

Dear Illinois Art Therapy Community,

I am honored to introduce myself as the 2019 President of the Illinois Art Therapy Association. It was a delayed transition, due to some unforeseen circumstances, but I have now stepped up as president and am excited to work with the 2019 IATA Board. I'd like to thank the 2018 outgoing board members and welcome the incoming 2019 members. Serving on the board is a volunteer commitment, and the hard work and time board members dedicate to the Illinois art therapy community should not go unnoticed. So, thank you everyone who keeps this organization running!

On that note, we still have essential board positions open including treasurer and director of membership. Serving on the board is a rewarding experience providing leadership opportunities and the chance to network and advance the field of art therapy. Please visit illinoisarttherapy.org to see open board positions and familiarize yourself with new board members. E-mail communications.iata@gmail.com to nominate yourself or someone else for an open position.

2019 has already been an active year for the IATA. On February 9th we hosted the 38th Annual IATA Conference at the Hope Institute Learning Academy in Chicago. The theme of the conference was the use of art in contemporary art therapy practice, and our Keynote Speaker Jeff Lohrius presented on virtual reality in art therapy. Caroline Tye, IATA Conference Chair, and Maria Kim, IATA Conference Chair-Elect, put forth an amazing effort in organizing the event. Thank you to all who attended the event, presented, and/or volunteered.

I've been meeting individually with 2019 board members to set goals for the upcoming year. Our new Programs Chair Becca DeGraw and I met in January to discuss programming. We decided to schedule monthly meet-ups to create an opportunity for the art therapy community to gather in an unstructured, casual environment so we can just chat and get-to-know each other. Friday, March 22nd is our first meet-up at Off-Color Mousetrap on Kingsbury Street from 5-7pm (see IATA website for more info). We'll be there to greet you, hear your thoughts, and have some beers! We will be rotating the days, times, and locations of our monthly meet-ups to accommodate schedules and preferences. If you have any ideas for a meet-up, please e-mail Becca at programs.iata@gmail.com.

Our new Director of Communications Anne Zakaras and Social Media Chair Brittnee Page are internet and social media wizards. The IATA website is on its way to looking modern and updated. Our social media accounts have been sharing inspirational quotes, art therapy news, and IATA updates. We are lucky to have these two women on our team propelling the IATA into the modern tech world. Please visit illinoisarttherapy.org or follow us on Facebook or Instagram for current IATA news! We will continue to update you on our progress throughout the year, and I will continue to introduce you to the amazing 2019 team.

As for me, I moved to Chicago after graduating from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville with a Master's in Art Therapy Counseling. I've had the opportunity to work for a few non-profit organizations in the Chicago area, serving mostly children, adolescents, and families. Currently I work full-time as a Child and Family Art Therapist for Children's Research Triangle, providing art therapy to children in Chicago Public Schools as well as in our downtown clinic.

I joined the IATA board in 2014 and served as communications chair and treasurer. I decided to pursue the role of the IATA president during a time of low enthusiasm, low participation, and high turmoil and

pain in both the country and the field. I made this decision because I believe in rallying together when times are tough. If you've been disappointed with IATA in the past, or if you've been satisfied with IATA in the past, I'd like to hear what you have to say so we can better serve you. This organization should exist to provide support, promote the field, and serve the mission. Please join us!

IATA will be reviewing the mission, values, and bylaws of the organization this year. We will also be reviewing board positions and adding programming to our agenda. We'd like to hear your voices, and luckily we can hear you from all over the state with GoToMeeting! Our chapter meetings are open to chapter members by logging on to the website through a link shared in our e-mail newsletter and posted on the website. If you're in Chicago, please also visit us at one of our meet-ups or upcoming programs. Please always feel free to e-mail me at president.iata@gmail.com if you have any thoughts, questions, concerns.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Clark, LCPC, LSOTP, ATR-BC