

HTPA Goes to WASHINGTON DC for H.O.P.E. on the HILL



by Sharon Robbins, RN, HN-BC, CCHt, HTCP, Healing Touch Professional Association (HTPA) Executive Director

After a fairly long life of studying and reading about political activities that go on in our nation's capitol, Washington, DC, I was finally able to experience the environment and feel the energy in person. All I can say is, it is AWE-SOME!!

Why did HTPA go to Washington to attend H.O.P.E. on the Hill? Last June 2010, we met the founders and leaders of Voice for H.O.P.E. (Healers of Planet Earth) when we (HTP/HTPA) were exhibiting at the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine (ISSSEEM) in Denver, CO. We attended a meeting at which they explained that they had started their organization (just a few months previous) to advocate for our citizen's right to unbiased health care information and the right to choose our own health care options. To align with them as advocates for our HTPA members and HT Community at large was a no-brainer.

After their meeting, we (Lisa Gordon, Cynthia Hutchison, Linnie Thomas and myself) began a conversation with them that actually lasted over an hour. We got to ask how we can make our state, county and city policymakers understand that Healing Touch is not the same as massage (we do not manipulate tissue or muscles) and it is not at all invasive, therefore practi-

tioners should not be required to have a license to touch and practice. They were extremely understanding of our need to enlighten our legislators and gave us some ideas of what we might do to accomplish that.

Because Voice for HOPE "believes that each one of us can be a powerful influence on public policy in our own right," HTPA has aligned with them to learn how to communicate with our local, state and national lawmakers. That is why we went to their recent training, HOPE on the Hill.

During the short couple of days we were together, we learned a great deal about how not to bring an agenda to a meeting but rather to "create space" for the person(s) we are meeting with so that they are more open to a new way of thinking (about what it is we are trying to accomplish). It was a surprise when we were told that appointments had been set up for us to meet with the staff of a number of Congressmen. For some of the meetings we were assigned in a group but others we were assigned individually. As into as I was, I was also quite nervous to go to Capitol Hill and meet one on one with the staff of one of the Senators from my state of California. But, I did it and am very grateful to have had the opportunity.

As I walked from the hall where we had our training, to the building where the office of Congressman Dennis Kucinich is –

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where one of my appointments was scheduled, I couldn't help but be taken by the enormity of the huge historical buildings and the air of important goings on that permeates the atmosphere. In the not too far off distance, was the Supreme Court and the beautiful dome of the Capitol Building. As I passed the Library of Congress, I was wishing I had some free days to meander around and soak all this history up more but since I didn't, I made a vow that I would return sometime before too long.

When I reached the building I needed to go into, there was a very long security line and it seemed like everyone was going to similar meetings like mine (ours). I could actually feel the energy of all the anxiety, knowing that most of us would only have a few minutes for our meeting, yet we all were carrying high hopes of making a huge impact during those minutes. When I reached Kucinich's office my fellow HOPE on the HILL members were not yet there, so I had a chance to breathe my nerves away and center as I waited for them to arrive. When they did, we went in to the office reception area and asked for Vic Edgerton, the staff member we were assigned to see. From the moment Vic came out to the reception area to the moment we left, it was all like a wonderful dream!

First of all, Vic apologized for having to meet with us at a table in the reception area but because during our training we were told not to be surprised if we were kept in that area, the four of us from Voice for HOPE, were completely comfortable with that. Then Vic apologized for not being the person he thought we wanted to see but when he told us that he was directly involved with the Integrative Medicine Caucus we all looked at each other and burst into smiles = he was BETTER than the person who was originally going to see us as he knows exactly what the issues are around health care freedom. When we all gave Vic our personal cards along with the card from Voice for HOPE, he actually spent time reading each one and we truly felt connected and validated as he acknowledged each one of us for our commitment to the practices we each are involved in.

As we had been trained earlier that morning, we asked several times: what we can do to help increase support for the Integrative Medicine Caucus. We explained that Voice for HOPE has been established to be an "objective and trustworthy connection for legislators to receive reliable information regarding



Above: Vic Edgerton, Chief of Staff for Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich, with Voice for H.O.P.E. members (Sharon Robbins, RN, HTCP is on the far right)

different healing modalities but not to advocate any one health-care alternative or solution." Also, to help them gain support in their specific districts by organizing constituent groups in growing numbers to let it be known that they want their representatives to participate in passing policies that give all citizens more choice, control and responsibility for their own well-being and health.

Vic gave us some good ideas of how we can help and I/we all left that meeting (which lasted over 40 minutes!) high on HOPE! We giggled all the way down the hall and could not wait for our next appointment. Although each of us was off to a different office, we knew that for the rest of the day we would be half thinking of what just had occurred and internally smiling til we'd meet up again.

The experience described here in does not begin to adequately tell what is happening in this movement toward health care freedom of choice. With each of our practices (there were approximately 30 different integrative or comprehensive medicine modalities represented at the HOPE on the Hill event) growing along with the awareness of the public's demand for our services, with the formation of the Voice for HOPE and their Vision, I believe we have everything going our way and that it is just a matter of (a short) time until we will see the nation's, the state's, the county's and the city's policy makers coming forth with laws that promote our work rather than restrict it. There's really no stopping this forward progress now.

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In the very near future we will be offering specific steps through HTPA on how to get involved in your communities. Voice for HOPE is putting the final structures together to offer a number of trainings that include more HOPE on the Hill events and a Citizen Healer Academy. We will keep you informed as these opportunities for involvement unfold. If you are interested in learning more about Voice for Hope [click here](#).

About the author:



Sharon Robbins is Executive Director of the Healing Touch Professional Association. She is a Holistic Nurse in private practice offering CAM therapies to her clients since 1980. Sharon has been committed to the advancement of HT into main stream professional business arenas and believes payment for HT service should elevate to the level of other well respected professional practices.



Professional Association

HTPA is now sponsoring 2 monthly support calls:

1. "Let's Chat About Healing Touch Stories and Practice Issues"
 - held on the last Monday of the month 9pm EST
 - the next call is on **March 28, 2011**
2. Monthly Business Support Conference Calls
 - held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
 - 9-10:15pm EST
 - the next call is on **April 12, 2011**
 - "Express Yourself Through Writing: It's easier than you think!" With Barbara Litchfield, HTCP, Master's in Pastoral Ministry

[Click here](#) for more information or to register online.

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