February 28, 2014 marks the 75th birthday of Parker J. Palmer, senior partner and founder of the Center for Courage & Renewal. We recently asked him about the place of “Courage work” in his life and his hopes for his legacy.

“As a writer, I’ve always wanted to ‘put wheels’ on the ideas I write about. Over the last twenty years the Center for Courage & Renewal has partnered with me to implement that vision. Together we have created vehicles for people to ride these ideas toward creative destinations in their own lives and in the world.

“When I think about the way vehicles of that sort can serve individuals and the world—when I think about how our vehicles have carried people closer to these visions, possibilities and hopes—it’s wonderfully gratifying and exciting.

“But that’s not my personal legacy. It’s a collective legacy created by the work of many hands. I’ve always said that the success of our work should be measured by its capacity to draw to us committed, competent, caring people who are doing significant work in the world around problems, solutions and things that matter. I think that’s exactly what we’ve done.

“It’s wonderful to be in this long-term, deep partnership with the Center where I have a chance to learn from others and a chance to plant seeds of new ideas and watch some of them grow to fruition.

“To be embedded in a community of people who share your deepest convictions and concerns is an enormous gift. I’m grateful for that on a daily basis.

continued on page 4 ➤
A Note from the Executive Director

I had the pleasure of lighting the candles on Parker’s cake this month, a surprise to him after he led a retreat here in Seattle.

Those three days with Parker reinforced the reason why I’m here.

Honor Parker with your gift

Parker is well loved as a man who is authentic, vulnerable, and make-your-face-hurt funny. He is admired for his courage to live a life congruent with the ideas and principles he writes and talks about. He inspires us to do the same.

Gratefully yours,

T erry Chadsey
Executive Director
Center for Courage & Renewal

Connecting Organizational Soul & Role

The first time I heard Parker talk about his five habits of the heart was at the 2011 national gathering of Courage & Renewal facilitators. He hadn’t published Healing the Heart of Democracy yet. His ideas resonated with me, and I thought, “We don’t just need Courage & Renewal facilitators, we need Courage organizations!”

Stephen Lewis is President of the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) in Decatur, Georgia, a nonprofit organization with a 60-year history of cultivating the next generation of diverse church leaders through vocational discernment and other offerings. A Courage & Renewal facilitator and Board Member, Stephen began integrating Courage & Renewal practices into his work years before he was promoted to President.

“Most organizations today live in the tragic gap,” said Stephen. “They’re stuck between doing what they have always done or developing the courage to try something new.”

“Organizations are a reflection of their people, a mirror of who they are with regard to their values, practices, habits, and the long traditions that preceded them prior to joining an organization.”

“I am trying to build a learning organization that seeks to learn together. It’s a team effort—we’re all in this work together. It’s not just me dictating to others, but discerning and learning with a team of people who share a commitment, values and a deep longing for an organization in which we can thrive. And where we can help the organization reach its own potential and

Habits of the Heart
1. An understanding that we’re all in this together
2. An appreciation of the value of “otherness.”
3. An ability to hold tension in life-giving ways.
4. A sense of personal voice and agency.
5. A capacity to create community.

Stephen Lewis, FTE President, is creating a courageous organization.

Your gifts move Park...
Herdley Paolini, PhD, joined Florida Hospital 11 years ago to become director of Physician Support Services, the first program of its kind in the United States to address physician burnout.

The 8-campus hospital has more inpatient admissions annually than any other hospital in the U.S. and has rescued the careers of over 100 physicians in the past decade.

“Physicians are facing unprecedented stress and change,” said Herdley. “Physicians are not technicians, they are healers. They need the support so they can begin to not only survive but to lead health care in a different way.

“When you have 40 to 60 percent of physicians across the nation who are clinically burned out, how can we get the health we want for our patients?”

Five years into the program, the hospital administration changed and the program faced possible elimination. It was at that point that Herdley found Courage & Renewal facilitator Penny Williamson who helped her get through this enormous challenge by inviting Herdley to a five-retreat Courage to Lead® series.

“I was experiencing not just a tragic gap but a crater. I needed others to help me sustain the courage, which is a pioneering kind of courage. I don’t think I would be here at my job today if it wasn’t for that.”

“There are so many barriers it can be exhausting. I don’t know how anyone would do it alone. It’s just an impossible task. Courage work sustains me.”

Herdley is now a Courage & Renewal facilitator herself and applies the practices in many ways. Last autumn, she took 12 physician leaders on a weekend retreat.

“By Sunday morning, we had all of them saying, ‘This was an unbelievable experience. I came here totally burned out crisp and I’m leaving now with a sense of how I’m going to hold myself. Now I’m actually looking forward to going back home and going back to work.’ This is just in one weekend.”

“I have physicians who wouldn’t be here without the kind of Courage & Renewal retreats that we do. They say, ‘This has changed my life. I was at the bottom. I could not think of practicing one more day, before I came to this retreat. I now feel renewed. And now my staff say they don’t recognize me.’”

Did you know?

1 in 2 physicians experience burnout symptoms
40% currently suffer or have suffered from burnout
45% of primary care physicians would leave medicine if they had the financial means.

Offering Antidotes to Physician Burnout

“Physician burnout is threatening the foundation of the U.S. medical healthcare system.”


Thanks to you, facilitators like Herdley are helping physicians renew their courage to heal.

Depression, suicide, & substance abuse disorders are more prevalent among physicians than the general population.
Putting Wheels on Parker’s Ideas
continued from page 1 ▶

“I’m sitting in my office as we talk. I have two bookcases here, both with three shelves. Both are packed to the limit with books I’ve written in various editions and translations; other books in which I have chapters or for which I’ve written forewords; and periodicals in which I have articles.

“I look around and think, ‘That’s a lot of words!’ And yet for me, that’s not the legacy.

“For me, a legacy is a living thing. It’s the way all of my writing has been translated into the lives of people—by those people—and from them into the lives of communities, institutions and the larger society.

“I’d like to leave a more personal legacy, one of good humor, good will and generosity. I’d like it to be said that we had a lot of good laughs, we spread a lot of kindness, and we shared a lot of human resources of heart and soul. I can’t imagine a better legacy than that.”

Your gift ensures that Parker Palmer’s ideas continue to inspire courageous, caring people.

Connecting Organizational Soul & Role
continued from page 2 ▶

discern the connection between its soul and role within the world.

“I used some of the Courage & Renewal principles and practices in my work throughout the organization’s life, such as seasons as metaphors for life and appreciating paradox as a way to hold greater complexity.”

Recently, Stephen used Parker Palmer’s “five habits of the heart” as a frame for FTE’s organizational restructure.

“The habits helped us think about our vision and call to do our work authentically, with a level of intentionality, and shared understanding that we are all in this together.”

“With a little creativity and courage, people can create courageous organizations and cultivate institutional habits of the heart.”

Thanks to you, facilitators like Stephen are cultivating courage in organizations committed to great change.

I support Parker’s legacy!
Yes! I want to ensure that Parker’s wisdom reaches committed, competent, caring people who are helping others thrive.

Please accept my gift of:

☐ $ 50 ☐ $ 100 ☐ $ 250
☐ $________ to help others thrive.

All gifts to the Center for Courage & Renewal are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. 1402 Third Avenue, Suite 709 Seattle, WA 98101

www.CourageRenewal.org/donate

Share Your Story
How has Parker Palmer inspired your life and work? Are you sustained by certain concepts or quotes? Tell us about that time when Parker helped you find your hidden wholeness, teach with courage, let your life speak – or made you laugh out loud.

Join us in honoring Parker on his 75th birthday. Share your story and photos here: www.couragerenewal.org/storyboard

CREDIT CARD
☐ I wish to give by credit card
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard
☐ American Express ☐ Discover

CARD NUMBER

NAME ON CARD (Please Print) ☐ PHONE NUMBER

EXP DATE ☐ CVV CODE

SIGNATURE

EMAIL ADDRESS

NAC02140