

Give Chapters a Hand: Awards of Excellence

Kentucky Chapter

PART 2: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

For the AMTA Kentucky Chapter, what we do is guided by what is valuable to our members. We survey our members annually to learn what they want; then we strive to make those things happen. Our members tell us that they want affordable, quality continuing education, networking opportunities, and fun. To that, we add effective communication, public recognition, community outreach, and vigilant government relations. To meet these challenges, here is what we have done in 2008-2009. We have proudly starred ideas that we believe may represent excellence and innovative ideas.

Quality Continuing Education

Because Kentucky has licensure with continuing education requirements, our number one priority continues to be quality educational programming. Our chapter is an NCBTMB provider and all of our speakers are carefully vetted.

**Our educational program is carefully designed to meeting the needs and interests of all our therapists, from the clinically oriented those interested in wellness/relaxation, from energy therapists to specialty interests. As a NCBTMB provider our theme was "Bright ideas to Grow your Business" and we included 14 different classes, in four separate education tracks. Carey Bayer, success coach, Mary Dinneen, Tui Na instructor and Sharon Puszko, geriatric massage instructor were among our presenters.

Affordability

Nothing that we do is important if our members can't afford to attend. In an effort to make the conference within their means, we made affordability a priority. Our registration fees were kept low and included six community meals. **Members who registered before February 2 were entered into a drawing and four of them received a \$50.00 gas card to offset conference travel.

Being able to purchase massage products at a discount and without shipping is an important cost savings to our members. We had a great group of vendors who brought their wonderful products and offered them at discounts to members.

**We have a program of "giving back" to the members by providing three free continuing education hours at our summer meeting. The summer classes focus on topics that can provide self-care as well as client care. Members pay only for their lunch and get to choose between two three-hour NCBTMB-approved classes.

Networking

Our state is geographically diverse; members don't often have the chance to be together, so we believe that networking in a warm, social environment is important to bring our members together in a way that fosters a united sense of professionalism.

Our Spring Conference is an exciting time for all chapter members to gather together, make plans for the upcoming year and to review what we have done the past year. But the best thing is to visit with our friends around the state, many of whom have become like second family.

Community dinners and lunches are excellent opportunities to meet and share over a friendly meal. Knowing that, we provided six opportunities for shared meals at our conference.

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Fun

We find ways to lend “sparkle” to our meetings. “Goodie Bags” are distributed when participants pick up their folders, name badges and class schedule. These bags contain sample products and information from our meeting sponsors. “Stars” were placed under selected seats at our business luncheon and winners received sponsor-donated T-shirts as their prize. Balloons and decorations lent a festive air to the conference.

**A raffle brings energy and fun to our meetings. This year products and services valued at more than \$5,000 were raffled and our Chapter collected more than \$900.00 for our legislative efforts. The fun was priceless.

At our conference, we hired a magician to add laughter at our Awards Dinner. Dion recruited several members to participate which added to the joviality of the evening. It was a good way to end the evening and relax after many hours of classes.

Member Recognition

**We honored our educators and their students. This year, our educators received a complimentary luncheon where they had the opportunity to meet and interact with representatives of NCBTMB and FSMTB. The discussion was helpful to all parties and education went both ways.

**Students also were invited to attend a free box lunch; a panel of seasoned professionals fielded questions on ways to assure success in practice building. As in years past, the luncheon was highly successful.

Our chapter has fourteen members with over twenty years of AMTA membership; those present were publically recognized at our business luncheon.

Public Recognition of chapter and community service was given to twelve members of our chapter at the Awards Dinner on Saturday night. In addition, those whose volunteer service included helping with the conference were rewarded with chocolate! Nothing better!

Community Outreach Innovation

We believe that “community” means both the community at large as well as our chapter community.

**The membership chose “Reaching Out to Our Military and Their Families” as its community outreach project for 2008-2009. The Community Outreach Committee was formed in August 2008 and has developed plans to work with veterans, military personnel and their families across the state.

We believe that a chapter sports massage team is a great way to publically promote AMTA in a positive way. At our spring conference, the first meeting of an AMTA-KY Chapter Sports Massage Team took place. At that meeting the nuclear group got acquainted, established goals, and made plans to meet in April to develop a plan for implementation of a team that has strong training, team spirit and a solid plan for success.

**The Benevolence Committee reaches out to our members on behalf of the chapter and keeps us informed of events in our members’ lives. Their goal is to offer support in both sadness and joy. The committee is currently developing a list of resources that can be made available for members in need.

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We reach out to the new members of our chapter community as well. The Member Services Committee sends letters, pins and a list of the officers to all new chapter members each month. **Also, the names of new members are sent to the Units so they can be invited to the Unit meetings.

Communication

Our newsletter is published four times a year, rather than three, with information relevant to the members and their business. We feature a Member Spotlight, highlighting different members around the state. Our Newsletter continues to improve, while still holding costs down.

The website, amtaky.org, just keeps getting better and better. New members are always recognized and Unit activity is kept current. Members can find pertinent information or a link to someone who can help them. E-blasts are sent, as needed, to provide timely information about upcoming events, benevolence concerns or changes in laws and legislation. Conference registration is online, by phone and by regular mail.

Laws and Legislation

We are a small chapter; fund-raising is critical to our success. We have begun work to shepherd a clean-up bill through the Kentucky legislature. In 2008 we were awarded an LLAP grant to support the writing of our proposal. During 2009 we have begun a program that will raise awareness of both our members and the legislators on the need for change. The proposal will be sent to the legislature in 2010. **Our chapter earns approximately \$15,000 each year to underwrite the expense of our Laws and Legislation Committee by holding conferences, continuing education classes and raffles.

PART 3: OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MEMBERS:

Outstanding Service in Education

On the weekend of our March 2008 conference, Kentucky was blanketed with 12 inches of snow, making driving hazardous. In spite of the severe weather, we held the conference as scheduled and 160 attendees manage to arrive, showing their dedication.

Our written refund policy stated that no refunds would be made to those who cancelled on the day of the conference. Nonetheless, the Board decided to refund the registration fees of those who could not travel and refunded more than \$5,000.00 to our attendees.

Knowing that Kentucky's therapists depend on us for their continuing education, in summer, we scheduled an additional ethics class and added an eight hour CE program to our regular meeting to assist members in "making up" CE hours they might need to earn for their licensure renewal.

Outstanding Service in Public Relations

Our Public Relations/Marketing Committee created a program to assist members in marketing themselves in their home communities. The Committee is sending a press release to each member's local newspaper announcing that the AMTA-KY Chapter member has attended the continuing education program provided by AMT- KY Chapter. The member only needed to sign a permission card to receive this service!

Outstanding Service in Affordability

We sponsored a Consignment Shop this year for the first time. Members were invited to bring gently used massage-related items and offer them for sale. All of the money went directly to the seller.

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AMTA KY Chapter charged no fee; instead, sellers could donate a portion of their profits to the Chapter, but only if they chose to do so. More than \$1,000 in used items were sold at the Consignment Shop. Money earned through consignment sales enabled some therapists to offset their registration fees. For others it meant that they could buy great massage CDs or equipment at bargain prices.

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.amtaky.org

NEWSLETTER ADDRESS: <http://www.amtaky.org/index.asp?page=newsletter>