Founders Series Launches

Two Sofia alumni presented their entrepreneurial "Toolbox Project" at the Founders Series in mid-January. Mark A. Collin, MA, MFT, class of ’76 and Chuck Fisher, PhD, class of ’86 shared their success story to a warm and responsive audience. The Toolbox Project gives children, teachers, parents, and schools a common language and the tools necessary to form a cohesive, collaborative, non-violent, and caring community, which leads to hope for a meaningful and positive future. Toolbox is now in over 100 schools, in 30 cities. Sofia University Founder Robert Frager, PhD said, “Toolbox is a beautiful example of the best that we hope for our graduates.”

Transpersonal Festival

Feeding the Soul, the first transpersonal festival of the European Transpersonal Association (EUROTAS) will take place in Milan, Italy, from June 18 to 21, 2015. Sofia Professor Steven Schmitz of the Global Ph.D. Program will represent Sofia. The aim of this event is to come together as a community of diversity that transcends differences and unites through deep dialogue with others and with nature by including puer and senex, heart and mind, spirit and matter, the young and the elders, women, men, and children—our future generations.

http://tinyurl.com/eurotas15

Weekend Workshop Coming in July

The Adventure of Self-Discovery: A Holotropic Breathwork Experience With Stanislav Grof, M.D.

This workshop will give participants the opportunity for a deep personal experience shared in a group. Holotropic Breathwork is a powerful psychospiritual experiential approach that uses a special set and setting and a combination of breathing, evocative music, focused energy release, and mandala drawing to explore realms of the psyche ordinarily hidden to conscious awareness. Holotropic sessions mediate access to emotionally relevant childhood memories and other biographical issues, sequences of psychological death and rebirth, and a broad spectrum of transpersonal experiences. Trained facilitators assisting in the workshop will help to create a safe and supportive context for participants during the holotropic sessions, in the sharing groups, and in the follow-up. Participants will alternate in the roles of experiencers and "sitters."

Stanislav Grof, M.D., is a psychiatrist with an experience of over fifty years of research in non-ordinary states of consciousness. He received an M.D. degree from the Charles University School of Medicine and a Ph.D. (in Medicine) degree from the Czechoslovakian Academy of Sciences. Stanislav Grof is one of the founders and chief theoreticians of transpersonal psychology and founding president of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA). He has written over 150 articles in professional journals and books.

More information coming soon.
Accomplishments

Sofia Alumnus on Good Morning America

Sofia alumnus and author Elisha Goldstein PhD appeared on Good Morning America’s segment on a surprising teen trend: meditation. Elisha is a psychologist, author and speaker who synthesizes the pearls of traditional psychotherapy with a progressive integration of mindfulness to achieve mental and emotional healing. His new book “Uncovering Happiness: Overcoming Depression with Mindfulness and Self-Compassion,” uses cutting-edge mindfulness and self-compassion techniques along with innovations in neuroscience to release natural antidepressants in the brain.

Grad Student Elected

Sofia student Paul Kiritsis who was just voted to be San Francisco Psychological Association of Graduate Students Chair-Elect for the 2015 year. We remain inspired by his tenacity and true grit. His words of wisdom: “The best day of our lives is the day we decide to take life by the horns. It is an amazing journey, and we alone are responsible for the quality of it. Life is about the choices we make; hence we must choose wisely! One of my guiding stars, perhaps the brightest and most supernal, is intimately entwined with the mission of giving back to the local community freely and willingly, without expecting remuneration. This must be our mission in life. To be of service to our fellow human beings.”

Teaching English and Philosophy in the Philippines

PhD candidate Paul Ambrose spent his vacation teaching both English and Philosophy in the Philippines as a requirement for graduation in the Transpersonal PhD program. Paul taught “Kundalini and Plato’s Allegory of the Cave” at Silliman University, the first American University ever founded in the Philippines. This photograph shows several other English teachers at a smaller school where I taught English to Filipino children.

The Transpersonal Gratitude Scale

Alumni Patty Hlava and John Elfers have just completed the development of a psychometric instrument that measures the transpersonal features of gratitude. Gratitude has long been associated with spiritual disciplines, yet much of current psychological research on gratitude has focused on the personal response to tangible rewards and benefits. Building on interviews from a grounded theory study of gratitude, Hlava and Elfers crafted a draft instrument that highlights the transpersonal features of gratitude. Survey responses from 700 individuals helped in the creation of a 16-item instrument with good reliability and validity.

Transformed by Postpartum Depression

Sofia alumna Walker Karraa, PhD, has written “Transformed by Postpartum Depression” and it's been on the top ten for postpartum depression every week since publication. Walker’s book is a poignant tale of 20 women’s journeys through postpartum depression, the trauma it creates, and the growth they experienced as a result. Shocked by the severe and sudden onset of symptoms, these women described the failure of care providers to screen or treat for depression. Battling postpartum depression, including thoughts of suicide, these women fought to do whatever it took to recover. Remarkably they discovered that not only had they healed, but they had grown in extraordinary ways. They would never wish it on their worst enemy, but were ultimately thankful for the personal growth experienced through the trauma of postpartum depression.

Paid 5-Month European Traineeship

Gain hands-on experience working at an international and multicultural location. Trainees work at executive bodies and agencies of European Institutions such as the European External Action Service or Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation. Fields include competition law, human resources, and environmental policy. Registration for the October 2015 traineeship session is now open. http://tinyurl.com/5europa