



Sandplay Therapists of Hawai'i

Newsletter – September 2026

President's message

Aloha Hawaii & Beyond Sandplayers,
We hope you are safe from Hurricanes Lala and Lowell. We have those on the Big Island, Maui, and Kauai in our thoughts & prayers. If you experienced damage &/or loss, please let us know about your needs or how we can possibly help. Please send that information to our member outreach person, Alissa, at webhead@sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org. She will inform the board & members so we can act on how we might be of assistance. Ohana takes care of Ohana.



Our sandplay shelves reflect who we are as individuals, where we live and the culture or cultures that surround us. Holidays and celebrations brings forth images, and many of us can picture the various miniatures on our shelves that reflect the holidays and seasons. The miniatures on our shelves include the religious and spiritual as well as the secular, worldly and earthy images our clients will use to express themselves while being held by you, their therapist, in the free and protected space that is sacred to a client's healing.

Though June through November is hurricane season in Hawaii, we have many positives this time of year also brings. Our Keiki have started back to school, something exciting for our preschoolers through young adults to seniors. This time of year brings season and temperature changes and shortening (or lengthening!) of the days. This year the Fall Equinox is on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 2:05 PM, HST.

October ushers in the start of the holiday season, filled with memories, special images and meanings. We have Columbus/ Discoverer's Day or Indigenous Peoples Day and Halloween, also known as All Hallows Eve, the holy evening before All Saints Day. The Day of the Dead is celebrated in Mexico, and many countries observe similar ancient festivals and ancestral traditions that honor spirits, nature, or the harvest.

November has Veterans Day – 11/11, not only a day to honor our veterans who have secured our freedom, also the date STH will have our fall interactive online workshop, **which you will not want to miss**, "The Spiritual Impulse in Sandplay" with Jill Kaplan. You will find our workshop information in this newsletter. We also celebrate Thanksgiving, a time to be grateful for all we have, what has gone right in life and making it through the obstacles, hardships and issues that caught us off-guard.

December brings the Winter Solstice, the First Day of Winter, Monday December 21, 2026 at 10:50 AM HST. Celebrations include Bodhi Day, a Buddhist holiday; Hanukkah the Jewish festival of lights; Los Posadas of Mexico and Central America, reenacting the journey of Mary and Joseph; Christmas a major Christian and often non-religious celebration; Kwanzaa, honoring African heritage, culture and values, and Omisoka, the Japanese New Year's Eve; then finally ringing in 2027 on New Years eve.

How quickly this year is going and has gone! As a collective we move through the seasons of each year and the seasons of our lives. By doing so we each have experiences and challenges, greeting the new and releasing the old. Wishing you a great rest of 2026 as we enter the fall season and winter seasons in the northern hemisphere, as well as seeing good health and prosperity for all in 2027.

Aloha nui, Sue :)

~Sandplay Therapists of Hawai'i (STH) presents~

Spiritual Impulse in Sandplay: Roots & Branches

Presented by: Jill Kaplan, MS, MFT, CST-T



Live, interactive webinar

**Wednesday,
November 11, 2026
(Veteran's Day)
9 am to 1:30 pm HST**

Location: Virtual event. Zoom link will be provided to participants**Cost:** \$90 professionals, \$75 - STH members, \$60 - students**4 STA/ISST credit hours** (apologies, we're adjusting to changes in professional CE availability locally and aren't able to provide them at this time)**Register online:** <https://www.sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org>

Sandplay Therapy, as founded and developed by Dora Kalff, is said to rely on three roots: Carl Jung and analytical psychology, Margaret Lowenfeld and play therapy, and Eastern Philosophy, or Buddhism. This four-hour interactive online workshop will explore the third root, offering theoretical background, examples of contemplative practice related to therapeutic holding, a mindfulness approach to witnessing therapeutic process, and clinical case material. There will also be an experiential component during the workshop for participants to create their own sacred images, through art or a sand scene.

Who should attend: This is an STA/ISST Certified Training®. Play/sandplay therapists, social workers and mental health professionals interested in a post-graduate level workshop and earning training hours toward credentialing as a sandplay therapist. All levels of Sandplay knowledge and experience are welcome.

About the trainer

Jill Kaplan, MS, MFT, CST-T has worked with children and families throughout her career, holding masters' degrees in Early Childhood Education and Counseling Psychology. Jill has been a teaching member of Sandplay Therapists of America and the International Society for Sandplay Therapists since 2007. She has practiced Zen meditation for over 30 years and has been recognized as a Dharma Teacher since 2013. She has published several articles in the Journal of Sandplay Therapy, presented workshops nationally and internationally on Sandplay, and is particularly interested in the complementarity of Sandplay and spiritual practice.

*For cancellations within 1 week of the program, a \$25 cancellation fee will be applied.

*In the event this workshop must be canceled due to a natural disaster or other unforeseeable event, STH's expenditures will be deducted from the collected registration fees and the remainder will be refunded to registrants.

Reflection provided by STH member Ki Eun Jeon, M.A. LMHC.

My first experience with Sandplay Therapy was in 2011, and since then I have used sand trays with many clients. Each tray shows where a client is mentally and emotionally, and gives a glimpse into their inner world. Every tray is different. Together, the figures and symbols in the sand tell a story about the client's past, present, and future. They can show pain, struggles, fear, anger, anxiety, and frustration. At the same time, they can also show healing, hope, and personal growth.



From: Saint-Exupéry (1946) *The Little Prince*. Editions Gallimard. Used with permission.

The Little Prince workshop, led by Nil Akat, M.A., presented the case of a 56-year-old client who came for counseling to work through struggles in her romantic relationships. Almost all of her trays showed a contrast between fear of and desire for a relationship. After the death of her husband, she had remained single for 22 years and continued to struggle with intimacy and connection. Her trays revealed a strong desire to move forward, but at the same time something seemed to be holding her back. She was feeling trapped.

In the featured book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, the narrator is a pilot whose plane crashes in the desert. He must learn to survive in a new and unfamiliar situation, which reflects both fear and curiosity. The story includes many symbolic characters. One of them, the fox, says, "One sees clearly only with the heart." As I listened to the presentation, I could see this idea reflected in the client's trays. Her trays showed not only pain and struggle, but also growth and self-discovery. In one tray, she even placed a figure of the Little Prince. Moments like this are why I am so drawn to Sandplay Therapy. It helps us see feelings and experiences that are often difficult to express with words alone.

Another meaningful lesson from this workshop came from Ms Akat during her explanation of the client's trays. She linked *The Little Prince* to the archetype of the Divine Child and this theme is symbolized differently across three books: *Trauma and the Soul* by Dr. Donald Kalsched, *The Little Prince for Grown-Ups* by Robert Lima Netto, and *Saint-Exupéry, the Journey of the Little Prince* by Olivier Larregle. Towards the end of the workshop, it became clear that the client's trays showed that she identified herself with the Little Prince, and I believe she continues on her own journey as the Little Prince even now. The image of the Little Prince in her tray appeared stronger and more powerful than her diagnosis because the tray revealed how she truly defined herself. This, too, is one of the strengths of Sandplay Therapy.

As a workshop attendee, I could identify with the Little Prince in my own experience, a desire to grow and a fear of giving up security. Other attendees may have had their own expressions of the Divine Child during the workshop.

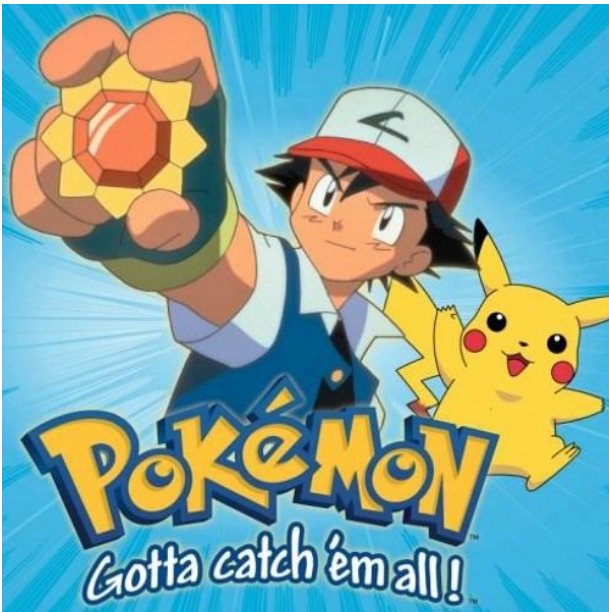
Dara Godwin-Downs beautifully took participants to explore the world of Pokémon during this Pau Hana Symbol Study. She shared her work with a child whose journey reflected deep resonance between Dara as a therapist and his impulse to come to meaning and peace in his life.

Participants were invited to briefly dive a little deeper with a randomly chosen Pokémon—leading to lots of new discoveries, and delightful connections.

Mahalo Dara, your work and your presentation were so fun and informative!



Participants comments regarding what they found beneficial from the symbol study:



I love Dara and I am entranced by her enthusiasm for Pokémon. Working on archetypal themes that regenerate through time.

Dara's enthusiasm and the case she shared!

The depth & relationship to myths, finding our personal Pokémon

I appreciated the time spent exploring in the small groups and seeing and hearing how Pokémon can become a part of the individual's story.

Chicago, June 11-14

What a special gathering this year – especially for STH as members (past and present) were celebrated, presented their work, and found companionship with fellow Sandplayers. Despite the thunderstorms that greeted us, participants were able to settle in to learn with and from one another.



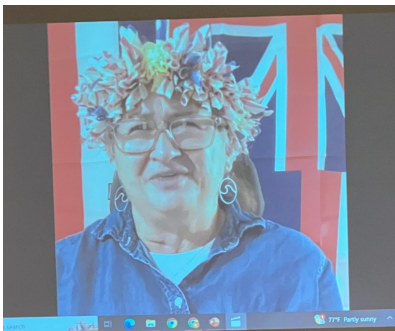
Sue Bergman being honored with the STA Outstanding Associate Award!



Alissa, Dara, Theresa, John, Sue, Lorraine



John presenting on his somatic and Sandplay work



Nelle presenting Lorraine with the Diversity Award



Lorraine presenting about Time

Remembrance by Sue Bergman

Dr. Patricia Patrick was part of our first STH Board. Sandplay Therapists of Hawaii was organized by Carla Sharp and Pratibha Eastwood in 2004. Both Carla and Pratibha studied under Chonita Larson for several years. Chonita was one of Frau Dora Kaiff's original 12 people she trained. Since Carla had started Hawaii Play Therapy, she and Pratibha used that experience and the documents created to form Sandplay Therapists of Hawaii. To have a complete board, they invited Diana Chee and Patricia Patrick to serve with them. Several years later when Sherry Renmu Shepherd moved to the Big Island from Japan, she also was invited to join the board.

Dr. Patricia Carol Patrick, MD, PhD (née Gibford), beloved mother, psychiatrist, teacher, and lifelong learner. She began medical school at UCLA and completed her degree at Northwestern University Medical School, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1963 as one of only five women in her class. Patricia devoted her professional life to psychiatry, initially focusing exclusively on children and adolescents before expanding her practice to patients of all ages. She remained deeply committed to the healing value of psychotherapy alongside medicine throughout her career.



Her passion for learning led her to study a wide range of therapeutic approaches, including Sandplay Therapy, and, in her 50's, Jungian psychology at the University of Zürich in Switzerland. There, she immersed herself in psychoanalytic study and integrated the teachings of Carl Jung into her work.

Patricia was accomplished in many pursuits and endlessly curious about the world. In her mid-50s, she traveled alone to Bhutan and trekked through the Himalayas. Soon afterward, she earned double black belts in Taekwondo and Hapkido, during which time she met the love of her life, Peter. Together they made their home in Hawaii. "Dr. Pat" moved to Kailua-Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii in 2000, began practicing, and became the only psychiatrist on the Island providing therapy.

Always devoted to scholarship and growth, Patricia earned a PhD in Depth Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute in her late 70s. Her dissertation on childhood trauma and PTSD explored the physiological effects of trauma and proposed innovative approaches to diagnosis and treatment. She later joined renowned Jungian analyst Marion Woodman and became an important member of the Marion Woodman Foundation, helping to guide the organization.

After Peter's death, she lovingly cared for several hānai — informally adopted — teens from the Pacific Islands and supported them through high school and into their early college years. She saw her last patient in Hawaii in 2021 at the age of 84.

A graveside service was held at the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery in Kona, on May 29, 2026. She is interred with her husband Peter at site B-A-13. To celebrate Patricia's life, in lieu of flowers, please make a tribute to the Marion Woodman Foundation at <https://www.mwfbodysoulrhythms.org/>

A Sandplay and Somatic Journey John Mascaro

In 2002, while attending my doctoral program at Pacifica Graduate Institute, my classmates showed me a sandtray that was in the corner of our classroom and talked about using Sandplay Therapy with their clients in private practice. I was interested and started to talk with therapists over the next couple of years about how to use Sandplay with clients.

It wasn't until 2006 while attending a play therapy training with Carla Sharp that I learned about Sandplay Therapists of Hawaii and started attending Sandplay workshops on Oahu. I began collecting miniatures but did not have a therapy office to use until a few years later while working for a therapeutic foster home program. I set up all the miniatures that I had been collecting and a sandtray in the corner of my office and worked with my young clients, inviting them to play with the miniatures in the sand. I had very little understanding as to what was happening with my clients, but I was struck by how deep my clients went in doing their trays despite their level of trauma. I also found that by looking at my client's trays after their session, I could understand their inner process so much better than talk or play therapy.

In 2014, I opened my private practice and set up my miniatures and two sandtrays and started using sandplay therapy with my clients. I started attending and certifying in various somatic therapies to find a way to work more gently and less activating with my clients and their trauma. I then decided to combine Sandplay with the various somatic therapies I was learning to create a way to work deeper and more effectively with my clients and their trauma.

In the summer of 2024, Lorraine mentioned to me that Martin Kalff (who is the son of our founder Frau Dora Kalff) was selling and moving away from his home in Zollikon, Switzerland. In the basement of this home in Zollikon was where Dora created sandplay and saw clients and therapists who came to learn from her about Sandplay. I met Martin a few times over the years; once at a training in Hawai'i and several years later at a conference in Chicago. I was drawn to Martin and his work integrating sandplay with somatic and mindfulness practices. I decided to go to Zollikon and do a Sandplay process with Martin for a week in November of 2024. Martin was warm and inviting; showing me around his home and telling me all kinds of stories about his mother Dora. He brought me upstairs to the lecture room where Dora would teach therapists about Sandplay. Martin walked me over to the meditation center next door to his house and talked about his work integrating mediation and mindfulness practices into his work with clients in private practice. My Sandplay sessions with Martin throughout that week opened me up to his work integrating Sandplay with somatic and mindfulness practices, I was deeply moved and influenced by Martin.



The STH Board when I became a member
Standing: Pratibha Eastwood & Carla Sharp; Seated: Patricia Patrick, Diana Chee, Sherry Renmu Shephard



My first private practice Sandplay office at Pearlridge on Oahu

In June of 2026, I contacted Martin and found out that he had moved from Zollikon and was now living in Zurich, Switzerland. Martin moved into one of the upper floors of a family home where you walk up the stairs and one side is his living space and the other side is a separate entrance to his sandplay therapy office. Since 2024, I continued to develop and work with my clients utilizing sandplay with somatic practices influenced by Martin and the work we did together. I decided to spend another week with Martin in June of 2026 just before the STA Chicago Conference. The work we did together that June continued to deepen my understanding of sandplay and the importance of somatic modalities in helping to deepen the sandplay process of my clients. Martin reminded me that his mother Dora used somatic and mindfulness practice in her work with clients, so this was what he continued to develop in his Sandplay practice.

Through this process of learning and working with my clients, I was able to develop a therapeutic modality that merges Sandplay with various somatic therapies to create a more holistic and integrative approach that I call Somatic Sandplay Awareness. I am so grateful for all my teachers and sandplay colleagues in helping to support me in finding my way. Sandplay allows us all as therapists to work within the personal modalities that we are comfortable with when working with our clients. I found mine combining Sandplay with somatic therapies, but other therapists are finding different other ways to work with their clients. As we all continue to work to find our therapeutic way in deepening our work with sandplay, I wanted to share how grateful I am that Martin was able to help me in shaping my work with Sandplay and somatic and mindfulness practices.



Martin and I at his Zurich office



Right top: Sandplay therapy office of Martin's Zollikon home where Dora developed sandplay and worked with her clients and therapists



Right bottom: Martin's new sandplay therapy office in Zurich



Aloha!

The Big Island Sandplay group in Hilo, HI provides a supportive community of practice in Jungian Sandplay Therapy as developed by Dora Kalff. Participants earn training and consultation hours to become a Certified Sandplay Therapist (STA/ISST).

Details may change. We will send updated schedules throughout the year. Questions?
Contact Lorraine: lrfreedle@gmail.com

STA/ISST Teaching Members:

Lorraine R. Freedle, PhD, ABPdN

Sherry Renmu Shepherd, PhD

Don't forget to join STH in 2027!

The membership year begins January 1 of each year and is effective until December 31. Annual membership fees are a modest \$35 per person and are used to provide local Hawai'i Sandplay accredited (typically STA/ISST) professional workshops and facilitate professional gatherings.

Benefits of membership include: discounted STH sponsored workshop fees, free attendance to symbol studies, and being part of a local supportive community of practice for Sandplay therapy

Register at our website today! <https://sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org/>

Please consider donating to the Diana Chee Scholarship!

In honor of our dearly departed friend and devoted Certified Sandplay Therapist, Diana Chee, a scholarship fund has been established to assist others in learning more about Sandplay therapy.

Diana spent her life serving others in her most gentle way, and now the legacy of her service to others will continue on. This scholarship would cover up to 50% of the workshop registration fee for one workshop.

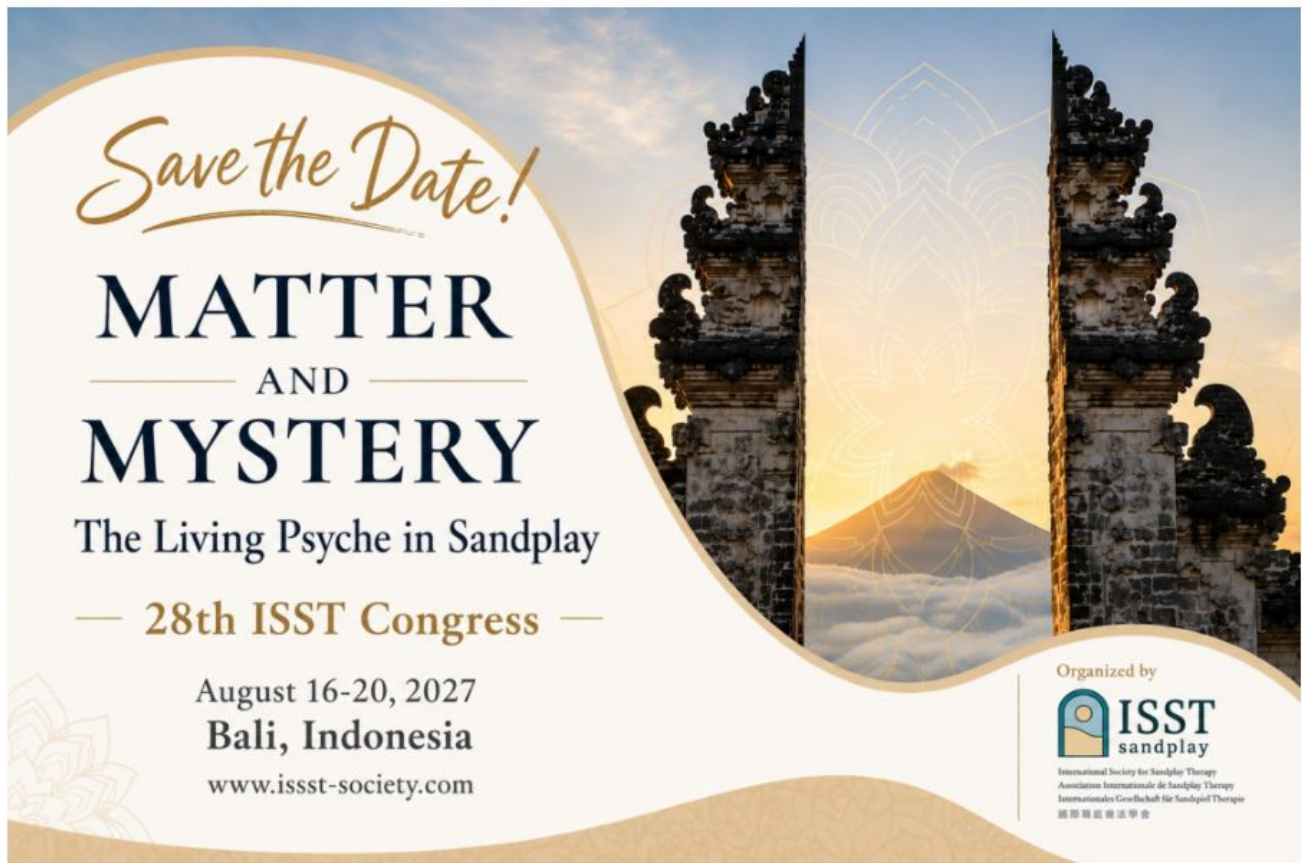
Donate here: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=Q6VN9BCAZ22SY



Diana Chee, STH President Sue Bergman, and Emeritus Board Member Pratibha Eastwood at the 2013 ISST Conference in Venice



<https://www.sandplay.org/>



<https://www.isst-society.com/>

Important reminder!

STH has a travel reimbursement scholarship, and the Diana Chee scholarship. Members can apply for these scholarships that help with attending in-person trainings!

And if you'd like to help support these scholarships through a donation, you can do so by visiting:

<https://sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org/join-sth>



The Hawai'i Counselors Association (founded 1956) is the state branch of the American Counseling Association.

Through partnership with STH, members of both organizations can attend each others' workshops at the membership price!

<https://www.hicounselors.org/>



Visit the Sandplay Therapists of America site for their monthly newsletter, training information, journal archives and more at

<https://www.sandplay.org/>

Sandplay Therapists of Hawai'i

webhead@sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org

<https://sandplaytherapistsofhawaii.org/>

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The STH newsletter is published semi-annually, and is an entirely volunteer endeavor. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, submissions, or accolades, please feel free to contact us at the above address or during the next workshop!

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