



Nurture Our Children . . . Nurture Our Future

TAPT Newsletter

Volume 14, No. 4--Winter 2005

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TAPT President's Update

Linda M. Ramirez, RN, MEd, LPC-S, RPT-S

KATRINA and RITA. . .Aftermath of two Powerful Storms



Wow! Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have spawned whirlwinds of discussion, planning, policy writing, and more after hitting several Gulf Coast states. As an organization we have been pushed to take action to get written policies and protocols in place to help give us direction in how TAPT members can most effectively use their knowledge and skills to help children and families when a disaster befalls them.

Whether that disaster is fire affecting family and neighbors; destruction caused by inclement weather; or the ever-present reality of a terrorist attack, TAPT needs to have guidelines in place to give structure and guidance in the midst of the chaos. The TAPT Board had discussed this topic during the past year, but

Katrina and Rita have demonstrated how a written plan is now required. The purpose would be to state TAPT's position, policies, and limitations in assisting members to help others and themselves.

The Association for Play Therapy's stand, as to their role, is currently being written and defined. Bill Burns did state that APT is not set up and could not function as a first responder organization to deploy play therapists to the "field". You can find more information on the APT website about disaster guidelines. APT takes the position of providing guidelines and information on disaster response for the individual members and the Branches to access and use in the development of their own disaster response plans. I am working with Louisiana and Mississippi Branch Presidents to bring our collective experiences together with the various resources available so we can write a disaster preparedness protocol. The TAPT Board will provide input and assist in the final drafting and adoption of a disaster protocol for TAPT. Members are invited to send me information of their

experience, concerns, and suggestions.

At the APT Conference in Nashville this fall, the Mississippi Branch President, Mistie Barnes; the Louisiana Branch President, Marcia Cox; and I teamed up with Teri Krull from Arizona for a workshop sectional to discuss this very topic. We had a good beginning and now must follow through to write policies that take into account our mutual association with APT and the unique needs of our states and memberships. Each of these branch presidents, including myself, had to scramble to get information out and to respond with answers to our membership as best we could. A protocol for what each Branch will and will not be able to do provides some semblance of structure in the midst of turmoil. Not every plan will foresee or solve all problems, as the very nature of a disaster is chaos. But defining TAPT's role and producing guidelines will hopefully lessen some of the frustration and sense of powerlessness that many members experienced.

Inspiration is a guest that does not willingly visit the lazy - Pyotr Tchaikovsky

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Texas Association for Play Therapy has had an agenda on the back burner to promote and train play therapists as responsive mental health providers in case of disaster. Katrina has reminded us how vital it is for us to be prepared for such an occurrence in the unpredictable world in which we live. Katrina forced us all to be more aware and be sensitive and prepared for any type of disaster that may occur. We have had a hard lesson to learn, yet play therapists around the state stepped up to the plate and were active and ready to help our communities in this unexpected challenge.



The first to step up to the plate was our Houston Chapter (SHAPT) due to the majority of evacuees from New Orleans being transferred to the Astrodome in Houston. Mary Ring kept us informed of the activity in Houston and how they were first responders through their local churches in providing assistance at the Astrodome and in other shelters. Mary reminded us that in those first few days, the evacuees had so many basic needs and were in such shock, that the primary work done was to assist other agencies and volunteers to provide those needs. Houston gave us the lead in setting up tables with toys and materials, primarily art materials and play dough, which seemed to help the kids express their fears and concerns in a non verbal fashion, and give them a break from the frantic state they found themselves in.

Our president, Linda Ramirez was quick to help us organize throughout the state having specific contact persons to assist in the crisis. She provided us with extremely valuable information to help us all in the crisis and provided resources for us to access and to pass on to others. Linda also communicated with Play Therapy presidents around the country who provided donations and assistance to us as well. (I received donations from Nebraska and New York for the Hill Country Chapter!!)

Corpus Christi (Coastal Bend), San Antonio (Alamo), El Paso (Far West), Dallas (North Texas), and Austin (Hill Country) were all ready as evacuees were further dispersed to the different areas of Texas that had large facilities as shelters for the thousands of evacuees from New Orleans. Many play therapists participated as volunteers directly through the Red Cross and through their churches. Some organized as the local Play Therapy Chapters and provided assistance as a group. Overall we had many Play Therapists providing play activities at the different centers; some as crisis responders, some later as support and assistance as the crisis subsided.

Julie Thigpen and Laurie Stoebel in Corpus were extremely helpful, suggesting items for play therapy kits and therapeutic activities and helping us remember to stay very flexible given the circumstances. In many areas, the Red Cross and other victims services did not request therapists unless they were volunteering as first responders and crisis intervention specialists. We needed to be reminded at times that although we were very eager to "get to work", some of our best work will be long term in dealing with the post traumatic stress that many evacuees will experience after the initial crisis.

Here are some excerpts of comments made by various Play Therapists around the state:

Susan Lee (Austin): "Initially, parents, grandparents and other family members either kept their children very protected and close or allowed them to "wander" and sometimes be left crying, having lost their orientation in such a huge facility with lots of passing people. Children would brighten to have someone reflect their behavior and to respond to their inquiry."

Robin English (deployed to Mobile, Alabama): "Most of the children were very well behaved and workers heard, "Yes, ma'am" all day long. I saw a lot of older children taking care of their brothers and sisters, so we encouraged them to let us do that while they relaxed and played. Some families were still living in their cars after four weeks, so the kids were eager to play."

Claudia Savio (Austin): "I was struck by the resilience that I saw in the children during my volunteer time. It appeared, on the surface that they were at a big gathering and were having the time of their life. In their play, however, there was lots of chaos and aggression. I noted in the extended families that mistrust was common not only of the helpers, but also, of other family members. Most seemed to appreciate someone to listen to their story and there was an opportunity to assist when a parent was overwhelmed."

Misty Duke (El Paso): "After having played with the food, making us both supper, he engaged in play with the sword. He alternated between pretending to hurt me with it and pretending to protect me with it. He had us hide behind chairs, whisper, and then lay in wait to kill the "monster". He promised me that the sword would keep us "nice and safe". Later, he found the tools and had me help him "repair the wall". He seemed to be working through issues of safety and control and the power of play allowed him to do this work in a way that was empowering to him."

Marilyn Ross (Austin): "I'm just starting to work with an 8 year old girl who was displaced with her family and plans to return home in December. She moved from being a self-confident, resilient child to one who is very sad, missing home and crying nearly every day. Her friends are scattered across many cities, she didn't get to start choir as she expected this fall, she didn't join soccer as she expected, and she's missing her stuff. She's become a biter for the first time in her life. She is very verbal, and describes having so much in her brain that she needs to erase some of it to fit anything else in." This experience has reminded us that we need to be prepared to provide an extremely needed service to those who may encounter extenuating circumstances at any moment. Play is so healing, we don't realize how empowering what we do is, until we see it in action in circumstances like this disaster. The lives we touched by our presence and play activities were changed by our interventions. Most of us did not have an hour to provide play therapy to the children (and some adults) through this experience, but our presence in the setting of chaos and crisis brought a little sunshine to the new Texans from New Orleans. Many have integrated into our communities because of the positive experiences they had in this crisis. Some we will continue to work with in the next months as the crisis subsides.

Remember, we need to be prepared for disaster response. Stay active, and get involved!

From the Student Director

Molly Kuzmich MS, LPC, LMFT, RPT

Attention upcoming play therapists!

You are a great resource for play therapy literature. If anyone has research or literature reviews that you would be willing to publish, we would love to have those in our newsletter. It's a great way to get your name out there, too!

I would love to highlight exceptional play therapy students in the next newsletter. College and university faculty can be great resources for this. If you know a play therapy student who is making

a particularly strong effort to better the lives of children and our field, email a short description of that person and what they contribute.

Again, students please contact me with any suggestions or ideas of ways in which TAPT can best serve you!

You can reach me by email at kuzmichcounseling@comcast.net, by mail at 6021 Morriss Road, Suite 109A, Flower Mound, TX 75028, or by phone at 972-754-7308.

TAFT Business News

Linda M. Ramirez, President

Your TAPT Board is comprised of volunteers elected and appointed from the general membership. Although the TAPT Board is a volunteer board it has the responsibility to function as a 501(c)(3) corporation. Just like running any business, a written business plan, goals, budget and marketing provides direction and a means of evaluation. As well as, collaboration with other professionals who assist us behind the scenes in the administrative and business functions which allow us to meet many of our stated goals.

Your Board represents you, the member, and works hard to effectively balance the membership perks you receive and the reality of a finite budget. This Board rolls up its sleeves and works very hard to provide play therapy training and information for the public, play therapy and non-play therapy professionals alike.

Please let us know if you have suggestions to help us better meet our stated mission. Each TAPT Board member donates their time, talents and efforts in the hope that their contribution will make your membership a more informative and pleasant experience.

"Thank you!" to all the members of the TAPT Board for their endless hours of hard work and focus that keeps our organization growing and moving ahead. If you have a criticism that we can use to improve, please let us know. Remember to give a hug and / or a "thank you" also to the Board member of your choice!

I wish to thank Ralph Louis, The Third Hand, for many years of support and work on behalf of TAPT. Ralph, of Austin, was our administrative "right hand man" in the early years of TAPT. Most recently he has done quite a bit of volunteer work for TAPT. Thanks, Ralph! Pam Sease, in Houston, also worked as a graphic artist and web master for many years with TAPT and I wish to thank her for the work she has done for us in the past.

We are now working with **John Swinburn** of **Challenge Management, Inc.** in Dallas. John will be managing our website and newsletter. Hopefully, in the future, we will be able to have Challenge Management, Inc. assist us in our conference registration and management. Welcome aboard, CMI!

I am always doing that which I can not do, in order that I may learn how to do it. - Pablo Picasso

Editor's Message

Phronsie Kelly-Zion, LCSW-S, RPT-S



Welcome to the latest edition of the E-newsletter! Thank you for your comments and response to our new format. Your feedback is welcomed and very important as we strive to improve our delivery of news to you. Some of you have sent very positive comments and some of you have also mentioned that you miss the paper version of the newsletter. Based on your comments, we will be surveying the membership in paper form in the next edition. In addition to the survey, the early 2006 edition will contain the ballots for next year's board members. Please be watching and ready to send us your ballots and opinions.

The "Play Therapy Travels" articles have been well received and I welcome and encourage you to send articles relating to your travels to promote play therapy, either in the U.S. or abroad. Also, I'm still hoping to have a column called "Play Therapy: News Around Texas" where we can highlight ways our members are promoting play therapy throughout the state.

In my position as newsletter editor, I am enjoying learning and increasing my skills. If you have any requests, suggestions or comments, I genuinely welcome them. I accepted this position to serve our membership and strive, with each edition, to do my best!

Kindness makes a fellow feel good, whether it is being done to him or by him. - Frank A Clark

TAPT member honored in Nashville

Christina Villareal, LPC, NCC, RPT of San Antonio traveled to the Assn for Play Therapy conference in Nashville where she was awarded a research grant. The current title of her research is: "Filial therapy with Hispanic families with children experiencing externalizing and internalizing behavior problems". Christina is currently a Ph.D. student at Regents University and is the Immediate Past President of the Alamo Chapter.



Play Therapy Travels: My Wroxton Experience

Judi Gilbert, LPC, RPT-S

After several days playing in London, my friend, Dr. Linda Homeyer and I boarded a train at Paddington Station for Banbury, England. From there, we had a short journey through the edge of the Cotswolds into the quaint village of Wroxton. The narrow streets were lined with thatched roofed cottages, each with a colorful lush garden. There were a few churches and a pub across the street from a small pond with a family of ducks. Curving through the village, we approached the stone entrance to Wroxton College. At the end of a very long driveway stood an enormous stone building, the Wroxton Abbey. We had arrived.



Wroxton College is owned by Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey where Dr. Charles Schaefer, a founding father of APT, is a professor. For several years Dr. Schaefer has gathered play therapists, literally from around the world, for the International Play Therapy Study Group at Wroxton College.

This week long, multi-cultured experience impacted me at many levels. Not only were we immersed into the English culture, we were also mingling, learning and playing with play therapists from many different countries. 26 people from England, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and America were invited. TAPT was well represented by four members: Dr. Sue Bratton, Dr. Linda Homeyer, Phronsie Kelly-Zion, and myself.

Each morning we heard two presentations from global scholars, often research oriented. The presenters represented several theoretical backgrounds and disciplines. The variety of lectures enhanced my play therapy knowledge. After lunch we participated in discussion groups, the topics chosen by Dr. Schaefer. The dialogue was stimulating. Often these discussions were held outside under beautiful, old trees.



Dr. Charles Schaefer leading a discussion group. Dr. Sue Bratton and Judi Gilbert are among the participants.

Our training teaches us the universality of play. It was particularly interesting for me to see the universality of play therapists. Play therapists, globally, seem to have a positive, playful personality. They love to seek and share information to improve their skills. They are genuine, caring people who want to create a more harmonious world for children.

On another level, the natural beauty of the site provided a peaceful and relaxing experience. Formal gardens, trails through the woods, ponds, rolling lawns with magnificent old trees created a serene setting for personal growth. In addition, the simplicity of the abbey's single rooms provided solitude for reflection and renewal.

On a social level, living, eating, studying, and playing together provided many opportunities to develop new relationships and friends. Playful activities were encouraged, such as playing croquet on the lawn, dart throwing contests, ping pong, and playing "Spoons" at the pub. Small groups took early morning or evening walks through the village into the countryside past the beautiful, red poppy fields. One evening a pig was roasted in the woods where we picnicked with the village people.

An afternoon and evening were spent in Stratford Upon Avon, shopping for sandtray miniatures and toys, eating a wonderful dinner in a garden, and then attending a Royal Shakespeare Theatre production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. One of my fondest memories is leaving the theatre, walking outside along the Avon River with swans swimming under the Solstice moonlight.

The Wroxton experience enriched my being, personally and professionally. I returned to my playroom with renewed energy to do the work I love. Dr. Schaefer is to be commended for his global vision. Children around the world will benefit.

Association for Play Therapy Conference 2005, Nashville, Tennessee

Many members of TAPT were in attendance at the conference, held in the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Conference Center. Pictured below are Cecilia Alvarez (San Antonio), Dr Akiko Ohnogi (Tokyo, Japan), Christina Villareal (San Antonio), Monica Mathewson (San Antonio), Judy McCormick (Chicago, IL and Tulla, Ireland), and Phronsie Kelly-Zion (San Antonio).



Akiko Ohnogi and Judy McCormick, along with Dr. Charles Schaefer, are the editors of the recently released International Handbook of Play Therapy.

Next year's conference will be held in Toronto, Canada. Get your passports ready and plan to attend!

Chapter News

Alamo Chapter Phronsie Kelly-Zion



Like many other groups in the disaster relief areas, the Alamo Chapter responded and worked to provide support to hurricane evacuees. Several members have signed on to be a part of a developing task force dedicated to improving responsive services to children.

In October, Patricia McNaught, LPC of the Children's Bereavement Center gave an excellent presentation: "Playing Through to the Heart of Your Grief".

The final meeting of the year will relate to self-care of the Play Therapist and will be presented and hosted by Kathryn Campbell. Maps to Kathryn's home will be included in the fliers which will be mailed in late November. This meeting is scheduled from 7 - 9pm and will include one hour of continuing education credit and one hour for a social. Please plan to attend!

Hill Country News

Denise Hall

We will be hosting the 5th annual winter retreat in Wimberly Friday evening January 13th thru Saturday afternoon, January 14th, 2006. Due to the overwhelming response at the 2005 retreat, this retreat will be limited to 50 participants. So register early by December 15th for a cost of \$70.00 (includes a one year membership in HCAPT). After December 15, the cost is \$80.00. For more information, please contact Joey Achacoso (drjoey@yahoo.com), Claudia Savio (timeoutfortherapy@gmail.com) or Tamra Zehner (TWZehner@gmail.com). HCAPT is also busy planning the 2006 TAPT conference in Austin. We look forward to seeing you at one or both events.



North Texas

Kathy Eubanks



NTAPT continues to combine supervision as well as training for the benefit of members and interested students. The chapter meets in odd months. The September meeting featured Alan Katzen, LCSW, BCD, MSSW and Joel Muro, PhD. Mr. Katzen introduced the chapter to Equine- Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Dr. Muro provided an overview of filial therapy. Members received 3.0 CEU's.

The November meeting will be held at the YMCA, 146 Town Center Blvd, Coppell, TX on Saturday November 19th from 12:00 to 4:00 pm. RPT and LPC approved supervision will be provided.

Sam Houston Chapter

Mary Ring

Life has been very busy over the past three months here in the Houston area. We have experienced the influx of 10,000 plus children into our school systems, all experiencing some kind of trauma due to hurricanes and consequential losses and this number does not include the preschool age children displaced. The first step of local play therapists was to offer therapeutic listening and playing at the large shelters where many of the children were housed. School counselors attempted to tackle the situation at their schools by doing some group processing to help the children tell their stories as well as help determine at what educational levels they had been previously placed. There were very few educational records available for these children.



One of the next steps has been to choose a plan to help these children in the long term as they attempt to resolve the traumatic issues and reestablish a secure base. By the end of October almost 40 childhood professionals will have been trained here in the Houston area to do group process using Theraplay®, adventure based group activities, and trauma resolution activities. Sam Houston Association for Play Therapy teamed up with Community in Schools and ChildBuilders

Organization to develop and provide the training. The goals of providing services for the children from the hurricane areas are to help them reestablish a secure base so they can emotionally be able to accomplish their educational goals.

As far as chapter meetings coming up, our next one is on Nov. 11 at 7:00 P.M. at the Cy-Fair Instructional Support Center at 10300 Jones Road. Our annual winter workshop will be on January 21, 2006 with Dr. Yvonne Garza and Dr. Richard Watts from Sam Houston State University presenting on "Experiencing Play Therapy with Hispanic Children" and "Ethical Practices for the Play Therapist" respectively.

Our new website is www.shapt.org. Take a look. It has a playful atmosphere about it and has great potential for sharing our informational details. Thanks Gabe Lomas for getting this up and moving forward in our technological age.

Coastal Bend Lauri Stroebel



Coastal Bend Chapter continues with our goal to promote Play Therapy throughout South Texas. This includes a membership drive with a special membership meeting in January 2006 and monthly meetings that provide one hour of CEU training for LPC and RPT credit.

Our regular meetings are the third Wednesday of each month from noon to 1:30 PM at the First Baptist Church Recreation Center on Ocean Drive. October meeting may have to move location due to the church providing

shelter for hurricane evacuee's.

Our October training will be: Supporting Sensory Integration Disorder through Play Therapy presented by Lori Fredrickson. Our November meeting will be a white elephant show and tell that provides ideas and materials for therapist to share, along with a fun mechanism for sharing.

The December meeting is in conjunction with the Marriage and Family monthly meeting and Julie Thigpen and Debra Ferguson will present Play Therapy in Groups for Adults and Adolescents. Everyone is invited to join our list serve at Yahoo Groups and for more information you can go to cbaplaytherapy@yahoo.com.

Far West Texas Chapter Leah Miller

Fall Conference

Sept. 15 -16 Dee Ray

Developmental Themes in Play Therapy

Oct. 28 Leah Miller and Misty Duke

Ethics in Play Therapy

Future Presentation

Dec. 9, 2005 Carlisle Navidomskis

Trouble-shooting in Play Therapy:
What to do when play goes out of control.



Activities

FWTAPT set up a playroom at the convention center in El Paso to provide play therapy for about 50 children that were displaced during Hurricane Katrina. Misty Duke, FWTAPT president did an

outstanding job organizing and scheduling therapists to provide services to these children.

FWTAPT will be hosting a booth for TAPT in the upcoming TCA conference in El Paso.

Check website for details of upcoming events - www.fwtapt.com

*The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But why should love stop at the border? -
Pablo Casals*

The Dan E. Homeyer Award of the Texas Association for Play Therapy

The Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award of the Texas Association for Play Therapy (TAPT) bestows two \$500 research awards twice a year.

To qualify for the Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award, you must:

- Attend or teach at a Texas college or university
- Use play therapy in some aspect of your research
- Have approval of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) [attach copy of approval letter/document to the form linked below]

Once the research is completed:

- Write a short synopsis of the research findings which will be published in the TAPT Newsletter (in such form that will not preclude your publishing the findings elsewhere)
- Present the findings at the next TAPT Annual Conference (held in April). The Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award Fund will pay for two nights at the conference hotel and TAPT will provide a gratis conference registration.

The TAPT Research Committee will do a blind review of your proposal. Please email the proposal, described in the document linked below, to ldhomeyer@gvtc.com

- A description of the research project including the research design
- Maximum of three pages, double-spaced, 10-12 point font.
- Please do not have your name or other identifying information on the proposal pages

To open the application for the Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award, [click on this link](#).

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