

## **Give Chapters a Hand: Awards of Excellence** **Massachusetts Chapter**

### **PART 2: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN PROGRAMMATIC AREAS**

In 2006 The Board of Directors of the Mass Chapter AMTA voted to close the chapter office as it was determined that it was not the best use of the member's money & was not serving the members in their needs. As a result the Mass Chapter went from having a "physical" Chapter office to operating a "virtual office".

We purchased a toll free telephone number for our members, updated our website and secured a PO Box for Chapter mail. Ring Central was purchased which is an online voicemail system that forwards voice mails to the email addresses of board members & committee chairs. It has multiple mail boxes that forward voice mail messages to the emails of Board members. As a Board we promised increased communication with our members (return of phone calls, response to emails, etc within 2-3 business days). In fact with Ring Central our members many times get calls returned with in minutes much to the surprise of our members. In doing this, we were able to save on unnecessary office expenses and are now very proud to day that 66% of our budget is returned to our members in various ways for them to benefit professionally.

Our Chapter has grown by leaps and bounds – 19% in 2007-2008, members feel "listened to", important and appreciated.

Our chapter continues to host top quality chapter meetings and education sessions. Attendance at the '07-08 meetings was excellent with high standard presenters such as Ralph Stevens, Mark Bigelow, Carol Osborne as well as our own members Greg Hurd and Jeanne Coleman presented continuing education workshops at very affordable prices. The Chapter has received NCTBM approval for our courses ~we are now an NCB provider. Members are surveyed for feedback on meetings/education sessions/interest and results forwarded to Board members and committee chairs, feedback has been most favorable. All information about meetings and educational offerings is contained in our newsletter, on our web site ([www.massamta.org](http://www.massamta.org)) and by email blasts. Registration is available online as well as by phone and regular mail. At our annual meeting, we offer free continuing education sessions and lunch, hold our elections, present our awards, provide networking opportunities, meals & a vendor area. At each meeting "goodie bags" are given to each participant containing sample products/information from our chapter sponsors such as Biofreeze; Inner Peace; PurePro; Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins , Compassionate Touch – to name a few. Attendance prizes are also provided by the same.

At our 2009 Annual meeting the Humanitarian Award winner received a \$100 voucher to one of our education sessions; other award recipients received a gift certificate to one of our Sponsor's companies. Door prizes included an Oakworks Portal Pro massage chair, an NRG Massage table, registration to 2010 New England regional Conference & many others. Door prizes totaled \$2500 in value for this one day.

Our Annual meeting also was a time to incorporate our Out Reach committee. Because of the devastating Ice Storm that struck our area, many food banks were close to empty, therefore our attendees were invited to bring a non-perishable food item. A total of 8 cartons of dry goods were collected and donated to Marlboro Community Service, Inc which has a food pantry serving those in need in the area. A heart-felt thank you letter was received. Our membership committee strives to visit each of the 40+ massage school in the state, sharing with them the benefits of being an AMTA member. The committee brings with them our new reusable shopping bags with the "[www.findamassagetherapist.com](http://www.findamassagetherapist.com)" website & our state logo imprinted on

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them. They contain a nail file and pen with our chapter website information on them, AMTA marketing brochure and a listing of our upcoming chapter events. Students are invited to attend the next chapter events & meet other LMT's & see what we are all about.

We strive to have a board member or a committee chairperson greet every member who attends an event. A welcome folder is sent to each new member; it includes a personalized letter from our President, our chapter pen, nail file and a list of upcoming events. Because of all this committee's effort, our chapter was awarded #1 in growth at the 2008 National Convention in Phoenix.

Here at the Mass Chapter our website is the hub of communication. We have a calendar of events, a continuing education page that lists and describes all our events including a news box that highlights upcoming events. With events displayed in three areas and three formats, it makes it easier for our members to clearly see and plan for upcoming events. Our site hosts an on-line sign up and Contact Us page so members can connect directly with the board of directors and committee chairs. The fact that our annual meeting had a record turnout of 250 members (up from 19 in 2007 and almost 200 in 2008), with most people signing up directly from the website, speaks to the success and functionality of our site. Our site links back to the National AMTA site when appropriate, for example, the Consumer Page and the Volunteer section. We also incorporated what we like to call our Resource Page where we have linked many useful and pertinent sites for our members such as National AMTA, Massage Therapy Foundation and our State Regulatory Board for Massage Therapists. We have also incorporated such features, newsletters, online photo gallery, press releases, a calendar and other feature-rich areas.

Our Chapter Newsletter "Kneaded Knowledge" has gone through significant improvement and thanks to the diligent effort of our newsletter chair, is now in "magazine form". Its contents consists of a "Spotlight on a Volunteer" corner, pictures of chapter, region and National events, a letter from the President, notes from committee chairs, National and Foundation news. Past editions are archived on the website."Kneaded Knowledge" is published three times a year and has recently gone through a complete content and cosmetic revamping. Our software was updated to use a design program (InDesign by Adobe) and we moved into making more of a chapter magazine-style publication that attracts and encourages more articles submitted from our volunteers, local massage therapists and local business owners. Our newsletter is designed to keep Massachusetts massage therapists connected and informed. We offer our Newsletter in both electronic and hard copy versions.

### **PART 3: OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MEMBERS:**

All of the above mentioned and:

- NMTAW ~ the Chapter provides stipends annually to members to assist in celebrating and promoting NMTAW; the application is available to all members on our website. In 2008 six members received stipends to help run events. The events were featured in our newsletter and on our NMTAW page on our website. This will be a yearly item in our budget.
- Improved Newsletter ~ Our "Kneaded Knowledge" newsletter is designed to keep Massachusetts massage therapists connected and informed. We offer our newsletter in both a hard copy and electronic version. (See above for full description.)

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- Updated website ~ we communicate with our members extensively via our website (See above for full description.)
- Networking ~ we offer time for our members to network during meals at meetings; over 300 of our members attended NERC last year. This allowed members to go outside the chapter to network with the other New England therapists, educators and vendors. Serving on committees within the Mass Chapter gives members an opportunity to share their ideas and talents with other members.
- Retention and New members: This is the major function of the Membership committee (see # 2) but is also the responsibility of each board and chapter member.
- Policy manuals, checkbook, committee reports are handed down to next elected board members and committee members ~ flash drives have been purchased so electronic files can be easily passed to incoming officers along with any hard copy files .

The Mass Chapter Board has worked diligently to bring our Chapter to where it is today. We are member-driven and believe we have provided the best there is so our members can maintain their professionalism - state licensed, high standards in continuing education. Member satisfaction is evident in the surveys we have been conducted.

**WEBSITE ADDRESS:** [www.massamta.org](http://www.massamta.org)

**NEWSLETTER ADDRESS:** <http://www.massamta.org/index.php?id=21>