



The Mission of the Humanists of Greater Portland (HGP) is to create a thriving local community that promotes and acts upon the ideals of Humanism

August Potluck

It's summer potluck season again!

At Anne Henderson's house in Aloha on Labor Day weekend, August 30 at 11am. Note the earlier time, planning on a hot day!

Hope to see you all there!!

- Anne Henderson,

Atheist News

The 2026 World Humanist Congress will take place August 7-9, 2026, in Ottawa, Canada.

Info at atheists.org

"We're not doing that climate change, you know, crud, anymore."

- Agriculture Secretary Brook Rollins to Fox Business about embracing climate change denial and science cuts.

New York Times 5-21-25

HGP Scholarships

The Del Allen Memorial Scholarship was founded with these ideas in mind:

To help young people with their educational journey;

To stimulate interest in Humanism among young people; and

To raise awareness of the HGP organization.

Since 2012, 250 essays on Humanistic subjects have been read and adjudicated. 56 individuals have received a monetary award, for a total of \$90,700.

These scholarships are made possible by us. It is our donations to the HGP Scholarship Fund that help these students. So, please, donate to keep Del's vision going.

Here are this year's winners:

Dakota Mears

1st Place - \$3500

How might Humanism as a philosophy help you navigate a personal challenge in your life?

Growing up, I always believed that hard work would get me where I needed to be. I thought that if I put in enough effort, things would just fall into place.

But life isn't that simple—sometimes, no matter how hard you work, the obstacles in front of you feel impossible to overcome.

For me, that obstacle was financial hardship. My father wasn't in the picture, and my mother—despite working tirelessly—was never in a position to financially support my college education. Because of poor financial decisions, she couldn't apply for loans, and I quickly realized that if I wanted to go to college, I would have to figure it out on my own.

It was overwhelming. Watching my peers submit their FAFSA applications with the expectation that their parents would help cover what aid didn't was a stark contrast to my own reality. I wasn't just applying to college—I was fighting for a chance at a future that felt just out of reach.

In moments like these, it's easy to feel powerless. To believe that the circumstances you were born into define you. But this is where Humanism gave me strength—not in some abstract, philosophical sense, but in a way that truly shaped my perspective.

According to the Humanist worldview, we are responsible for our own lives and the well-being of others, rather than relying on fate or supernatural intervention. This philosophy helped me understand that while my challenges were real, they were not insurmountable. My success depended on my choices and my willingness to shape my own future.

I refused to let my financial situation limit my potential. Instead of focusing on what I lacked, I started looking at what I could do. I applied for every scholarship I could find, sought financial aid, and took on responsibilities that allowed me to grow both personally and academically.

But I didn't just focus on myself. If there's one thing Humanism has taught me, it's that community matters. We have a responsibility to uplift those around us, especially when we know what it feels like to struggle. One of the core principles of Humanism is altruism—helping others selflessly, without expecting anything in return. That belief guided me when I started volunteering at an elderly care facility.

At first, I was just handing out Christmas cards, but I quickly realized that what the residents needed most was human connection.

Many were lonely, longing for conversation, for someone to simply sit and listen. So I did. I listened to their stories, their regrets, their joys. I held their hands, laughed with them, and, for a brief moment, helped them feel seen.

That experience reinforced the Humanist principle that well-being is achieved through social engagement and compassion. Compassion isn't about grand gestures—it's about showing up for people and making them feel valued.

Humanism also emphasizes critical thinking—a skill that became essential as I balanced academics with family responsibilities. As the oldest sibling, I took on the role of caring for my younger brothers—helping with homework, cooking meals, making sure they had what they needed. It was exhausting at times, trying to juggle everything while keeping up with school, but I learned how to manage my time, stay organized, and push through even when I was running on empty.

The Humanist focus on reason and responsibility helped me realize that while I couldn't change my circumstances overnight, I could develop the skills and mindset necessary to navigate them effectively.

That resilience carried over into my other commitments. When I tutored fourth graders for the Math is Cool competition, I saw firsthand how small acts of encouragement could make a difference. Some of these kids had already decided they “weren't good at math,” that they would never succeed. I recognized that feeling—because I had felt it too, not with math, but with the idea of affording college. So I did for them what I wished someone had done for me: I reminded them that they were capable. That just because something seemed impossible didn't mean it actually was.

This reflects the Humanist commitment to education and intellectual honesty—helping others see their own potential through learning and critical thinking.

Education is my passion—not just for myself, but for others. I want to become an English professor, not only to teach literature but to inspire students to see learning as something empowering. Too often, education feels like an obligation rather than an opportunity. I want to change that. I want to help students see knowledge as a tool they can use to shape their futures, just as I have.

Humanism's emphasis on objective knowledge and intellectual honesty aligns with my belief that education should be a force for personal and societal growth. It teaches us not what to think, but how to think .

This is what Humanism means to me. It's not just about believing in yourself—it's about creating a world where others can believe in themselves too. It's about recognizing that life isn't always fair, but that doesn't mean we stop trying to make it better. Humanists believe in using reason and evidence to make informed decisions that contribute to individual and collective well-being . This belief has shaped my approach to life—focusing not on what I cannot change, but on what I can.

I know my journey isn't over. There will be more obstacles ahead, more moments of doubt. But what I do know is that I will keep moving forward. I will keep learning, keep growing, and keep working to ensure that my success isn't just my own, but something I can share with others.

With this scholarship, I will be one step closer to that future. One step closer to proving that where you start in life doesn't have to define where you end up. One step closer to making a

difference—not just for myself, but for every student who, like me, refuses to let their circumstances determine their worth.

Dakota sent us a card which read, "Thank you so much not only for the support, but also for the warm welcome you gave me and my family during the reading. It was truly inspiring to see such a community come together in such good faith. I will take all your advice and kind words with me into the next step of my journey. Thank you."

Shahazad Khosravi

2nd Place - \$2500

How can the application of Humanism serve a particular field or organization (e.g, your possible career interests)?"

The Impact of Humanism on Healthcare

Humanism provides a philosophical framework focused on ethics, reason, and dignity. This worldview is one which guides healthcare professionals through the maze of medical and ethical challenges they face daily. I'm personally drawn to medicine as a career path, and I believe implementing Humanistic ideology can transform

healthcare in three crucial ways: It fosters compassionate patient care, it strengthens our commitment to equity, and it pushes to progress scientific knowledge.

From an early age I have been interested in healthcare. As I came into high school I began to wonder how we could address health problems affecting so many lives. I began volunteering at local hospitals where I observed patients interacting with healthcare teams. I assisted with administrative tasks and provided patients with comfort and support.

These experiences taught me something significant: while medical knowledge forms the foundation of care, a humanistic approach distinguishes truly exceptional healthcare providers.

I observed how the relationship between doctor and patient often determined not just satisfaction but measurable health outcomes. Several key principles from the American Humanist Association directly inform how healthcare can be practiced. "Treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity" transforms the doctor-patient relationship. Humanist healthcare recognizes and treats the whole person, not

just a collection of symptoms or a case number.

William Osler, both physician and philosopher, articulated this concept stating, “The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.” When providers embrace this perspective, they listen more attentively to patient concerns and respect their autonomy in medical decisions. The entire care experience improves from the patient’s point of view as a result.

Medical ethics becomes more navigable through the Humanist principle that “ethical values derive from human need and interest” . Healthcare decisions carry significant moral implications. Should limited resources be allocated to one patient or another? How should end-of-life care proceed? Kurtz and Wilson address these questions in *Humanist Manifesto 2000*, arguing that human welfare, rather than abstract rules or religious doctrine, should guide our choices.

For healthcare providers, this means considering the complete context of patients’ lives when making recommendations, balancing evidence-based practices with individual circumstances.

Humanist values became vivid to me through conversations with my friend who volunteered at a community health organization. He provided free health screenings for low-income individuals who couldn’t afford regular healthcare. The experiences he discussed with me displayed how ubiquitous healthcare inequity truly is.

My friend described patients who had postponed seeking help for treatable conditions due to financial constraints. Their health deteriorated unnecessarily as a result. These conversations helped me understand that the Humanist value of fairness compels us to address these systemic inequities. Paul Kurtz explains in *Embracing the Power of Humanism* that “a humanistic ethics... emphasizes our common moral decencies and the need to develop fair social institutions” .

I realized that healthcare cannot be considered successful if it remains inaccessible to significant portions of society. The field truly needs a greater presence of Humanist perspective.

Science constitutes the foundation of Humanism, making it especially valuable for healthcare. Humanists

affirm that “knowledge of the world is “derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis” . This principle aligns precisely with evidence-based medicine.

During my time as a research intern at the OSU College of Pharmacy, I witnessed scientists applying rigorous methodology to develop and test treatments for various cancers. Their approach, grounded in rational inquiry rather than tradition or authority, drives medical innovation.

Corliss Lamont articulates this process in *The Philosophy of Humanism*, noting that scientific progress depends on “the constant testing of opinions and beliefs against observed facts”. When healthcare adheres to this approach, treatment efficacy improves.

Patients benefit from practices validated by evidence rather than those merely presumed effective.

In conclusion, Humanism has the potential to revolutionize healthcare by focusing on compassion, equity, and scientific rigor. By embracing its principles, healthcare providers can build stronger relationships with patients, create more ethical and fair systems, and advance medicine in ways that truly improve lives. As I

pursue a career in healthcare, I believe Humanism is not just a philosophy but a guiding force that can make healthcare better for everyone.

Abigail La Brie

3rd Place - \$1500

Is there a threat from religious fundamentalism to U.S. democracy and U.S. governance? What current examples come to mind; and how does Humanism respond to those threats?

Over the past few years, there has been an unprecedented surge in religious fundamentalism within the United States. From the reversal of Roe v. Wade, the push towards anti-LGBTQ+ bills, and debates surrounding public school curriculums, the influence of religious ideologies in the state of governance cannot be dismissed.

While the foundation of this country was established on individual freedoms and church-state separation, the growing connection of religion and politics raises serious questions: Can democracy possibly be successful when the legislative body is defined by religious dogma? How will a multicultural country respond when religious beliefs seek to be imposed on

an entire country? And, above all, how can humanism assist in the defense of the First Amendment rights?

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed Jane Roe's case in the historic Roe v. Wade, declaring that Texas's abortion restriction laws violated a person's right to privacy under the 14th Amendment. The decision gave people the right to abortion nationwide, reversing state laws.

But in 2022, the Dobbs v. Jackson decision overturned the previous verdict in Roe v. Wade and returned control over abortion to individual states. The consequences of this were immediate and apparent. Following the decision, numerous states immediately prohibited or drastically restricted access to abortion.

Currently, 12 states have outright bans on abortion, and 7 with strict gestational limits, some only at 6 weeks. This change in law and subsequent ban is most often associated with conservative political groups, and most prominently those who subscribe to Christian fundamentalist beliefs. These groups believe that life starts at conception and therefore see abortion as morally equivalent to murder.

This setback is not only a tremendous blow to reproductive rights but also threatens other liberty rights as Roe v. Wade has been linked to other liberty rights on personal decisions regarding family, relationships, and one's body.

In addition to abortion regulations, certain religious groups have pushed for enforcing other acts in accordance with religious principles, such as prohibiting same-sex marriages and LGBTQ+ rights. These groups argue that marriage must be the union of a man and woman only, as seen in the Bible as the basis for this belief.

Even after the Supreme Court judgment in Obergefell v. Hodges in 2015 legalizing gay marriage throughout the nation, in several states, many same-sex couples face difficulties tying the knot. Additionally, these right-wing parties continue to stir up demands for religious exemptions bills which allow discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community under the guise that they are simply exercising their constitutional right of freedom of religion.

These legislations enable businesses, employers, and even healthcare facilities to deny people on the basis of

sexual orientation or gender identity. These types of legislation deprive the civil rights of the LGBTQ+ community by violating equality, justice, and church-state separation.

This type of lawmaking does not only affect adults in the United States; children are not safe from the influence of religious fundamentalist teachings either. Throughout the nation, there is controversy over whether evolution or creationism should be taught in public schools.

Some political movements and political figures who are fundamentalists advocate for the idea of a "Christian nation" and seek to erode the democratic principles of pluralism and secular government. This begins in schools where they believe creationism must be taught, instead of evolution, or at least alongside it. Not only is this a violation of the church and state separation, as witnessed by the First Amendment. It invalidates and ostracizes children from different religious or non-religious backgrounds, and also undermines the integrity of education as a whole.

Teaching creationism instead of or alongside evolution defeats scientific literacy and critical thinking, two essential aspects of a

well-rounded education. Moreover, the change in curriculum poses the risk of rendering students less capable of comprehending and engaging with a scientific worldview, leaving young adults underprepared for careers in science, technology, and any other space that requires evidence-based reasoning.

Humanism, and specifically secular humanism, is the answer to such threats by seeking reason, morality, and justice as the rules in society.

At its core, humanism supports the separation of church and state, and the making of laws and policy to be done with reason, facts, and the respect of all human rights rather than based on religious dogmas that do not treat everyone as equals.

Humanists subscribe to moral systems founded on compassion and the well-being of others, where compassion and equality are accorded more priority than interpretations of sacred texts. This faith in justice also extends to the belief that all individuals, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

Finally, they support educational systems that focus on critical thinking, questioning, and evidence-

based reasoning. Through this strategy, secular humanism aims to empower future generations with the skills necessary to fight discrimination and oppose the emergence of fundamentalist policy.

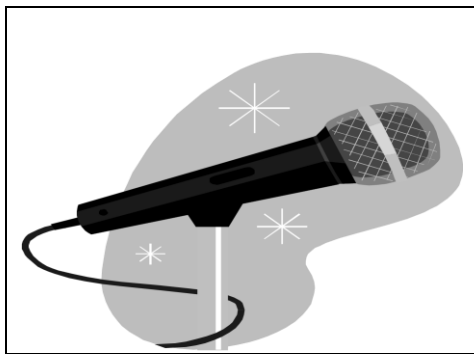
Religious fundamentalism undoubtedly poses a threat to the United States' democratic and governance systems. Especially so when the very foundation of democratic values such as pluralism and First Amendment rights are in danger. However, despite all this, hope exists.

Humanists counteract these threats through the advocacy of reason, secular government, and universal human rights. They aim to create a nation where individuals can live their lives without fear of religious discrimination or coercion, and where the very democratic principles the United States was founded upon are preserved and remain intact for future generations to come.

Two notable Jewish neologisms (from our inimitable Laurent Beauregard):

Oyster: A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms.

Circumvent: An opening in the boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.



August 3

When Good Intentions Meet Hard Realities

Presentation at Friendly House by Anand Atre.

From Wall Street to rural Malawi, HGP member Anand Atre reveals why changing the world can be surprisingly messy, hard, and complex. Case studies from special needs education projects across three continents illustrate the dilemmas when good intentions meet organizational politics, cultural differences, and unintended consequences—and why the work's still worth pursuing.

Atre grew up in British colonial Hong Kong, came to the US for undergraduate studies, then spent 16 years working in investment banking, private equity, and co-founding a hedge fund, then volunteer projects supporting young people with special needs.

August 10

China: What It's Actually Like

Presentation on Zoom by Ralph Jennings.

A beyond-the-media presentation by a media guy, about the world's (second?) most important country. What's it like

to live there, as native or not? Are you oppressed? Free to move about? What inspires the average person to get out of bed?

Ralph Jennings was born and raised in Portland, graduated from Cal, and later pursued an MA in Taiei. A lifelong journalist, he now works for the South China Morning Post (scmp.com) covering the Chinese economy.

August 17

AHA Conference 2025: Coming Together as Things Fall Apart

At Friendly House, HGP member David Buckley will report back from the American Humanist Association conference which took place June 26-29. While the challenges of this moment in American society and politics are hard to overstate, the conference highlighted hopeful developments and opportunities that are present in spite of - and sometimes because of - those challenges.

David will try to convey that sense of hope and lay out specific opportunities for AHA chapters (like ours) to consider.

Buckley is a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner who has been actively involved in Humanist Community for over a decade.

August 24

Finding Joy Amid Stressful Times and Bad News

Presentation at Friendly House by Maya Katalena.

Boundaries and joy are connected through a constant

feedback loop. HGP member Maya Katalena will explain the concepts of external and internal boundaries, and the difference between joy and happiness.

The presentation will include a brief time for journaling, an on-your-feet body centered exercise, and an opportunity to share thoughts, aha's, and feelings with the group, providing tools to facilitate creating more happiness and joy.

Katalena is a certified life coach and dance instructor with a degree in physical therapy, with a strong belief in the mind-body connection which is central in her coaching style.

August 31

Understanding and Countering Fascist Movements

Presentation on Zoom by Joan Braune.

Numerous ideological factions within the Trump administration and adjacent networks see leaders as above law. We'll learn about some of the far-right ideologies and movements (including fascism and Christian nationalism) influencing current policies, and how people are counter-organizing against authoritarian hate.

Dr. Joan Braune is Lecturer in Philosophy at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and wrote Understanding and Countering Fascist Movements: From Void to Hope, a co-edited volume on the ethics of researching the far right, and a forthcoming co-edited volume on Christian nationalism.

Northwest Humanist Monthly

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Editorial contributions are encouraged. Submit editorial suggestions to info@portlandhumanists.org.

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HGP Board

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Membership

If you are interested in becoming a member of HGP, or know someone who is interested, a membership form can be obtained by emailing:

info@PortlandHumanists.org
or visit the website and download the form at:
www.PortlandHumanists.org/content/members

Membership in HGP is open to anyone who agrees with its basic philosophy and who intends to provide the chapter with either financial or personal support in pursuing its purpose.

Committee and Board Vacancies Need Volunteers!

The **Social Concerns Committee** to help improve the state of our community and world at large.

The **Nominating Committee** to help us fill vacancies on the Board and perhaps other committees.

The **Outreach Committee** needs a coordinator.

Volunteers Needed

Stephanie Payne is organizing a monthly volunteer event at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Gresham. It's a 4-hour shift on the third Thursday of each month.

stephanie.payne@frontier.com
503.803.7360

Social Concerns Committee

Humanist Helpers aims to assist HGP members during times of need or emergency. For help, please email SocialConcerns@PortlandHumanists.org

We will try to arrange temporary help from the membership.

Needs could be:

- Moving help
- Emergency pet care
- Home, hospital, rehab visits
- Rides to HGP events or medical appointments
- Meal delivery /or prescription pickup for the housebound

HGP Scholarships

The Committee appreciates the generosity of HGP members, allowing us to award helpful amounts often to three outstanding college-bound seniors each year. Their essays indicate that they are learning about Humanism, some for the first time.

Please give generously to the scholarship fund at any point you feel capable.

"I don't think people should be taking medical advice from me."

- Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

New York Times, 5-14-25

HGP Bulletin Board

Sunday, August 3

9:30 am Music
10:00 am Program: **When Good Intentions Meet Hard Realities**

Sunday, August 10

8:30 am Early Bird Discussion Group
10:00 am Program: **China: What It's Actually Like**

Saturday, August 16

10:00 am **Women's Brunch**

Sunday, August 17

8:30 am Early Bird Discussion Group
10:00 am Program **AHA Conference 2025: Coming Together as Things Fall Apart**

Wednesday, August 20

1:00 pm **Book Club**

Sunday, August 24

8:30 am Early Bird Discussion Group
10:00 am Program: **Finding Joy Amid Stressful Times and Bad News**

Tuesday, August 26

Noon **Men's Lunch**
Life of Pie Pizza
1765 NW 23rd Ave

Sunday, August 31

8:30 am Early Bird Discussion Group
10:00 am Program: **Understanding and Countering Fascist Movements**

HGP Women's Bunch

We are a thought-provoking, lively and supportive gathering for two hours on the third Saturday of each month. Carolyn Tomei invites you to get together via Zoom on Saturday, August 16th at 10:00 AM. An HGP invitation earlier that week will include the link you need to join us online.

Share stimulating conversation on the topics of your choice with interesting HGP women like yourself.

For questions about this Zoom process, contact Joan Hamilton at jhdiscovers@mac.com or 503-360-4711.

HGP Book Club

The HGP book club continues to meet on the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom with Beth Parmenter as host. All HGP members are welcome.

Just contact Beth for a link to the meeting or Margie Adams for a current list of books. We read both fiction and non-fiction and we'd love to have you join us.

In August we'll read *Station Eleven* by Emily St John Mandel.

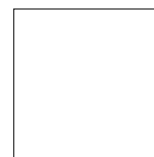
Try youtube.com/@portlandhumanists
All HGP presentations since 2020 are there, and the newest are always at the top of the list.

HGP does not take responsibility for material presented by our speakers, and they don't speak officially for HGP unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change without notice.

Programs now take place at Friendly House and via ZOOM, starting at 10 am on Sundays. Check the HGP website for updates.

**NORTHWEST HUMANIST
MONTHLY**

PO BOX 8475
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED