

Give Chapters a Hand: Awards of Excellence

New Hampshire Chapter

PART 2: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

The New Hampshire Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association's mission is to promote massage therapy through Education and Professionalism.

All New Hampshire Chapter members enjoy the special benefits of tri-annual newsletters, multiple chapter educational workshops and meetings, regional educational opportunities, as well as the ability to frequently enjoy camaraderie with their peers.

AMTA-NH's Board of Directors continually and consistently strives to empower members and excel in all programs and benefits, as well as to find new ways to ensure that each and every member is positively touched and influenced by AMTA. We are pleased to share the following examples in excellence and innovation.

New Member Recruitment:

- NH initiated and implemented the idea of offering a fifty dollar coupon for students to sign up with AMTA. (Provided a competitive strategy with ABMP)
- A membership team, developed by our Membership Chair, regularly visits the NH massage schools to deliver the AMTA message. During the past year the team described our coupon incentive, while hand-delivering the coupons.

Retention:

- In noting that our financial reserves were above 100% of our annual budget, NH decided to give back to our members. We chose to waive the thirty dollar chapter fee for fiscal year 2009/2010.
- NH touched each member by purchasing nail files, inscribed with our logo and website address, to deliver to members. We did a state wide membership mailing of the nail files as an introduction to our new website, while letting each of our members know we were thinking of them.
- The entire NH Board of Directors makes monthly phone calls to members coming up for renewal. Through this personal contact we elicit information as to how happy they are with their organization, what we might do to help them and their member experiences, whether they know about future chapter meetings and events; and gain an understanding of their particular skills and interests to initiate them into doing some volunteering for the chapter.

Building Referral Networks:

- When the opportunity of exhibiting at the state American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) conferences was made to all the chapters, NH connected with the NHAFP and provided a qualitative weekend of chair massage while establishing a positive connection with these doctors from around NH. Along with chair massage, we gave them a nail file and showed them how to use our website to find therapists in their area. This event served as a new way for our chapter to help our therapists build their client base in a difficult economy.
- We are now working with the organizer to develop a future network of venues with other medical specialty organizations, including the NH Medical Society and the NH Pediatric Society.

Public Relations:

The increase in referral networks has provided opportunities for our Public Relations chair to promote for our chapter members via the submission of timely press releases, before and after each event, to the major NH newspapers.

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Our public relations/press release initiatives include:

- 09/01/08 - A file of NH Newspaper contacts was begun;
- 10/31/08 - NMTAW, 3 events by AMTA Professional Members and/or member schools;
- 03/01/09 - After elections, the changes in our Board of Directors and Committee Chairs;
- A declaration signed by our Governor each year proclaiming NMTAW in New Hampshire;
- 03/29/09 - Chair massage for the 2-day NH Academy of Family Physicians' Conference;
- 03/31/09 - Chair massage at the State Capitol for Legislative Awareness Day.

Licensing:

- AMTA-NH was active in working with the Massage Advisory Board and the Department of Health & Human Services to amend our current licensing law. We brought forward ideas such as having temporary licensing to help therapists working on our borders to be able to make their living within NH. This will also enable members moving into the state to start working immediately instead of waiting until they fulfill their requirements before they can begin to make a living. They can also start utilizing their AMTA benefits immediately too.

Team-Building/Planning:

- On 08/01/08 AMTA-NH held a successful team-building retreat day, including swimming and hot tub, for the entire BOD, committee chairs, and delegates to create new chapter plans, goals, and guidelines, paving the way for future growth.

Each chapter leader at the retreat was given a flash drive to use with the following guidelines: layout your obligations and job descriptions in a month to month manner; and then load it on the flash drive, which will then be passed on to the successor. The flash drive can then be added to/alterd as needed. This turn-over file has greatly simplified the orientation time of new chairs and officers.

Being Astute and Ever Watchful:

- Recently our chapter was a victim of banking fraud. Our ever watchful treasurer caught the fraud within 2 days of occurrence and secured all accounts. Due to her quick reporting, investigators were able to track the fraud to a particular bank. Bank officials felt that the first withdrawals were testing the waters, and had it not been for close supervision by our treasurer, we may have lost most of our account holdings. We are happy to report that the chapter funds that were fraudulently withdrawn have been fully credited by the bank.

Future Fun:

- As we continue to build historical data for our chapter, it is noted that our 25th anniversary is on the horizon. We are now preparing for our 25th in 2011. We have an historic letter in our files that came from AMTA National, saved and passed on by our 2nd president, noting the planned inception day for the NH chapter. It was from a time when AMTA National governance included District Directors!

Community Service:

- National Massage Therapy Awareness Week

Three individual members took it upon themselves to donate their time for chair massage at various community venues and were recognized in our newsletter and website as well as having press releases issued on their behalf. Annually our members are encouraged to come forward to garner recognition for their efforts during this opportunity to toot our own horn to the public.

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- **Local Sporting Events**

AMTA-NH Sports Massage Team members provide sports massage for a minimum of 3 community sporting events each year. AMTA banners are conspicuously displayed as professional massage therapy is provided in contrast to the many student-only offerings. Most of AMTA-NH's Sports Massage Team events are funded by the event coordinators so that team members are compensated for their time.

- **New England Hemophilia Association Camp**

Each year about a dozen AMTA-NH members volunteer their time to provide chair massage at the end of a week-long educational and recreational camp for hemophilia children and their families. Given that one or more of the family members has hemophilia, the massage provides respite and comfort to the campers and caregivers alike. For many it is their first exposure to massage and they are always very grateful. Our therapists are well fed and can enjoy swimming at the end of the afternoon in beautiful Lake Winnepesaukee.

- **Legislative Awareness Day**

We have just completed our 6th Legislative Awareness Day at the NH Capitol Offices. We were able to provide chair massage to 81 state legislators in the course of 5 hours. 16 massage therapists participated. A photo was taken with the NH Governor which is used for publication. The legislators are very interested to learn about massage and experience our hands-on skills.

Chapter Communications:

- **Newsletter** - Our chapter newsletter editor has brought forth new ideas for its shape, view and content. She has incorporated member ideas and frequently is complimented on design and content by our members. Our newsletter is not only timely and informative, but once per year is mailed to every licensed therapist in the state so that our activity, professionalism and good example can be used as a recruiting tool for new members. The newsletter is archived on the chapter website so that members can always have a reference library of past issues.

(<http://www.amta-nh.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=newsletter&category=Main>)

- **Website** - AMTA-NH's website (<http://www.amta-nh.org>) is designed to provide current information as well as useable news to anyone interested in chapter activities. The Home page is featured with News and Upcoming Events. Refreshed at least weekly, the website provides contact information for all the chapter leaders, links to resources for state massage therapists, including organizations and trade publications, state massage schools, and sponsors of chapter events. It further provides a member opportunity section where members can find new employment opportunities or post availability of job opportunity. We have recently added meeting minutes of General Membership Meetings so members unable to make a meeting can get timely information on the activities of their chapter. It also includes a Photo Gallery and an Awards section that prominently feature chapter members and their accomplishments.

- **eBlast** - There are times when more immediate communication vehicles are needed; such as snow storms inhibiting our annual meeting in February. For this we use Constant Contact. It has proven to be an effective way to reach our members in a quick fashion. Of course we keep track of those members that are not using email, in which case we reach them by phone. The most recent use of email that proved heart warming for our chapter was when National sent out a note via Constant Contact letting our members know of the thirty dollar chapter fee waiver. Our president is still getting

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messages from our members of how much they appreciated this gesture and how great it was to receive the note from National.

Education:

- Since education is a prominent feature of our mission, much energy and effort is put into providing quality continuing education opportunities for members at the most reasonable price possible. All educational opportunities are chosen from surveys and member input. To the extent possible we subsidize workshops ensuring that our members not only meet all CE requirements for AMTA membership and licensing but, as we are an NCBTMB approved provider, we also are a logical way for members to recertify with the NCBTMB should they so choose. We also strive to offer at least one annual no cost educational opportunity to our members. On 04/12/08 a free 6 CEH Kinesio Taping and self-care workshop was held that drew 80 members.

Miscellaneous:

- AMTA-NH does not rely on just an annual meeting to reach our membership, but convenes three major meeting/workshop opportunities per year. At each meeting goody bags with free samples supplied by local and national vendors are provided to attending workshop members. We provide a free lunch during workshops while we host our chapter business meetings - a sweet incentive to have more folks stay for the meeting; and acknowledge first-time attendees by name and with a small gift when we start the business meeting. We invite vendors to join our workshops, providing them with free tables; vendors in turn provide us with gifts which we raffle to our participating attendees. The Chapter and chapter members also contribute gifts for the raffles.
- Our chapter believes in thanking our chapter leaders in a big way. For the past eleven years we felt it would not only show our appreciation to our chapter leaders, but refresh them with new ideas to contribute more to our chapter. To accomplish this we have been sending our entire 7 member BOD, along with our 2 delegates, 1 alternate, Education Chair and our meritorious winner. We turn out to be one of the largest state contingents present at National Convention (in comparison to our percentage of membership). We subsidized our entire group at 100 per cent of expenses. This turns out to be a large line item on our budget; however, our membership is very supportive of this fact and recognizes the benefits of a well informed and enlightened leadership team. Equally, during our New England Regional Conference, we make accommodations to send all of our committee chairs, as well as the aforementioned group above, to have a large leadership contingent present at the biggest AMTA event in New England.
- Gifts that are donated for raffle prizes are not the only items we give away during our chapter meetings. A fully paid registration to NERC is raffled off at our annual meeting. We make that the first raffle item so everyone has an equal chance of winning this coveted prize.

PART 3: OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MEMBERS:

Almost every aspect of AMTA-NH's ongoing activity is driven by its affect or benefit to members. We especially remember the member through our Awards, Benevolence, Education, and Membership Committees.

Awards are presented yearly at our spring meeting. We try as much as possible to keep the award a surprise, and invite significant others to join in the surprise for the recipient. Award recipients are given a framed, color award document with their name, AMTA logo, and achievement description

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signed by our chapter president and awards chair. Each recipient also is given a gift certificate to a local restaurant, which is a big hit!

The Benevolence Committee acknowledges members and friends of the chapter for celebratory events and an assortment of occasions including hospice, bereavement and illness. In the past 15 months over 20 people/groups received some gesture from the chapter, which resulted in members being deeply touched that they were remembered.

We frequently open our arms to area members in need in various ways:

- Our chapter donated a massage table to a local massage school for a needy student;
- We also reached out to NH flood victims for the past 3 years to see if any of our members lost tables or supplies that would inhibit their ability to work;
- We held a raffle fundraiser, 02/15/2009, using donations from national vendors and presenters to aid a cancer-stricken member without insurance.

AMTA-NH is a firm believer in supportive networking opportunities amongst local and national therapists, leaders, presenters, and vendors. We always host a reception at NERC for our NH attendees and frequently invite National leaders and chapter presidents in attendance. When possible we host a reception at National to enable us to have greater rapport with other chapters, National BOD and staff, and vendors.

Connecting our members to other professionals and other client-building opportunities is always foremost in our planning.

We have diligently incorporated survey results into planning for our educational offerings. While we recognize that we can always improve on everything we do, we are gratified that we get thanks from our members for doing everything well!

WEBSITE ADDRESS: <http://www.amta-nh.org>

NEWSLETTER ADDRESS:

<http://www.amta-nh.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=newsletter&category=Main>