

# Wendt Center *today*

January 2014

## You Are Invited to a Special Dinner Party

Ever feel like you are alone in wanting to talk about your experience with loss? Like it's never a good time to bring it up, and the room goes silent as soon as you do?

You're not alone. In fact, you are invited to dinner!

The Dinner Party is a collective of men and women out to change the way we approach life after loss, through candid conversation and breaking bread.

This project brings together groups of 6 - 12 people for monthly potluck-style dinner parties at a designated host's house. All the guests are people who have experienced a significant loss in their lives -- recent or long ago. The dinner serves as a space in which the guests can talk to each other about their experiences with grief and loss and how their day-to-day life is impacted by it.

There are Dinner Party tables all across the country, including several in and around DC and Baltimore. A vegan table hosted by a Wendt Center

## Introducing . . . new staff!



*Heather Powers, Ivonne Miranda, and Chaz Holmon*

In the past several months, the Wendt Center's clinical staff has expanded significantly! We are delighted to welcome four new full-time clinicians to the Wendt Center family:

**Ivonne Miranda, LPC**, bi-lingual (Spanish) counselor originally from Puerto Rico, has extensive experience providing services to survivors of trauma, including victims of torture, trafficking and domestic violence, and has expanded our reach into the region's Spanish-speaking population. **Heather Powers, LICSW**, is an experienced domestic violence specialist, and coordinates our domestic violence services, including our new partnership with SAFE.

client is launching soon in Mt. Pleasant, and the project is looking for additional hosts in the area.

If you're interested in attending a dinner, hosting a table, or simply learning more, visit <http://thedinnerparty.org/> or e-mail [thedinnerpartydc@gmail.com](mailto:thedinnerpartydc@gmail.com)

## Strategic Planning in Progress



Board Member Shane Hedges

The Wendt Center staff and board are working toward a robust, visionary, and realistic five-year strategic plan to guide the Center's direction and growth.

Board member Shane Hedges (pictured above) has skillfully facilitated the process. Staff were asked to summarize their reactions in a single word following the most recent meeting to review progress. "Exciting", "Adjustment", "We can do it," "Optimistic," "Looking forward", and "Determined" were representative of the general feeling. An exciting

**Shannon Goodhue, LISCW**, oversees services to survivors of sexual assault through our partnership with Network for Victim Recovery DC (NVRDC) and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). **Chaz Holmon, LGSW**, provides individual and group services to children and youth in our partner schools through our C.H.I.L.D. (Child Healing to Improve Learning and Development) program and was an intern at the Center.



Shannon Goodhue

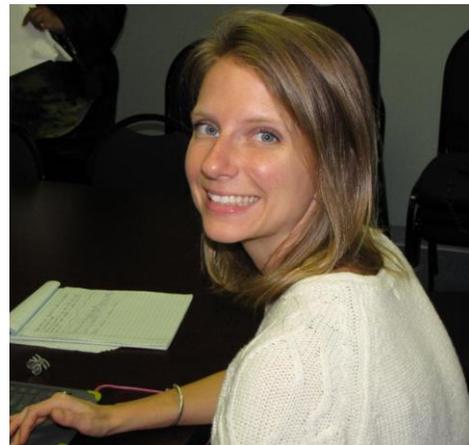
## A Journey Begins: *Confessions of a Brand New (and slightly nervous!) Clinician*

*Each year, the Wendt Center provides didactic and experiential internships to 5-8 emerging clinicians, often giving them their very first client experience. We are grateful to one of our current interns, Chelsea Benetz, graduate student at the National Catholic School of Social Services, Catholic University, for sharing her thoughts and feelings as she contemplates her first client appointment.*

I have been waiting for this day for over a year and a half. The day that I would sit down in a room, quiet, open to whatever the client was going to bring, and to begin my very first clinical therapy session. Alone.

Regardless of the courses, the trainings I have had, no matter how hard the Wendt Center has prepared me... there is nothing, nothing in this world that can calm my nerves or ease my anxiety as the day encroaches on me.

How will I greet them? Will I shake their hand? Use my first name or last name? What will I wear?



Graduate intern Chelsea Benetz

time for the Wendt Center indeed!

## Save the Date

2014 Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC

June 6-8, 2014

*Camper/Volunteer  
Applications available  
February 3, 2014*



## Kudos

Wendt therapist Stephanie Handel was honored by the Department of Justice Victim Witness Assistance Unit for "Outstanding Community Service" as a result of her participation on the "Children Exposed to Violence: Strategies for Investigation, Prosecution and Treatment" conference committee.

## Must Reads

*Hear is My Chance, by Jen Hackler*

Jen Hackler, former staff member and part-time RECOVER therapist for many years, recently had an article entitled "Here Is My

These are all only the rather surface and initial gut wrenching questions stirring through my mind as I prepare to spend all weekend agonizing and reflecting on what I can offer my first clinical client, both in words and unspoken.

I am humbled to be invited to embark on my social work career with this organization, and even more privileged that I am asked to assist clients in their own journey through their grief or trauma. It is such a tender and truly human experience and to walk next to someone as they sort through the wild mix of emotions and feelings is the highest honor I could be extended.

I do not want to mess it up.

I do not want to be anything but helpful, caring, endearing and most importantly, genuine.

I do not want to fail at being their clinician as I try to think of the most appropriate questions and terms to use.

I do not want to fail at listening to them.

I do not know what to expect. I do know that I will be changed. Forever. We have been given fair warning. I will be changed as a person. Each client is bound to touch my life, and I just hope that I can have the same positive effect on them. As this weekend approaches and the hours are counted before I begin this next step in my career, I am reminded that sometimes just being there for someone, sitting quietly next to them, sharing a private and very personal space together, can be all that is needed in that moment. I know, I trust that I am confident, that I can at least start there.

And so the journey begins . . .

*Chelsea Benetz, Graduate Intern*

## Camp Volunteers Honored at Benefit

Ten Camp volunteers earned a Golden Ticket to this year's anniversary benefit in November. Each raised over \$1,000 in donations to support Camp as part of this year's Camp fundraiser. All Camp volunteers are challenged to meet a fundraising goal of \$350 to help defray the costs of Camp and keep it free for the children who need it. These 10 volunteers went well beyond and, to show our extra appreciation, were invited to attend our Benefit and receive the special thanks and recognition of all our guests. Bravo and thank

Chance" published in *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy Journal of the American Academy of Psychotherapists*. Summer 2013/Vol 49/No. 2. If you want to get a sense of what it's like for our clinicians at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, this is a must read. [Click here.](#)

*The Art of Presence*, by David Brooks

A recent editorial in the New York Times provides a thoughtful and helpful approach to being truly supportive to someone who has experienced loss or trauma. [Click here](#) to read the article.

## Upcoming Events

[2014 Support Groups](#)

**Lights of Hope Training**  
February 26, 2014

**Camp Information Session**  
March 6, 2014

**Spring Volunteer Training**  
March 2014 - TBA

**Annual Butterfly Release**  
June 21, 2014

For more information click here [khill@wendtcenter.org](mailto:khill@wendtcenter.org)

you!!



*Teri Gennarelli, Jackie Bottash, Candice Evans, Sandra Barnes (pictured above), and Tom Cooke, Donna Tish, Kristin Serumgard, Andrew Wone, Rachel Burton, and Ellen Vargyas were honored at the Wendt Center Benefit in November.*

[Click here to see more Benefit photos!](#)

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FOR LOSS AND HEALING



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