



Iowa Therapeutic Recreation Association NEWSLETTER

A Chapter Affiliate of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association

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Newsletter 2006-2007 ITRA Board of Directors

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Past-President's Corner: Reflections on the Last Year *Connie Williams, CTRS - ITRA Past-President*

It has been a busy year. I feel confident as I leave my position of President that ITRA will continue to move forward in providing opportunities for the therapeutic recreation specialists throughout our state.

The last ITRA workshop, "ABC's of TR: Advocating, Building, and Collaborating," had the greatest number of attendees that we have had in a long time. The quality and breadth of programs was phenomenal with .7 CEU's offered.

ITRA is working to create job opportunities with preliminary work being done for the MEDICAID PROJECT. The ITRA Board worked hard this last year to make contacts with agencies, facilities, and institutions that provide services for people with disabilities in order to get the word out about therapeutic recreation and increase our membership. A new ITRA web site will soon be completed.

There are many people who need to be thanked for all their hard work. Doug Boleyn coordinated an excellent ITRA workshop. John Spilde and Cindy Coffin will be leaving the board after three years of service. They have been vital members and will be missed. Thanks to Joe Fernau who had been working on the web site and just recently left the field of TR. Many, many thanks to Jackie French-Krueder for her many years of working behind the scenes on the ITRA website.

I would like to welcome our newest board members, Mollie Wilhite (2 year member-at-large), Allison Ball (1 year member-at-large), Megan Schwalm (1 year member-at-large), Martin Wright (Southwest Regional Representative), and Annie Obrecht (Southeast Regional Representative). This year will be exciting as both the University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa each have two student representatives. From UNI we welcome, Adria Swinonos and Abby McDermott. From U of I, we welcome Rachel DeKeyser and Marcy Matthias.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Karla Belzer for her continuous support of ITRA, leaving the board as Past President. Karla has also taken on the responsibility of Newsletter Editor and has agreed to continue to edit our newsletter. I extend a gracious thank you to Karla for all her work. It has been an honor and pleasure to be involved with ITRA.



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ATRA Medicare Project Update

Ann Huston - ATRA Executive Director

(www.atra-tr.org)

- Conference Call attended by 13 state contacts on April 26 and 6 state contacts on April 27 for total of 19 participants!

House of Representatives Update

- Representative Peterson (5-PA) and Representative Tauscher (10-CA) still championing our efforts (sponsors)!
- State contacts need to maintain House of Representative relationships for future action in 2006. (co-sponsors)
- 2005 House of Representative letter on www.atra-tr.org

Senate Update

- Individual Senate letters to CMS by McCain (AZ), Santorum (PA), Burr (NC) and Grassley (IA). Note Senator Grassley is Chair of Senate Finance Committee with jurisdiction over Medicare Program (see website).
- Senate "Dear Colleague" letter still in progress. Working closely with two Senate offices to serve as sponsors.
- Co-Sponsors of the Senate "Dear Colleague" letter will be sought as soon as the letter is released by the sponsors.
- ATRA grassroots will be called to action by the ATRA RT Medicare Project state contacts.
- We will initiate more frequent telephone conference calls for the state contacts during the Senate "Dear Colleague" open time (for co-signatures).

Fundraising

- AT the 2006 Mid-Year Professional Issues Forum, we raised over \$7,000 toward our goal of \$58,000 for the year! Many thanks to all those that contributed at the midyear. If you have not made a contribution to the project, please do so by visiting the website.

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ITRA Board Meeting Minutes Report

The ITRA Board met on Friday, June 23, 2006 at ChildServe in Johnston. Jennifer gave the financial report and received monies for membership sales at the conference. The Board discussed the 2006 conference and agreed that it was very successful. This year there were 192 attendees at the conference. The Board is awaiting receipt of conference evaluations to determine changes to be made for the 2007 conference. The Board also discussed progress with Paul Beck and the new ITRA website. The Board brainstormed on what visually the site should look like and agreed that the site should reflect ITRA's personality. Paul wants to include good quality pictures on the ...

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Quote of the Quarter:

"The reward for doing things is the opportunity to do more things"

Professional Implication:

Many of the wonderful professional opportunities we have can be linked to a connection made or skills previously learned. Sometimes, when we're faced with a task that does not have immediate payback, we fail to see the big picture. Volunteering and taking on professional responsibility is really about making an investment in ourselves and in our profession

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Jennifer Fisher, CTRS - ITRA Secretary/Treasurer

We had a great turn out for the 2006 ITRA conference, almost 200 participants! Because we had so many registrations we will be able to put money towards a lobbyist to promote the Medicaid project. We grossed a significant amount of money which will be very beneficial to our organization. Thanks to all who attended!

We had our first meeting in June for the new board. We are already planning for the 2007 conference to be held at UNI.

If anyone is interested in joining any committees please contact any of the board members. Direct anyone who is interested in joining ITRA to me.

Jennifer Fisher

ITRA Treasurer/Secretary 2005-2008

North Central Representative Work Report

Renee Barbu - ITRA North Central Regional Representative

This past year, I attended board meetings to discuss decisions in planning the spring conference and other issues affecting the association.

I also assisted Karla Belzer and Doug Boleyn by sending emails, faxes, and making phone calls to request the support of Congressman Tom Latham. When speaking with the Congressman, I asked him to sign onto the Dear Colleague letter that outlined the problem that Medicare patients are being denied access to RT even though Medicare is currently paying for RT services. On March 15, 2005, Tom Latham's Legislative Healthcare Assistant, Jacob Parker, informed me that Congressman Latham was in agreement to sign on the Dear Colleague letter.

I mailed out 86 letters to healthcare agencies in the North Central Iowa region to recruit possible new members and conference attendees. In the letter, I explained the mission of ITRA, directed them to explore the ITRA website, introduced myself as their representative, proposed they become a member of ITRA and/or attend the ITRA spring conference, and provided them with my contact information.

Finally, I assisted in the set up of the annual conference and presented "Strategies for Anger Management" at the conference.

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...opening site page. The Board decided that they would like to see pictures of special populations, special needs equipment, geriatrics, and aquatics, just to name a few! The addition of a bulletin board space, quick links to accredited schools and facilities, as well as updated internship sites was discussed.

The Board then focused on ITRA's Medicaid initiative and formulated several questions to ask of past-president, Doug Boleyn, who was not in attendance. The Board wants to formulate the best time to meet with legislators and to decide on ITRA's platform for advocacy.

Additions to the newsletter, ITRA's nomination for Chapter of the Year, and ITRA Board Conference Calling was also discussed.

Finally, the Board discussed options for the 2007 conference and created a list of potential topics. The Board welcomes input and suggestions from the membership regarding the 2007 conference.

The meeting was adjourned and the next meeting date set for Friday, August 4, 2006 at UNI.

ITRA Board Meeting Dates

August 4, 2006 - UNI Room 250
 October 6, 2006 - ChildServe, Johnston
 December 8, 2006 - ChildServe, Johnston
 February 2, 2007 - UNI
 March 29, 2007 - UNI (pre-conference)
 March 30, 2007 - UNI (conference)

All meeting times are 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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- Remember all monies donated to the ATRA RT Medicare Project go to pay our attorney fees and do not support any other effort.

Preparation for Legislation

- Most signals from CMS recently indicate legislative action will be necessary. ATRA is working with Legislative Counsel in the drafting of potential legislative language and will be scheduling Capitol Hill visits to discuss the language and potential of introduction.
- AT point of Hill visits, ATRA grassroots involvement will be very important and all the information will be disseminated through the ATRA RT Medicare Project State Contacts.

As always, keep posted to the special RT Medicare Project section of our website for House and Senate letters, CMS responses, project donors and new initiatives.

Recorded by Ann Huston
April 27, 2006

Marketing your TR Program with TR Quotes

Karla Belzer - ITRA Newsletter Editor

As recreational therapists, we live, breathe, and truly understand what recreational therapy is. We should know the benefits of TR by heart and should be able to communicate all the wonderful things about TR to anyone who will listen. Marketing a TR program is important to convey to others what we want them to know about the program and how important it is.

Marketing your program can be done in many different and unique ways – bulletin boards, brochures, informational fliers, balloons, special events/presentations, word of mouth, sandwich boards...you get the idea. Quotes are often used in these materials to give a brief picture of the TR program. For some people, this is a daunting task. Who better to ask what TR is than TR professionals? The following quotes were found on the TR Directory (www.recreationtherapy.com).

"Leisure is an essential part of life so remember to TReat yourself right!" ~Ana Osborne, Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

Therapeutic Recreation: We're more than just fun and games.
~Stephanie Parker, CTRS

Therapeutic Recreation = LiFe; Leisure interventions, Functional experiences. ~Deanna Tahau, TRS

"If bread is the necessity of life, recreation is a close second"
~Edward Bellamy

May the FLOW be with you!
~Jo-Anne Harrison, Recreation Therapist

"Recreation's purpose is not to kill time, but to make life, not to keep a person occupied, but to keep them refreshed; no to offer an escape from life, but to provide a discovery of life."
~Author Unknown

****Upcoming Continuing Education Opportunities****

2006 ATRA Annual Conference
September 14-18, 2006
Orlando, Florida
For more info: www.atra-tr.org

National Institute on Recreation Inclusion
September 7-10, 2006
Groton, Connecticut
For more info: www.nrpa.org

NRPA 2006 Congress
October 10-14, 2006
Seattle, Washington
For more info: www.nrpa.org

For More Continuing Education Opportunities Visit:
<http://www.iowatra.org/>
or
<http://www.atra-tr.org/continuingeducation.htm>

ITRA Welcomes New Board Members

Mollie Wilhite – 2 year Member–At–Large

Mollie graduated with her degree from UNI and is currently working as a Recreation Supervisor with the Urbandale Parks and Recreation Department. She is excited to be a part of ITRA and believes there is a lot that can be done to make the TR field grow. Mollie is a member of ITRA, IPRA, and NRPA. Mollie can be reached via email at mwilhite@urbandale.org

Allison Ball – 1 year Member–At–Large

Allison has her degree in TR from UNI and is a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at St. Luke's Hospital. Allison joins the board with enthusiasm for wanting to make a difference in the TR field. She is a member of ITRA and ATRA and can be reached via email at allyball@cfu.net

Megan Schwalm – 1 year Member–At–Large

Megan comes to the ITRA board with a degree in TR and Women's Studies. Megan is currently employed as an Activity Specialist 2 at the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute. Megan looks forward to helping advance the field of TR in the state of Iowa through her involvement with ITRA. Megan can be reached via email at megan.schwalm@iowa.gov

Mackenzey Herrick – South Central Regional Representative

Mackenzey currently works for ChildServe in Johnston. She can be reached via email at mackenh@childserve.org

Martin Wright – Southwest Regional Representative

Martin graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a degree in Public Recreation with an emphasis in TR and has past involvement with ITRA. Martin has been employed with the Glenwood Resource Center as an Activities Specialist 1 for 28 years. He has coached Special Olympics since 1978 and has coordinated other community sports programs. Martin can be reached via email at mwright@dhs.state.ia.us

Annie Obrecht – Southeast Regional Representative

Annie attended the U of I where she received a degree in TR and is currently working on her Masters in Leisure Studies. Annie also currently works two jobs in the field – Recreation Director at Iowa City Rehabilitation and Health Care Center and Recreational Therapist at St. Luke's Hospital. Annie brings energy, motivation, and determination to the ITRA Board. She wishes to maximize advocacy for TR professionals. Annie can be reached via email at aobrecht13@hotmail.com

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Interventions Ideas

Hoy Card Game

Size: small to large

Equipment: two packs of cards

Objective: to promote concentration

Description: Leader has one pack of cards. Leader gives clients four or five cards each, more or less depending on size of group. Cards are then turned face up. Leader holds up a card (e.g., seven of diamonds) and announces it to the group. Whoever has that card turns it over. Play continues in this manner until all cards are turned over. Whoever has all their cards turned over first yells out "Hoy". Three or four games can be played to fill a morning or afternoon session.

Therapeutic Jenga

Size: 2+

Equipment: 1 Wooden Jenga game on which your treatment team has written therapeutic questions. A flat, level surface

Objective: Rapport building, disclosure promotion, trust building, orientation testing. Clients will share some information about themselves and begin to feel comfortable in the therapeutic process.

Description: (Jenga is a Milton Bradley game and the original game is copyrighted. This activity, however, is not. Therapeutic Jenga Game originally created by Robert Silva, Jr., Dana Stephens-Craig, and Alison Jedrick, 2001)

To create the game:

Write with marker on each block a therapeutic question (i.e., Talk about a time when someone made you feel uncomfortable) and some lighter questions (i.e., If you were a cartoon character, who would you be and why.) Orientation questions (what day is it today?) are also handy.

To play the game:

Each player (including the therapist(s)) removes 1 block from the stack of Jenga blocks without knocking the whole thing over. S/he will read the question on the block out loud and answer and then replace the block at the top of the tower. If a player is uncomfortable about answering any question, s/he can put the block on top without answering, but must then take another block. If a player pulls a block s/he has already answered, s/he must also pull another block. If a player knocks the whole thing over, the game is finished & all other players get to ask him/her any question.

ITRA Announces Changes to Website

The ITRA Board of Directors has agreed to hire website developer, Paul Beck, to redesign the ITRA website. The new site will feature ITRA information, ITRA Board of Directors information, archives of ITRA newsletters and much, much more. The Board of Directors feels that updating the website will provide better service to its members as well as access to and information on Therapeutic Recreation in Iowa for potential members, providers, and consumers. ITRA is excited to undertake this initiative that will improve ITRA's visibility in the state. Watch the newsletter for more information and updates!



ITRA Welcomes New Board Members (continued from page 5)

Mandi DeRocher – South Central Regional Representative

Mandi currently works at Link Associates in Urbandale. Mandi can be reached via email at Mandi@linkassociates.org

Adria Swinonos – UNI Student Representative

Adria is currently working on her degree in TR from UNI. Adria also works as a Living Instructor at an RCF/MR. She is looking forward to learning more about the TR profession through her involvement on the ITRA board. Adria can be reached via email at adria5@uni.edu

Abby McDermott – UNI Student Representative

Abby is a full time student at UNI studying Leisure, Youth, and Human Services with TR emphasis. Abby volunteers at the Mental Health Institute in Independence and helps out with Special Olympics. Abby is excited to be on the ITRA board and is ready to contribute her time and talent while gaining experiences that will benefit her in the future. Abby can be reached via email at abbymac@uni.edu

Rachel DeKeyser – U of I Student Representative

Rachel is a full time student at U of I and is working toward a degree in TR. Rachel is looking forward to becoming more involved in the field of TR. Rachel can be reached via email at rachuiowa8@msn.com

Marcy Matthias – U of I Student Representative

Marcy is studying TR at the U of I. Marcy can be reached via email at marcina-ann@yahoo.com

Proud To Be Certified! NCTRC CELEBRATES 25 YEARS!

NCTRC invites you to join them in commemorating the 25th Anniversary of NCTRC! NCTRC has been proud to serve as the professional credentialing organization for Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists, achieving 25 years of setting quality standards for practice. Please take a look at the documents listed below on the NCTRC website (<http://www.nctrc.org/25thAnniversary.htm>). They include interesting facts and history related to the NCTRC legacy.

Enjoy and thank you for your continued support and dedication to NCTRC!

- **TR CERTIFICATION -- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**
- **A BRIEF HISTORY OF NCTRC**
- **NCTRC HISTORICAL FACTS**
- **INITIAL NCTRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- **INITIAL NCTRC BOARD MEETING AGENDA**



c/o K. Belzer
605 Marsha Lane
Rock Falls, IL 61071

TO:

Keepin' Cool with ITRA!

ATTENTION ITRA MEMBERS!

As a part of an ongoing effort to keep our members informed of the most up-to-date information concerning therapeutic recreation in Iowa, ITRA has recently completed the development of the following e-groups!

ITRA General Membership E-Group

This group is intended for all members of ITRA. Ask questions of the general membership, inform members of events, and keep informed by the ITRA Board of Directors of upcoming events, late-breaking news, and all other information related in therapeutic recreation in Iowa. To join, email your request to IowaTRA@yahoogroups.com

ITRA Board of Directors E-Group

This group is your quickest link to the ITRA Board of Directors. E-mail your concerns, questions, success stories, and all other Board related inquires to

ITRABOARD@yahoogroups.com

The ITRA Board of Directors would love to hear from you!

Check out the ITRA Website: **WWW.IOWATRA.ORG**