabin" pattern quilt (38" x 56") of 30 antique fabrics.
- Olive wood prayer beads from the Holy Land and book *Praying With Beads*
- Western Style wall cross
- St. Benedict ceramic statue by South Texas Potter Betty Shamel
- Beach weekend retreat at Helen Appelberg's Galveston home
- Framed original watercolor by Pam Heidt
- Much much more!

Buying (donation!) opportunities at the Community of Hope International Conference in June

- Buy at Silent Auction
- Cash donation (see form on next page)
- Purchase DVD of Sister Joan Chittister's keynote at 2012 COHI Conference (sales of this are limited to this Conference).
- Purchase COHI dove-embossed notecards
- Purchase items from vendors, such as Nancy Denmark and Margaret Bailey, since they donate part of their proceeds to COHI.

If you would like to make an "Honor the Founder" cash donation (which will be matched by the generosity of the anonymous donor) please fill out this donation form and either bring your donation to the Conference or mail it to

COHI Board Treasurer, **Mike Patton**
16 Curlew
Rockport, TX 78382

Checks should be made payable to "COHI International"
The Community of Hope International is a
§501(c)(3) charitable corporation. Your donations are tax-deductible.

Honor the Founder
Celebrate 20 years of
Community of Hope



Run while you have
the light... RB

"Honor the Founder" donation

Your contribution of \$____ to COHI
will be thankfully acknowledged.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

REMINDER!



Early Bird Conference
Special Rate is in effect
until May 16, 2014

Register today!

Online: www.campallen.org

or

Call or email Heather Lundy
(936) 825-7175 ext. 4023
heatherl@campallen.org

Your next COHI Newsletter will be the
SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER



We would love to hear news from you
and your center! If you would like to
share pictures and/or news of classes,
retreats, your center's activities or stories
that touch the heart, please send them to
your regional representative.

www.cohinternational.org