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Well Spouse Association – 2008 Annual Report -- Dec. 31, 2008

Prepared by Richard Anderson, President

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Mission:

The Well Spouse Association, a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) membership organization, advocates for and addresses the needs of individuals caring for a chronically ill and/or disabled spouse or partner. We offer peer to peer support and educate health care professionals and the general public about the special challenges and unique issues "well" spouses face every day.

The Organization:

- Apart from a paid Office staff of just over 1 F.T.E., the WSA is an all-volunteer, grassroots organization with a growing membership.

- It is estimated that over 5,000 hours a year of volunteer time are donated to the WSA

Highlights:

-Over 400 contacts were made with the press, members of the general public and professionals, well ahead of 2006. We now have over 700 organizations or individuals on our contact list.

- Individual, dues-paying memberships increased from 1054 in 2006 to 1324, plus 60 more professional and institutional memberships, for a total of 1384.

- At year-end there were local area WSA Support Groups in 34 states and Canada, an increase of 8 states.

Finances, Grants and Fundraising:

- This year 92% of our revenue came from member dues and donation.

- A loss in capital reserve of \$20,700 was experienced.

- The 2007-2008 Annual Appeal raised over \$16,000.

-A further special campaign raised \$13,700.

Web Site:

- At year's end a Members-Only area was created on the WSA website
- In 2008 there were 485,000 visitors to the website. Monthly traffic increased from 19,400 (in 2007) to 40,400 a month, or about 1,350 a day.
- Donna Amato as Web Manager, coordinated web page work with the WSA Office.
- Erin Englehardt continued to be the Administrator of the WSA Forum, the online board open to all, and free to join. It has become our main outreach vehicle for attracting people to become paid members of the organization.
- In September, 2008 we had the 100,000th post in the WSA Online Forum.
- At year's end there were over 2100 registered users of the Forum.
- In 2008, 891 new people joined the Forum, which was about 73 a month.

Office:

- During the year Paula LeBlanc was promoted to Executive Administrator, and supervised Johanna Karr who was in charge of Media Development and Outreach, and Donna McQuade, who was the Membership Coordinator
- During the year we increased the number of hours for Office staff to 50.

2008 National Conference:

The 2008 WSA National Conference, at which we celebrated the 20th was held October 17-19 in Skokie, IL on the Chicago North Shore, with 80 people registered (including many new members). Special thanks are due to:

- The Office staff for organizing it
- And four of our WSA founding members, Zane Kotker, Debbie Hawke, Jan Beattie and Diane Negri who were the featured speakers

Membership:

- In 2008 a major project in the Office was to remove from the Membership list personal and institutional members who did not reply to renewal requests within the last 2 years. The results have been much more accurate, up-to-date records.

Mainstay Newsletter:

- In 2007 three issues of the *Mainstay* newsletter were produced under the capable direction of Editor Marty Beilin, with the help of a committee of volunteer writers and editors. It should be noted that *Mainstay* consistently has been regarded as one of the major benefits of WSA membership – members eagerly await each next issue, as a means of feeling in touch with the WSA, and receiving emotional support from stories, poems and letters written by their peers.

Support Group Network:

- As noted above, the number of local area WSA Support Groups increased from 49 to 60.
- Each peer-led group has one, or sometimes two volunteer WSA members organizing and leading it.
- In some states there are contact people, who do not currently run a group, but who are available to talk to those who might be interested to do so.

- Special thanks are due to Board member Sue Kaufman for her telephone support work with our volunteer Support Group leaders.

Outreach:

- Three special links and partnerships were set up with: CarePages, CaringBridge, and LotsaHelpingHands, and Richard Anderson began writing a blog, The Life of A Well Spouse, on the CarePages site.
- On March 21, 2007 President Richard Anderson met with David Fajgenbaum, Executive Director and founder of National Students of AMF (Ailing Mothers and Fathers)
- A series of audio clips of comments from members about how highly they value the WSA, were produced by member Diane Newman, to advertise the conference, and also for the Caregiver Journey workshop project.
- Sunday-Tuesday, June 17-19 with the volunteer help of member Ron Pokorski as organizer, the WSA exhibited at an international conference: the Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability and Technology (FICCDAT) Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Richard Anderson gave 4 media interviews and one workshop talk during the year.
- He also wrote numerous letters to the editor, and to journalists, as well as comments in blogs, and letters to ABC, NBC, the Oprah Show, and the Dr. Phil Show.

WSA Board and Executive Committee: Volunteer Leadership:

- The WSA Board currently meets by telephone every 6 weeks, and in person during the annual conference in October. In between the Board carries on the work of committees on finance, support groups, membership, public relations, fundraising and grants, mentorship and the website. In April, 2006, the Board met in person at Cherry Hill, NJ, and under the capable direction of Board Chair Rita Herskovitz, spent a day of Strategic Planning and committee meetings.
- The WSA Executive Committee meets once a month, and is composed of the Board Chair, President, Past President, Treasurer and Secretary. At year's end Perry Beek resigned as Treasurer and was replaced by Robert Mastrogiovanni.
- A list of the current Board members is appended to this report.

Goals for 2008:

The principal goal for 2008 arose from the 20-20-20 campaign: to put in place at least a part-time Executive Director.

In view of our finances, we contemplated the best way to go is to train and promote one of our Office employees, Paula LeBlanc, who is currently the Executive Administrator.

The Board is working to obtain more grants, and major funding from individuals and corporations; and will consider holding a special, midyear fundraising project.

All of the above considerations are meant to work towards the goal of growing the organization to at least 3,000 members, and to raise consciousness of spousal caregivers, professional caregivers and the general public of the support the WSA offers.

The WSA has also begun the process of establishing an Advisory Board, to assist the Board with expertise in areas such as fundraising, legal questions, and caregiver support.

Name, Office and Committee Membership	Initial Election Date	Old or Current Term Expiration Date	New (2007)Term Expiration Date
Note EC = Executive Committee Richard Anderson, President, EC, Website, Interim Chair, Public Relations, Interim chair, Caregiver Journey	2003	2007	2009
Rona Auster Support Network	1995-1999 2002	2008	
Amie Brockway Grants/Fundraising	2007		2009
Jerry Bishop Mentor Coordinator, Support Network	2004	2008	
Anita Bluestone Chair, Support Network	2004	2008	
Terri Corcoran Board Secretary, <i>Mainstay</i>	2007		2009
Joan Crespi Chair, Membership	1995-1999 2002	2008	
Pamela Frankel Membership	2004	2008	
Rita Herskovitz Board Co-Chair, <i>Mainstay</i> , Chair, Strategic Planning, Exhibits Coordinator	2001	2007	2009
Susan Kaufman Support Network	2005	2007	2009
Bob Mastrogiovanni Treasurer, Chair Finance, EC	2006	2008	
Clark Mayer Membership	2006	2008	
Diane Raymond	2007		2009

Membership			
Martha Scott Board Co-Chair, EC, Public Relations, Strategic Planning	2000	2008	
Jean Thompson Grants/Fundraising	2007		2009
Non-Board Member Committee Chairs			
Donna Amato, Website/Technology			
Marty Beilin, <i>Mainstay</i>			

Officers for 2007-2008

President: Richard Anderson
 Treasurer: Bob Mastrogiovanni
 Secretary (EC):
 Secretary (BOD): Terri Corcoran
 Board Co-Chair: Martha Scott, Rita Herskovitz

Board Committees October 2007

#Non-Board member

Bylaws Committee

Vacant, convened as necessary

Nominating Committee

(Main task is to extend Board Membership and establish an Advisory Committee for the Board)

Executive Committee

Richard Anderson (Chair), Bob Mastrogiovanni, Martha Scott

Website/Technology Committee (office computers, website)

#Donna Amato (Web Manager and Chair), #Marty Beilin, Jerry Bishop, Richard Anderson, #Jim Anderson, #Kelly Brunn

Finance Committee

Bob Mastrogiovanni (Chair), #Rich Raychert

Support Group Network Committee

Anita Bluestone (Co-Chair), Rona Auster, Jerry Bishop, Susan Kaufman (Co-Chair)

Mentorship Committee

Jerry Bishop (Chair)

Mainstay (Newsletter) Committee

#Marty Beilin (Chair), #Pam Alesescu, Rita Herskovitz, Terri Corcoran, #Sandra Bekele, #Dina Gerasia, #Dorothy Pocinki, #Dorothy Saunders

Fundraising /Grants Committee

Chair vacant, Richard Anderson, #Marty Beilin, Amie Brockway, Jean Thompson

Membership Committee

Joan Crespi (Chair), #Donna McQuade, Pamela Frankel, Clark Mayer, Diane Raymond

(Public Relations Committee

Chair vacant, Martha Scott, Richard Anderson, #Marty Beilin, #Ron Pokorski, #Diane Braselton (Newman), #Robin Kollmeyer, #Mary Teel, Rita Herskovitz (Exhibits Coordinator).