

May 16, 2022

Dear CQ colleagues,

You have just heard about the two new faculty Chairs in qualitative research that have been funded by me and my husband Chris Hoffmann. This is a hugely significant moment, both for CQ and for me, and I wanted to say a few things that, as they say in our trade, puts the gift 'into context'.

First, let me say how thrilled I am to be able to do this. But I want you to know that CQ would not be worth a penny of support if it weren't for what is already in place and the endless effort, commitment, and creativity of those who built it over many years. In 2009, when Denise Gastaldo and I transformed "QUIG" (for those of you who have been around long enough to remember that name!) into the Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research, it was already an astounding organization with course curricula, visiting scholars, advocacy activities, methodology seminars, public internet access to teaching and learning materials, a website, and so on. And all of this was done mostly with informal volunteer time and commitment, and with hardly any extra resources at all. Since its founding, CQ has become ever better, but it has never been easy to keep all the pieces together, to sustain what has been successfully developed, to manage constant challenges within the academy, to act on all the great ideas that its membership spawned and the field invited, and especially to maintain a graduate curriculum of exceptional excellence. This gift is about ensuring that CQ can continue in the future to do what it does so well.

In addition to continuity, the funding is intended to help propel CQ to even greater accomplishment. I spent a really long time planning how the gift would be structured to give it the best possible chance of producing leading-edge thinking, teaching, and practice in qualitative health research. I used everything I ever learned over my career about what it takes for this kind of scholarship to survive and thrive, especially in the health sciences environment. All important is the need to educate the next generation of critical qualitative researchers, while simultaneously providing for the continued presence and vitality of CQ's unique and very special community of practice (inside and outside of academia, locally and internationally) that has proved of existential importance to those trying to generate knowledge that runs against the scientific grain, and that has so enriched our capacities and experiences as researchers, and as persons.

For me personally, however, donorship has its implications, including the unavoidable change it means for my relationship to CQ. I can't know yet what it might mean, but my hope is that I can find ways to stay engaged in this community without running afoul of (justifiable) university donor influence practices, or messing up the wonderfully open exchanges within CQ about our work and direction. I am determined to move beyond my former roles in CQ, to 'let go' of CQ Past, and to watch it fly off, wherever. I will ever remain eager to follow and understand where CQ goes in the future as it rides, resists and redirects the ever-changing tides of theory, method and knowledge.

I have written in the past about the role of marginality and exclusion in our teaching and research community— our practices have been rooted in and framed by our struggle within the dominant science and its institutional structures. I would never like to think that a gift like this — one that makes critical qualitative inquiry more secure, more sustainable, more institutionalized — might also unintentionally undermine its most valuable contributions to knowledge, its research values, its risky and feisty creativity. Even though these new faculty positions will help put critical qualitative

methodology and CQ 'on the map' and spare it some of the endless scrabbling to get by and to legitimate its scholarship, I would ask you to never let that security draw us back from the edge or weaken our capacity for alternative understandings of science and health.

Donorship comes with naming and various recognitions, but because CQ is a collective accomplishment and because Denise Gastaldo in particular has been so core to CQ's development, I wanted her to be acknowledged too. Although U of T policy does not allow naming a chair after an 'active' faculty member, the junior Chair is to be renamed the Eakin-Gastaldo Chair in Critical Qualitative Health Research Methodology after she retires (although who says retirement makes one no longer 'active'?).

I also want to acknowledge the key catalytic role of Dean Steini Brown in making this gift possible. He spent hours listening to me and reading what I wrote endlessly to him as I tried to explain, and he to grasp, the fundamental ingredients of what I believed was needed to make the donation work for CQ: the distinctive nature of knowledge created by this form of research, reasons for the focus on methodology, the key role of theory and criticality in methodology, the importance of disciplinary social science in health research (with the overlaying challenges of being 'applied' science and of accessing social science from inside the health sciences), the singular difficulties associated with teaching and practicing qualitative inquiry in a health research milieu, and so on. His thoughtful and respectful skill and ingenuity in marshalling the donation through the University, and his hefty commitment on behalf of the Faculty to matching a large part of the funding, was pivotal to the process.

Thank you all for what you have contributed to making CQ into what it is today, and thus providing me with the opportunity to support research I believe in and care deeply about, research that I know first-hand has something very special to offer the study of health and the public good. How could a donor ask for more?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.