



Center for Community Counseling

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FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER TRANSFORMING LIVES & HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

Support CCC Through Our \$10,000 Fall Match!

Welcome to Fall. It's hard to believe another year has gone by and soon the holidays will be upon us. For some, this time of year brings sadness and uncertainty. Time constraints, financial challenges and gaps in insurance can make finding support feel impossible. CCC is here to provide that support for those who are low-income, uninsured and facing difficulties finding services.

"During a period of my life where a lot of changes happened...I felt very grateful to have a counselor who understood the trying times I was going through. It was the security blanket I really needed."

Our unique model allows us to provide quality mental health counseling through a blend of licensed therapists and student interns. Our sliding scale fees and options for in person or telehealth sessions help lessen barriers to service. Since we do not accept insurance or receive any government funds we are dependent on donors to support our efforts. This year, thanks to a generous donor, your contributions will be doubled by a **Dollar-for-Dollar Match up to \$10,000!** Please help CCC meet our Fall goal and take advantage of this generous match. Donors like you make all the difference!

Intern Spotlight

At CCC, our volunteers bring a depth of expertise and personal experience to the work that we do. Ari Kosel, one of this year's masters level counseling interns, has supported CCC and our clients by providing screens and assessments, individual and couples therapy, and facilitating process groups. See page 4 for Ari's thoughtful look at being with grief during the holidays.

Volunteer Recognition Party

Thanks to the generosity of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, we gathered together in the Parish Hall on September 15th for our annual Volunteer Recognition Party. This year's afternoon tea brought some familiar faces and new additions to the CCC family. Thank you to all who were able to come and all who were there in spirit. CCC would not exist without the help of our incredible volunteers!



From left to right: Board member, Ursula Schneider, and long-time volunteer counselors Cori Taggart and Leora White.



From left to right: Retiring Board member Len Calvert, Board member Sheila Broderick and Janet Calvert.

Dear Debbie

I always donate to the Center for Community Counseling each year, but I wish there was a way I could give more on a fixed budget. Does my small donation make a difference?

Signed, Million-dollar Donor in My Heart

Dear Cherished Donor,

Believe me when I say, every dollar counts! As a small agency with limited financial resources, we operate on an efficient but lean budget. We depend on individual donors, foundations, and events to raise enough money each year to fulfill our mission.

There are a couple of ways you can support CCC and this year we have a way for your donation to be matched! Thanks to a very generous anonymous donor, we have a \$10,000 Challenge Gift for our Fall Fundraising Campaign. This means that the first \$10,000 in contributions will be matched dollar for dollar. Your gift will go twice as far!



Another way to support CCC is to come to our Dueling Pianos Fundraiser on February 10, 2024 at WOW Hall. This a fun, interactive, rollicking good time featuring two extraordinary piano players 'dueling' it out for your entertainment. You'll enjoy light fare, a silent auction and an all-request night of songs you know and love. Sing along or just clap to the beat! You will enjoy a night to remember! Tickets are only \$50 and all proceeds support the Center for Community Counseling. We hope to see you there!



Deborah Saunders

A Vision for the Future

We are thrilled to announce that Chris Clarke, RN, a highly respected and experienced medical executive, has assumed the role of President of the Board at the Center for Community Counseling. Her extensive knowledge and expertise in the healthcare industry will undoubtedly prove invaluable in guiding the CCC towards excellence.

As the new Board president, Chris will continue to prioritize the well-being of our clients, ensuring that they have access to the highest quality counseling services. We are confident that her leadership will bring positive change and contribute to the continued growth of CCC. Thank you, Chris, for your ongoing support as we embark on this exciting new chapter together!



Chris Clarke

Thank You to Our Volunteers

Alayna Pilney, Intern
Alex Garver, Intern
Alexandria Davis
Amalia Sullivan, LCSW
Andy Duffield, Intern
Ana Marie McAbee, CSWA
Ari Kosel, Intern
Arien Muzacz, Ph.D., LPC
Art Schiller
Audrey Medina, Ph.D
Bella Giannettoni
Carolyn Benedict, LCSW
Carolyn Taylor, LMFT
Chris Wig, MS, CADC
Christy Sheerin, LCSW
Cori Taggart, LPC
Dayna Huey, Intern
Emily Alderaen, Intern
Emma Burton, Intern
Gene Obersinner, LCSW
Jack Straut
Jamie Raffety, Intern
Jamie Souza, Intern
Jan Jamison, LCSW
Janet Taylor, LMFT
Jamyn Gavello, LCSW
Jennifer Owen, Intern

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Volunteers

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Jessica Haymaker, LCSW

Jennifer Devault, LPC

Jon Davies, Ph.D.

Jon Talebreza-May, Ph.D.,
LCSW

Juliana Picard, Intern

Katelyn Colborne, Intern

Keri Anderson

Lauren Wilson

Leora White, LPC

Lilian Liang, BS Intern

Lyndsie Leech

Mara Woods, CSWA

Marissa Zarate

Michelle Perez, Intern

Monica Blaine, MSW

Pam Birrell, Ph.D.

Paul Bolle, LMFT

Payton Cawley, Intern

Peggy Russell, Intern

Polly Jamison, Ph.D.

Rick Friedrich, MD

Robin Samora, LCSW

Sarah Schrott, LCSW

Tricia LaFrance, LPC

Valina Jacksonberger, Intern

Whitney Whiting, Intern

Zoza Oberle, Intern

Ask Nasim

I feel like I never fully bounced back from being isolated during the pandemic. It seems like everyone else is moving on and I'm still at home, feeling anxious, and not sure who to reach out to. Am I the only one who feels like this?

Signed, Secluded in Springfield

Dear Reader,

You are not alone in your loneliness. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has announced that the latest focus of the country should be in “building social connection” in the “same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues such as tobacco, obesity, and substance use disorders,” noting that loneliness is a national epidemic. Researchers from the US Census looked at people living alone, divorce rates, and the use of dating apps to determine the loneliest states in the United States. Oregon was rated as the 3rd loneliest state in the nation.

Carl Jung, one of the founding fathers of depth psychology, noted that, “loneliness does not come from having no people around you, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important to you.” It is here that the dedicated volunteers at CCC come in. The core of our philosophy is to transform lives through the healing power of building relationships. These relationships start in the therapy room, where, through time, clients have the opportunity to build a trusting relationship in order to communicate what is important to them, and be listened to in a deep and meaningful way. We hope that this experience will allow our clients to identify other relationships in their lives in which the deeper level of social connection can be formed and developed.

Beyond our individual counseling services, CCC established a series of four, 8-week DBT groups throughout the year, focused on Emotional Regulation, Distress Tolerance, Interpersonal Effectiveness, and Mindfulness. Although most participants were nervous about starting, noting that being in a group situation increased their feelings of anxiety and insecurity, throughout the year, group members have developed a deeper understanding and appreciation that they are not alone in their feelings. In fact, a core group of people who have attended 2 or more of these modules have helped to create a culture of trust, vulnerability and support in the group. Many celebrated the final session of the 3rd group by going out for ice cream together! We look forward to fostering the social connectedness for all members as we conclude the final module for the year. If you are interested in joining the new series of DBT groups in 2024 or any of our other services, please reach out to Intake@ccceugene.org.



*Nasim
Talebreza-May*



Volunteer of the Year!

We are pleased to announce this year's Volunteer of the Year is Christina "Christy" Sheerin. Christy joined CCC in 2019 and has served many of our clients who were assessed for needing a more experienced therapist to meet their needs. She has facilitated groups with associates and student interns whom she mentored along the way. We appreciate the warm and enthusiastic energy that Christy brings to every encounter at CCC.



Christy Sheerin

Christy first heard about CCC from an ad in the newspaper. She was reactivating her license after taking time off to raise her three children. The idea of providing mental health care on a sliding scale appealed to her. Christy has been an active member of the Eugene community for years, volunteering for various organizations including the Eugene Mission, and the array of sports and educational activities her children have been involved with. Volunteering at CCC seemed like a wonderful and natural way for her to begin practicing again. During her years at CCC, she has never taken a break from seeing clients. When asked what has kept her coming back, she said that getting to know her clients—their struggles as well as their strengths—is one of the privileges of the work she does at CCC.

"I feel a sense of commitment to providing ongoing care, and this was especially true throughout the COVID pandemic. Also, being able to continue working with clients based on their identified needs (and regardless of their insurance status or limitations) is a rare freedom."

When asked what she enjoyed most about her time at CCC, she said that she found CCC to be a supportive and friendly place, and she appreciated the opportunities for ongoing professional development. When Christy is not seeing clients at CCC or in her private practice, she can be found walking her dog at the various trails in and around Eugene, swimming, spending time with family or settling down with a good book.

Thank you, Christy, for your skillful and dedicated service to CCC and the members of our Lane County community!

Being with Grief

by Ari Kosel

The holiday season can be both a joyful time filled with celebration and togetherness, as well as an incredibly emotional and painful time. It can be a stark reminder of the absence of those we love and can serve as another milestone that marks the passage of time. Having lost loved ones myself, I feel their absence most keenly during the holidays when our focus turns culturally toward celebrating with family and friends. It can feel challenging to hold the "holiday cheer" while also making space for the deep sense of loss and sadness.

When I feel my grief rising, I remember a quote from the Dalai Lama XIV that I read in the *Book of Joy*, "...grief is the reminder of the depth of our love. Without love, there is no grief. So when we feel our grief, uncomfortable and aching as it may be, it is actually a reminder of the beauty of that love, now lost." When we learn to be with our feelings of loss and longing, we also allow ourselves to hold the rich memories and depth of love that is the flip side of the coin.

Grief is one of those feelings many of us don't know how to be with - whether it's our own grief or the grief of another. How can we hold what feels impossible to be with? Many of us feel the need to "fix" grief and fill the void as quickly as possible, yet grief is not a problem to be solved. It is a process to be tended to and lived through.

We can all benefit from learning how to be with grief. Frances O'Connor, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Arizona, believes that grieving is a form of learning that helps us adapt to a world that feels like it is missing something. Inevitably we will all experience loss, and we will navigate and feel these losses with varying degrees of acuity. As Julia Samuel notes in her book, *Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death, and Surviving*, "There is no right or wrong in grief; we need to accept whatever form it takes, both in ourselves and in others."

Healing is not linear, and the grief process can look different for everyone. A vital part of any grieving process is to allow the pain to exist without trying to ignore it, rush through it, or avoid it. We may never "get over" our grief, but we can

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A Legacy of Community Service

The Center for Community Counseling bids farewell to their beloved longtime volunteer, Len Calvert, as he officially retires from the Board of Directors. Len's remarkable tenure has left an indelible mark on the organization, exemplifying the true essence of community service. For years, Len has been a pillar of support, lending his time, expertise, and unwavering commitment to CCC. As a member of the Board, his contributions have been instrumental in driving the organization's mission forward and positively impacting the lives of countless individuals in need. While Len steps away from his role on the Board of Directors, his dedication to community service will undoubtedly continue in new ways. The Center for Community Counseling extends its deepest gratitude to Len Calvert for his exceptional service to our community. We wish him a joyful and fulfilling retirement.



Len Calvert

*Photo courtesy of
Eugene Ballet*

Grief *continued from page 4*

make peace with it. We may never "move on" from our grief, but we can learn to live *with* it. Grief is easier to hold when we don't feel isolated or alone with it.

This holiday season, I invite you to consider how to be with grief as a community. If you're supporting someone with their grief, validate their feelings and allow them the space to express and be with their pain. Focus on how you can minimize their suffering, but be mindful of not offering unsolicited advice. Listen, be patient, and remember to take care of yourself as well. Bearing witness to grief can be painful and exhausting for those in support roles. Be sure to fill your own cup so you can continue to show up and fill the cups of those you care about.

Grief can be profoundly challenging - especially when we feel alone in navigating it. Perhaps the holidays, a time of year so focused on being together and celebrating connection, can also be an opportunity to come together around grief and loss. Let us collectively hold the sadness that can be magnified during this time of year and celebrate the love that is the flip side of grief.



Grants received from Sept. 21, 2022 to present

Many thanks to the generous donors that gifted CCC with grants since September 21, 2022. We are so grateful.

Active 20-30 Club of Eugene

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United Way

Woodard Family Foundation



Donor List - September 21, 2022 to September 21, 2023

We understand that people donate to CCC at different times of the year and we always appreciate your donations. Any donations made after September 21st will be listed in our Fall 2024 Newsletter.

\$5,000-\$15,000

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\$2500-\$4999

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Betty Taylor

Ellen Thomas

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Geraldine Wagner

Jennifer Wassermiller

Timothy Withrow

** Recognizing our Legacy Society
Contributors*



An Unforgettable Heart of Gold

After more than 10 years of dedicated service to the Center for Community Counseling, Carolyn Benedict passed away in May of this year following a valiant battle with cancer. There is so much that Carolyn contributed to the CCC during her years with us. In addition to being a volunteer counselor and member of our Board, she also facilitated the Grandparents Raising Grandparents Group, and was an Events Committee member for over six years. In her free time she even hosted Book Clubs for CCC counselors at her home!



Carolyn Benedict

Carolyn first discovered CCC after moving to Oregon and running into CCC staff selling fundraising tickets at the mall. She expressed interest in volunteering and the next week she called the Center and made an appointment with the Director at the time, Melissa Thomas. The rest is history! Melissa recently shared her thoughts about their time together:

“Carolyn Benedict was an absolute joy to work with at CCC. She truly valued volunteerism and was dedicated and steadfast in her work with individual and group clients, as well as graduate student interns. Her contributions of time, creativity and financial support were greatly appreciated. Carolyn was beautiful inside and out and had a huge heart for helping others. She was often the first to volunteer when a need arose at CCC. She will be remembered for her dedication, and greatly missed!”

Carolyn’s clients loved her too! One of the members of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group shared with us that being around Carolyn was “like a warm hug.”

Others added that, in addition to her many other talents, Carolyn had a flair for decorating. She created the lovely floral

arrangements for our annual Volunteer Recognition Party and made every celebration one to remember. Past staff member, Lesley Sabini shared that she could always depend on Carolyn when she needed help with an event:

“She didn’t just share ideas-she was hands on and gave her all. She was a caring, generous person who left this world too soon.”

It is clear that anyone who had the privilege of crossing Carolyn’s path was impacted greatly by her presence. Our Executive Director Debbie Saunders shared:

“I will remember Carolyn as a voracious reader. We shared the love of reading and oftentimes shared books with each other. Her worldview was progressive and inclusive. While Carolyn was known for her kindness and compassion, no one should mistake her kindness for weakness. She had quite a backbone, and was willing to fight for what she knew was right.”

Nasim May, our Clinical Program Manager, spoke to Carolyn five days before her sudden passing and she was already looking forward to rejoining the Grandparent’s group. Carolyn’s warm and welcoming smile and dedication to the field has had an impact on all of us. She will be dearly missed by everyone at CCC and remembered for her kindness, generosity and grace.

“I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion.”

-Henry David Thoreau



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