

Dear Members,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the 2022 SWHPN Annual Assembly in Santa Fe, New Mexico. It's so nice to finally meet in person and we hope you enjoy your time connecting with colleagues you haven't seen since 2019.

It's been an unprecedented two years with the pandemic, murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and too many other Black and Brown people, social unrest, and the war in the Ukraine. In reflecting on this year's theme, "Looking forward & back: celebrating our history and the future of hospice and palliative care social work," We're struck by the word "celebrate." While there is a lot that we are proud of in this field, and proud of SWHPN as an organization, it's a difficult time to "celebrate" when we are aware of our roots in white supremacy and anti-Blackness. As an organization, SWHPN is dedicated to cultivating a sustainable community rooted in belonging and justice. An important part of this is to own our past and move through a period of disruption and discomfort. To develop new ways of working to ensure we do not perpetuate harm to historically marginalized and excluded communities, including our colleagues in hospice and palliative care.

In Alicia Elliott's memoir, *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*. Elliott, a Mohawk writer, reflects on her childhood growing up on a reservation in Ontario Canada:

"Perhaps one day this neighborhood, this city, this country will finally hear its neglected past whispering. Look at me plainly. Look at me. Look at your patterns. Don't make the same mistakes. Don't hide who you were. Acknowledge it, then make something new, something beautiful, something that will make everyone proud." (Elliott, Pg. 57)

SWHPN is in the process of reflecting on its patterns, its history – so we can acknowledge where we have colluded with oppressive structures, so we can stop making the same mistakes, and make something new. We have committed the human and financial resources necessary to help us identify our patterns and plan for a more equitable future. As the history of systemic racism and oppression within the medical system begins to be acknowledged and addressed, we as social workers need to look at ourselves as individuals and at social work as a profession. As a profession that is rooted in "nice" whiteness, we need to question its role in proliferating power structures and imagine a new future. In 2022-2023 and beyond, my hope for SWHPN, to borrow from Elliott's words, is that we not only "hear the neglected past whispers" but actively work to turn whispers into trumpets to address systemic racism.

*Acknowledge the neglected whispers of the past
Make something new
Something beautiful
Something that will make everyone proud (A. Elliott)*

We look forward to seeing what SWHPN will together, in 2022 and for many more years. Please see the executive director message for other exciting updates.

Anne Kelemen, LICSW, APHSW-C, Chair
Danielle Jonas, LCSW, Vice Chair
Caitlin Scanlon, LCSW, Secretary/Treasurer
Stacy Remke, LICSW, APHSW-C, Past Chair