



Well Spouse Association

2006 Annual Report

Dec. 31, 2006

Prepared by Richard Anderson, President

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1. Mission:

- The Well Spouse Association is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) grassroots organization that brings peer-to-peer support to spousal caregivers who care for a husband, wife or partner with chronic illness and/or disability, and makes known the need for support to those in the helping professions. The WSA is an all-volunteer organization, with the exception of the Office staff and two individuals who receive honorariums.

2. WSA Office – Paid staff and Honorariums:

- The Freehold, NJ office staff included three part-time paid employees, comprising a total of approximately 1 FTE staff. Donna McQuade, the Office Manager and Membership Coordinator continued in 2006 to provide us with sterling service. There were two resignations during the year: Office Assistants Carol Baum, who moved away from the area; and Paula LeBlanc, who was replaced by Vicky Allen.
- Contract employees Carol Baum (working from Illinois) and Marty Beilin worked on special projects to extend our outreach efforts to caregivers, other caregiving organizations, disease organizations and professionals.
- Beginning with the last issue of the year, a quarterly honorarium of \$500 was given to the editor of our newsletter *Mainstay*; and honorariums of \$500 were approved to be paid to the Web Manager, and of \$600 to the WSA Online Forum Administrator.

3. Outreach:

WSA Web Site:

- The WSA website was completely revamped and remounted by September 1, 2006. The URL is <http://wellspouse.org>, and during the year we gained ownership of the domains wellspouse.com and wellspouse.net as well, eliminating a problem of unwanted third parties misrepresenting the WSA and misdirecting Web surfers to commercial sites.
- The ability to make donations and join the WSA and pay membership dues online was added to the website.
- A volunteer Web Manager was appointed, to coordinate web page work with the WSA Office.

When One is Sick . . . Two Need Help

- The WSA Online Forum Administrator this year added the WSA Kids Forum to the adult Forum. At year's end the latter had approximately 900 members, an increase of 400 over the previous year.

Contacts:

- Over 300 contacts were made, by the President and by the Office, with:
 - other caregiving organizations re exchange of website links and cooperative action.
 - disease organizations re exchange of website links and cooperative action.
 - the media, including:
 - Four interviews of WSA members arranged during the year.
 - A study on the higher mortality of elderly spousal caregivers by lead author Dr. Nicholas Christakis and reported extensively in the media, led to interviews by Canada's National Post newspaper (Richard Anderson) and the Boston Globe (Martha Scott).
 - A letter to Amy's Mailbox, a syndicated advice column, drew a lot of phone calls to our office, and further publicity, as the columnists graciously gave the WSA column space to expand on our support services.
 - Letters to the editor in reply to relevant articles were sent by the President to various online newspapers, or blogs.
 - Individual professionals (clergy, social workers, doctors, nurses, psychologists) and others.
- The President attended four Washington, DC area meetings:
 - The *White House Conference on Aging* in December 2005
 - The Johnson & Johnson Co. launch of their *Caregiving Initiative* and website in February 2006.
 - The National Cancer Institute *Cancer Survivor Summit*, June, 2006
 - The *WeMove Patient Summit* in September 2006.
- A database of contacts was started and built on for later follow-up.
- WSA exhibits were set up at meetings of 4 other health-related organizations, with the help of volunteer efforts by members.

Newsletter:

- Four issues of our newsletter, *Mainstay* were prepared and edited by Marty Beilin and his team of volunteer assistant editors.
- Exchanges, and republishing of articles were arranged with other publications.

When One is Sick . . . Two Need Help

Caregiver Journey Workshop Project:

- Preparation of *The Caregiver Journey* workshop began. The Powerpoint presentation is to be aimed at family caregivers of all kinds, and especially spousal caregivers, as well as caregiving professionals, to publicize the needs of all caregivers, and also to attract new WSA members.
- The first booking of *The Caregiver Journey* was made by the New Jersey Parkinson's Foundation for their May 19, 2007 caregivers' conference.

2006 WSA National Conference:

- Held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, White Plains, NY, the 2006 Conference, with the theme, *Sharing the Caring*, had a packed program, and attracted nearly 100 people, including many new members. The keynote speaker was Carol Levine, Director of the Families and Health Care Project, New York United Hospital Fund. A special pre-conference dinner was also held for WSA Support Group Leaders.

4. Finance, Grants and Fundraising:

- The gross income for 2006 exceeded \$90,000. A copy of the 990 for the organization will be attached to this Annual Report, as appropriate.
- Major grants received this year came from:
 - Christopher Reeve Foundation (\$5000 - for the *Caregiver Journey* project)
 - Kenneth Kendal King Foundation (\$1500 - for the *Mainstay* newsletter),
 - NY Community Trust – Everett F. and Ann P. Gordon (\$1900 – unrestricted)
 - Sonny & Abe Rosenberg Foundation (\$1000 – unrestricted)
 - Sol Goldman Foundation (\$20,000 - unrestricted)
- The 2006-2007 Annual Appeal at time of writing reached approximately \$10,000.

5. Membership, Support Groups and Mentorship:

- Overall membership increased over 2005. At year's end the WSA had 1197 potential paying members, with a total membership of 2434, including inactive members, who were still receiving materials from the Office. Major illnesses represented included: Brain Injury (78), Cancer (60), Diabetes (48), MS (213), Paralysis (due to injury or stroke -131), Parkinson's (95), Spinal Cord Injuries (61) and Stroke (139). In many cases, ill spouses have multiple diagnoses.
- At the end of 2006, there were 61 WSA local area Support Groups, including 9 new ones that began this year, located in 25 states and Canada (1).
- A program was begun of making regular telephone contacts with Support Group leaders, in particular those just starting up groups, to give them assistance and encouragement.

- A voluntary mentorship program continues, in which those members who are beyond the reach of a local area Support Group, are afforded an opportunity to establish a helping, supportive relationship with another member who has been a spousal caregiver for a longer time.

6. WSA Board Activities:

- The WSA Board is comprised of current and former spousal caregivers, all volunteers. The Board met in person twice during the year, October 21, 2006 at the Annual Conference in White Plains, NY, and on April 1, 2006 in a Spring Board meeting in Cherry Hill, NJ, to work on Strategic and Operational Planning and committee meetings. The rest of the year the Board met by telephone conference call, every six weeks.
- The WSA Executive Committee met monthly. At year's end Perry Beek resigned as Treasurer and was replaced by Robert Mastrogiovanni.

Thanks are due in particular to the following volunteers:

Marty Beilin, and Donna Amato for work on the Website; Donna Amato as Web Manager; Marty Beilin for editing *Mainstay*; Erin Engelhardt as WSA Online Forum Administrator; Barbara Marder and Anita Bluestone for their work on the 2006 Conference; Marty Beilin and Pam Alesescu for their work on *The Caregiver Journey* presentation; Executive Committee member Perry Beek for his work as treasurer; Board Chair Rita Herskovitz for her work on the Strategic and Operational plans of the organization; Martha Scott as past President for her help with grant applications and for advice and guidance to the incoming President (since October, 2005), Richard Anderson; Perry Beek for his work as the WSA Treasurer; Anita Bluestone and Sue Kaufman for their work with WSA Support Group Leaders; Rona Auster, and Joan Crespi for their work on the Membership Committee; Jerry Bishop for his management of the Mentorship program.