

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

ARIZONA STATE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION ASSOCIATION

WHAT'S TO COME

WRITTEN BY KELLY WALSH, ASTRA PRESIDENT

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Happy New Year! I am excited to serve as the Arizona State Therapeutic Recreation Association President as we begin this new year. I am excited to share with you a few items we are looking forward to in this new year. First off, we are bringing back our quarterly newsletter. It is important that we continue to stay connected and share knowledge, acknowledgments, concerns, and questions with one another as we continue to grow therapeutic recreation in the state of Arizona. Secondly, we will be planning a spring conference based on how we as Recreational Therapist have faced and overcome COVID-19 as we outreach and continue to provide services to our clients. Lastly, facilitating a networking program. Whether you are starting to explore a new focus, fresh into the field, or looking to mentor young professionals, we are looking to develop a platform where we can connect.



“RTS GOING 5G-STAYING CONNECTED”.

WRITTEN BY: JOSH PARKS, PRESIDENT-ELECT

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Welcome to 2021! We made it through one of the most tumultuous years most of us have ever experienced. Unlike 9/11/2001, last year caused rifts between people in all aspects, and we as Recreational Therapists had to call upon our infamous ingenuity to bridge physical gaps between ourselves, those we serve, and our communities. Stress levels have been at an all-time high and with that comes a loss of interest in leisure and recreation. Now, more than ever, our profession has been saving lives and changing perspectives.

Everyone has had to adapt to a new normal. This upcoming conference will showcase how RTs succeeded in holding our communities together through technology. “RT going 5G”. We want to hear how you all have been making a difference in an ever-changing environment. Limited contact, smaller groups, health and safety concerns on a whole new scale, and stress levels higher than we ever thought possible are some of the barriers you’ve had to overcome. How did you do it?! **Come to ASTRA’s Spring Conference to share, learn, and reconnect through 5G!**

STAY CONNECTED



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Website:

www.astra-tr.com



RECREATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS BRING THE HEART!

WRITTEN BY: RACHEL FISHER, ASTRA STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE
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ASU's recreational therapy student association went through some changes this year. Saying goodbye to the student name and hello to AoRTA; Association of Recreational Therapy at ASU. This year the student club has made goals to connect with industry professionals within ASTRA, to create mentorships between CTRS and students, focus on support for undergraduates, preparedness for the NCTRC, and creating more CFE opportunities through established community partnerships!

Connect with ASU Club

 @asu.rectherapy

AoRTA successfully hosted 2 service weekends with this year's community service partner EmpoweRanch! Recreational Therapy students were joined by Watts College Council, Non-Profit Leadership, and First Gen at Watts students. AoRTA students lead service projects repairing the chicken coop and barn, planting, painting, adding irrigation and so much more! The student association is looking forward to creating professional panels and virtual engagement events this semester and teaming with ASTRA for this year's conference.

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HONOR. RECOGNITION. APPLAUSE. CONGRATULATIONS.

WRITTEN BY: DELINDA CARR, ASTRA PAST PRESIDENT/AWARDS CHAIR
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Honor. Recognition. Applause. Congratulations. These are all words that describe how we take note of someone's accomplishment or success. Sometimes, the accolades are easy to come by. Sometimes, the recognition that someone richly deserves, never comes. As professionals in the field of Recreation Therapy, we don't typically do what we do for the sake of applause. Our applause comes in the form of the small steps or the big accomplishments our clients/patients achieve under our care. Our reward comes when we see the impact made on the life of an individual.



While we as professionals may not crave the award, we as a profession want to recognize those individuals and organizations that have gone above and beyond. Maybe not even above and beyond. Maybe the one that is simply, faithfully, consistently, joyfully carrying out their passion in the form of employment.

The ASTRA Board will be presenting awards at our upcoming Spring Conference. In this newsletter you will find a list of the award categories. Please take a look at the award descriptions, think about who you might be able to nominate, complete the information needed and submit to Delinda Carr, Past President/Awards Chair at pndccarr@gmail.com, by Monday, March 1st. Certainly, during this year of challenge, we can identify many who are deserving of recognition.

PROFESSIONAL SHOWCASE

HONORHEALTH ARTICLE ABOUT CTRS DELINDA CARR

"Recreational therapist Delinda Carr, CTRS, brought the holiday spirit to HonorHealth Rehabilitation Hospital when she led patients in creating snow people out of socks as part of their recreational therapy sessions. The occupational and recreation therapy teams partnered up to supervise and assist while patients practiced sitting, standing, balance and object/material grabbing skills as they gathered materials and completed their projects. The craft was great fun for all and wonderful therapy as it allowed patients to use their creativity."



IF YOU HAVE AN AWESOME STORY TO SHARE, PLEASE LET US KNOW AND WE CAN SHOWCASE IT IN A FUTURE NEWSLETTER! YOU CAN EMAIL IT TO:
AZTHERAPEUTICRECREATION@GMAIL.COM OR MEAGAN.DURAZO@GMAIL.COM.



OTHER NEWS & UPDATES

- IF YOU KNOW OF ANY REC THERAPY JOB OPENINGS, PLEASE SEND THEM OUR WAY AND WE CAN POST THEM.
- ASTRA WEBSITE IS BEING REVAMPED AND UPDATED FOR YOUR BENEFIT.
- QUESTIONS OR INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INVOLVED? EMAIL US AT AZTHERAPEUTICRECREATION@GMAIL.COM

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Recognizing the Importance of Therapeutic Recreation in the Time of COVID: My Internship Journey

by: Margaret Kullos, CTRS

2020, the year the novel Coronavirus (Covid19) becomes one of the largest epidemics faced by Americans and the world. I was finishing my senior year when healthcare and recreation facilities began to limit access, and my internship was canceled. Suddenly, I was so close to graduation, yet so far away from completing my degree and reaching my goal to become a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS). I spent weeks scouring the state of Arizona for a new internship, repeatedly coming up empty handed. I made a final plea on an Arizona State University Recreational Therapy Alumni Facebook group, and one week later I began my internship at a facility for patients who were court ordered to psychiatric treatment. My internship began as expected, as I adjusted to my new role as a full-time intern, but what came next was seemingly inconceivable.

Four weeks into my internship, an outbreak of COVID-19 occurred on my assigned unit. In the 'normal times' the unit had two full-time recreational therapists with the help of other professionals that program on all the units. I had been working exclusively on the infected unit, to limit exposure to other units. The supporting professionals could no longer come on the floor, which left all programming up to me and two CTRSs. Unfortunately, one of the therapists got sick. To ensure continued programming, I took up the role with my supervisor to program on the unit with the sick patients. I spent 6 weeks working full time on the unit wearing full personal protective equipment, and after work I was required to isolate myself from my friends and family to prevent accidental exposure. During this time, I began creating a COVID guide that would serve as my final project. The emphasis of the recreational therapy COVID guide was to ensure quality of life for the seriously mentally ill during a pandemic.

The first phase of pandemic response occurred in March, and this involved restricting people that came in and out of the hospital as well as limiting outings. Agency (temporary) staff started to come on unit as the full-time staff began to contract the virus. The rehabilitation staff panicked initially when the positive test results were announced, and a second phase of lockdown was instituted. We all tried our best to calm the patients while also trying our hardest to remain calm ourselves. The hospital policy was to lock down the unit. This meant patients were not allowed in the mall (an outdoor space with vending machines and recreation spaces) and all staff were required to stay on the unit; not floating to other places in the hospital. All meetings were held via telephone. All these rapid changes created inconsistencies in care, which

adversely affects quality of life for our patients. I developed a guide on how to maintain quality of life among SMI when restricted from the normalcies of life.

The guide attempts to create an outline for maintaining quality of life during this type of situation. I included a definition of quality of life (QoL) that I crafted based on several sources with existing definitions such as the World Health Organization, The Centers for Disease Control and the TR definition from a strengths-based approach. The definition I created is as follows: An individual's satisfaction or ability to reach satisfaction in the areas of relationships, autonomy, emotional/physical health, leisure and personal growth. From this definition I was able to find two specific areas that impact quality of life which are also affected by staff at facilities. The two areas are the importance of choice, and continuation of meaningful leisure. I examined what choice looks like in a level one facility, how language affects autonomy, the importance of helping patients keep a routine, and how empathic listening can ease the burden of a lockdown which restricts choice. The continuation of meaningful leisure is where I focused most of my attention during those weeks. The rehab department was largely responsible for continuing to provide recreation services to those who had or were recovering from COVID-19. In this setting, leisure is the area that provides autonomy, coping, distraction and social interaction, which are vital to patient mental health. As one of the rehab 'staff' my job was about making sure there were opportunities for leisure during the lockdown. Some of the activities provided included: stress management, game groups, gardening, art, and trivia. The hardest part of providing services was creating meaningful activities while minimizing contact or exposure with patients that were unwell. My time at my internship site has now shaped who I am as a professional. I was given the opportunity to see what care looks like during a pandemic. I was in the middle of the storm with amazing colleagues that helped me grow in ways I never expected. I am forever grateful for my experience. By sharing my experience, I hope to assist others that may find themselves in similar situations. This pandemic is far from over and as recreational therapists we have a responsibility to ensure the quality of life to our patients and ourselves.

ASTRA Annual Awards

ASTRA Recreation Therapist of the Year Award

This award will recognize the recipient's outstanding contribution to Recreational Therapy through creative and innovative programming in the clinical setting, promotion of the profession and service to upcoming professionals.

Qualifications:

- Active member of ASTRA
- At least 2 of the following criteria:
 - o Minimum of 3 years full-time employment in the field
 - o Evidence of creative and/or innovative programming in a clinical setting
 - o Promotion of RT through supervision of student interns and/or mentoring interns or new graduates
 - o Evidence of promotion of the profession

ASTRA Outstanding Professional Award

Qualifications:

- Active member of ASTRA
- At least 3 of the following criteria:
 - o A minimum of 5 years full-time employment in the field
 - o Distinctive leadership in the promotion, organization, and development of new and/or unique RT programming.
 - o Contributions to the RT profession on national, state, and local levels
 - o Evidence of Leadership within the profession either as an elected official of a position within an RT association or as an RT association committee member
 - o Participation in RT professional research, publications, and/or presentations

ASTRA Institution or Organization Award

This award will recognize any agency, institution, and/or organization whose major purpose is to advocate, promote, and/or provide RT services to persons with disabilities, including any public, private, or voluntary agency.

Qualifications:

- Promotion of RT services at any level
- Development of new and/or innovated RT services/techniques
- Sponsorship or support of RT related educational opportunities
- Preparing or sponsorship of RT related legislation
- Supportive of RT related research

Directions for Submitting Professional Nominations:

Email the current Past-President and include the following information:

- The recipient's name and contact information (email)
- Title of the deserved award
- A brief (50 words or less) description of why you feel the individual should receive the award

ASTRA ASU Student Recognition Award

Qualifications:

- An Active member of the ASU ASTRA Student Club
- Must be a Junior or Senior enrolled in the Therapeutic Recreation
- Program with a 2.5 grade point average or higher
- Must have ASU TR Instructor support

- Must submit a maximum of 500 word essay describing your academic/professional goals and achievements that demonstrate professional promise and commitment to the Therapeutic Recreation Profession

Directions for Submitting Student Nominations:

Interested Students should email the current Past-President and include the following information:

- Name and contact information (email)
- The name of the ASU TR Instructor supporting the nomination
- Current resume
- 500 word essay