

## Compassionate Caregiving Program Update

Pamela Russell, LMSW

### 2007 EVENTS

#### September 23–28 Contemplative End-of-Life Care: Caring for Others, Caring for Yourself

Annie Eichenholz and Darci Meyers will lead this 6 day workshop offering caregivers an in depth exploration of how to care for ourselves as we care for others. Held at Hollyhock Retreat Center, Cortes Island, BC, Canada. [www.hollyhock.ca](http://www.hollyhock.ca)

#### October 21–26 Contemplative Caregiving: Wisdom and Compassion at the End-of-Life

Pam Russell and Annie Eichenholz explore how meditation and compassion practices can help us face our own fears and the challenges of being truly present with dying. Held at Omega Institute, Rhinebeck NY. [www.omega.org](http://www.omega.org)

#### November 9–11 Healing With the Heart of Inspiration

Annie Eichenholz and Pam Russell will present a workshop on exploring the heart of inspiration – by returning to what inspires us we can heal ourselves and begin to manifest a deeper quality of presence that benefits ourselves and others. Held at the Center for Professional Renewal in Houston, TX.

For more information visit our website at:

[www.spcare.org/us](http://www.spcare.org/us)

This past May, the U.S. Spiritual Care Team met for the first time with Spiritual Care's International Director, Cecile Gassler and James Duffy, MD, President of the Institute of Religion and Health (IRH) and Medical Director for the Institute of Palliative Care at Texas Methodist Hospital (TMC) of Houston, Texas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the latest updates and progress of the Compassionate Caregiving Program (CCP) slated to begin February 2008. Also present from the U.S. team were Annie Eichenholz, Senior Educator, Darci Meyers, National Coordinator, and Pam Russell,

Educator and Manager of the CCP Project.

The Compassionate Caregiving Program is our first hospital-based educational program in the



ANNIE EICHENHOLZ, CECILE GASSLER, PAM RUSSELL, ANN ALLEGRE, DARCI MEYERS, JAMES DUFFY (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

U.S., and the priority of the meeting was to discuss how the program would be best implemented and supported by IRH and TMC. The team deter-

mined that as a pilot program, the optimal participant group size would be limited. The target audience will be primarily the oncology nursing staff and may also include the emergency room nursing staff.

Progress on the writing of the student manual, with the welcome support from the International Spiritual Care Team, was also discussed. After the completion of the first draft of the manual the final revisions will be shared with the board of advisors at TMC and the timeline for completion will be set by November 2007.

*Continued on back page*

## International Spiritual Care Program Annual Meeting

Darci Meyers, MA

This year's annual International Spiritual Care meeting was held at Dzogchen Beara Retreat Center in West Cork, Ireland on March 27 – April 1, 2007. Dzogchen Beara is under the spiritual guidance of Sogyal Rinpoche and offers year-round programs and retreats. The public programs include introductory weekends for beginners

and people new to meditation, supplemented by retreats for those who wish to deepen their understanding and practice. For more information please visit [www.dzogchenbeara.org](http://www.dzogchenbeara.org).

Spiritual Care Representatives came to the annual meeting from all over Europe, Australia and the U.S., with 23 participants

in total. Darci Meyers, Annie Eichenholz and Pam Russell represented the U.S. The annual meeting was led by Cecile Gassler, International Spiritual Care Director, and focused on the future vision of Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program throughout the world, team building, and the sharing of resources. We heard updates

*Continued on page 2*



THE INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUAL CARE  
EDUCATION PROGRAM TEAM  
AT THE NEW CARE CENTER SITE

**“A REFUGE WHERE  
THOSE WHO ARE SICK  
OR FACING DEATH  
MAY STAY WITH  
THEIR FAMILIES,  
RECEIVING THE BEST  
IN PHYSICAL,  
EMOTIONAL AND  
SPIRITUAL CARE”**



THE VIEW FROM DZOGCHEN BEARA  
CORK COUNTY, IRELAND

## International Spiritual Care Program Meeting, continued from page 1

on the Spiritual Care Book Project, the new Dzogchen Beara Care Center, and we participated in a training on “Deep Listening.”

### The Spiritual Care Book Project Update

The Spiritual Care Book Project is coming to completion. The publication is a practical handbook for caregivers and health care professionals who care for people who are ill and dying. It documents what caregivers have found in applying the practices on wisdom and compassion as they are described in the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, by Sogyal Rinpoche, and includes testimonials from Spiritual Care Educators, guided practices and reflection exercises. Chris Whiteside, Senior Spiritual Care Educator in Ireland is spearheading the project, with the support of many others from Rigpa’s Spiritual Care Education

Program. The book is targeted for completion and submission to the publishers by December 2007.

### Dzogchen Beara Care Center Update

Ground breaking is underway at Dzogchen Beara for the Spiritual Care Center. Under the guidance of Sogyal Rinpoche, the new center will serve people from all walks of life and religious orientations. It will be a refuge where those who are sick or facing death may stay with their families, receiving the best in physical, emotional and spiritual care. The center is targeted to open in the fall of 2008. At that time Rigpa’s Spiritual Care Education Program plans to facilitate an international conference for leaders in health care and caregiving around the world.

### “Deep Listening” Training with Rosalyn Oliver

“Deep Listening,” developed

by Rosalyn Oliver and Rigpa’s Spiritual Care Education Program, is listening compassionately and holistically from our whole being, to ourselves and to others. The training led us to personally explore this deeper method of listening, to practice the skills and to look at how to integrate these skills into our work as professional and volunteer caregivers. The “Deep Listening” training manual is currently undergoing final revisions. Once complete, we plan to bring this training to the U.S.

**Darci Meyers, M.A.** worked as a Hospice Director for six years, and has experience in health education, bereavement and spiritual care. Currently Darci serves a Hospice Chaplain in Boulder, Colorado, and is the National Coordinator for Rigpa’s Spiritual Care Education Program. [darci@spcare.org](mailto:darci@spcare.org)

## Study Groups Update

Osee Mallio, Study Group Coordinator

Spiritual Care Study Groups are offered to healthcare professionals and/or volunteers with the aim of providing support and education through learning meditation and contemplative skills which can be integrated into one’s professional and personal life. Study groups are coordinated by Spiritual Care trained facilitators and are offered in cities where there is an established Rigpa community.

For the past two years we have been working with the new 10 module International Spiritual Care Study Group Curriculum. The curriculum includes group activities, handouts, booklists, and audio/video resources, and covers such topics as healing and preventing burnout, compassion, finding meaning in life and preparing spiritually for death.

Study groups have been

held in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Eugene, Oregon. Paul Norden and Dan Smith began a second study group in Chicago in June and Ronna Friend begins a second study group in Eugene in July.

If you are interested in starting a study group in your area, or would like to join a study group, please contact Osee Mallio at: [ocma@cfl.rr.com](mailto:ocma@cfl.rr.com).

## Contemplative End-of-Life Care Program for Health Care Professionals

Annie Eichenholz, RN

This May 15 students, including doctors, nurses, chaplains, counselors, volunteers, and a social worker, graduated from our program. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year our program has been offered in collaboration with Naropa University Extended Studies in Boulder, CO, and important changes have been made in the course.

Students can now receive 8 units of academic credit through Naropa's Contemplative Psychology Program. These credits are often transferable to other learning institutions. In addition, the course now begins in January with an 8-day residential retreat at Shambhala Mountain Center (SMC), followed by 15 weeks of online learning, and ends with an 8-day residential session in May. SMC offers a very beautiful and sacred environment where students can safely explore deep personal aspects of end-of-life care, learn meditation and compassion practices, and enter into rich discussions around integrating spiritual practice with caregiving.

In the online session, students

heard audio excerpts from teachings by Sogyal Rinpoche and written lectures by our faculty on grief, the dying process, and many other topics in end-of-life care. Each week an audio guided practice was featured. There is an amazing depth in the online discussion generated when students consider the practice and the content of each unit in the light of their own experience.

In addition to educators Annie Eichenholz and Pam Russell, we welcomed Dr. Ann Allegre from Kansas City. Ann is a palliative care physician and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in hospice and palliative care. And, we were blessed this year with an educator in training, someone you also know as our U.S. Program Coordinator, Darci Meyers.

In our May session, Dr. James Duffy joined us. He has been an advisor to our program for many years and is now the Director of the Institute for Religion and Health at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, and the Director of Palliative Medicine at Texas Method-

ist Hospital. Together with his Buddhist study and practice, he brought us an inspiring view of how to "be the change" in health care today.

In our January session we were joined by Christopher Sheppard, a well known English documentary filmmaker who produced "Finding the Spiritual Dimension of Death" about Dzogchen Beara. Christopher plans to produce a documentary about Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program in the U.S. so he immersed himself in our course to learn first-hand how we work.

Our 2008 residential is January 5–13, with online course study January 14–May 7, and the last residential on May 8–16. Please visit [www.spcare.org/us](http://www.spcare.org/us), or the Naropa Extended Studies website at: [www.naropa.edu/extend/contemplativecare/certificate](http://www.naropa.edu/extend/contemplativecare/certificate) for more information.

**Annie Eichenholz, RN** is a Senior Educator and a hospice nurse with more than 20 years experience. She is certified as an educator by the End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC).

### Integrating Spirit & Caregiving Conference, May 18-20, at Naropa in Boulder Annie Eichenholz, RN

This 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference brought together caregivers from around the country to hear addresses from Joan Halifax Roshi, Barbara Dossey, PhD, Frank Ostaseski, Mitchell M. Levy, MD, C. Porter Storey, MD, and our very own James Duffy, MD, all leaders in their fields.

Dr. Duffy received a standing ovation following his presentation. He delivered a moving message to healthcare workers about how we can 'be the

change' in health care through healing ourselves.

Ann Allegre, MD, and Pam Russell, LMSW presented a workshop on the "Four Tasks of Living and Dying" to approximately 40 people. They engaged participants in a lively discussion and Pam led a guided practice of Loving Kindness. The feedback was decidedly positive. A highlight was a lunch for conference speakers and our Contemplative End of Life Care faculty. A discussion

facilitated by Fleet Maull, Director of the Contemplative End of Life Care Program at Naropa, came to a consensus to form a *Contemplative End of Life Care Coalition* that will begin a dialogue online to discover the common language that we bring to our different programs. This development has exciting potential to spread the ripples on our pond of 'quiet revolution' further and further! A website and online discussion forum has been created Please visit: [www.ceolcc.ning.com](http://www.ceolcc.ning.com)



2007 GRADUATES AND FACULTY  
CONTEMPLATIVE END OF LIFE CARE  
PROGRAM

#### \*FACULTY NEWS\*

We are blessed to have **Ann Allegre, MD** on our Spiritual Care Team!

Ann was awarded the *American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine–Project on Death in America Community Leadership in Palliative Care Award* in 2007, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the advancement of the field of palliative medicine through the education and training of future leaders.

Congratulations Ann!



ANN ALLEGRE, MD

“To inspire a quiet revolution in the whole way we look at death and the care for the dying and the whole way we look at life and the care for the living.” *Sogyal Rinpoche*

Spiritual  
Care

The Spiritual Care  
Education Program  
A Project of Rigpa

Darci Meyers, National Coordinator  
1922 Parfet Estates Dr.  
Golden, CO 80401

Phone: (866) 511-CARE  
Phone: (303) 482-1552  
E-mail: [usa@spcare.org](mailto:usa@spcare.org)

Visit us on the web:  
[www.spcare.org/us](http://www.spcare.org/us)

The Spiritual Care  
Education Program

addresses the spiritual dimension of dying and death and the practical knowledge most frequently requested by health care professionals. Established in 1993 by Christine Longaker, author of *Facing Death and Finding Hope*, our program is inspired by the highly acclaimed and ground breaking book, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche. In a remarkable way, the Buddhist teachings reveal universal spiritual principles that resonate with people of any faith or none. Our training emphasizes skilful ways that the compassion and wisdom of these teachings can be applied in any caregiving setting. The program exists in Europe, North America and Australia. [www.spcare.org](http://www.spcare.org)  
[www.rigpa.org](http://www.rigpa.org)

## How you can help!

Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program is currently working on several special projects that need volunteer and financial support:

We plan to hold a Spiritual Care *Facilitator Training* in October at the Tenzin Gyatso Institute outside Albany, NY (our Rigpa retreat center in the U.S.— [www.tenzingyatso-institute.org](http://www.tenzingyatso-institute.org)).

It is critical that we continue to train new educators and facilitators as the demand for our training increases. We hope to raise \$3,000 to sponsor this event.

We are also working on professionally producing a *guided*

*practice CD* that can be used as training material for many of our programs. This CD will also be available to the Rigpa Sangha and the public for purchase and will be an ongoing fundraiser for our program. Production and overhead costs total \$5,000.

In addition, we would like to design and print a new *program brochure* this year that reflects our new programs. The total production and overhead costs for this project is \$5,000.

We are also looking for volunteers to help with fundraising efforts, data base management and special projects.

If you would like to contribute in any way to the success of our program, please contact Darci Meyers, National Coordinator, at (866) 511-CARE, (303) 482-1552, or [darci@spcare.org](mailto:darci@spcare.org), or send a check to “Rigpa” (write Spiritual Care Education Program in the memo) and send it to the address on this newsletter.

Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your generous support!

## CCP Continued from page 1

The workbook format includes readings, reflections and exercises that aid in the experiential learning of meditation applied to the tasks of everyday healthcare work. Soon to follow the completion of the manual is the production of a companion practice CD that will complete the educational and practice materials.

We are happy to announce that documentary filmmaker, Christopher Sheppard, will be filming the Compassionate Care Program as part of a documentary about Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program in the U.S. Christopher Sheppard is an internationally acclaimed

filmmaker, also having produced the documentary film on Rigpa's model Spiritual Care Center at Dzogchen Beara in Ireland. After the trial run and an evaluation of the CCP pilot, revisions to the course will be made in preparation for the next run of the program. In addition, workshops that complement the material plan to be offered to deepen the educational content offered in the program.

With all this progress underway, the Compassionate Caregiving Program is moving closer to becoming an educational model for hospitals around the country. Our deepest heart wish is to manifest Sogyal Rinpoche's vision here in America,

where true compassionate care becomes the standard in our healthcare delivery system. We are grateful for the continual blessings coming our way, and know that with your support, we can make this happen.

**Pam Russell, LMSW**, is an Educator in Rigpa's Spiritual Care Education Program. She has studied with Sogyal Rinpoche for 18 years and is a Rigpa meditation instructor. Pam worked for more than 20 years as an Activities Director, specializing in elders care in long-term care facilities. She currently works as a social worker in New York State.

[pam@spcare.org](mailto:pam@spcare.org)