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Standing on a Threshold

by Peggy Hansen, MS, LMFT

If we think about a “threshold” as a time of transition, departing from one place and stepping into another, this Fall of 2021 surely fits that description. In many ways, we find ourselves in a “middle” place that speaks of both continuity and disruption.

At Samaritan, our intention is to live fully in today – this present time of threshold – mindful of yesterday’s foundational accomplishments and also aware of the significant challenges and promise that tomorrow holds.

Yesterday – Where We Have Been

For years, our primary service has been counseling. Our therapists have met with hundreds of clients each week, most in office space contributed by local churches around the Puget Sound region. From the beginning, a sliding fee scale expressed our belief that everyone deserves care, regardless of their ability to pay. To keep this commitment, we have gratefully relied on the generosity of our donors and grant funders.

We created the first graduate program in the Northwest to train marriage and family therapists. An innovative and talented faculty taught and supervised hundreds of master’s level students who have gone on to provide therapy for an uncounted number of families.

We provide supervision and training for therapists who are working toward state licensure. These trainees are woven into the fabric of our clinical staff, allowing us to increase our service for those with limited financial means.

As a pastoral counseling center, our staff has served congregations and clergy through expert consultation and assessments. Local organizations and businesses have relied on our therapists for workshops and psycho-educational presentations.

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An Abiding Hope

The air quality was unhealthy, and the visibility was poor. Wildfire smoke had blinded much of the Puget Sound on this mid-August morning, so that a ferry crossing from Bremerton to the Seattle waterfront felt like an exercise in faith. A boat full of cars and people churning ahead into shrouded, disorienting blankness.

The scene that morning – and the feeling I had in the midst of it – this has overtones to what life has sometimes felt like for the past year or so. A recurring and pervasive sense of uncertainty, persistent feelings of vulnerability or even outright peril. We can visit history to see how other pandemics have resolved, but let’s face it: we don’t know where this is headed. And the experts don’t seem to be far out in front, offering guidelines and setting expectations, but then later altering and even reversing them.

(Continued on page 5)

The Samaritan Community

Clinical Staff

Kay Abramson, MS
 John Baumann, MDiv
 Mary Kay Brennan, MSW
 Grace Carpenter, MS
 William Collins, MS
 Sean Eagon, MA
 Robert Erickson, MS
 March Gunderson, MDiv, MEd
 Beth Hess, MS, MSW
 Mark Houglum, PhD, MDiv
 Colleen Kelley, MC
 Leo Kiralla, MA
 Natividad Lamug, MA
 Isaiah Lin, PsyD
 Heather Macdonald, PsyD
 Matthew Percy, PsyD.
 Anne Perry, MA, EdD
 Jim Ramsey, MA
 Michael Rogers, MDiv, MA
 Beverley Shrumm, MC
 Jonathan Siehl, MDiv, MSW
 Jocelyn Skillman, MA
 Kimberly Snow, PsyD
 Mary Stanton-Nurse, MA
 Gary Steeves, MEd
 Eric Stroo, MA
 Tita Subercaseaux, MS
 Neal Teng, PhD
 Deb Thomas, MS
 Katherine Yoder, MA

Counseling Locations

Seattle

Main Office (Green Lake)
 Rainier Beach Presbyterian Church

West Seattle

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
 West Side Presbyterian Church

Shoreline

Shoreline Free Methodist Church

Bellevue

Bellevue Presbyterian Church
 St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

Renton

Fairwood Community United Methodist
 St. Stephen the Martyr Parish

Spokane

First Presbyterian Church of Spokane
 Opportunity Presbyterian Church

Board of Directors

Rev. Leland Seese, Chair
 Douglas Farnham, Treasurer
 Rev. William McIvor, Secretary
 Mary Denny
 Colleen Chinen
 Doug LeRoy
 Liz Covey
 Rev. Scott Lumsden, ex officio

Administrative Staff

Beverley Shrumm, CEO/President
 Matthew Percy, Clinical Director
 James Ramsey, Director of Facilities
 Heather Macdonald, Director of
 Testing and Assessment
 Eric Stroo, Community Relations
 and Marketing Coordinator
 Katherine Yoder, Director of Admin-
 istrative Services
 John Poole, Senior Accountant
 Jesse Dobner, A/R & Billing
 Min Park, A/R & Billing
 Daniel Keyes
 Reception/Admin
 Emerald Lynch, Admin Assistant
 Konrad Schaller, Admin Assistant

**The main office of Samaritan Center of Puget Sound is located at 564 NE Ravenna Blvd, Seattle, WA 98115.
 We can be reached by calling 206-527-2266.
 More information about therapists, locations and programs can be found on our website at www.samaritanps.org.**

Smooth Operators: Well-Deserved Recognition

The year 2020 brought significant changes throughout the world, and Samaritan Center of Puget Sound was no exception. Despite the turbulent times, our administrative team has been a steadfast presence at our Ravenna facility, ensuring the smooth operations of the agency over the past year. They have demonstrated incredible ingenuity, flexibility, and resilience as our agency moved from a paper-based system to one that could accommodate remote work for our therapists at the beginning of the pandemic. Beginning in 2021, this move was followed by the implementation of an EHR (electronic health record) system.

In addition to developing new forms and procedures, the administrative team provided countless hours of support and encouragement to staff and clients alike as they adjusted to new ways of doing things. The Samaritan community is very blessed to have such a dynamic team working behind the scenes! Please join me in saying thank you to Jesse Dobner, Daniel Keyes, Emerald Lynch, Min Park, John Poole, and Konrad Schaller for their hard work and dedication.

-Katherine Yoder, director of Administrative Services

Meeting Our Board Members



Doug Farnham is the sales manager and principal of Centerline Sales & Marketing and is Treasurer of the Samaritan Center Board of Directors. He is serving in his second term.

Could you describe your earliest involvement with Samaritan Center?

I was asked to join the Board of Directors in 2010. I had been on the finance committee and involved in a capital campaign at Newport Presbyterian Church, and a member of the congregation recommended me as a board candidate. Samaritan was looking for someone for their board with financial experience. I was familiar with Samaritan Center but didn't realize the importance and strong history of this unique mission until my first meeting with the Executive Director, Beverley Shrumm.

What do you see as the unique/most valuable attributes of the agency and its role in the community?

As with most service businesses, the most valuable assets are the people who provide the service and the administrative support team. What makes the Samaritan team special is their overall commitment to the mission of helping and healing.

Where have you been able to contribute to the agency over the course of your involvement?

In both of my terms with Samaritan I have served on the Finance Committee and as Board Treasurer, so I have been deeply involved in the budget process and finances of Samaritan. I was also on the Strategic Planning Committee that was formed to navigate the potential vulnerabilities and opportunities that a faith integrated agency would face as the Affordable Healthcare Act was rolled out.

What do you believe are the greatest challenges that Samaritan Center faces today?

This past year I was amazed and impressed that the Samaritan counselors and administrative staff were able to shift from a face-to-face service model to a mostly virtual model. The challenge moving forward will be to determine the right balance of in-person and virtual service and still fulfill the mission of the agency.

The other ongoing challenge is finding counselors and staff who are a good fit with the mission of Samaritan Center.

What are your hopes for Samaritan Center for its next decade and beyond?

I would hope to see Samaritan Center expand the mission, both physically and virtually to other markets in the Pacific Northwest and beyond!

Wonder: A Sighting!

"The world will never starve for want of wonders; but only want of wonder." —G. K. Chesterton

At a recent Samaritan staff meeting, therapist Kay Abramson shared this email reflection from her granddaughter, Kate Luboda, who was engaged in a summer internship at the research station at Lime Kiln Lighthouse on San Juan Island. In Kate's words:

"Finally!!! Finally, I have some resident sightings to report! Finally, after 68 days of a research study without any research subject, the whales have returned. The Southern Resident Killer Whales have been absent from these waters because their main food source, Chinook salmon, have also been reported in historically low numbers. But at long last, members of all three southern resident pods (J, K, and L) were sighted at the lighthouse last night. It was a real orca party: breaches and spyhops and tail lobbs galore! At risk of anthropomorphizing these animals too much, it really did seem like these whales were rejoicing with us to be back in the Salish Sea. At the very least, we human viewers were overjoyed to see them.

At first reports, we thought only J pod was entering from the strait, but as we kept watching, members of K and L pod arrived as well. Not only that, but transient calls were being picked up by the hydrophone! That's really rare! Everyone was there! The whales were incredibly spread out and kept zig-zagging along. I sat at the lighthouse for at least two hours as the sun set, and the whales passed by. The shadows obscured the saddle patches that are unique to each individual, so identifying the whales was challenging, but the dusky rays expertly illuminated their blows. Water droplets turned gold.



My favorite moments were when a matriline of whales surfaced together. Something about the cluster of dorsal fins: tall and straight male fins alongside short and curved female fins with the little fin of L-125, one of the most recent calves, leading the way is truly inspirational. You get a sense of the intense familial bond these whales share and the innate wisdom they hold. While you want to see and learn everything about them, you feel honored to simply be in their presence. You feel chosen just to witness their magnificence.

Turning away from the waves and to the land, the rocks along the shore were speckled with eager viewers: camera, telescopes, and binoculars all pointed expectantly outwards. It struck me that the other thing so incredible about these whales is the community they inspire. Sitting on my stone perch, I felt buoyed and light, not only by the presence of the magnificent orcas, but by the collective joy of the people around me. Seeing the residents after such a long time and so much expectation was an incredible satisfaction; the world, once askew on its axis, was righted. Summer had finally begun!



Photo by Kate Luboda

(Continued from page 1)

I have struggled at times to stay hopeful, and that is unusual for me.

I have been led to ask myself what it is that I draw upon when I do the gut check to regain hope. Is it an ability to cast my vision ahead to some future point—the spring of next year, perhaps—and then place my trust in the likelihood that things will then, once again, feel normal? I have certainly been tempted to try that over the past year and a half, and yet I have come to regard that as a risky vessel to which I might entrust my precious cargo of hope.

A former Czech dissident and political prisoner, Vaclav Havel offered a remarkable and clearly durable perspective on hope. In a 1986 interview he said, “Hope is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart.... It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.” I would find this to be a powerful statement, even without the knowledge that three years later Havel became his country’s first democratically elected president.

Where does one achieve and maintain that orientation of the spirit, that certainty about what makes sense? A helpful story comes from the indigenous peoples of this land who tell, in various versions, a story that I respectfully summarize as follows:

Bear was taunting the other animals, claiming supremacy because of his great strength. None dared challenge Bear until Turtle spoke up, claiming that he could best Bear in a tug of war. Scornfully, Bear accepted the challenge, pulling from the land while Turtle took to the water in the river. Once underwater, Turtle swam to the depths and tied the end of the rope to the root of a mighty tree that grew at the far shore. Bear pulled until the sun was setting and finally conceded defeat.

The capacity to overcome Bear lies not in Turtle’s own strength but in the hidden strength of something that is rooted in the depths. Just so, our own capacity to have an abiding hope lies not in our own strength but in the way our hearts and spirits are rooted in what we value and honor that extends beyond ourselves. For a Christian such as I, certainty is rooted in the God who has made common cause with those who suffer at the hands of the powerful.

Wherever it derives, hope is the certainty that steadfastly accompanies us, emboldening our actions, not dependent on a desired outcome but on this orientation of our spirits that is in accord with the wholeness we sense and seek. That is our hope, the safe harbor that abides with us, rather than the one we can only imagine in the smoke and mist of a distant shore.

—Eric Stroo, LMHC



Illustration by Jocelyn Skillman

Another Transition

Peggy Hansen Retires

Our dear colleague, Peggy Hansen, after a veritable lifetime of clinical work has closed her practice here at Samaritan Center. Luckily for us, she will stay connected and involved in our professional community by bringing her magic touch to our public relations endeavors.

Through her decades of service, we have benefitted from her wisdom, perspective and deep caring—for colleagues, for community, for each of her precious clients.

Trained and licensed as a family therapist (LMFT) Peggy has guided and supported her clients through life's transitions, both the chosen and unexpected. Her innate wisdom and life experience (having reared nine children from two loving marriages) offered solid grounding for clinical decisions. On her wall at home is a saying: "My life has a superb cast, but I can't figure out the plot." At home and in her clinical practice, she has always been willing to discover the plot line *with* the people involved. She frequently would thank her clients for the privilege of conversation with them.

We at the agency are already missing Peggy's kind good humor in the face of challenging transitions such as our recent COVID 19-required shelter in place and then the long ordeal of social distancing. I've been privileged to be part of a regular consultation group which we've conducted via videoconference platforms. Our twice monthly small group conversations sparked with personal engagement and clinical insight. This group sorely misses Peggy's cheerful insights and her profound conviction that because of who we are "this will get better."

We are comforted to know that her writing and editing skills that have enhanced our letters, postings, brochures, bios, newsletters, and grant proposals remain available to support us as we continue growing and transforming our presence in the communities we serve. —Kay Abramson



Margaret "Peggy" Hansen

(Continued from page 1)

Our commitment to continuing education, therapist training, and peer consultation ensures that the services we provide are of the highest quality. We frequently collaborate with other trusted professionals in the field of psychotherapy.

On A Threshold – Looking To Tomorrow

Much has been written over the past year about the pandemic, political unrest, global crises, and the effect of this on our mental, physical, spiritual, and relational health. While we acknowledge that we will continue to live in a climate of uncertainty, Samaritan believes deeply in the future. Our leadership, board and staff are engaged in a process of assessing and planning. There is work to be done, people to be served, and visions to be made into practical realities.

Standing here, on this threshold, we can choose what to take with us from the space we're departing from. What have we learned in these 60 years? What needs do we see in this new, uncharted time? How can Samaritan best contribute?

We listen to the words of our mission statement: "*We dedicate ourselves each day to make this a more peaceful, just and compassionate world—one intentional, healing encounter at a time.*" Our commitment is to truly face the losses and the pain within and around us. Then, acknowledging the vulnerability and the fear, we will engage the future with courage and resilience.

Wisdom from Many Voices

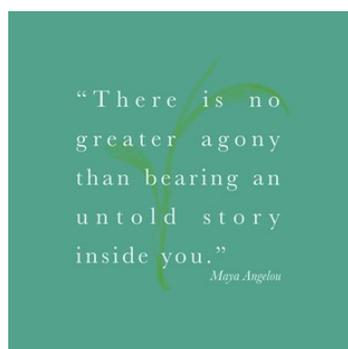
Revitalizing our Samaritan Center Instagram Presence

By Jocelyn Skillman LMHC, MHP, CMHS

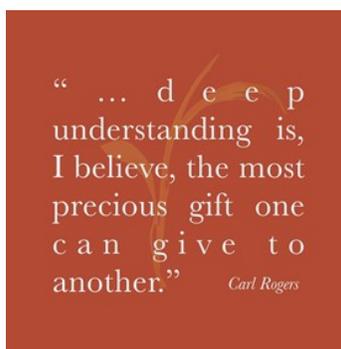
Samaritan Center of Puget Sound has had a fallow presence on Social Media for a year or so, and I've been on an exhilarating mission to revitalize our Instagram account. Instagram is a social media platform built for folks, from far and wide, to curate and share images and words. When you “follow” a given friend or organization, you thereafter receive a “feed” of posted images. I've been honored to devote time daily to searching out words of wisdom that beam and bloom for our followers—in hopes to bless and expand our community's touch.

Through this creative and healing work of curating wisdom, I get to explore my dense bookshelf—all the greats from my multi-disciplinary walk...from Hafiz to Brene Brown, from Thomas Merton to Maya Angelou. I'm blessed to pluck wisdom words from our incredible, generous colleagues, dipping into their reservoirs of deep knowing, cultivated in the warm earth of their professional and personal lives.

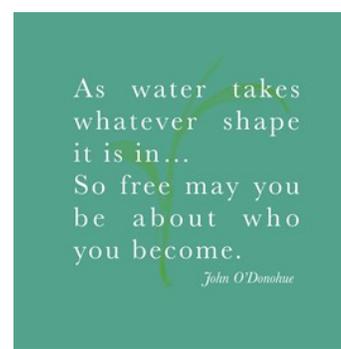
When I find a quote, I embed it visually on a program called Procreate with an echo of our logo and our marketing colors—a shade of turquoise and our particular Samaritan Red. Posting usually late in the evening, I pray over the words in hopes that they touch hearts. They are free-floating. Intermittently our circle expands, we catch followers...



moving from 7 followers to 14...



14 to 30...



30 to 50...

I think on Jesus' expanding circle, the Body, and His “open source.” The way Jesus fished humans—deftly plopping Love into the sea of being, waiting patiently for seeds to germinate and bloom. They have done just that, growing in our own community. Look at our organizational circle of courageous, pandemic-rugged, wounded healers, standing in the mess of it all, holding space, collapsing into Christ's arms, client by client.

Through our Social Media presence, I send Love through the ether—the ethereal internet cords—and I hope some new eyes and ears, the ones in need, might spark our way to be befriended and uplifted. We seek accompaniment and move through these dark hours on the wings of heart wisdom, by the grace of God given through the ages by our sisters and brothers.

Follow us! [@samaritancenterofps](https://www.instagram.com/samaritancenterofps)

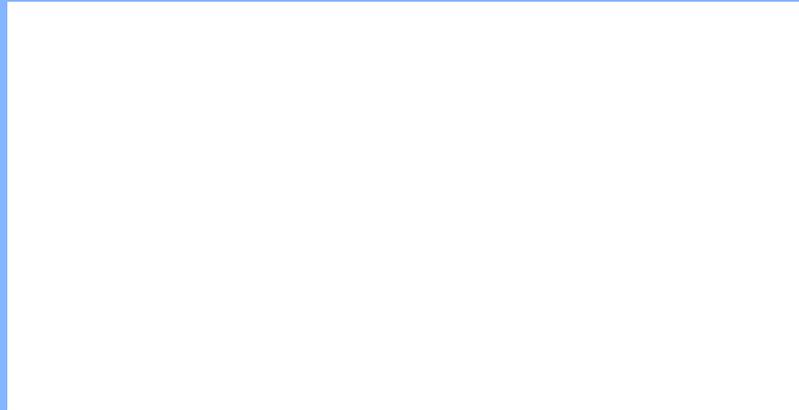
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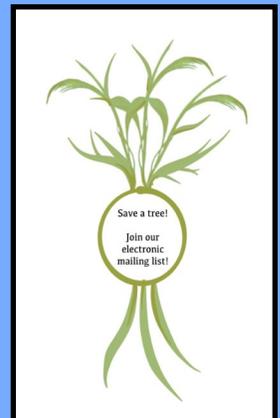
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Stay in Touch and (Perhaps) Save a Tree

As we seek to shape our agency for the future, we're aware that many people have moved from getting information on paper to receiving it on their phones and computers. If you'd prefer to get our next newsletter via email as a PDF attachment, please tell us so at jskillman@samaritanps.org (We will use the sender's email address in the future unless you specify otherwise.)

If, however, you prefer this paper newsletter, take no further action! We'll be equally happy to continue to mail it to you. The PDF is always available for viewing at our website.



For 60 years, Samaritan Center of Puget Sound has been committed to providing high-quality mental health services that are affordable and accessible to all. We provide psychotherapy that is relational and spiritually grounded for individuals of all ages, as well as for couples and families. We are attentive to the needs of those who are underserved, offering care at a reduced fee. In addition to counseling, we offer psychological testing and therapeutic assessment, continuing education and training for therapists, and support groups. Currently, we provide services both in-person and remotely throughout the state of Washington.