



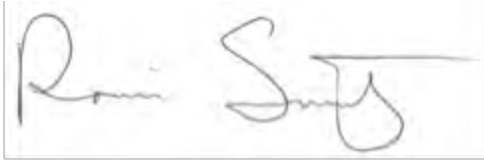
Dear Altruistic Behavior Institute Board Members and Community,

A new book. Expanded programs *to seek out ways to enhance altruism and prosocial behavior in society*. Difficult conversations about care, compassion, and reconciliation. A new name (potentially). These are just some of the activities the Altruistic Behavior Institute has been involved in this past year. Please read on to find out more.

About the potential name change: Cal Poly Humboldt adopted a policy this year that requires all institutes to re-apply for recognition. While this comes with the paperwork, forms, and justifications you can imagine in a well-developed institutional bureaucracy, I decided to use this as an opportunity to put forth a name change for the institute. Originally chartered as the Altruistic Personality and Prosocial Behavior Institute, now known as the Altruistic Behavior Institute, I expect approval at the beginning of the 2025–26 academic year to change the name to the **Oliner Altruism Institute**. Now is a

good time to make sure the institute always honors and lives up to its founders' vision. I'll keep you posted on this exciting development.

Please continue to share the [Oliner Altruism Institute/Altruistic Behavior Institute website](#) with people so the ongoing work Sam and Pearl set out to do over 40 years ago is widely circulated. [There are also buttons to press to make financial contributions.](#)



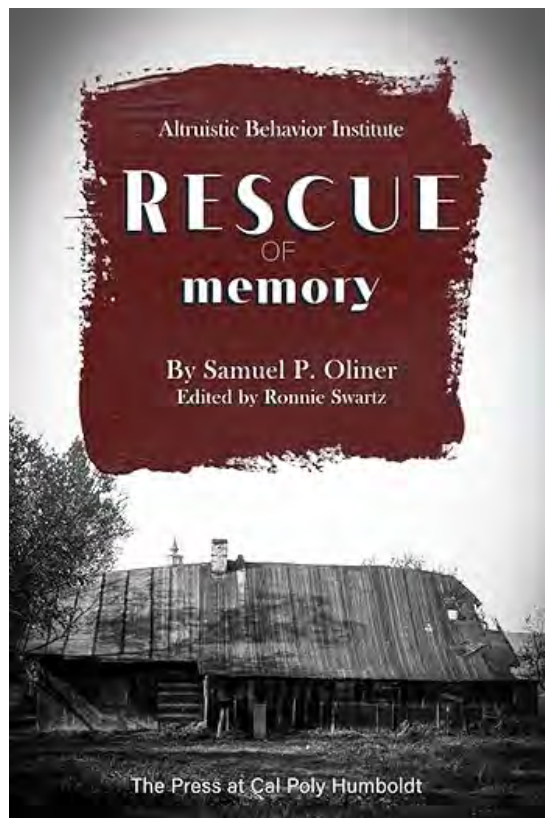
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Oliner Altruism Research Archive



The free online library now includes audio recordings of Holocaust Rescuers and Survivors, transcripts of survey interviews on apology and forgiveness, with Carnegie Heroes and other moral exemplars, and experiential questionnaires completed by Holocaust Survivors. Currently, the student assistant for the institute, Alondra Montoya Gomez, is converting cassette tapes of some of the survey interviews into digital files that will be included in the archive. [Check it all out here.](#)

Rescue of Memory



Sam Oliner's final book, [*Rescue of Memory*](#), has now been published. The manuscript had been previously circulated among family members. I edited portions that I thought would be interesting to a broader audience. Chapters include reflections written by Sam, his Korean War diary, and interviews with Holocaust Rescuers/Survivors who had a profound influence in Sam's life.

Behavioral Health Workforce Development

Sam and Pearl described widely shared characteristics of people who provide support to other people with little to no significant material gain for themselves. These principles inform the knowledge, skills, values, and standpoint of the Altruistic Behavior Institute's ongoing behavioral health workforce development efforts. Behavioral health practice with vulnerable populations often requires a strong commitment to service for others at the expense of short-term material gains for oneself.

The Altruistic Behavior Institute's workforce development efforts produce professionals that demonstrate these characteristics:

- Different social classes and diverse lived experience
- Internalized values such as helpfulness, responsibility, fairness, justice, compassion, and friendship
- Relationships with groups outside of their own family circles or immediate communities
- Acceptance of differences
- Responsibility for many kinds of people
- Meaning in their work

- Confidence to take calculated risks
- Awareness of what is happening around them
- A supportive emotional network
- Affirmation of their work by family members or others who can be trusted

With the addition of the Rural and Tribal Behavioral Health Distributed Learning Advanced Standing Fellowship, the Altruistic Behavior Institute has received over \$5.6 million in state grants to strengthen behavioral health services in California's rural and Tribal communities. The newest program adds to workforce development programs reported on in previous annual reports (e.g., Rural and Tribal Behavioral Health MSW Fellowship, Rural and Tribal Substance Use Disorder Earn & Learn Program, and Rural and Tribal Behavioral Health Undergraduate Fellowship) which aim to produce an ethical and effective behavioral health workforce that better represents the population of behavioral health consumers in the state. The Altruistic Behavior Institute provided almost \$1 million in financial support to 28 students pursuing altruistic and pro-social careers in 2024-25 and will provide more funding, to more students, in 2025-26.



Xavion Bond is one of the first MSW graduates who received a Rural and Tribal Behavioral Health Fellowship through the institute. He interned at the Southern Humboldt Family Resource Center in his first year of the graduate program and with Trinidad Rancheria in his second year, providing services to victims/survivors of violence.

Unfortunately, most of the funding for the institute's altruistic and pro-social workforce development projects comes from one-time state funds that will run out in 1-3 years and are unlikely to receive support in the future. Meanwhile, I submitted a large federal behavioral health workforce development grant application earlier this year before the scale of the federal administration's decimation of human services funding was clear. I do not anticipate that the institute will receive an award given the pendulum that is swinging in relation to federal support for such efforts.

Voter Registration

In September, I met occasional institute assistant, Eva Swartz (also my daughter), in Nevada to engage in a non-partisan voter registration drive on the campus of UNLV and in a predominantly Spanish-speaking market. We got people registered to vote, confirmed existing registrations, conveyed the importance of voting, and celebrated that many people were already registered.



Polytechnic Transformation

As California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt continues its transformation from Humboldt State University, it is more important than ever for the university to recognize

the significant contributions of the Altruistic Behavior Institute. To keep this on the administrative radar, I developed a document that demonstrates how the institute furthers the university's framework for a 21st century polytechnic, including being "Hands-on and Career-Focused," building on "STEM and Applied Sciences," and having a "Strong Grounding in Liberal Arts."

Two examples of the institute's work in 2024-25 that are consistent with the university's vision for a polytechnic are the keynote and community consultation provided by Aboriginal social worker Tileah Drahm and the Virtual Reality Skills Development Project.

In January, the institute hosted Tileah Drahm as the keynote speaker for an annual conference of social work students. Tileah, a Durrumbal woman who lives and works in Kuranda, in Far North Queensland, Australia, also offered consultation to a local community organization that provides services to Native American youth and families. Tileah has over 20 years of experience working across Indigenous Health and Social and Emotional wellbeing, including the past eight years working as an Emergency Department Social Worker at the Cairns Hospital.

Here we are with her partner, Justin, and one of Cal Poly Humboldt's social work student mentors, William Feather, who works and lives in Mendocino County.



Several institute Fellows participating in behavioral health workforce development used virtual reality headsets and the program Headspace during the academic year to strengthen their practice skills of empathy, non-judgmentalness, and mindfulness which contribute to more effective services. While this project was not conducted as research, the handful of students who completed the activities reported higher scores on assessment instruments that measure these attributes. However, most participants (me included) found the headsets uncomfortable to use after a short period of time.

The [*Humboldt State University Polytechnic Prospectus*](#) says, “In the final analysis, our success as educators is not measured by how well our students contribute to our own disciplines, but by...how those contributions promote a sustainable and just world” (p. 21).

Conversations on Altruism

The annual Conversations on Altruism series continued with Nezzie Wade as our guest. Maral Attallah, institute board member and faculty in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and I talked with Nezzie about compassion, reaching across differences, and grassroots action. Nezzie has been involved in some of the areas most rooted non-profit organizations, including the Redwood Community Action Agency, Democracy Unlimited, and Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation. She is co-founder and President of Affordable Homeless Housing Alternatives (AHHA), the leading local non-governmental organization assisting in implementing a variety of affordable housing solutions for people dealing with homelessness in Humboldt County. [A video of the public conversation can be found, along with previous Conversations on Altruism, here.](#)



Consortium of Higher Education Centers for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Studies

While I was not able to attend the biennial conference held this year in Birmingham, Alabama, the Altruistic Behavior Institute was represented in several Consortium meetings related to the effects of the Presidential election on Higher Education Centers for Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Studies. Some places have it really hard right now and I feel privileged to be in a university, community, and state that is not hostile to the institute's work. I am also blessed to have a supportive board.

Altruistic Behavior Institute Board of Directors

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