

# *HER editorial for May, 2026*

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## **Abstract**

Founding HER Co-editors, Renee Owen and Paul Freedman celebrate HER's 5-years in publication with a look at what all of us, together, have accomplished as a holistic community.

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Five years ago, *HER* was re-born. The first issue of the new *Holistic Education Review* was published, this time as a free, Public Knowledge, open-access journal. Fitting for springtime, it was a rebirth, a resurrection of the original *Holistic Education Review* published between 1988-1998. Later the journal was renamed and became *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*. Some of you reading this were among the pages of these previous incarnations—pages that documented a scholarly foundation for holistic education.

With this May, 2026 issue, we celebrate the health and development of holistic education by providing a short retrospective of what we – as a literary and scholarly community – have accomplished on this five year anniversary of *HER*.

## **The journey so far**

As part of the rebirth, new *HER*'s initiating editors, Paul Freedman, Renee Owen, and Lauren Tien, invited founding scholars of the holistic education movement to serve on an advisory board. Ron Miller, Jack Miller, Don Jacobs (aka

Four Arrows), Andrea Purcell, Phillip Snow Gang, Yoshi Nakagawa, Thakur Powdell, Ashwani Kumar, Marni Binder, and Prapapat Niyom all graciously served, reading each issue and providing guidance and credibility for the newborn journal. Together, we decided to publish twice annually – spring and fall with the mission statement: The mission of the *Holistic Education Review* is to enhance and broaden the scholarship of holistic education, lift up diverse and emerging voices of holistic education practice, and connect the holistic education community.

Volume 1, Issue 1 included an interview with Parker Palmer (who was also one of the early contributors to the original *HER* in the early 1990's), the first of many well-known authors and unique contributors to the field of holistic education, among them: Daniel Rechtschaffen, Meena Srinivasan, Richard Louv, Jack Miller, Lisa Miller, and Margaret Wheatley.

In addition to well-known authors, our bold vision was to broaden the circle of holistic education, as declared in the first editorial written for the inaugural issue. With that in mind, in addition to scholarly peer review articles, we included the

“Community Voices” section of the journal, where practitioners can share teaching strategies and philosophies (such as this beautiful piece by [Lea Abrams](#)), creative writers can wax poetic (such as [David Jardine](#)), and students can share newfound insights (See [Sunnaya Khan’s](#) autoethnographic piece).

Also, in the spirit of widening the circle, Debbie Millon offered a critical perspective on holistic education, noting its limited accessibility. Following that, Debbie chaired a guest editorial team of six scholars who curated a themed issue, [Social Justice and Equity in Holistic Education](#), on the intersection of holistic education and social justice in May, 2025. (Most of this team also presented at the International Holistic Teaching and Learning Conference at SOU in Ashland, Oregon in April, 2024.) As that issue was in production, the current federal administration induced so much fear, that some authors, located within universities that were not friendly toward DEI, either pulled their articles, or chose to publish anonymously. In honor of the era, the editors chose to symbolize their sacrifice by publishing “blank pages.”

Other themed editions of HER provided an opportunity to publish a wing of holistic education or hold sacred a particular dimension. Spring 2022, was the [Eco-pedagogy and Place-based Education](#) issue. Authors included David Orr, David Sobel, and Gregory Smith.

Four Arrows curated an all-Indigenous authored issue, published in Spring of 2023. [Kinship worldview: Indigenous Authors Going Deeper with Holistic Education](#). Authors included Tyson Yunkaporta, Greg Cajete, and Ilarion Mercurief (Kuuyux).

Also in 2023, *HER* published a special issue on [Contemplative Perspectives and Practices in Holistic Education](#). A giant issue with 21 articles, guest edited by Heesoon Bai and Charles Scott.

How have we done all this in only five years? Together. One of the fundamental principles of holism is interconnectedness—the recognition of interdependence and the ecosystems we are all a part of.

HER is and always has been so much more than a publication. We are a community.

### **The HER community and current organizational ecology**

With that in mind, we want to thank the community. Our financial model is dependent on the idea of community. *HER* is resourced communally. We are primarily volunteer-powered, without a university paying for faculty or sponsoring production costs. Senior editors are volunteers. We editors do this work because we cannot *not* do it. We are motivated by a deep love for holistic pedagogy, holistic teaching, and holistic learning.

At some point we recognized we did not have a sustainable funding model. Our advisory board wanted the journal to continue to be free and open-access to all readers. While many open-access journals charge authors for each published manuscript to cover the cost of production, we made the bold choice to offer authors the opportunity to donate to the journal to help pay for production costs – costs that we keep to a minimum through volunteerism.

We are deeply grateful for the excellent work of our volunteer copy editors and peer reviewers. Sophia Lorentz, originally a HER Student Editor became our first head copy editor, leading a small team of dedicated volunteer copy editors. She trained Corey Idleburg, HER’s current Lead Copy Editor. Thank you to the peer reviewers who offer thoughtful, kind advice. The quality of our peer reviewers is one segment of the *HER* community

that sets us apart from other scholarly journals. The reviewers use their role to engage with and guide (rather than merely criticize). The dialogue between reviewers and authors ultimately helps to shape the field of holistic education.

Donations, made by many of you reading this, “keep the lights on” – paying for needed services, such as web hosting, our PO Box, an occasional bookkeeper to keep our financial reporting to government agencies up to date, and one paid staff member. (Even she, Emilie McGeary generously volunteers much of her time.)

We are so much more than a publication. We are also a non-profit business that Emilie runs for us. We are all so grateful to Southern Oregon University for providing a student editor every year and enough grant money to stay in operation. But it is private individual donations that have kept the journal afloat. THANK YOU for your generous philanthropy.

As a nonprofit organization, the *HER* relies on a volunteer Board of Directors who provide oversight and governance. Our current Board includes another swath of leaders and visionaries. Tobin Hart, William Greene, Sam Crowell, Debbie Millon, John King, and Robin Ann Martin, we are so grateful for your leadership and wisdom.

Our working team at *HER* includes Senior Editors, Renee Owen, Paul Freedman, Annie Rappaport, and Fawn Canaday. Production Editor, Emilie McGeary, and Student Editor, Anu Ayers. We all meet often and try our best not to step on one another’s toes as we perform the often elegant (and occasionally awkward) dance of bringing authors’ voices to our digital pages for the delight and edification of you, our readers.

And speaking of our readers, you are also vital and integral members of this community. We do not consider the *HER* to be a cold, static, lifeless offering. Rather it is a living, breathing dialogue.

We shepherd authors’ words and voices as an invitation to engage. The ideas spark questions, insight, or wonderings. Readers write back to us with emerging thoughts. Often readers become authors, or donors, reviewers, or even editors of the journal. At this time, we warmly invite you to imagine taking a step into these warm waters. If you had time, skill, or resources to offer, where might you fit within this living community? Give us feedback. Make a donation. Send us event announcements, even job openings that might interest other readers. Sign up to be a peer reviewer. Submit a manuscript. All our doors are open. We’d love to hear from you. As Margaret Wheatley reminds us, these times are dominated by powerful centrifugal forces that push us apart. Let the *HER* be one of your counter-hegemonic communities of practice, an “island of sanity” where the centripetal forces bring us together during these times of isolation.

### **Looking towards the future**

What we now have to offer here in Volume VI, Number 1, is the latest addition to a continually growing collection, a clearinghouse, if you will, of holistic education. Teachers, professors, students can make one stop – *HER* – to understand and help define holistic education, explore the breadth of holistic approaches and philosophy, and search for the growing edges of this field. As we know, edges are places where there is often the most energy, the most vibrancy, and the greatest diversity within living systems. And in an expansive and expanding field like holistic education, we must continue to pay close attention to the edges.

In the coming year, Senior Editor, Renee Owen will be on sabbatical, opening the possibility of welcoming a new member to our leadership team. You, perhaps? Send us a note if you might be interested.

We look ahead to a future guest-edited themed issue, tentatively scheduled for fall 2027 (Vol VII #2) which will feature manuscripts focused on “Formative Education.” If you have not been aware of formative education, you are not alone! Our editorial team has been surprised and delighted to have recently become aware of this closely aligned part of the landscape. We look forward to learning along with you, as we join forces with our brother and sister scholars.

More than anything, we want to take this moment to share with you three things: First, our pride and congratulations on reaching our five-year milestone together. Second, our gratitude for joining us on this journey in whatever capacity you have been along for the ride. We appreciate you! And finally, a sincere invitation to take another little step towards even deeper engagement with the Holistic Education Review. Now would be the ideal time to submit your article, sign up to peer review, or make a tax-deductible donation. Together, we are HER.

With love,

~Renee and Paul