

## A Season of Joy & Restoration – AHTA Update

Dear Colleagues and Partners in Horticultural Therapy,

Welcome to the December 2024 edition of our monthly newsletter, where we share the latest updates and news from the American Horticultural Therapy Association. As we enter this season of reflection and celebration, we honor our deep connection to the natural world, especially as we approach the winter solstice.

This time of year—whether celebrating Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, or other traditions—offers a meaningful opportunity to grow in gratitude for the work we do. It's a moment to harvest the fruits of our collective efforts in horticultural therapy and celebrate the positive seeds we've planted in the lives of those we serve. The season reminds us of the importance of both giving and receiving care, much like tending to a flourishing garden.

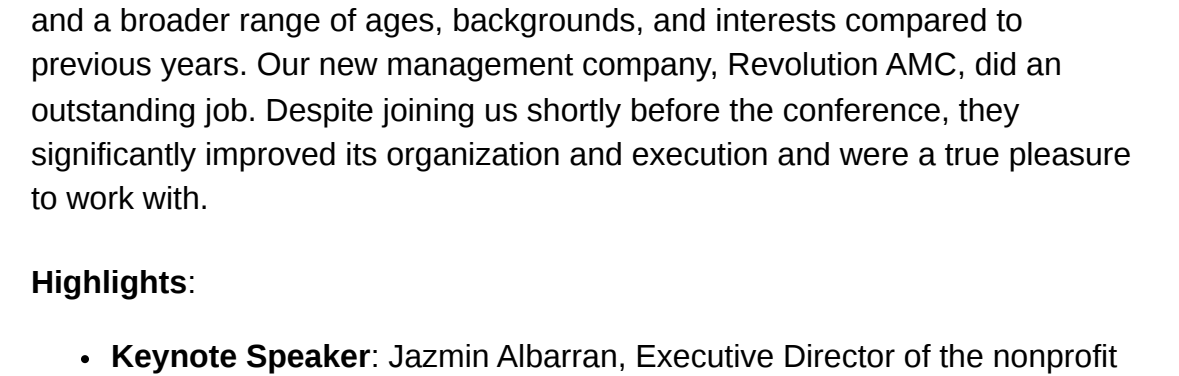
Looking back on the past year, I am rooted in appreciation for the dedication and hard work of each of you—our practitioners, programs, and community. The connections we've cultivated with the earth and others around us have led to numerous successes and have helped grow hope and healing for many. Your continued commitment truly blooms in the lives of those we support.

Thank you for your passion and your ongoing connection to AHTA. I wish you all a peaceful holiday season, filled with comfort, reflection, and continued growth in both your professional and personal lives.

"Leafing" you with warmest wishes for a joyful and restorative holiday season!

Warmly,  
**Matthew Janson HTR, CTRS**  
 President, AHTA

### News and Events



**2024 AHTA Conference Recap**

This year's AHTA Conference was held in Raleigh, NC, ablaze with vibrant fall foliage and was an inspiring gathering for first-time attendees and long-time members alike. Many attendees were amazed by the energy and enthusiasm that defined this conference, with a notable increase in first-time participants and a broader range of ages, backgrounds, and interests compared to previous years. Our new management company, Revolution AMC, did an outstanding job. Despite joining us shortly before the conference, they significantly improved its organization and execution and were a true pleasure to work with.

**Highlights:**

- **Keynote Speaker:** Jazmin Albarran, Executive Director of the nonprofit *Seed Your Future*, delivered an unforgettable keynote address, sharing powerful insights and inspiring attendees with her vision of collaboration for the future. Bringing young people to careers in horticulture and all ages to horticultural therapy.
- **New Events:**
  - *Moth Up Hour:* Members shared heartfelt and insightful three-minute stories about the lessons they learned in the garden this year. This event was wildly popular.
  - *Talking Circle:* The AHTA Board of Directors hosted this engaging event, fostering open dialogue and community connection among members and directors.
  - *New Members Welcome:* The membership went above and beyond to welcome new members and first-time attendees with dedicated outreach areas including designated areas where one could go if they didn't know anyone else at the conference and be in good company.
  - *Regional Groups Panel:* Six of the eight regional groups talked about their focuses, accomplishments, challenges and plans for the future.
- **Tours:** With so many exceptional HT locations in North Carolina, the conference featured two separate tours, each showcasing three unique sites.
  - *New Chapel:* Transplanting Traditions, NC Botanical Gardens, The Farm at Penny Lane
  - *Durham:* Hawk's Nest Healing Garden, Hub Farm at Durham Public Schools, Duke Gardens

A heartfelt thanks to the Carolina team for warmly welcoming us to North Carolina and working tirelessly to showcase the wonders of HT in the region. Thank you to everyone who made this year's conference such a success. We can't wait to see you at 2025's virtual conference next October!



### Community Meeting: January 14, 2025 7-9pm(EST)/ 6-8pm CST/ 4-6pm (PST)

Are you an AHTA member that works with youth? Whether in a school setting, clinical practice, or community group, horticultural therapists are an essential member of the village it takes to raise a child. AHTA is spearheading a Youth Campaign in 2025. We hope to share resources, encourage future HTs, and learn from the young people ages 1-25 who use our services. We want to hear from all members how we can better serve the youngest members of our community. Please join us this **January 14th from 6-8pm CST** as we brainstorm ideas to get young people involved with horticultural therapy, including potentially forming a Youth Counsel to guide the Board's direction.

### 2025 Webinar Update

**Save the date for our January webinar with our guest speaker from [Thrive](#). Details and registration coming soon... January 28, 2025**

### HT Activity - Holiday Ornaments

**By Laura DePrado, B.S., HTR, CEO**  
 Final Touch Plantscaping, LLC, Somerset County, NJ

The landscape is frozen in time as winter blankets trees, shrubs, perennials asleep until next spring. The garden is all but forgotten, but some plants are great at their best this time of year with colorful foliage and stems that make great materials for horticultural activities and learning in programs of horticultural therapy in the Garden State.

This month, one activity I planned for three different populations was the creation of holiday ornaments. The populations are Memory Care, adults with dementia with medical complications, and adult outpatient group with mental health and substance abuse issues, and a group of fourth- through sixth-grade students in after-school prevention program for youth at risk in a garden club. The activity offered fun, connection, curiosity, socialization for all of the participants and meaningful connection, expressed in different ways.

#### Materials

- Clear plastic oblong-shaped ornament the size of an old perfume bottle or softball size with a top that opens, to allow all participants to hold comfortably while creating and handling plant materials.
- Potpourri of rose petals, carnation and Baby's Breath flowers.
- Tree bark and fresh cut evergreens such as Arborvitae and white pine cut into small pieces.
- Dried and harvested hydrangea flowers and lavender.
- Artificial snow and shredded pieces of shiny silver paper.
- Brightly colored bells.
- Large snowflake stickers, ribbons, decorative rolls of decorative tape.

#### Directions

Show materials and pass them one at a time to allow each member to respond, connect, and be successful at completing each single step task toward creating and completing an ornament.

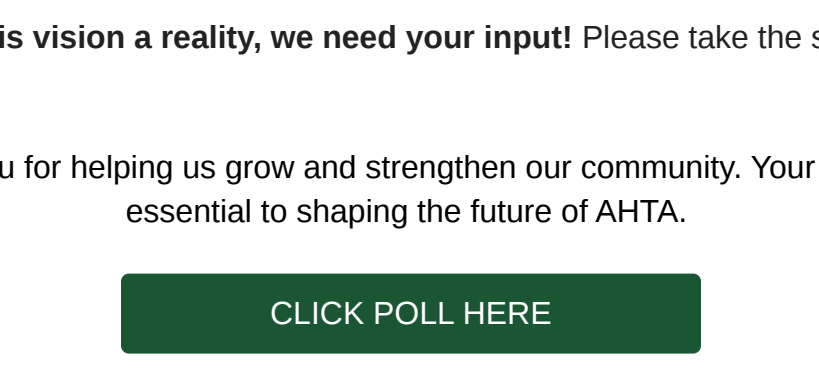
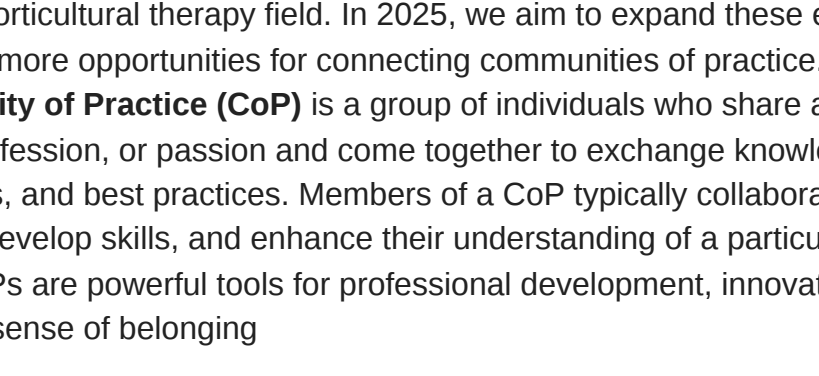
First, offer lavender and the potpourri which participants place into their ornament.

Participants then select a bell or two which they can jingle if they want to. They insert bell into the ornament or if participants are able, thread ribbon through two bells and attach to outside of the silver cap.

Offer some fresh evergreens which participants place in the ornament followed by artificial snow and shiny silver paper.

Finally, they place snowflake stickers and decorative tape on the outside and close the top.

*Excerpted from My Central Jersey, December 18, 2017. [Click for the full story](#)*



Photos by Laura DePrado

### Poll: What Communities of Practice would you like to see or be a part of?

A core mission of AHTA is to foster community and enhance communication within the horticultural therapy field. In 2025, we aim to expand these efforts by introducing more opportunities for connecting communities of practice. A **Community of Practice (CoP)** is a group of individuals who share a common interest, profession, or passion and come together to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Members of a CoP typically collaborate to solve problems, develop skills, and enhance their understanding of a particular domain or field. CoPs are powerful tools for professional development, innovation, and fostering a sense of belonging.

**To make this vision a reality, we need your input!** Please take the short [poll](#) below.

Thank you for helping us grow and strengthen our community. Your ideas are essential to shaping the future of AHTA.

[CLICK POLL HERE](#)

### Exciting Progress for Next Year's Youth Campaign!

As we prepare for the year ahead, we are excited to share some updates about our 2025 youth campaign, "Growing Impact: Advancing Youth Wellness Through Horticulture." Our team has been hard at work building the foundation for impactful HT/TH campaign programming that will inspire, empower, and engage the next generation in fostering their holistic well-being.

#### Key process highlights include:

**Campaign Sponsorship:** We are excited to announce that Ball Horticultural Company has become the first official sponsor of our youth campaign. This marks an exciting step forward in our journey, and we are grateful for their support and belief in our mission. Together, we are laying the groundwork for impactful change and growth.

**New Partnerships:** We are equally thrilled to share that Seed Your Future will be joining forces with AHTA for the youth campaign. This collaboration is a true honor as we unite to advance our shared vision of a nation where the power of plants and the deep connection between people and plants are widely recognized, valued, and supported. Further partnerships are in process with community leaders and organizations committed to collaborating and amplifying the reach of the youth campaign.

**HT/TH Programming Development:** Innovative workshops and events are in the works, designed to enhance the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social wellness of youth.

**Youth Engagement:** Early feedback from young voices has shaped our vision, ensuring this campaign reflects their hopes and needs.

We are deeply inspired by the growing momentum behind this initiative and look forward to sharing more details with you soon. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for our youth.

Stay tuned for updates, and we invite you to be a part of this journey. Please don't hesitate to reach out – your support and guidance is invaluable and makes all the difference! You can reach us directly for the campaign at [sponsorship@ahta.org](mailto:sponsorship@ahta.org).

### Announcing the THP, Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner!

The American Horticultural Therapy Association recognizes the practice of Therapeutic Horticulture is becoming a widely accepted and important component in healthcare, rehabilitation, residential programs, and community settings. The AHTA is pleased to announce that the new professional credential - **Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner, THP** - is now available for applications! The Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioner is intended for practitioners who provide services aligned with the AHTA definition of therapeutic horticulture. Visit the [THP webpage](#) to find out more information regarding eligibility and the process of applying.

[Learn More](#)

### AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture

The AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture had been approved for the Open Access Model and is now available on Google Scholar. Did you know that you can access the copies of the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture by going to Google Scholar, putting in the "AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture" in the search window and to narrow down your search add the volume number from the AHTA list of Journal. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

While considering publishing in the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture consider that as members of AHTA there is no charge for the Article Processing Charge (APC) while nonmembers pay \$300. Another great way to become a member! Hoping to see more submissions that will go out to all!

#### Supporting AHTA

Your generous support makes it possible for our organization to grow and thrive. Your contributions help keep us going, including helping with the expenses of our annual conference, increasing our ability to work toward credentialing, offsetting the cost of our journal and other outreach publications, and connecting to colleges and universities, facilities, prisons, hospitals, and agencies that [support the profession of horticultural therapy](#). Our [2024 Partnership Guide](#) is now available!

In keeping with the forward growth of AHTA, we have redesigned our [2024 Partnership Guide](#) to include new "à la carte" sponsorship opportunities! These options can be selected independently of AHTA sponsorship packages or added to enhance them. The goal is to offer sponsors greater flexibility in shaping their partnership opportunities to better align with their specific needs and objectives, resulting in a more tailored and impactful collaboration. [Sign up to become a sponsor](#) today! Your support fuels our mission to continue advancing the development of horticultural therapy and making an impact nationally and worldwide.

[Ways to Support AHTA](#)

[View 2024 Partnership Guide](#)

### AHTA HTR Database Search Option

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.

### 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.

**Did you know?** AHTA members benefits include free webinars and free article processing fees for the AHTA Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture! Another two new reasons to join!

[Join Today](#)