



## President's Message



Dear Colleagues in Horticultural Therapy,

The season of gratitude is upon us and here at AHTA we share our gratitude with all who have interest in AHTA and the profession of horticultural therapy! Harvesting and the bustle of the fall season is winding down as we prepare for the season of slowing down, sharing stories, having time for connection to family, friends, and to all in the world of horticultural therapy. As we continue the transitions that the fall season provides let us all take time for giving back. AHTA welcomes you to remember AHTA during the season of **annual giving**. Volunteer your time to join one of our work teams as AHTA now has a **Sponsorship Work Team** and a **Webinar Work Team**! AHTA welcomes new ideas, the diversity of our practitioners, and expertise in keeping AHTA moving forward into the next 50 years!

I again want to give a shout-out to all the board members, work team members, and review board members who worked hard this year in making the changes for AHTA happen. We can do this collectively! I again want to give a shout-out to Derrick Stowell Ph.D. CTRS HTR, PJ Snodgrass Ph.D. HTR, and Debra Edwards HTR who recently left the board. Thank you for your exceptional service! Another shout out to our three new board members - Charles Jordan Jr., April Ellis LSW HTR, and Kelly Warnick. Welcome! Of course, another thanks to Linda Brown-Kuhn HTR for continuing her service to the AHTA Board of Directors, to Matthew Janson CTRS HTR for stepping up as President-Elect, and to Nicole Giron MPH CTRS HTR for stepping up as Secretary.

The AHTA Annual Membership Meeting held on October 24, 2023, was recorded, and can be viewed in the [Member Center](#). Also, we would like to remind those who attended our virtual conference “AHTA 2023: 50 Years of Cultivating Horticultural Therapy” that they can access the conference recordings and request that they complete the evaluation that they received in their inboxes. Many thanks!

Yours in horticultural therapy,

**Lana Dreyfuss LPCC, LCADC, SEP, HTR, President of AHTA**

## News and Events

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### AHTA 2023 Annual Award Recipients

AHTA recognized the excellent work in horticultural therapy this year by honoring these award recipients.

**Charles Lewis Excellence in Research Award**

"A pilot randomized controlled trial of group-based indoor gardening and art activities demonstrates therapeutic benefits to healthy women"

Charles Guy, Raymond Odeh, Elizabeth R.M. Diehl, Sarah Jo Nixon, Craig Tisher, Dylan Klempner, Jill Sonke, Thomas Colquhoun, Qian Li, Maria J. Espinosa, Dianela Perdomo, Kaylee Rosario, and Hannah Terzi

**Ann Lane Mavromatis Award**

Bree Stark

**John Walker Community Service Award**

Hope Garden Programs at Robins Air Force Base

**Rhea McCandliss Professional Services Award**

John Murphy, HTR

**Therapeutic Garden Design Award**

Marie Rose Therapeutic Garden at Mary's Woods

**AHTA Honorary Membership Award**

Matthew Wichrowski, MS, HTR

Congratulations to these awardees! Nominations for the 2024 AHTA Annual Awards begins in March 2024!

[Learn More](#)

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### 2023 Annual Conference Review

The American Horticultural Therapy Association was proud to see a year of efforts culminate in last month's outstanding two-day conference. The conference was entitled [AHTA 2023: 50 Years of Cultivating Horticultural Therapy](#) and was held virtually. While we acknowledge the human drive to connect to others and have face-to-face opportunities to do so, it cannot be denied that a virtual conference allows a level of accessibility and inclusivity that an in-person conference does not.

The conference generated 273 registrants from 17 countries. Additionally, 81 students attended the conference, which is vital to the future of HT/TH. There were about 40 different sessions which included two keynote presentations, oral presentations, poster presentations, an awards ceremony & presentation, short films on HT certificate programs, and opportunities for attendees to network. The presentation recordings will be available for attendees to view until **January 9, 2024**.

One of the keynote Speakers was Dr. Robert Zarr. His presentation, entitled ["Nature Rx: Prescribing nature to promote human and planetary health,"](#) focused on how nature, the garden space and our innate connection to these environments impact our health and wellness. Dr. Zarr exhibited the Park Rx program and provided examples of what a prescription may look like, as well as how to access green spaces in our communities. It was very beneficial and enlightening to have a medical perspective from Dr. Zarr and hear his expertise regarding HT/TH and nature implications on public health for all populations.

The other keynote speaker, Rebecca Haller, Director of the Horticultural Therapy Institute in Denver, Colorado, focused on interconnections during her presentation, ["Roots, Growth, and Interconnections."](#) Among the many fascinating points, she referenced mycelium and mycorrhizae when highlighting the importance of connections, community, and reciprocal relationships. Parallels were also drawn between the resilience of plants and the strength of individuals. Her talk led attendees to think about not only the function of the roots of their plants, but the roots in their lives and how the history, culture and people we come from, in part, form who we are and where we are going, both personally and professionally.

We hope to gather additional feedback via conference surveys and we encourage attendees to complete those surveys, so that we may continue to adapt to an ever-changing world as appropriate. Like the *Socratea exorrhiza* (Walking Palm), adapting to change will be imperative for our survival as a therapeutic application, organization and the overall universal goal of improving individuals' wellness, system health and planetary healing. AHTA is honored to be a part of connecting plants and the garden space to people. We are grateful from where we have come, humbled to see where we are, and excited to see where we are going. Thank you for your interest in [AHTA 2023: 50 Years of Cultivating Horticultural Therapy](#).

[Learn More](#)

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### Research Request from the University of Tennessee

Researchers at the University of Tennessee are conducting a [national survey](#) on the interest in and use of horticulture or gardening within healthcare and community-based settings to help improve health, wellbeing, and vocational outcomes. Horticulture and gardening have a long history of benefiting a variety of individuals and populations. The purpose of the research study is to explore the interest in and understand how horticulture and gardening is utilized by practitioners in multiple care settings across the United States. We are exploring settings that include hospitals, vocational training/employment programs, programs that serve incarcerated individuals or those on probation/parole, community garden programs, community-based programs, schools and other healthcare or allied health settings throughout the United States. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please [review the consent form](#) for participation and [complete the survey](#).

[Complete Survey](#)

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### Pre-Approval of Coursework

[Pre-approval of coursework](#) is now officially online! This process is designed to assist you in determining if a course meets the requirements of professional registration. Visit our [Pre-Approval of Coursework for Professional Registration webpage](#) to learn more.

[Learn More](#)

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### Look Forward to the New Magazine Design

Thanks to our talented Visual Designer, Scott Horne, the AHTA Magazine will sport an elegant, fresh look starting with the fall issue! When the magazine is released, let us know what you think of the redesign on AHTA social media.

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### AHTA HTR Database Search Option

AHTA has a [Horticultural Therapist-Registered \(HTR\) Directory](#) feature on our website. This feature allows companies or the general public to search for HTRs near them. The benefits for HTRs may include employment, consultation work, presentation/information sharing opportunities, advocacy

for the profession of horticultural therapy and more! **Any HTR member has the opportunity to *opt-in or opt-out* of the database.** We request that HTR members update their profile with this indication.

**To update:**

1. Log into the [Member Center](#)
2. Select "My Profile"
3. Select "Edit Profile"
4. Check "Opt-in" or "Opt-out"

We would like to use this as a reminder for all members to refresh their profiles with any other updates as well.

[Visit the Member Center](#)

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### **AHTA Job Board**

**Looking for a job or interested in posting a job?** Find your next job using [AHTA's Job Board](#). To access the job board, you must be an AHTA member.

[Visit Job Board](#)

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### **Become a Member**

**Not a member of AHTA? [Join today!](#)** AHTA's membership is comprised of individuals who are passionate about the unique benefits of horticultural therapy as a therapeutic modality. Members are committed to the growth of the profession. Membership in the AHTA will keep you up to date on the latest in horticultural therapy news, as well as give you access to outstanding educational and networking opportunities.

[Join Today](#)

  
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