President's Message

Dear ALTA Members,

I hope everyone’s year is off to a good start. The past year has been challenging for all, and especially for our members who have had to face delivering therapy in a whole new way. However, as always, ALTA members have risen in the moment to accomplish some amazing things. I’d like to highlight a few of our ALTA members’ accomplishments over this past year:

- VP of Exam, Margie Gillis, and an amazing team of ALTA subject matter experts completed the new Academic Language Therapy Association Competency Exam for Multisensory Structured Language Education at the Therapy Level.
- ALTA now has 18 chapters across the U.S., many of which have offered virtual events with strong attendance.
- A new CE App went live in January which will allow members to more easily record and track their CEs, as well carry over additional CEs for one year.
- The ALTA Board approved creation of a Bilingual CALT credential.

Coming this year, here are a few of the initiatives in progress:

- The ALTA Charitable Foundation was incorporated to offer an expanded mission to increase scholarships and support for ALTA. More information coming soon on the ALTA website.
- The CALT Candidate Exam Handbook will be released soon and will include sample questions from each domain.
- Creation of a new CALP Exam will be underway soon.
- ALTA’s first Scholarly Journal will be published this year.
- ALTA’s National Conference will be held virtually this spring. Mark the date: April 30th - May 1st!

Newsletter Chair, Tammy Tillotson, has pulled together stories from some of our chapters and members in this edition of our newsletter. Read about some of the wonderful things ALTA members have been up to recently.

Thanks to each of you for giving your time and hearts to those who struggle with dyslexia! Keep up the good work!!

Lynne
Please join me in welcoming our newest Chapter…ALTA New Mexico! Congratulations to Erin Brown and the entire leadership team for all of their hard work to make this happen. As Chairperson of the ALTA Chapters committee, I’d thank the dedicated leadership teams of each Chapter who volunteer their time to ensure that ALTA members have access to relevant and high-quality professional development, opportunities for engagement with other professionals, and the support and resources they need to reach our most at-risk learners. Perhaps now, more than ever before, we have had to face countless hurdles as we navigate this “new world.” I’m so impressed with how our members have come together to share ideas and resources for “distance” service delivery. To borrow from an old proverb… “It takes a village” (and a strong WiFi connection) to educate a child. I couldn’t be prouder to be part of the ALTA village.

Below, you will find contact information for each of our 18 Chapters serving 23 States. Please do not hesitate to reach out. We welcome your ideas, feedback, and involvement!

ALTA - NEW MEXICO

We’re very excited to announce the newest ALTA Chapter…ALTA New Mexico Chapter!

Chapter President, Erin Brown, CALT, shares that “As an established ALTA chapter, the NM Chapter intends to increase opportunities to connect with local colleagues and build community, including sharing and expanding professional knowledge. We also hope to increase overall visibility in the state of ALTA members' invaluable skill set and services provided by local members.”

ALTA-NM looks forward to hosting a Virtual Meet-and-Greet in Winter 2021 to connect with local New Mexico ALTA members and discuss the chapter's goals - the date to be announced.

Erin Brown, CALT
Chapter President, New Mexico
erinbrown.calt@gmail.com

Kara Lee, CALT-ICALP
ALTA Chapters Chairperson
klee.alta@gmail.com
Arkansas Legislative and Governmental Update: Vicki King, Quality Instructor and Dyslexia Specialist for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), provided an update on what is happening in Arkansas public schools as well as at the ADE.

Expanding Your Virtual Therapy Practice: Patricia Elkins, CALT; Jill Henrich, CALT; Stacey Mahurin, CALT; Brenda Nahlen, QI; and Holly Stokes, CALT gave a presentation entitled “Expanding Your Virtual Therapy Practice.” The presentation provided members with the tools to be able to provide therapy to clients virtually. The presentation reviewed different technology devices for virtual learning, ranging from hardware such as USB extenders and digital writing tablets to software such as OneNote and SMART Learning Suite.

It was great to “see” our members via Zoom! We look forward to our next completely virtual meeting on February 20, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Please contact us at alta.arkansas@gmail.com for more information.

ALTA - GREAT LAKES

Great things are happening in the Great Lakes states! The Chapter has been leading the way in professional development and helping create a path for other chapters to work with Stansfeld in providing learning opportunities.

Recently, ALTA Great Lakes enlisted the knowledge and expertise of Dr. Cheryl Chase on November 11, 2020, to provide training and development on Executive Functioning. As a licensed clinical psychologist in her Ohio private practice, Dr. Chase explained how “executive functions” is a term used to describe a broad set of cognitive skills that, when working properly, allow students to manage impulses, work in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, and organize their time and materials. She further explained that when development of these skills is delayed, as is often the case in those with learning disabilities, ADHD, or emotional disorders, academic performance suffers.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **February** Book Study: *Executive Skills and Reading Comprehension*, by Kelly Cartwright (2.5 CEs). Email altagreatlakesbookstudy@gmail.com for more information.
- **April** Webinar: *Executive Skills and Reading Comprehension* by Kelly Cartwright. Diving deeper, Dr. Cartwright will share lessons she has learned (2.5 CEs). Be on the lookout for the webinar registration link coming soon!
ALTA - PENNSYLVANIA

The ALTA PA Chapter has exciting and timely news to share with all members. In Pennsylvania, we are 93 members strong! Our certified ALTA members are providing services for children across the state, both in private practice and in the schools. We have also worked hard to make connections with higher education and school district administrators to bring services directly to children in the classroom.

RECENT EVENTS:

The ALTA PA Chapter held its first Virtual Conference in partnership with King’s College. If you didn’t have the opportunity to tune in live, you can purchase and watch the recorded speakers at your leisure. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to hear how ALTA PA members have made an enormous impact in our state. You will not only learn about partnerships with colleges and schools in PA but also in Colorado and Louisiana.

This will be an informative opportunity for all ALTA members across the US to discover the strides being implemented towards the effort of “Making Connections Making a Difference!” We hope you will join us!

PURCHASE TODAY!

ALTA - VIRGINIA

The ALTA-VA chapter started the 2020 year by hosting an online event, featuring Natalie Wexler, author of The Knowledge Gap. Chapter members and other educators participated in a discussion of the book with the author, highlighting the importance of background knowledge, explicit instruction in historical, cultural, and scientific content, and systematic phonics instruction for students.

The first chapter meeting of the year featured a speech-language pathologist who presented a workshop on Auditory Processing Disorder. In March and April 2020, when many therapists were figuring out how to transition to virtual teaching, Jennifer Appleton, CALT-QI, generously shared her knowledge on how best to conduct teletherapy. Jennifer led two webinars entitled “Successful Teletherapy” and “Advanced Multimodal Practices in Teletherapy Using the Zoom Platform.”

The second chapter meeting of the year featured Diane Talbot, CALP who discussed how to incorporate Structured Word Inquiry into an Orton-Gillingham-based lesson. The chapter also hosted an informal question and answer period afterward where members discussed a range of topics, with many addressing aspects of teletherapy. For the final event of the year, some members read and discussed Reader Come Home, The Reading Brain in a Digital Age by Maryanne Wolf.

Although 2020 was a year filled with many unexpected challenges, ALTA-VA chapter members continued to have access to many professional development opportunities and were greatly helped throughout the year by colleagues pooling their knowledge and expertise, particularly in the area of teletherapy.
ALTA NATIONAL CONFERENCE
April 30 - May 1, 2021

More information coming soon
altaread.org

Looking to Get Involved?

ALTA is always looking for volunteers to help support the mission of the organization. We all know that everyone has different availability to either help support on a national or chapter level. To find out more about how you can get involved, visit the ALTA Chapter listings for contact information or contact the ALTA National office today!

Have an article you would like to submit for a future newsletter?
Email: office@altaread.org