



## Letter from the President

### *Happy National Play Therapy Week!!*

National Play Therapy week is February 5-11. What a great opportunity to promote the benefits of play therapy! What are you doing to celebrate? APT will be distributing daily newsletters during National Play Therapy week. Let them know how you will be celebrating and what you will be doing to spreading the word about the power of play therapy. Let's all enjoy "our week"! (The APT announcement is attached).

I do hope that this letter finds you healthy and keeping warm during these winter months! I know many of us are looking forward to spring and the many events that come with it, especially our annual NYAPT conference!

This year's conference will be held on March 24 and March 25 at the DoubleTree in Tarrytown. It will feature a two-day presentation by Dr. Terry Kottman. The first day will be on "Family Play Therapy-Adlerian Style". The second day will be on "Play Therapy Techniques for Working with Teens". Ann Buckley Forest, LCSW-R, RPT-S will also offer a play therapy supervision training on Friday, March 24 from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

**If you are planning to stay at the DoubleTree it is crucial that you make your hotel arrangements ASAP.** We have a limited number of rooms left in our reservation block, and the hotel is booked. After 2/21/17 any unreserved rooms will be turned back to the hotel (and are not likely to be accessible). You can make your reservation by calling (914)631-5700 or online at [tarrytown.doubletree.com](http://tarrytown.doubletree.com); be sure to indicate the code "APT" for your hotel discount. A copy for the brochure is included in this newsletter for further information. I look forward to seeing you there!!

Included in this newsletter is also a ballot for this year's NYAPT election. The year we will be electing candidates to the positions of corresponding secretary, treasurer and two board member positions. Please take a moment to review the ballot and biographies then indicate your choices through the anonymous link included in the ballot. The elected officers and board-members will be inducted at the annual conference. Please take a moment to cast your vote.

The APT charter year ends on March 31. We will know shortly thereafter if we attained Gold Branch status. One of the criteria for gold branch is outreach. According to the APT gold branch program guidelines, outreach efforts include NYAPT branch supported activities that involve providing information and education about play therapy to non-play therapy individuals (general mental health, parents, schools etc.). We know that many NYAPT members are frequently providing outreach throughout the state. Please let us know about your efforts. We would love to hear about the creative ways that you are spreading the word about the benefits of play therapy. I can be reached at [maryannassini@gmail.com](mailto:maryannassini@gmail.com)

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or ideas please feel free to contact me.

Hope to see you in Tarrytown!  
Mary Anne



### **Why Play Needs You** By Patricia Garrett Fearing

“Student Board Member.” I heard the title being spoken over a plate of food at the 2016 NYAPT Conference in Albany. As I tried to digest all that I had taken in that day, as well as what was in front of me, I was puzzled. I had worked in the nonprofit field for the majority of my, granted, short, adult life, and never had there been such a thing as a “Student board Member.” So many organizations give the impression that a board is either meant for governing or for managing, and both forms focus significantly on funds from their pockets, and the pockets of others. This new terminology was refreshing and surprising. After a year of claiming the title “Student Board Member,” I would say those terms still apply.

The NYAPT board is refreshing in that you are surrounded by people in the field who all have a similar goal in mind: to further the research, education and practice of Play Therapy with as many resources, trainings and opportunities as they can muster. The professionals live all over, so getting together as a board can be challenging at times, but as a result, I noticed that everyone did their “homework.” The dedication to this chapter of the APT is abundantly apparent, with great care given to how the board can do more, give more, bring more people in and reach more people with its resources.

While the unique nature of the board was the main surprise during my time participating, the other was the nature of title itself. I’m sure it comes as no surprise that being part of a board takes time and commitment. As a graduate student, those are two reservoirs are mostly depleted between class time, homework, a job and grasping at any kind of personal life. An awareness of

what you can take on amidst the many other consumers of your time is needed to fully experience the incredible opportunity that this position brings. While I feel I haven't been able to fully engage as much as I wish I had, my takeaways are ones that will hopefully encourage and inspire you to apply for this title.

Being the Student Board Member not only places a new line on your resume, but provides you with experiences that someone might not otherwise get during their time in school. The wealth of knowledge that the other board members are willing to impart on you from their professional experiences is overwhelming. From learning how such an organization runs and how to communicate the key elements of Play Therapy to networking through outreach with other organizations and schools that may benefit from joining NYAPT and taking part in its resources and training, this opportunity gives a student a leg up in the professional world they are about to enter. The potential growth and enrichment in being part of this board is endless. As a student, now is the time to take these opportunities and run with them. What better than to do so with an organization at play!?

### **Student of/at Play**

By Patricia Garrett Fearing

As a child, play was a word I used to describe, and defend, how I would spend my day, and to ask of for the participation of those around me. To play was the essence of life, and was as easy as breathing. As I got older, play only described a game, board, sport or otherwise, for the childhood whims of play would not help in my pursuit to be cool. To play was death to my social life, the creator of embarrassing moments and lost its ease with every shameful dismissal when the opportunity presented itself. Play became hard not because it was my work, but because play lost its place in my life. Like any habit of lifestyle, gaining it back was difficult. An eye was always scouting for judgmental glances in the rare moments play showed signs of life. Even as an adult in a career where play is can not only be explained, but encouraged, the fear of shame dwells beneath the surface.

It wasn't until I discovered, in one of the many career pit stops I've taken along the way, that play could bring child, and adult, alike back to life. My job required me to learn the religious, Montessori based curriculum Godly Play, which had many a training attached to certification. I was required to play in order to help others do the same. As I sat next to the sand tray, which in that context was call "the desert tray," I had one eye on the tray and the other gauging the level of judgement of those watching me play. To my surprise, it wasn't there. Instead, a bunch of eager adults, moving around slightly with the discomfort of their own vulnerability, looked back at me with child-like eyes. It was in that moment that I realized play could bring people to a raw, open place.

When I decided to become a counselor, that moment rang in my mind through every theory, DSM criteria and OARS. It drove me to seek out Play Therapy and its scholars for as much information as I could hold. Through the study Jungian theory, I found sand tray therapy. Through an internship that allowed for flexibility and discovery, I became attuned to the healing powers of play for both children and adults. The desire to soak up as much research and practice as I could led me to NYAPT. Play became a both a practice and a powerful driving force in my career, and my life.

Dr. Stuart Brown of the National Institute for Play said in a 2014 NPR interview that, "Play is something done for its own sake. It's voluntary, it's pleasurable, it offers a sense of

engagement, it takes you out of time. And the act itself is more important than the outcome."<sup>1</sup> Such thoughts on play, and being believer in non-directive counseling approaches, play has become a key “player” in getting to know my clients, particularly my adult ones. I watch women who have had the essence life sucked out of them by domestic violence find growth in a sandtray, peace in a labyrinth and self love in box of crayons. Dr. Brown said that the act was more important than the outcome, and while I agree, I am incredibly grateful for the life giving outcome, both in myself and the population I serve.

<sup>1</sup>*Yenigun, S. (2016, August 6). Play Doesn't End With Childhood: Why Adults Need Recess Too. Retrieved December 01, 2016, from <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/06/336360521/play-doesnt-end-with-childhood-why-adults-need-recess-too>*

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### **NYAPT Ballot Elections 2017**

*Please take a moment to read about your NYAPT Board Nominees, and simply vote at this link:*  
[https://naz.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_06c3yQYWAWmAtBr](https://naz.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_06c3yQYWAWmAtBr)

#### *Corresponding Secretary: Hilary Sutliff*

Hilary Sutliff is a new addition to the mental health field. She holds a BA in Psychology from SUNY Plattsburgh and a MA in Counseling and Community Psychology from The Sage Colleges. She was fortunate enough to complete a one year graduate internship with Ellis Child and Adolescent Treatment Services during her final year of graduate school. This is where she was first introduced to the New York Association for Play Therapy while helping coordinate their 16th Annual Play Therapy Conference in Albany, NY. Since graduation, Hilary has been working towards becoming a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) and a Registered Play Therapist (RPT). She is currently employed by The Family Counseling Center of Fulton County where she provides outpatient therapy services to individuals, families, and couples of all ages. In addition to seeing clients in her office, she also provides off site therapy services in four of the local Elementary schools. As a board member, Hilary will strive to share her passion for the field and fresh insight with both current and future members of the NYAPT. Her strong advocacy skills and dedication to continued professional development will greatly aid in sustaining and increasing the positive impact this organization has on clinicians throughout the state.

#### *Treasurer: Ashley Speno*

Ashley Speno received her Bachelor of Science from Marist College where she also completed a one-year internship in the Emergency Psychiatric Unit at Saint Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie, New York. She then went on to complete her studies at Sage Graduate School's where she earned her Master of Arts in Counseling and Community Psychology. During her graduate studies, she completed a one-year internship at Ellis Child and Adolescent Treatment Services. During this internship Ashley developed a passion for play therapy and was fortunate enough to have served on the NYAPT board as a student representative in 2016. Ashley currently works as a therapist at The Family Counseling Center where she provides outpatient therapy to all ages. She provides services to individuals, families, and couples with a specific focus on families and children. Additionally, her agency additionally contracts with local schools which allows her to

provide school based and agency based therapy. Ashley has been working towards becoming a licensed mental health counselor (LMHC) and intends on working towards becoming a Registered Play Therapist (RPT) and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT). Ashley approaches treatment from a systems perspective and utilizes the therapeutic powers of play in her work from this perspective with parents, families and children.

*Board Member: (Two Positions): David Schatzkamer*

David Schatzkamer is a licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and a Registered Play Therapist (RPT). His appreciation and knowledge of Play therapy is recognized within the field. David has obtained training at the University of North Texas where he was a participant of the Intensive Play Therapy Supervision Program. He continues to receive supervision by Allan Gonsler, a renowned Play Therapist Supervisor. At present, David facilitates an ongoing play therapy supervision group. His ongoing training at the Family & Play Therapy Center in Pennsylvania, has helped him specialize in ADHD, ODD, conduct disorder, abuse/trauma, and depression not only with individual children but with their families. While working at the NYU Child Study Center he specialized in ADHD and provided counseling for children suffering from post-9/11 trauma. David served as the Director of Clinical Services at a local Brooklyn, NY non-profit. David currently has a private practice. The most impressive trait about David is his passion for his work and commitment to his clients.

*Board Member: (Two Positions): Paola Cummings*

Paola Cummings is an LCSW-R and up until recently a psychotherapist at Samaritan Counseling Center in Scotia. She worked primarily with children and families, using a systems perspective along with family play therapy. She works as a middle school social worker at Draper Middle School in the Mohonasen School District. She continues to work toward her registration as a play therapist, and she hopes to bring a systems perspective to the board when using play with children and families.

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### Member News

Check out what other chapters around the country have done for National Play Therapy Week at <http://www.a4pt.org/page/PlayTherapyWeek>

*From Athena A. Drewes, PsyD, RPT-S:*

On 3/27/17 there will be "Puppet Play Therapy" from 9-10:30am at Founder's Hall.

Astor Services for Children & Families is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed mental health counselors. #MHC-0046. New York State Office of the Professions (NYSED) regulations require that participants attend the entire approved educational activity in order to receive continuing education hours, from 9-10:30am.

NYS SW; NYS LMHC AND Play Therapy Certificates available, 1.5 contact hours.

Fee: \$25 for non-agency attendees. SW CPE is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers #0084.

Play Therapy Certificates of attendance. APT-Approved Provider #95-106; held in conjunction with New York Association for Play Therapy.

Overview of how puppets can be utilized in cognitive behavior play therapy.

Training Goals: Participants 1) will learn the various techniques underlying use of puppets in child therapy; 2) be able to apply two puppet techniques for engagement and assessment within child therapy; 3) will be able to try out and utilize puppets in order to feel confident in utilizing them. Didactic and experiential training.

Contact Dr. Athena Drewes at: [adrewes@astorservices.org](mailto:adrewes@astorservices.org)

*From Wendy Ludlow:* I would like to include an announcement that I am offering Play Therapy CE Approved Clinical Training, Supervision, and also have non-contact webinars available. If interested in receiving Play Therapy Training announcements.

Please sign up to be on mailing list at: [OmPlay.org](http://OmPlay.org)

*From Laurie Zelinger:* My newest children's book became available on Amazon. It is called, "Please Explain Terrorism to Me: A Story for Children, P-E-A-R-L-S of Wisdom for Their Parents." It is intended for children between the ages of 6-11 and is receiving wonderful reception so far. In fact, it caught the eye of Tuesday's Children and they have asked me to partner with them on some of their endeavors. It also received a full page of recognition in Newsday on November 2. Artist Ann Israeli illustrated this, her first book, and Loving Healing Press published it. You can see a few of the excerpts, pictures and endorsements on my website. Please take a few minutes to look. I'd love to spread the word and am hoping that those of you who love it will write a great review on Amazon. Thank you so much.

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### **Call for Submissions!**

*Please consider submitting your Trainings, News, Reflections,  
and Fun Ideas for our  
Spring Newsletter due out mid-June!*

Contact Jillian: [JillianEKelly@gmail.com](mailto:JillianEKelly@gmail.com)

**A big thank you to our Board Members for their ongoing contributions!**  
*Mary Anne Assini, Athena Drewes, Jillian Kelly, Hillary Sutliff, Ann  
Beckley Forest, Gabriel Lomas, Paola Cummings, Annie Monaco,  
David Schatzkamer*