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Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago

Winter 2010

# Building Foundations

## Director's Dialogue

Susy Francis-Thornton, PsyD, MBA



**Why Cornerstone?**

After completing 5 years of service as executive director of Cornerstone, I find myself asking, what brought me here? Why do I stay?

Reflecting upon these questions, I am consistently reenergized. I first learned of the Center while looking for a doctoral internship placement and was thrilled to find an organization so closely aligned with my vision for serving, as well as one with a great deal of potential. Though I did not end up spending my internship year here, I headed right back to Cornerstone for a post doctoral residency. A few months into that year, then-director Dr. Paul Harris announced that he was leaving the Center. After a board search, I was appointed interim director in January of 2004 and permanent director four months later.

Cornerstone is a place of seemingly endless opportunity. With a continued commitment to social justice, excellence in all we do, serving the underserved, and integration of faith and practice, Cornerstone allows others to come and find ways to match their vision with the founding mission. This keeps us relevant, thriving and adaptable to the needs of our community. When I first joined

the Center we worked with mostly adults offering only English services. My passion for having therapy services available to all in our community, particularly Spanish speaking adults, children and adolescents, was warmly received and supported.

Because of the commitment of our board, staff, students and supporters, the Center has grown and evolved to respond to the needs of our community. Both the demographics of our clients and our service offerings continue to become more diversified. We've added Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and employ five therapists able to provide all of our services in Spanish. We continue to travel to 22 neighborhoods in Chicago, including several of the most underserved, to serve over 400 children weekly. We are currently training 10 students so that they can transform lives around the world. Thanks to the sacrifice of our therapists and donors, Cornerstone is on track to provide more non-reimbursable services than we ever have before.

I continue to hear similar reasons for why other students, staff, board and volunteers choose us, why clients come, and why people such as you choose to support us. Above all, in reflecting over the past 5 years, nothing inspires my answer of "Why Cornerstone?" like the words of a former client, Veronica:\* "I had no hope; I felt like a



Our current staff, consisting of five administrative roles, eight therapists, and ten training staff.

victim, hated life and was very angry. However, with my therapist giving me a safe place, I gained very important tools to learn to forgive, take charge of my life, explore my faith in God and begin to find healing. When I couldn't afford it, Cornerstone and a generous donor were there for me." In the words of donors like the Jones\* family, "we have continued to trust Cornerstone and see that our dollars actually change people's lives."

As our 9th Annual Benefit approaches, in the midst of an economic struggle and many demands on our generosity, the question remains, "Why Cornerstone?" On Thursday March 25, 2010 we will once again provide you the opportunity to meet our team, hear our vision, and as our theme portrays, give others the ability to flourish. ●

\*Names changed to protect confidentiality  
Dr. Francis-Thornton, CCCOC's Executive Director and licensed psychologist, offers bilingual (Spanish) clinical services and broad experience in counseling and program development. Her goal is to assist each person in maximizing his or her potential to create the most meaningful life possible.

## Our Updates

### Seminar

#### Personality Type Seminar

Dr. Susy Francis-Thornton led a seminar on identifying and working with different personality types for the members of St. Croix Christian Church during the Holidays.

### Staff Training

#### Integration Discussion- January 15<sup>th</sup>

Dr. Ron Ercoli from Willow Creek Church led a discussion on the integration of faith and psychology in our staff meeting.

#### Partnering Agencies

#### Non-Violence Seminar- November 3<sup>rd</sup>

Staff members led a non-violence

seminar at By the Hand Club for Kids and Fellowship Baptist Church.

#### Relationship Seminars

Our staff led a single adults training on November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and a couples training (in partnership with Cross & Crown Church) November 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> to encourage healthy relationships and effective communication. See

pg. 3 for details on more upcoming free seminars.

#### Breakthrough Staff Trainings

In November several staff led seminars for staff and volunteers at Breakthrough Urban Ministries.

Visit [www.chicagocounseling.org](http://www.chicagocounseling.org) for more updates!

# What to Do When Enough is Enough

Cyndee Langley, MA



Many people have the experience of being picked on at some point during childhood. This experience is often accompanied with thoughts and/or actions of revenge. However, conflict does not end with childhood. Many adults have issues with a difficult boss, a know-it-all coworker or a nosy neighbor. And as we did when we were children, we struggle to know how to deal with these conflicts. There are many coping strategies that you can take advantage of to help yourself deal with the stress that is involved in these relationships.

- **Pray**  
Give your concern to God. Allow Him to comfort and calm you in the midst of frustration.
- **Listen to the other person's perspective.**  
Place yourself in the other person's shoes to understand where they are coming from and the thought behind their actions.
- **Be willing to compromise.**  
Identify a solution where both parties give a little. It may not be easy, but it's possible.
- **Express your feelings in a productive way.**  
Don't bottle up your feelings. Share them with the other person, a loved one or write in a journal.
- **Avoid the person if possible.**  
If someone drives you nuts, it's probably better just to leave them alone. We don't need any

- additional stress!
  - **Make time for relaxation.**  
This could include participating in relaxation and meditation activities or activities such as reading a book or going for a walk.
  - **Help yourself feel healthier.**  
Make sure you are getting enough sleep and exercising regularly. Yoga and pilates can be especially helpful for overall health and fitness.
- Interactions with difficult people are hard to navigate. These strategies may help, but also remember to reach out to your friends and family. Spend time with them and when needed express your emotions to them. ●

*Ms. Langley has experience in individual therapy with children, adolescents, adults, families, and deaf and hard of hearing, as well as group therapy with children.*

## Relaxation Exercise

- Get to a quiet place
- Close your eyes and slowly count backwards from ten
- Take deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Imagine your worries shrinking in importance as you count down
- Ease the tension in your neck by pushing your head as far back as possible, then bringing it forward to touch your chest
- Roll your head to the right shoulder, then to the left shoulder

# Responding to the Need

## Anti-Violence Seminar Help for Haiti

In response to Darrion Albert's death here in Chicago, Cornerstone prepared an interactive half-hour non-violence seminar. This seminar was presented to over 800 students through our partnerships with By the Hand Club for Kids and Fellowship Baptist Church. Children and adolescents in Cabrini Green, Austin, Englewood, Altgeld Gardens and Fuller Park were taught to focus on positive role models such as Jesus, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ghandi and even Michael Jackson. The students were educated on how to stop violence and not join in. They were given tools to use such as telling an adult, avoiding risky locations and standing up as a group against violence.



With the immense devastation in Haiti, it is easy to feel helpless about how to make a difference. One way Cornerstone is seeking to bring hope to Haiti is by having the students in our weekly school therapy groups create uplifting, encouraging and fun cards for the children in orphanages in Haiti. We discussed with our students the power of encouragement as well as processed their feelings concerning the event.



## Cornerstone Transitions

Dr. Susy Francis-Thornton celebrated five years as our executive director this past April. Before serving as our director, Dr. Francis-Thornton served as our interim director and a post-doctoral resident. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the Center!

In January we said goodbye to Jon Bull, our development director. Jon is leaving to pursue a career in education. Thank you for all your progress over the past year Jon- you will be sorely missed!

Joining us in the month of February as our new development director is Joseph Wright. Joseph comes to us with a thorough background in development and a passion for the future.

After four years of service, board treasurer Carolina Reyes stepped down from her position in November. Thank you for your dedication to the Center!

Marketing Coordinator Matt Frantz and fee-for-service therapist Andrés Herrera each celebrated their one-year anniversary at Cornerstone. Thanks for all you do!

## Our Calendar

Be sure to check our website, [www.chicagocounseling.org](http://www.chicagocounseling.org) for the most recent info on all of our upcoming events.

### February 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>

#### P.I.C.K. a Partner Seminar

Call 312.573.8868 to register  
Cornerstone Building, Leslie Hall  
Fri 6:30-8:30pm; Sat 8:30am-4:30pm

### February 25<sup>th</sup>

#### KPMG Financial Literacy Seminar

Call 312.573.8868 to register  
Cornerstone Building, Leslie Hall  
Thurs 6:00pm-7:30pm

### Week of March 1<sup>st</sup>

#### Practicum Student Interviews

Our staff will be working to interview candidates for our 10-11 school year practicum students.

### March 25<sup>th</sup>

#### Annual Vision Benefit

Call 312.573.8860 to register.  
Holiday Inn, Chicago Mart Plaza  
Thursday 5:30pm



## You're Invited to our 9th Annual Vision Dinner

Guest Speaker: Kendra Smiley

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Silent Auction 5:00pm; Dinner and Program 6:30pm

Holiday Inn, Chicago Mart Plaza

## Sponsor a Client

Cornerstone seeks to provide relevant, affordable and adequate services to our community. To do so, we offer a sliding-fee scale for clients to pay within their means for excellent mental health services. The money given away through this sliding-fee scale is sponsored by donors like you. We ask you to read the following stories of personal growth and fruit and invite you to participate in the healing of one of our clients by sponsoring a specific client.

Sara is a 4 year old girl who started therapy due to her father's sudden death. Her mother was concerned about how she was adjusting to life without her father. Through play therapy, she began to express many questions about death. The characters she created were often very angry, and she had an opportunity to express her anger and to learn how to manage it in healthy ways. Over the course of therapy, she has gradually learned what death really means and also has had a safe place to express her feelings.

Mara is a woman in her late 20s whose parents both came to the US from South America. After arriving in the US, Mara's parents married, had her and her older brother, and sadly divorced once Mara was an adult. Although she was born and raised in the US, Mara finds herself very closely connected to her parents' culture. Mara came to therapy to address her grief after the tragic death of her fiancé. Mara has expressed appreciation to her therapist for her ability to freely explore her heritage, traditions, and ways of thinking about marriage, family, death and grief within her cultural context.

Darrell and Jessica are a biracial couple (African-American and Hispanic). They came to therapy to reconcile their marriage despite being separated for a significant period of time. The couple has identified part of their conflict to be the cultural expectations of family relationships. They are also dealing with the negative consequences of sharing too many details of their problems to family and church members who were not equipped to help them. With the aid of their therapist, they are working to better understand and respect each other culturally and as individuals, and to reconcile their marriage.

Kip is a recent graduate of a well-respected Christian college who then landed his first job in Chicago. His parents are overseas as missionaries, and Kip is in therapy to explore his journey away from the faith he grew up with. He is disillusioned by the narrowness of teaching he experienced as a child, and has had several experiences of severe disappointment with God. Together with his therapist, Kip continues to find the courage to build a new foundation of values and beliefs.

This board-sponsored event is our largest fundraising effort to support the sliding-fee services to our clients who could not otherwise afford therapy. Last year 50% of our clients utilized our sliding-fee scale, enabling us to provide over \$107,000 in non-reimbursable services. Each year at our benefit we seek to cast the vision of Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago and invite you to partner with us through prayer, networking, referrals and financial support. We hope to see you there!

RSVP by March 19th at

[www.chicagocounseling.org/benefit](http://www.chicagocounseling.org/benefit)

or by calling 312.573.8860

## How you can help

- **Come yourself**- we always appreciate guests!
- **Invite friends, family or colleagues**- bring others who are interested in hearing about our vision
- **Host a table**- fill a table of 8 to 10 guests
- **Sponsor a table**- cover the cost of 8 to 10 guests attending
- **Donate a silent auction item**- donate an item or service to be auctioned the night of the event (visit [chicagocounseling.org/auction](http://chicagocounseling.org/auction))

For more information call 312.573.8860 or email us at [cccoc@chicagocounseling.org](mailto:cccoc@chicagocounseling.org)

For more information on sponsoring a specific client please call 312.573.8860 or email us at [cccoc@chicagocounseling.org](mailto:cccoc@chicagocounseling.org).

## How to P.I.C.K. a Partner

This is a free, interactive workshop that helps single adults make more thoughtful choices in dating relationships, establish healthy boundaries and learn how to make a balanced decision about future mates. You will learn the warning signs of a difficult partner, skills for assessing compatibility and the five sources of love and intimacy. Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch and materials are all provided free of charge. Full-time participation is assumed; space is limited.

February 19th & 20th

Friday 6:30pm-8:30pm; Saturday 8:30am-4:30pm

Cornerstone Building, Leslie Hall

Call 312.573.8868 to register

This workshop is sponsored by Family Bridges, Healthy Marriage Initiative in partnership with Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago. Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90FE011. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

## Women's Group



This group is designed to empower women who are over-extended and may have difficulty finding time to take care of themselves while taking care of others. We meet weekly on Thursdays from 6:30pm-8:00pm. Call 312.573.8860 for details or to register.

## Financial Literacy Seminar

Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago will be hosting a free financial literacy seminar presented by KPMG, a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services.

The seminar will cover personal financial literacy topics such as budgeting, emergency funds, retirement, debt repayment and college savings.

Thursday, February 25, 2010

6:00pm-7:30pm

Cornerstone Building, Leslie Hall

Call 312.573.8860 to register

or for more information.

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## Board Profile

**M**s. Carolina Reyes has been a faithful board member for four years.

### How did you serve at Cornerstone?

I first volunteered my time with Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago by reviewing the financial statements. Eventually Dr. Susy Francis-Thornton invited me to join the Board of Directors. Soon I was the Treasurer and headed several Committees during my four year tenure.



### What first drew you to work with Cornerstone?

It was through the Executive Director's passion that made me want to help advance the

mission and vision.

### What excites you most about the work Cornerstone does?

It is the outreach that excites me the most. Partnerships with community agencies, schools and churches have given Cornerstone opportunities to reach out more individuals, couples and families who are looking for hope, solutions and new skills through our psychological services.

### How have you seen the diversity at Cornerstone grow?

Cornerstone had always been diverse in terms of race

and gender, but there exists a different type of diversity. An emergence of distinctive sociopolitical, ethnic and educational backgrounds among the staff bring in a unique perspective which serves its clients well.

### What are you looking forward to in 2010?

I'm looking forward to the upcoming fundraiser in March 2010 to learn how many more people Cornerstone has impacted for a better future. ● **Carolina, on behalf of our board and staff we thank you for your years of dedicated service!**

## Our Board

Phyllis A. Nsiah-Kumi, MD, MPH  
University of Nebraska Medical Center  
*Board President*

Jeffrey Dykstra  
Integrus Energy Services  
*Board Treasurer*

Daniel J. Mays, JD  
David L. Bea & Associates

Kent Munsey  
City Church of Chicago

Jennifer L. Merck  
Elder Rights Consultant

John W. Silmon  
KPMG, LLP

*Advisory Board*

Jimmie Alford, LLD, LHD  
The Alford Group

Mary Whelchel  
The Christian Working Woman

## Our Staff

E. Susanne Francis-Thornton, PsyD, MBA  
*Executive Director*

Andrew Ballew, MA

Maggie Bishay, MA, LPC

Amanda Bull, MA, LPC

David Cooley, MA

Dametria Ewunes, MA

Megan Gingo MSW, LSW

Sally Hale, MA, LPC

Rodney Harris, PsyD

Andrés Herrera, MA

Cyndee Langley, MA

Brianna Edwards Moore, MA

Ruben Morales

Eva Ponder, PsyD, LCSW

Keba Rogers, MA, NCSP

Brianne Schmidt

Andrew Shelton

Frances Tung, PhD

Judith Zink, MA, NCC, LCPC

Jon Bull  
*Director of Development*

Matthew Frantz  
*Marketing and Communications Coordinator*

Carolyn Koonce  
*Office and Human Resources Manager*

Rebecca Machado  
*Administrative Assistant*

Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago's philosophy is built around three firm commitments. The first is to Christ and His Kingdom, holding Scripture as the authoritative and truthful revelation of God, as well as maintaining a deep respect for people and their personal faith, no matter what their spiritual background and walk of life. Secondly, we are committed to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. Finally, we commit ourselves daily to compassion, helping all persons reach emotional healing.

### Building Foundations

A quarterly publication of Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago



### Building Foundations

Cornerstone Counseling Center of Chicago  
1111 North Wells Street, Suite 400  
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## Going Green

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