

Give Chapters a Hand: Awards of Excellence **Washington, DC Chapter**

PART 2: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

We began 2008 with a Board Retreat. The newly elected Board met with the purpose of designing our own mission statement. We were successful! Our Mission: Empowering our members to thrive by supporting professionalism, creating community and having fun! We also spent some time at the retreat discussing long- and short-term goals for the chapter. The general areas of these goals fell into categories: Communication, Education, Legislation, Recognition, Socialization, and Financials.

Communication:

We have created and actively maintain our website: www.amtadc.org. Members can find out about Chapter events and the public can use our site to link to the FAMT function at the National website. We provide links to other chapters, as well as to the area's legislative sites: DC, MD, and VA. We have created a Yahoo! list serv. On this online discussion board, members can post job leads, commercial space for rent and ask questions about courses, referrals, or any aspect of their careers as massage therapists. It has been the single most successful method of timely communication to and within our chapter. We are for the first time working with a professional graphic designer who is handling the layout of our newsletter. We are also "going green" and beginning in May 09- we will be sending our newsletter in an email as a .pdf file. Our newsletters are archived on our website. We will continue to print some copies for those therapists who prefer to have a paper copy. We also leave printed copies at the local massage school.

Education:

We now have an Education Chair who has been successful in finding presenters to provide NCTMB-approved credits at lectures following our general meetings at no cost to our members. We plan to expand the program to offer full-day and weekend classes to our members at reduced rates.

Legislation:

We currently have a Board member serving on the DC Massage Therapy Board, so we have improved communication between these two organizations. She is present at every Board and general meeting, and has been able to clarify legislative issues to our members, as well as bring our concerns to the DC Board. She is also the representative to the FSMTB, and has been fantastic at keeping us up to date with all the changes happening in that area.

Recognition:

We publish members' milestones in the newsletters. We have for the first time given our own "Above and Beyond" award to a member who has done just that. We are participating in the NO Awards program and have given a Chapter Meritorious Award for the past 4 out of 5 years. We recognize new members at every meeting, and send out "Welcome Packages" that include our latest newsletter, information about the next general meeting, product samples that have been donated, and a welcome letter with contact information.

Socialization:

We have started to host "Chapter Socials" at different venues around the city. We held 4 last year. We pick different neighborhoods and keep them close to Metro stops to increase availability for our members. We have expanding our social time at our meetings to a full 30 minutes before the general meeting starts. Last spring, we hosted a chapter pot luck.

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Financials:

We have, with help from the NO – cleaned up our books and become fully compliant with the financial requirements set up by the NO. We had the same Treasurer for many years who had a very outdated method of recording keeping, so getting up to the digital age was a huge challenge.

Leadership Development:

We have been very successful in bringing new people onto the Board and cultivating future leaders while including former members. Our "Leadership Team" has grown to include a Legislative Action Chair, Membership Chair and committee member, and an Education Chair. We will be sending a volunteer to CVOP this year (making 3 years in a row with interest from other members to participate in future CVOP events). After years of having the same person represent us as delegate (due largely to lack of interest), we now have people wanting to participate as delegate. We are moving out of a time when there was not a lot of movement onto or off the Board to one where we are able to cultivate enough interest in leadership that we have fertile ground for years to come. I foresee a very productive and bright future for our small chapter.

Student Outreach:

We have a member who is a teacher at the local massage school, and has made herself available to students who have questions regarding membership. It is not a formal student recruitment program, but we feel we are well represented in the school.

MTAW:

During MTAW we send therapists to the Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown University Hospital. We provide massage to clients and staff at the Betty Lou Ourisman Breast Health Center. It is always well received.

PART 3: OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MEMBERS:

In addition to all that was previously mentioned, we have added several functions to our general meetings. We have a food drive at every meeting, with donations going to the Capital Area Food Bank. We have a lending library that is brought to every general meeting and is always an active table. We offer a music swap area, as well as business card exchange. We also give away door prizes at every meeting- the prizes are donations of products. At the annual meeting- we give away a \$50.00 gift certificate to the local massage school store, and a \$100.00 gift certificate for continuing education offered through the school. The chapter pays for these gift certificates.

We have successfully updated the chapters' Standing Rules with help from Cheryl Sinaikin. This is the first time it has been done since the 1970's. This is something that does not affect our members in their daily lives, but helps the board to clarify it's role and keeps us in compliance.

We fought and overcame some unfavorable legislation last summer with help from Marsha Hagney. We became aware of the situation because of a members' posting to the list serv. We were able to track down the office in question and after many months of discussion and debate, were able to secure the continued right of licensed therapists to practice out of their primary residences.

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As a very small chapter, we are in the position of having to find volunteers for all positions. (As mentioned above, this month marks the very first time we are hiring an outside vendor- our graphic artist.) Our newsletter content is largely comprised of articles written by our members. It includes articles written by members on topics of Ethics, Business Practices, and Nutrition. We even have art work contributed by another member. We work to include and promote our members' skills, whatever they may be.

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.amtadc.org

NEWSLETTER ADDRESS: <http://www.amtadc.org/newsletter.htm>