

NATSAP NEWS

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs

3RD QUARTER 2006



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NATSAP GOES TO WASHINGTON, DC

Rosemary Tippet



Dr. Karen Fitzhugh, Public Policy Committee Chair, Jan Moss, Executive Director and Rosemary Tippet, NATSAP Director of Public Relations visited with members in the offices of the Education & Workforce Committee, Subcommittee on Select Education to introduce NATSAP as an immediate resource in addressing the safety of children in residential treatment.



We met with legislative assistants from Representative Rubén Hinojosa, D-TX, Representative Chris Van Hollen, D-MD, Representative Jim McDermott, D-WA, Representative Pete Stark, D-CA, Representative Lynn Woolsey, D-CA and Representative George Miller, D-CA. We were fortunate

to speak directly with Representatives Hinojosa, Stark and Van Hollen.



Denise Forte, Minority Coordinator for the Education & Workforce Committee, which is the committee addressing Representative Miller's bill H.R. 1738 Titled: To assure the safety of American children in foreign-based and domestic institutions, and for other purposes, met with us. Ms. Forte was extremely knowledgeable about Congressman Miller's legislation and listened intently as NATSAP was introduced. Ms. Forte stated that their first step is to research best practices across the states. This would take them to their primary focus of licensing and professional development. We offered our assistance with the research and provided them a copy of our white paper and the NATSAP best practices appendix. They

readily accepted our offer. An invitation was extended to visit NATSAP programs, which they accepted. We are pleased to have already been contacted by the staff assistant for this committee and will be scheduling the program visits at their convenience.

Representative Pete Stark, D-CA, and co-sponsor of the bill, was very forthright with us regarding his concern about separating children from their parents. Representative Stark's questions were thoughtful and challenging. He acknowledged that he approved state regulation vs. federal regulation.

We were very pleased with the reception of these introductory meetings and we are looking forward to continuing our advocacy for our members. We want to extend a special thanks to Michael Barnes of DCBA Law, the highly qualified government affairs advocacy group that NATSAP has utilized on behalf of our members. Mike graciously arranged for, and accompanied us on, each Capitol Hill visit.

We will soon be contacting our members to request that you join us in our advocacy and education efforts. We encourage our members to attend the 2007 pre-conference workshop Legislation, Politics & Advocacy Workshop on Wednesday, January 31st. The workshop will be facilitated by members of DCBA Law.

NATSAP BOARD SETS 2007/ FUTURE GOALS

A 2-day planning session was held by the NATSAP Board of Directors on September 27-28. Dr. John Santa, Board President, led the directors in an initial brainstorming session to establish the major focus for NATSAP for 2007 and beyond. Directors then formed groups to drill down into the specific goals for each individual focus.

The Board reviewed each group's recommendations, approved and set the direction, as follows:

Administration / Organization Structure

The Board assigned Jan Moss, Executive Director, and a group of board members to address the critical needs of the NATSAP administration and organization structure. They were chartered with:

- Defining a support structure for the organization that will maintain current NATSAP projects and

IN THIS ISSUE...

NATSAP Goes to Washington

.....Front Cover

NATSAP Board Sets 2007/Future Goals

...Front Cover, Pgs. 1&2

President's Corner

.....Pgs. 2, 3 & 4

Pre-Conference

Workshops.....Pg. 4

Outcome Research Summit.....Pg. 4

Small Residential Program Summit

.....Pg. 5

Northern Rocky Mtn. Regional Chapter

.....Pg. 5

Committee Meetings & Summits.....Pg. 5

Northeast Regional Conference..Pgs. 5 & 6

Southeast Regional

Conference.....Pg. 6

Staff Hiring...Pgs. 6&7

An Alumni Story

.....Pg. 8

Seeing is Believing

.....Pg. 8

Membership Report

.....Pg. 8

2006 Directory Updates

.....Pg. 8

JCAHO BHC

Conference.....Pg. 9

allows for growth.

- Identifying the role, commitment and responsibilities of board members
- Creating a process that enables the utilization of the strengths of each board member.
- Increasing the productivity of committees; create efficiency and self-sufficiency within the committees; address committee member responsibilities and accountability.
- Formalizing the relationships and structure between regional chapter leadership, the national board and the corporate office.
- Establishing a reliable process to ensure successful conferences
- Defining the purpose of the national and regional conferences

Public Policy

The Public Policy Committee was chartered with:

- Identifying and addressing legislative issues at both state and federal levels
- Continuing public policy efforts with congressional representatives
- Establishing a national presence as a child/adolescent committee member on various task forces
- Educating state and national agencies on NATSAP, our ethics and standards
- Holding a NATSAP Advocacy Conference for program executives in Washington, DC
- Establishing the NATSAP website as a national public policy 'voice'
- Long term: Hiring a Government Relations Specialist to establish a presence in Washington, DC

Outcome Research

The Board was presented with, and in support of, the results of the Outcome Research Committee meeting. The Research Committee, chaired by Dr. John Santa, were chartered to deliver, within the next five years, the following:

- Hiring a NATSAP Research Coordinator
- Establishing a common research database to be managed by the Research Coordinator under the direction of a standing research committee
- Outcome studies will begin in 2007 to track each research candidate from the beginning of the program to the end of the program with follow up at 6 months, 1 year and 5 years with a focus to:
 - Facilitate program improvement
 - Create an understanding and a model of adolescent problems and treatments
 - Increase specificity of treatment; i.e. what works best; for what populations; for what problems
 - Increase understanding of family dynamics as related to individual problems and

treatments

- Evaluate mechanisms of treatment and components (length of stay, experiential components)
- Effects of specialization of treatment

Individual Certification

The Board recognizes the need to provide a training curriculum for the professional needs of our members and their staff. This need will be met by offering a NATSAP certification to individuals. The Individual Certification Committee was chartered with:

- Providing a training/certification curriculum that would benefit the full membership. Training would include: First Aid, CPR, Boundaries, Relationships, Risk Management, Diagnosis, Family Systems, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse, Blood Borne Pathogens, De-escalation, Behavioral Management, Good Practices, Public Relations, Emergency Contingency, Meds, In and Out of program communication, Driving/Transportation, etc.
- Identifying 3-5 NATSAP member beta sites and conducting a training by identified trainers
- Creating a fee schedule
- Developing a database and certification process
- Creating a web-based CD/DVD of trainings
- Creating a manual within 3-5 years
- Working with universities and colleges to establish the curriculum within 5+ years

NATSAP Accreditation

The Board established an ad hoc committee, chaired by John Mercer, to research and develop a NATSAP accreditation process. Their short term goals are to:

- Maintain the database which identifies the NATSAP members current licensing and/or certifications
- Research liability as an accrediting body
- Create a proposal for standards for NATSAP accreditation
- Develop a NATSAP accreditation committee
- Identify programs that will serve as beta test sites for the NATSAP accreditation process
- Establish license/accreditation criteria for NATSAP member programs

Their long term goals are:

- January 1, 2009 all NATSAP member programs licensed by state and/or accredited by some type of accrediting body; i.e. NATSAP, JCAHO, COA, CARE, etc.
- Develop "reciprocity" with other accrediting bodies (i.e., JCAHO, COA, CARE, etc.)

Member Services

The Member Services Committee was chartered with:

- Improving the communication of the efforts of the NATSAP Board, committees and corporate office
- Increasing NATSAP visibility through development of a long-range Public Relations plan
- Developing a formal event calendar with committee meetings, board meetings, regional meetings, conferences, etc.
- Implementing an immediate drive for Individual Affiliates within the staff of our member programs
- Outlining benefits of program membership in NATSAP through a FAQ 'short sheet' published for distribution
- Maintaining the website as the voice of our profession
- Continuing to increase database/outreach efforts

Public Relations

The Public Relations Committee was chartered with:

- Utilizing and prioritizing webmaster services
- Identifying and establishing relationships with associations with similar interests
- Developing a schedule for Board members to present at local universities
- Developing a schedule for Board members to present at professional national conferences
- Identifying a base of newsletter 'writers' through committees/regional meetings
- Using the NATSAP website to display public relations concerns
- Establishing and developing Public Relation representation in regional areas

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

An Open Letter and Invitation to Critics of Private Residential Treatment Programs

John L. Santa, Ph.D., President, NATSAP

Recently a number of organizations and individuals have raised concerns about private residential schools and programs that address the needs of troubled adolescents. Web sites and presentations have included fear inducing titles such as "Exploitation of Youths and Families- Perspectives on Unregulated Residential Treatment", "Who's watching the kids", or "An alarming residential care phenomenon...linked to reports of mistreatment, abuse, and death." Such presentations and criticism are of course well intended to protect children and parents from abuse and exploitation. And I am sure that there are individual programs that have not been responsible in treatment of children and families, just as I am certain that some of my fellow psychologists (licensed or not) are inadequate, impaired, and unethical, but that does not mean that the entire profession is corrupt.

It is apparent that most criticisms are not aimed directly at the many quality programs in NATSAP, but the lack of knowledge of our programs, the misperceptions, and fears that such critics raise are dangerous and create mistrust for all, even the most responsible of us. It is particularly alarming when critics, including a number of educated professionals, make sweeping conclusions without legitimate data and without examining any of our programs or available outcome data. Rather the critics seem to draw conclusions from the

noisy complaints of a few individuals and from sensationalized newspaper articles.

NATSAP, as an organization representing 170 programs, would like to join forces with responsible critics of residential care in efforts to educate, raise standards of care, and put an end to practices that lead to abuse, mistreatment, or exploitation of either children or parents. However, the misdeeds of individuals or individual schools and programs should not lead to a wholesale condemnation of the many excellent and responsible programs that fill a genuine need for desperate adolescents and their families. Nor is the answer to be found in efforts to create federal standards and regulation for all private programs that would increase bureaucracy as well as costs and tend to homogenize the diverse and creative approaches now available to private paying families. In fact, most therapeutic schools and programs serving the private market are operated by caring, qualified and professional staff who take excellent care of adolescents who are referred to these programs precisely because all efforts to contain, treat, and keep adolescents safe in their home environments have failed.

It should also be pointed out that all programs who are members of NATSAP must attest that they operate under the highest of ethical principles and practice standards. These standards of ethics and practice are readily available to the public on our website at www.natsap.org. In fact NATSAP was founded to define a benchmark for quality of care and allow programs who seek such quality and professionalism a forum to collaborate in the creation of a knowledge base to improve the profession.

We recognize there are programs that provide inadequate care and do not aspire to the best practices of NATSAP. We also welcome specific criticism of any member program should anyone feel that they are not operating within the NATSAP standards. NATSAP is not a regulatory body, but we will insist that any member program address and correct any legitimate concerns if they wish to remain a member. However, vague and fear inducing allegations aimed at our entire profession are not helpful, and we ask that responsible critics of residential care please make the effort to distinguish between NATSAP programs that endorse high standards of ethics and care from programs that do not!

What are the major allegations and concerns of those who criticize private residential care? First, some critics feel these programs are based on entrepreneurial motivations of greed and marketing rather than concerns for the children and families that we serve. Second, some question whether private programs employ standard diagnostic criteria or models of practice that conform to well established medical and public health models of practice leading to a possible compromise of client care and safety. Third, there are numerous rumors and allegations of abuse and neglect of children in our programs. Finally, some think NATSAP as an organization is opposed to oversight and regulation of programs, and allege that many, if not all, programs are unregulated and unlicensed.

Some critics question the recent growth of private programs implying entrepreneurial capitalistic greed. Growth has far more to do with need than greed. In the past 25 years the level of structure and containment in our society has deteriorated. More than 30% of public high school students drop out of school. Drug use is

rampant in junior and senior high school. Drugs have become more potent, more addictive, and more dangerous. Increasing numbers of young people struggle with other addictive disorders that involve cutting, eating, sex, and escape to the fantasy world of the internet. More are diagnosed with depression (including bipolar disorder), anxiety, attention deficit disorder, and oppositional defiance. There has been an alarming increase in prescription medications to manage emotional and behavioral symptoms. Our adolescent culture is stressed, overwhelmed, and failing to cope.

There has also been a striking decrease in stability and containment offered by traditional mental health services. Over the past twenty years the length of stay in primary care psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment programs has decreased precipitously. Treatment has shortened and been reduced to crisis stabilization and medication management in order to “manage” care and contain costs.

Parents helplessly watch their children flounder and fail to mature. Despite outpatient therapy, complex cocktails of medication, and occasional brief visits to psychiatric hospitals or youth detention centers, large numbers of children remain on a trajectory of failure. Even with the best efforts, parents feel they are losing their children. They realize that their children will not graduate from high school, that they have limited ability to handle emotions, that they show little or no concern for others, and cannot plan realistically for the future. In short, their children are markedly immature and show no signs of becoming competent, productive members of society. Time is running out! They fear their children might not make it, may even die. The palliative remedies offered by outpatient therapists, schools, and conventional health care institutions have failed. It is because of these failures that parents place children in our privately funded residential treatment programs. To these parents the need is real and palpable. Government institutions and traditional health care have failed to meet these families’ needs. These desperate parents are willing to pay out-of-pocket to give their children an alternative to failing conventional treatment.

NATSAP programs are aware of the pain and vulnerability of parents. The NATSAP Ethical Principles and Principles of Good Practice make it clear that all NATSAP programs must respect parents’ stress. As member programs, we pledge to market our programs in a manner that is honest, complete and accurate in disclosure. We openly describe our treatment methods, and the qualifications of our staff. We agree to refuse payments for referrals and to fully disclose our costs.

NATSAP Principles of Good Practice insist that programs operate with the utmost concern for human dignity and specifically prohibit any behavioral management procedures that involve sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, or that deny a nutritionally adequate diet for our participants. All programs must also have a clear written statement of participants rights openly disclosed to both participants and parents.

It has been alleged that private residential programs treat serious emotional disorders without proper diagnosis or credentialed staff. Again our Principles of Good Practice, endorsed by all NATSAP programs, specifically require the full disclosure and description of staff qualifications. We agree not to provide services beyond our areas of competence. Virtually all NATSAP programs operate with a full range of licensed psychologists, social workers, educators,

and health care providers. The level of care and sophistication of individualized treatment in NATSAP programs stands in stark contrast to allegations of institutional abuse. Care is sensitive, nurturing, and highly professional.

But critics should understand that our programs are not based simply on the DSM IV symptom clusters. We draw from models of education, experiential education, psychology, psychiatry, social work, and family systems theory. NATSAP programs provide a complex milieu of bio-psycho-social-educational treatment that address multiple aspects of a child’s failure to mature and develop a resilient, adaptive character structure. Each program places a unique emphasis on the various aspects of treatment. The result is 170 member programs each with a somewhat different blend of approaches, but all committed to the same basic principles of ethics and practice in which the value, dignity and safety of our students is paramount.

Some allege that NATSAP opposes regulation and state licensure. We do not. This rumor is false. In fact, most NATSAP programs are fully licensed and accredited for all parts of their service. Only in states where appropriate licensure is not available for private programs is membership allowed without specific licensure. In such cases programs must still certify that they are in compliance with the NATSAP code of ethics and practice principles. Indeed, NATSAP and its member programs have been instrumental in lobbying states for strong regulation. As with any complex profession, we ask that regulation be deft, well informed and intelligently designed. We ask that regulators consider input from those who understand the profession, that the regulation recognize the unique qualities of programs, and that regulators do not simply apply standards designed for hospitals, extended stay hospitals, nursing facilities, detention centers, or traditional schools.

The NATSAP practice standards were derived by examining practice standards in many states and with the input of hundreds of professionals. NATSAP officers and member programs have worked closely with several states to suggest and improve regulation. We welcome intelligent state regulation and encourage all states to consider the NATSAP ethical principles and practice standards as a basis for state regulation and licensure. We resent well intentioned, but uninformed critics who call for restrictive and oppressive regulation that could eliminate professional, creative and competent alternatives to failed conventional diagnosis and care.

Certainly we who operate NATSAP programs have our own tasks if we are to achieve a new level of trust. We must do a better job of educating the public about our programs and strive constantly to improve all aspects of what we do. We must operate with impeccable ethics. We must examine all of our individual and collective business practices to insure there is not even a perception of impropriety. Quality of care and safety in programs derive from our own self-study and efforts to improve our profession. Regulation and licensure are important, but not to create the ethics and practice standards of our profession. This we must do for ourselves.

In conclusion, we invite the public, legislators, and critics to visit our programs. Inspect and see for yourselves how we operate. Ask questions, talk to students and their families. Compare the

and emotional status of NATSAP students and the satisfaction of our families to those in regulated public sector programs. Examine the results. Come and see for yourselves the rich variety of innovative and successful NATSAP programs before judging us or writing another inflammatory article or white paper based on rumor and innuendo.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Four pre-conference workshops will be offered to our program members and their staff at the 2007 NATSAP Exploring our Profession Conference.

The Public Policy Committee is pleased to present a pre-conference workshop on *Legislation, Politics & Advocacy*. We are fortunate to have Hon. Andrea G. Barthwell, M.D. and Michael C. Barnes as the facilitators of the workshop. Dr. Andrea Barthwell served as deputy drug czar under President George W. Bush. While serving in the Executive Office of the President, Dr. Barthwell played an active role on the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth and the White House Domestic Violence Working Group. Dr. Barthwell is a past president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine and the CEO of the health policy consulting firm EMGlobal LLC. Dr. Barthwell is an advisor to NATSAP and select member programs on matters of policy and practice.

Michael C. Barnes, Esq., is a principal in DCBA Law, PLLC, a Washington, DC, federal affairs firm with a niche practice in education, substance abuse, and mental health policy. Mr. Barnes formerly served as confidential counsel in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. DCBA Law provides counsel to NATSAP on federal legislative matters.

The Public Relations Committee has acquired the services of Media Specialist Matt Hagan, founder of Bulldog Public Relations to facilitate their *Working with the Media* workshop. Matt began his career working in front of a camera as a general assignment reporter for a CBS network affiliate and launched his career into public/media relations in Washington, DC. He has excellent news judgment and strong relationships with members of the media.

Dr. Jared Balmer, PhD and Kimball DeLaMare, LCSW will provide a *NATSAP Perspective on Behavior Support Management* in this pre-conference workshop. Their professional expertise will provide workshop participants with a comprehensive review of NATSAP standards, training strategies to help ensure staff competency and the ability to identify five “problem prone” areas related to behavioral support management.

Mary Cesare-Murphy, PhD, JCAHO, will identify how Joint Commission accreditation can be used as a management tool focused on improving care, safety and outcomes. Attend the *Joint Commission Accreditation – A Management Tool to Improve Safety, Quality of Care, Treatment and Services* workshop to understand how this management tool can be used to improve the quality and safety of your program.

OUTCOME RESEARCH SUMMIT

(committee picture on pg. 10)

The Outcome Research Summit was held on McGregor Lake at the homes of Dr. John Santa and Dr. John McKinnon on September 8th and 9th. Dr. Santa facilitated the ad hoc committee with Joel Agate (Telos Residential Treatment), Ellen Behrens (Canyon Research and Consulting), Dr. Rob Cooley (Catherine Freer Wilderness Therapy Expeditions), Pam Cook (Oakwood College), Kyle Gillett (Telos Residential Treatment), Cindy Grossman (Montana Academy), Gil Hallows (Aspen Achievement Academy), Matt Hoag (Second Nature), Nick Hong (Montana Academy), Pam McCollam (New Haven), Dr. John McKinnon (Montana Academy), Michael Merchant (Ansazi Foundation), Beverly Richard (Three Springs), Amy Simpson (Montana Academy), Dustin Tibbitts (New Haven), Chris Tolen (La Europa Academy) and Jan Moss (NATSAP Executive Director) in attendance.

The charge of the committee was to explore the potential for NATSAP involvement in research efforts aimed at documenting outcome effectiveness and at creating a knowledge base that could be used to improve our practices. The committee was provided with a multitude of relevant literature and studies prior to the Summit. In introduction to the task at hand, Dr. Rob Cooley, PhD provided a history of the research that has been conducted by the Outdoor Behavioral Health Research Counsel (OBHRC) under the direction of Dr. Keith Russell, PhD, University of Minnesota. Dr. Ellen Behrens, PhD then presented an overview of her work in the recent outcome study of residential treatment programs in NATSAP.

The work proceeded with committee identifying several key topics that required discussion and clarification in the development of NATSAP outcome research. The committee explored general purposes, motivations and benefits of NATSAP being involved in research. As a whole group they reviewed the state of research in residential treatment and then more thoroughly examined research efforts aimed at private residential and outdoor behavioral health programs. They also reviewed the origins of OBHIC and its research consortium OBHRC and considered the movement towards evidence based practice in education, medicine, and psychology.

The group reached a general consensus that NATSAP should indeed support a central, organized approach to research. Such a research effort should examine the effectiveness of our programs, and move beyond general issues of customer satisfaction and general effectiveness towards questions that would expand our knowledge of what types of residential interventions are effective for what types of problem and individual. Research should also allow us to expand our understanding of the mechanisms that underlie effective treatment. The committee hopes that such research will lead to the development of comprehensive models that will allow us to deal more effectively with the difficulties of children, adolescents, and families that we serve. They feel that the most effective NATSAP research effort will begin to provide a long term data base that would support long term industry wide research and a basic data base that will permit independent researchers to contribute to our understanding of residential treatment.

With these general goals the Research committee divided into

work groups to create the general outline of a research plan to be submitted to the NATSAP Board of Directors together with specific recommendations as to how to begin a NATSAP research effort. The first group attempted to consider in more detail the purposes of NATSAP sponsoring research, the second group addressed the organizational structure for the proposed research effort. The third group addressed concerns about a common shared data base, and the fourth group reviewed and considered specific measurement instruments that might be used in a common data base.

Each work group reported back to the whole committee for discussion and feedback, and then was asked to revise the groups recommendation for inclusion in the final committee report to the NATSAP board of directors. In the final meeting there was considerable discussion concerning the desire to not lose momentum and to get the process underway quickly versus a desire to create a process that would have adequate thought, design, structure, and support that it would provide the basis for an on going research effort.

Dr. John Santa presented the committee's report and recommendations to the NATSAP Board of Directors on September 28th. The Board approved a standing Research Committee with Dr. Santa as chair. The Board is accepting applications to serve on the Committee. Contact the NATSAP office at (928) 443-9505 or info@natsap.org to receive an application.

SMALL RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM SUMMIT

Penny James, Explorations, hosted a Small Residential Program Summit in Whitefish, Montana on September 11th and 12th to review the NATSAP Principles of Good Practice. Their task was to determine the principles application to a small residential program, which generally fell into the home-based residential treatment category. They were chartered not only with determining their applicability, but to establish principles that would specifically apply to a small residential program.

Andy Sapp (Cherry Gulch), Kenny Pannell (Chrysalis), and Mark Barrentine (Evangel House Christian Academy) joined Ms. James in the complex task. They first set about defining a small residential program as:

Small residential programs are designed to serve fewer than 30 students in nurturing, often family-like settings. Small residential programs offer a holistic therapeutic milieu, which is based upon the relationships formed and the social dynamics created in small, intimate environments. These programs offer appropriate levels of structure and supervision for the emotional, social and academic development of their students. These programs often incorporate life skills training, academic instruction, outdoor adventure, recreation, and family involvement into an experiential living environment. Small residential programs often maintain an area of specialty for the students they serve.

The group addressed each of the main principles and developed additional principles that are specific to small residential programs. The final document, Supplemental Principles of Good Practice for Small Residential Programs, was presented to the Board of Directors at their meeting on September 28. The Board approved the supplemental principles and asked that the small residential

program supplement and the supplemental principles established for therapeutic boarding schools be combined with the general principles of good practice to ensure a clear, concise document. The final document will be presented to the members at the 2007 Annual Meeting in La Jolla, California on February 1, 2007.

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CHAPTER

Linda Carpenter

Twelve NATSAP programs from Idaho and Montana, gathered on September 12th at Montana Academy in Marion, MT to discuss the formation of a regional chapter. Following a lengthy discussion, everyone was in agreement that we should approach the NATSAP Board of Directors to request formation of the Northern Rocky Mountain Chapter.

A board was elected comprised of Linda Carpenter, Hope Ranch, Chair; Tim Corson, Montana Academy; John Schrom, Ascent; and Steve Fairbanks, Building Bridges.

The chapter decided to host two meetings a year; one in the spring and one in the fall. The first meeting will be a NATSAP Regional Conference to be held in Sandpoint, ID in 2007. The chapter formed Public Policy, Public Relations and Training Committees.

Chapter goals will include a training program for direct line staff that could lead to certification. Members from Montana will also advocate for licensing regulations for Montana programs. Plans are underway to invite legislators to visit programs so they can better understand the services provided to children and families.

NATSAP COMMITTEE MEETINGS & SUMMITS

Jan Moss

I continue to be truly amazed at the results of our committee meetings and summits. It is extraordinary the quality and quantity of work that is accomplished. The attendees' dedication to the task at hand is inspiring. Also notable is the commitment and support of the member programs represented at these meetings.

As I look back over the year and our accomplishments, I realize how many of you have contributed to NATSAP's success. You are NATSAP and I greatly appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you!

NATSAP NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Third Annual NATSAP Northeast Regional Conference began again with the traditional Downeast "all you can eat" lobster fest the night before the conference began. This year we were able to enjoy this fest in the great outdoors with the ocean sounds floating over us.

Even the most well-planned conferences experience glitches from time to time and, unfortunately our keynote speaker, Lisa Machoian, PhD, was unable to appear due to a serious bronchial condition. Will White, conference co-chair, called on his colleagues, the

NATSAP Board members, who had just completed a 2-day strategic planning session to fill in the gap. Each member of the Board was introduced and gave an overview of their responsibility as a committee chair and/or Board member. Dr. John Santa stated that NATSAP was both a trade and a professional organization, encouraging everyone to become more active in NATSAP and to join as an individual affiliate as part of their professional craft.

Angie Senic, Eckerd Youth Alternatives and Sharon Laney, Three Springs spoke on *Dealing with Crisis in a Program* and Gil Hallows, NATSAP Ethics Chair, presented on NATSAP Ethics as our continued effort in educating and surveying our members on these ethics.

The conference ended with roundtables of interest that covered developing a Northeast crisis response support system, being on the Northeast regional conference committee, developing an active Northeast NATSAP region, developing a cooperative regional marketing plan, and effective transitions.

FIRST SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

(conference picture on pg. 10)

Hidden Lake Academy provided the ideal venue for the first Southeast Regional Conference in a room with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a forest of trees just beginning their fall colors. Attendees of the conference enjoyed a pre-conference dinner in Dahlonga that gave them the opportunity to mingle and get acquainted.

Renee Pancoast kicked off the conference with a great presentation on *Growing the Three "C"eeds*, followed by R. Dean Porterfield, Three Springs Duck River, on *Behavior Modification in the Field*. Sharon Laney, NATSAP Board Vice-President, Three Springs, gave the final presentation on NATSAP Ethics thus completing this committee's commitment to present at all Regional conferences.

The day ended with a lively talk by Naomi Griffith, Author of *Red Clay and Vinegar: Looking at Family Through the Eyes of a Southern Child*. Naomi spoke on *Renewing our Commitment: Seeing the Hard Work with New Eyes*. Many of you may remember her keynote at the Dinner Gala at the first NATSAP Conference and will remember the laughter and tears. She is still as great as ever!

We want to send a special note of thanks to the following sponsors of this conference as they went unacknowledged at the time: Alldredge Academy, Three Springs, New Lifestyles, La Amistad, Ridge Creek, and Evangel House. We extend a special thanks to Acadia Healthcare for sponsoring Naomi Griffith.

A SYSTEMIC VIEW ON THE WAR FOR TALENT

Dustin Tibbitts, LMFTI, Executive Director of New Haven

In the 2005 NATSAP Newsletter Dr. John Santa, President of NATSAP, stated that

. . . Staff recruiting is [an] obvious area in which we can undo trust, mutual respect and the development of professionalism. . . . Obviously, staff poaching will create distrust and decrease collegiality. How should recruitment be handled in a way that is open and yet respects each

other's business? I am not sure any profession has this problem figured out, but we must discuss it and begin to establish agreement as to what is OK and what is not.¹

Staff recruiting is a sensitive and complicated issue. Professionals who belong to NATSAP have varied views and passionate feelings on the subject. I hope that this presentation of my own views invites further discussion.

I realize that our employees are not commodities to be traded like barley or sheep. They are not "mine". And so, if they choose to leave my company for employment that suits them better at your company, I try to persuade them to stay, but in the end they have that right and I do all I can to make their transition amiably.

Aggressive Recruiting Practices Sew Distrust

Unfortunately, some member programs don't share the same views on staff recruiting. From time to time there have been staff wars amidst NATSAP programs. Maybe it is more pronounced in Utah where many of us are competing for the same small pool of experienced employees, yet I think that it is just a matter of time before other states feel the similar pinch of competition for staff. As we all know, state lines do not prevent companies from recruiting.

Organizations like NATSAP execute and compete and coordinate among many different smaller organizations as part of a national treatment system in an effort to foster healing in the lives of the clients we serve. I think it just makes sense that when an organization joins NATSAP – an organization that should be one of the most collegial, welcoming, non-competitive systems in the mental healthcare industry – that the new member organization's leadership feels confident that its employees will not be aggressively pursued by larger, more powerful programs. Likewise, it simply makes sense that the founding member programs of NATSAP should be able to bring their star employees to NATSAP meetings without fear that a company will recruit those employees and flatter them away with promises of ownership in a new venture.

If we had, as the basis for NATSAP, an enduring trust between all member programs, wouldn't it make sense that we would *share* key employees without fear of any one program orchestrating a massive campaign to decimate the ranks of any one company's key employees? Wouldn't we then be focused on what is best for our clients *and* what is best for our employees? And, idealistically speaking, if your program had a phenomenal opportunity for one of my key employees that I simply couldn't match, wouldn't I be more inclined to support my employee by discussing that openly with her/him?

Ethics vs. Best Practices

Gil Hallows of Aspen Achievement Academy, NATSAP's Ethics Committee Chair, recently asked program leaders to acknowledge the difference between "ethics" and "best practices" when discussing ethical concerns. Continuing in that same vein, I suppose it is not a breach of *ethics* for one NATSAP member company to recruit from another NATSAP member company. As was recently pointed out to me in conversation with a colleague, the IT industry does it all the time! However, that example highlights

the very reason why I choose not to work in the IT industry! While aggressive recruiting from other NATSAP member programs is not unethical per se, it does constitute a poor practice.

I would like to propose two overarching principles for NATSAP member programs to adopt concerning staff recruiting:

- 1) Do not actively recruit from other member programs without notifying the leadership of that program. I define “active recruiting” as any manager in any NATSAP member organization (or any consulting professional representing that organization) *who initiates repeated direct contact* with anyone in another NATSAP member organization in order to persuade that person to accept a job offer.
- 2) Engage in honorable recruiting practices that encourage prospective employees to initiate direct contact with your organization for job opportunities whenever possible, instead of you initiating direct contact with them.

With these three principles in mind, I propose these “best practices” for recruiting employees from within NATSAP:

- 1) Friends who work in competing organizations often make friends aware of job opportunities. It is not possible or wise to attempt to stop this from happening; however, member program leadership can make employees aware of the inter-company (and even industry-wide) consequences that result from employees’ active, direct recruiting from other member programs.
- 2) Advertise for available jobs on the NATSAP website.
- 3) Advertise for available jobs via the media in the towns/cities where member programs exist.
- 4) Advertise for jobs with internet-based companies that specialize in career placement.
- 5) Member program leaders should call the leaders in another member program and explain that they have an opportunity for an employee of that program, and then ask permission from that leader, out of respect for the disturbance to the milieu it might create for that program to lose that employee, to speak with the targeted employee.
- 6) Perhaps NATSAP could host “networking” meetings or lunches as a service to its independent affiliates where it is understood that those attending are looking for job opportunities. Making it overt, rather than covert, can only help the employees who are dissatisfied in two ways: 1) they can find other employment within NATSAP programs – arguably the best programs with the highest ethical standards in the industry; and 2) they can open an honest dialogue with their employers about why they are unhappy and want to change venues.

I am hopeful that NATSAP programs and NATSAP’s leadership will take a hard look at how these principles and best practices would ensure that a collegial, open, and friendly atmosphere exists within NATSAP long into the future.

¹ President’s Corner, NATSAP Newsletter, November 2005; Dr. John Santa, Ph.D.: *A New Professionalism: Collegiality, Competition, and Marketing*

² NATSAP Central Utah Regional Conference, June 2006 at Canyon Creek, Springville, Utah

AN ALUMNI STORY

Turning eighteen is supposed to be an exciting event in everyone’s life. In my story, turning eighteen proved to be the most challenging experiences I have had to date. Most kids that finish high school go off to college, and make life changing decisions. For me, my life changing decision came one month after my eighteenth birthday. On September 11, 1999, I overdosed on heroin. Thankfully God gave me another chance to choose life over death. I was scared, insecure, and sad. At that point I did not know my right from my left. I did not realize that by making the decision to admit myself into Peninsula Village that I was making the best decision of my life. I just thought that if I committed myself for two weeks then my parents would believe that I was cured and I could return home. My two week stay turned into a ten month rebirth.

My first day at the Village will be one I will never forget. It was the day that I found I could not hide behind anything or anyone anymore. The only thing I could do was face the life I had made for myself up to that point. I was lucky I survived to see that day. I learned in ten months what takes some people a lifetime to figure out: how to ask for help. When I finally asked for help my life changed forever. I graduated a Bear and I am still working out my Eagle. The level of the Bear is a great honor for it means that I can look within now for the answers I need to make the decision between right and wrong.

It has been six and a half years since that first day at the Village and I am grateful that I am clean and sober today. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t think about my past and what could have happened. With the knowledge I have received during these six years I have been very successful in my life and career. I was able to purchase my first house at the age of twenty-one, and I am currently training for a management position within the corporation I work. People ask me all the time if I could take back anything that I have done, and my answer is always the same: I would not be the person I am today if I had done anything differently.

I am proud of myself and can respect myself more than I ever knew was possible. It is not always easy to remember the pain that I caused my family. However, my family has also looked more closely at each other and we have begun the healing process. It is scary how easy and fast I can fall back into old habits. The difference now is that I know better. I have seen what it is like to be an addict and I don’t want to go back there. I have worked too hard for too long to throw it all away now. Everyday I remind myself of where I was, and I see where I am now, and it has been and continues to be an amazing journey. It takes time and effort to push myself to use the tools that I have been given to remain sober, and not in the dark streets trying to score my next bag of dope. I am happy and excited about life, and I cannot wait to see what I can accomplish next. I have the dedicated staff of Peninsula Village, the support of my amazing family, and myself to thank for this second chance at life.

Sarah B.
Peninsula Village ’99-’00

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Farah Ghans, The Family Foundation School

Although the campus of The Family Foundation School was spared the effects of the flood that devastated the surrounding community of Hancock, New York in late June, many students were deeply affected by the event. The flood occurred in the middle of their week-long summer break, and half of the school had left the morning of June 27th for a day of fun at Dorney Park in Allentown, Pennsylvania. By evening, flood waters had inundated their route home. Farah Ghans, a journalism student at the school, prepared this first-person account of what followed.

It was the Town of Hancock, home for us Family School kids. We rode past houses under water. Cars were flooded up to their door handles. Streets were water drowned and paralyzed with lifelessness. Yet what we saw was only a portion of the destruction caused by flooding in the Northeast.

Twenty-four hours earlier, I had been on a bus with about 35 other students and staff from The Family School, trying to find a way back to where we had begun that morning: home. A day trip to Dorney Park had resulted in an unplanned excursion through a water-drenched wasteland. Blockaded roadways and flooded highways slowed us down. At one point, our efforts seemed hopeless and we were forced to stop.

A sleepover at a hotel in Binghamton made most students cheer. In our room we ordered pizza and soda and watched consecutive reruns of "Law & Order." I saw the extended vacation off campus as fun at first, until scrolling flash flood warnings at the bottom of our TV screen served as a dose of reality. We checked news channels for updates on the flooding. I sat on the floor, Indian style, between two beds, the TV in front of me.

We watched.

Unstoppable flows of water blasted through towns. People were left stranded or traveled by boat or canoe at their own risk. The laughter and fun we had experienced moments earlier was brought to a halt.

I have been unhappy in my life because I didn't get an iPod for Christmas, another dog for my birthday, two barbeque sauce packets instead of one at McDonalds. But through the trials of our journey back, I realized we, as students, didn't have it bad at all. I had a bed to sleep in, water to drink, food to eat and I was with the people I cared about.

Staff members practiced patience, tolerance and love despite the unknown status of their family members and pets. Some even lost their homes.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." This flood was life-shattering for many, but I had to remember that hope had, can, and will shed light on even the darkest situations.

Students often come to The Family School believing they've witnessed it all, felt it all, and know it all. Some believe that nothing can take

them on because they've seen the world and conquered it. This I realized, for me at least, is far from the truth.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Jan Moss

It is my pleasure to introduce you to our newest members.

Echo Malibu Youth Treatment Centers (Associate Member) – a coeducational Residential Treatment Center serving ages 12 to 17. They are located in Malibu, California. Executive Contact: Dr. Jeffrey Nalin; Admissions Contact: Cole Rucker, MA Phone: (800) 780-ECHO

Heart Mountain New Beginnings (Associate Member) – a Home-Based Residential Treatment Program serving boys ages 13 to 17. They are located in Powell, Wyoming. Executive Contact: Jon M. Carter; Admissions Contact: John McColl Phone: (307) 754-0180

Living Well Transitions (Associate Member) – a Transitional Independent Living Program serving young men and young women over 18. They are located in Boulder, Colorado. Executive Contact: Bill Sell; Admissions Contact: Julie Randall Phone: (303) 245-1020

Pendleton Academies (Full Member) – a Residential Treatment Center serving boys and girls ages 6 to 17. They are located in Pendleton, Oregon. Executive Contact: Mary Moore-Suever; Admissions Contact: Gannett Pitkin, Ph.D. Phone: (541) 966-7773

Sunrise RTC (Full Member) – a girls only Residential Treatment Center serving ages 12 to 17. They are located in Hurricane, Utah Executive Contact: Dave Prior; Admissions Contact: Mike Crowley Phone: (435) 635-1185

The following member has moved to Full membership status effective August 2006:

Monarch Center for Family Healing

The following Provisional members have been accepted as Associate NATSAP members effective September 2006:

Cherry Gulch

Montcalm Outdoor Challenge Program

Open Sky Wilderness Therapy

Pine River Institute

2006 DIRECTORY UPDATES

Please note the following updates in your 2006 NATSAP

Directory:

E.L. Chamberlain

The Cedars Academy

Paint Rock Valley

Timpanogos Family Services

Admissions Contact: John Mendonca

Executive Contact: John Simpson

Admissions Contact: Dottie Kople

Email: dkople@cedarsacademy.com

Address: 3890 County Road 20

Trenton, AL 35774

Email:

Patrick@timpanogosfamilyservices.com

3rd Annual Joint Commission National Conference on Behavioral Health Care: Issues for Today, Actions for Tomorrow

The Third Annual Conference on Behavioral Health Care is designed for behavioral health care clinicians and providers. This year the conference takes an integrated approach to understanding timely topics and issues important to those in the field of behavioral health care through coordinating plenary sessions with setting- or population- specific break out sessions. In addition, poster presentations from organizations extend the opportunity to learn about good practices and to network with peers. Topics that form the nucleus of the meeting include selecting, retrieving and applying outcome measures to direct client care, treatment and services; services that support recovery and resilience; SAMHSA's New National Registry of Evidence Based Practice; and the Joint Commission's Hospital- based In-patient Psychiatric Services. Current issues that are highlighted include disaster planning for behavioral health care; benchmarking; data driven approach to combat homelessness; implementing co-occurring treatment; and workforce concerns.

Attendees at this conference will:

- Gain knowledge of how to select and retrieve outcomes measures
- Develop insight into the use of outcomes measurement to direct client care, treatment and service
- Broaden understanding of the benchmarking process and its application in behavioral health care
- Gather information on SAMSHA's New Registry of Evidence-based Practices and/or the Joint Commission's Hospital based In-patient Psychiatric Services
- Learn current information about workforce development that supports and sustains systems of behavioral health care
- Examine recent findings on evidence-based and promising practices
- Assess the need for and basics of disaster planning for community based behavioral health
- Have the opportunity to interact with poster presenters and to network with colleagues

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs is a supporting organization of this conference. Maximize your benefits by attending both the National Conference and the special pre-conference. We encourage your members to attend to receive the full benefit of your support.

December 5-6, 2006, Chicago, IL

Program code: 06-138

Program fee: \$595 per registrant

Early bird discount: \$495 per registrant

(Expires 30 days before the program)

Held in the same hotel a day before the conference, Behavioral Health Care Update is a special pre-conference to the Third Annual Joint Commission National Conference on Behavioral Health Care: Issues for Today, Actions for Tomorrow.

December 4, 2006, Chicago, IL

Program code: 06-095

Regular program fee: \$450 per registrant

Discounted fee if also attending the National Conference: \$300 per registrant

Early bird discount: \$390 per registrant

(Expires 30 days before program)

Special offer! Save \$150 per person. Register for both the Third Annual Joint Commission National Conference on Behavioral Health Care and its pre-conference, Behavioral Health Care Update on December 4, 2006 and pay \$895 per person for both. **(Discounts cannot be combined)**

To register, please contact JCR Customer Service at 877-223-6866

Visit www.jcrinc.com for full details on these seminars.

NATSAP OUTCOME RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Top Row (left to right): Nick Hong, Cindy Grossman, Ellen Behrens, Dustin Tibbitts, Matt Hoag, Michael Merchant, Gil Hallows, Rob Cooley, Beverly Richard, Pam Cook
Bottom Row (left to right): Chris Tolen, Amy Simpson, John Santa, Joel Agate, Kyle Gillett, Pamela McCollam

“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you.”

Henry Ward Beecher

Highlight your membership by adding the NATSAP logo to your website



NATSAP SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES



NATSAP

Vision Statement

Our vision is a nation of healthy children. We are the voice inspiring, nurturing, and validating the courageous work of our schools and programs

NATSAP

Mission Statement

The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs serves as an advocate and resource for innovative organizations which devote themselves to society's need for the effective care and education of struggling young people and their families.

Very Important!
Please contact the
NATSAP office with any
changes in information
about your program so
we can keep the NATSAP
Website current.
Thank you!

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3RD QUARTER
2006

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Annual Renewal Mailing
December 1, 2006

Annual Renewal Deadline
January 31, 2007

2007 National Conference
February 1-3, 2007
Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines
La Jolla, California

2007 Utah Regional Conference
April 19, 2007
Thanksgiving Point
Lehi, UT

UT Regional Call for Papers Deadline: February 23, 2007
Download Call for Papers at http://www.natsap.org/conferences_regional.asp

JUST RELEASED:

**JOURNAL OF THERAPEUTIC SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS (JTSP)
VOLUME I, ISSUE II**

See <http://www.natsap.org/journal.asp> for Details on How to Order



National Association of Therapeutic
Schools and Programs
126 N. Marina
Prescott, AZ 86301

TO: