



TRAAC News

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Message from the President

Hi TRAAC Members,

The Annual General Meeting is quickly approaching as the TRAAC 2011-12 Board of Directors prepares to end their term. The last 12 months have presented many opportunities for the association and the profession. This newsletter will be the last before we gather to learn, share and celebrate at the Nova Scotia Community College, Waterfront Campus on Saturday, April 28th.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of those who have made this last year both enjoyable and inspiring. We are surrounded by phenomenal individuals in this profession and I consider myself truly fortunate to have had multiple opportunities to work alongside these individuals. I hope that these opportunities will continue as we advocate for and work to advance therapeutic recreation.

As my third year on the board is coming to a close I am saddened as I have enjoyed every moment to advocate for therapeutic recreation over the last three years. I am also excited to welcome new faces to the board as I begin to take more time to enjoy my leisure time.

I look forward to seeing you on April 28th,

Heather Baker, CTRS

Recreation Therapist
TRAAC President 2011-12

Nominate a Colleague for a TRAAC Award!

It's not too late to make a TRAAC Award nomination! You can download a nomination form on TRAAC's website! The deadline for nominations is **Monday April 2nd, 2012!** Email completed forms to secretary@traac.ca Please consider nominating a TR colleague in one of the following categories:

- The **Vanguard Award** celebrates the successes of those who have been working in the field for a period of more than 5 years.
- The **Horizon Award** celebrates the successes of those working in the field for a period of 5 years or less.
- The **Crystal Award**, named after the first recipient of the Vanguard Award, celebrates the successes of students studying therapeutic recreation at either the community college or university level.



Join us on

Saturday April 28th, 2012

8:00am - 3:00pm

at the

**Nova Scotia Community College
Waterfront Campus**

**We will be offering an education
session, awarding the TRAAC Awards
and conclude with our
Annual General Meeting!**

**Details on the education session will be
coming soon!**

TRAAC Board Nominations 2012 - 2013

At our Annual General Meeting on April 28th, 2012 we will be electing a new Board of Directors for 2012 - 2013. Please consider how you can give back to the TR profession whether that be sitting on the Board or volunteering on one of TRAAC's various committees. Together we can make a difference and advance our profession in Atlantic Canada.

The following positions will be up for nominations. Some of the tasks associated with each position include but are not limited to the following:

President - Chairs board meetings, facilitates preparation of the Annual Report to membership, prepares and disseminates agenda to board members, addresses membership at Annual General Meeting, by-law review and policy development, etc.

Vice-President - Chairs board meetings in absentia of President, supports President in preparation of the Annual Report, by-law review and policy development, etc.

Treasurer - Accepts all monies to the association, provides receipts, maintains TRAAC credit card, makes deposits, maintains accurate account registrar, works closely with Education Chair and Membership Coordinator leading up to and during conference, etc.

Secretary - Records and distributes minutes of board meetings to the TRAAC Board, supports president in preparation for AGM, keeps minutes at AGM, etc.

Membership Coordinator - Accepts all membership applications/monies, provides welcome letters and member cards, maintains accurate membership list and account of member totals, accepts all conference registration information prior to and during conference, etc.

Education Chair - Organizes annual TRAAC conference, liaises with Student Directors to organize Student Night, etc.

Promotions Chair - Promotes the vision, mission and mandate of TRAAC, recognizes the accomplishments of colleagues through the TRAAC Awards, TR Week, etc.

Communications Chair - Maintains TRAAC website to ensure up-to-date information, develops and distributes newsletter, "TRAAC NEWS", quarterly

Advocacy Chair - Creates and compiles materials that can be used to advocate for the TR profession, responds to job postings related to qualifications using the Standards of Practice and forwards letters to organizations and to appropriate provincial government departments, etc.

Member at Large - Supports the membership by directing questions and comments to the appropriate board member, supports the work of the board, specifically the Membership Coordinator, etc.

Student Director - Acts as a liaison between the Association and post-secondary institutions, assists Education Chair in organizing Student Night, etc.

TR Intern Spotlight Update!

It is hard to believe that in three weeks I will have completed my internship! Time really does fly by and there is never enough time in a week to get everything done!



As I mentioned in my previous article I am doing my internship at Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (FVSRA) in Aurora, Illinois. FVSRA provides community recreation programs and activities to individuals of all ages and abilities who reside within our seven member park districts. These include: Oswegoland, Sugar Grove, Geneva, Batavia, St Charles, South Elgin and Fox Valley. There are Special Recreation Associations across the State of Illinois and these are government organizations, which means they are partially funded by the government but also receive funding, donations and grants from other sponsors and community organizations. Fox Valley Special Recreation Association provides recreation programs and activities specifically designed for individuals with various special needs. I know when I first heard about FVSRA I didn't understand what they did and couldn't wrap my head around the idea of community TR. The best way to explain it would be that if you live in Illinois and you have a family member or child with special needs then they have access to recreation programs (ie. swimming lessons, art classes, camp, cooking classes, social clubs and so on) specifically designed to meet their needs. We also provide inclusion services to individuals who wish to participate in a mainstream program through one of our park district member agencies. This means that if an individual with special needs wanted to participate in a program in a mainstream recreation setting FVSRA would provide an inclusion companion for that individual so they can actively and successfully participate in that program.

My experience with Fox Valley Special Recreation Association has definitely been the highlight of my studies in Therapeutic Recreation and I now understand what my professors meant when they said everything would all come together once we were on internship. Since my last update I have worked countless hours and jumped on many opportunities that have come my way!

"I've really gotten to know our participants and have been able to see them progress in their programs and grow as individuals, and this really is the best part of the job."

- Genevieve Panabaker

TR Intern Spotlight Update!

I have taken on the leadership role in many of our programs which means I am responsible for planning the session, preparing and acquiring any materials or supplies needed, leading the program for participants and supervising part-time staff and volunteers. These programs include Sensory Art, Aquatic Fitness, Spring Break Mini Camp and Super Saturdays. I've also had the opportunity to assist in a number of other programs including our Kiwanis Aktion Club, Cooking Connection, Special Olympics Swim Team, Movin & Groovin, Social Club, Early Intervention Play Group, Lunch Bunch and many more.

I have also had the opportunity to coach our Special Olympics Swim Team and our Junior and Senior Special Olympic Basketball Teams. I even had a chance to spend the weekend with our basketball teams at Illinois State University for the Illinois State Special Olympics Basketball Championships. This was an awesome experience and our teams placed second and third and we had a weekend of fun and games.



Apart from planning and leading programs I have also had the opportunity to attend the Illinois Parks and Recreation State Conference that draws over four thousand professionals every year. This was a little different than the TRAAC conference I'll say! I've had the chance to assist with intake assessments and will hopefully be leading an assessment in these upcoming weeks. I've also assisted in planning Special events including our Valentine's Day dance and our upcoming Spring Egg Hunt! We have our largest fundraiser of the year coming up on April 11th and that is our Pork Chop and Chicken BBQ and Basket Raffle and I encourage all of you to check out the event on our website and follow the PCCBBQ link at www.fvsra.org.

As an intern at FVSRA I am involved in all staff meetings, special events, parent advisory committee meetings, trainings and many other meetings and events. I've really gotten to know our participants and have been able to see them progress in their programs and grow as individuals, and this really is the best part of the job.

Fox Valley Special Recreation Association has provided me with so many opportunities to grow as a professional and as an individual. I would highly recommend this association to any TR students looking for a very fast paced, active, different and new experience and see how TR could work in a community setting. I will be sad to leave in a few weeks but I am so thankful for the opportunities and experiences that the staff and participants at FVSRA have given me, it was definitely an experience of a lifetime.

- Genevieve Panabaker
email: genevievep@fvsra.org

TR Educator Spotlight with Susan Hutchinson

1. Where are you currently working? What made you decide to teach in the field of TR?

I am a faculty member at Dalhousie University in the School of Health and Human Performance. I'm cross-appointed in the Recreation and Leisure Studies and Health Promotion program areas. Most of my teaching is in courses within the therapeutic recreation concentration.

I didn't begin teaching with the intention to teach! Instead it was a long and winding path...that I'm so happy to have travelled along. I was working as a recreation therapist (in British Columbia) when I decided to take a year's leave of absence to do my master's. At the time my goals were to have an adventure and to have time to think and learn more deeply about ways to help people recover following an acquired disability. I was fortunate to have studied with Dr. Colleen Hood, at Dalhousie, and it was she and Dr. Renée Lyons who encouraged me to think about going on to do a doctorate. It was then that I realized I had a passion for teaching (or really a passion for leisure and for helping students to understand how they can help people through leisure education and TR more generally). I received mentorship from excellent educators along the way, who have inspired me to try to be a better teacher... and equally fortunate to now be teaching at Dalhousie.

2. What is the best part about your job?

Hmmm... this is a hard question because there are a number of *great* parts of my job, including (to name just a few): (a) working with inspired and inspiring *students* who want to learn and who want to be as prepared as possible for their future roles in TR, (b) working with equally as inspired and inspiring *TR practitioners* who are working hard to develop and grow TR within their institutions and more generally, (c) working with professionals and researchers from a variety of different contexts who are interested in identifying ways to collaborate to improve services, and (d) always - every single day - getting a chance to learn.

3. What is the most challenging part about your job?

Aside from struggling to maintain work-life balance (which seems to be a reality for most of us who work and have families)... definitely the marking!! It is so time consuming to give fair and thorough feedback that students can learn from. I seem to have good intentions for meaningful learning assignments at the beginning of a term, forgetting that I'll need to mark them all! I'm trying to learn from my mistakes - and from student feedback - to be more realistic with assignments. Now I just need to practice what I preach and take more time for leisure myself!



Of all the allied health professions, TR practitioners are the only ones who will be "leisure experts".

- Susan Hutchinson

TR Educator Spotlight with Susan Hutchinson

4. What is the main piece of advice that you stress to your students studying in the field of TR today?

Another great question. Although I probably give more advice than I should I'd say that the one piece of advice I stress (more than a couple of times) is to remember that, of all the allied health professions, TR practitioners are the only ones who will be "*leisure experts*". All health professionals assess client needs, develop treatment goals, and implement and evaluate interventions; so we in TR are not unique in doing this, even when we do it well.

So when I stress that the unique contribution TR students can make to health care is by being a *leisure expert* what I mean is that by the time they leave their program they will (or should) have a deep knowledge and understanding of leisure and its benefits for optimal health, well-being and development. My hope is that they *use* this knowledge in *all* aspects of their work - especially as they communicate with clients, with allied professionals, and with supervisors about *why* they do what they do and to guide decisions about all the programs and services they provide.

5. What do you like to do in your leisure time?

I love to walk and "recreationally" read (i.e., not academic articles or student papers). I am part of a book group where we read one book a month and taste test 3 different wines. That camaraderie really means a lot to me. I do really enjoy spending time with my son - though spending time with me isn't as high on his priority list. He's a great young lad - I'm really lucky that way.



6. Something I have always wanted to do but not had the opportunity yet....

I would like to go sailing (not just day sailing but a longer cruise) and to write a book. Maybe I could combine these...?!

7. My best leisure memory is....

A road trip my son and I did a couple of summers ago. We flew to Alberta, rented a car and travelled all around the province, then took the train through the Rockies into BC, where we met up with my brother and wife for more camping and hiking. A wonderful combination of family time, fun, outdoors, and learning.

8. We know that you often do research in the field of TR. What are some of your main interests in terms of research and are you currently pursuing any research studies right now?

I've become increasingly interested in the role of leisure and recreation in mental health promotion and chronic disease self-management. For me this has involved trying to explore new models of service delivery, particularly those that involve collaborating in community contexts. I am also working with colleagues in the School of OT to look at factors contributing to successful aging by older adults who have experienced an acute health crisis or are living with chronic health conditions. My goal is to use this evidence to inform the development of new models of leisure education (e.g. "leisure coaching").

TR Educator Spotlight with Susan Hutchinson

9. Do you have a favorite story/memory in your career thus far?

A highlight for me was the recent opportunity to attend the National Recreation Summit this last October in Lake Louise Alberta that brought 200 delegates (from senior government officials to students) together from across Canada. One of the key themes of the summit was confronting Canada's public health crisis. At the end of the Summit, a vision statement was drafted, which is intended to guide national policy development for recreation over the next two decades. The vision statement is as follows:

"We envision a Canada in which all citizens are involved in recreation experiences that touch people in both their minds and their hearts and that contribute to mental and physical health and wellbeing; result in a well rounded, well adjusted contributing member of her/his community; connect to their communities and environments. We envision a Canada in which our communities are healthy, inclusive, welcoming, resilient and well planned."

It is clear from this that recreation is viewed as having a central role in promoting positive mental and physical health and resilience; TR is - or can be - ideally positioned to fulfill this vision.

10. The theme for this year's national CTRA conference is "Securing our Future in Health and Wellness". How do you feel this goal for the TR field could impact your job as an educator teaching TR students in the future?

I absolutely see this goal is *essential* to the future and growth of TR. I do think this means that, as educators, we (university programs that prepare students for work in TR) need to incorporate more education and training related to health promotion and disease prevention, chronic disease management, and health behaviour change. I also think there will be increasing emphasis on interprofessional competencies and our students will need to not only develop strong TR-specific skills and knowledge but also competencies to work within interprofessional teams. Finally, I think there will be increasing emphasis on community-based service delivery and we need to prepare students for new roles in community contexts.



"It is clear from this that recreation is viewed as having a central role in promoting positive mental and physical health and resilience; TR is - or can be - ideally positioned to fulfill this vision."

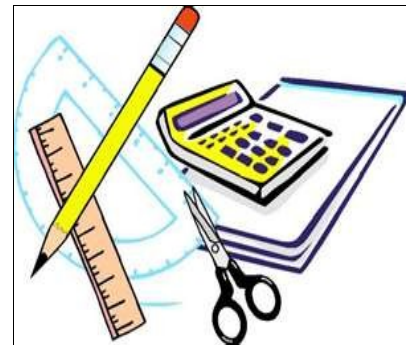
- Susan Hutchinson

Travelling TR

Promoting Awareness of Leisure, Therapeutic Recreation and Mental Health!

After participating in last year's TRAAC conference, I had heard a lot of participants talking about how recreation therapy professionals should have more involvement with schools. I agreed with this and after the conference I decided I would not let this discussion end when the conference did! Once returning to work I connected with my co-worker Bob Baird (Recreation Therapist, Abbie Lane) and began sending emails and contacting guidance counselors at different schools in NS. Bob and I heard back from three schools who were very excited to invite us in to speak to their students.

The schools that we visited were Citadel High School located in Central Halifax, Forest Heights Community School located in Chester Basin and Dartmouth High School in Dartmouth (Jonelle Rodgers, Recreation Therapy Associate, Nova Scotia Hospital site also joined us for the presentation in Dartmouth). We talked to the students about what they liked to do for leisure, what they thought it meant to be a recreation therapy professional and about the opportunities/possibilities in the recreation therapy profession. We also talked about mental illness and the service we provide at the Abbie Lane. We tried to make it as interactive as possible and gave the students prizes as an incentive to talk (Thank you to TRAAC and CTRA for donating prizes!). Afterwards, students approached us individually to ask questions. Questions varied from wanting to know more about educational routes to be a recreation therapy professional to disclosing personal information about their own struggles with leisure and their own mental health. The teachers and guidance counselors also approached us. They were very appreciative of our visit and one staff member wanted more information on how to access Recreation Therapy services for students within their school.



Overall, I found this to be a very exciting experience. Bob and I are eager to visit more schools in the future! If you are interested in hearing more or would like to connect with us about visiting additional schools please give us a call.

Submitted by Tara Harnish, Recreation Therapy Associate,
Acute Care Mental Health Services CDHA, Abbie Lane site, 473-4068



**Therapeutic Recreation Association of
Atlantic Canada**

PO Box 8871 Station A

Halifax, NS

B3K 5M5

Website: www.traac.ca

Mission:

**The Therapeutic Recreation Association of Atlantic
Canada promotes excellence in Therapeutic Recreation
through advocacy, resource development and continuing
education.**

Vision:

**Therapeutic Recreation is an essential service for health
and wellness.**

Board of Directors 2011 - 2012

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Recreation Therapist, CDHA
president@traac.ca

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Dawn MacDonald
Recreation Therapist, CBDHA
vicepresident@traac.ca

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Recreation/Volunteer Coordinator,
Shannex
treasurer@traac.ca

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Recreation Therapist
secretary@traac.ca

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Coordinator of Faith Formation Programs,
Bethany United Church
membership@traac.ca

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Recreation Therapist,
memberatlarge@traac.ca

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Veteran's Health Unit
advocacy@traac.ca

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Lynette Stevens
Recreation Therapist, Shannex
communications@traac.ca

Education Chair

Crystal Watson
Faculty, NSCC (Human Services)
education@traac.ca

Promotions Chair

Laura Boutilier
Recreation Therapist, CDHA
promotions@traac.ca

Student Directors

Juanita Sams
studentdirectors@traac.ca

Taylor Owens

studentdirectors@traac.ca