

BATA Hill Day: Art Therapy in Ohio Advocacy Day Overview

Molly Kometiani, ATR-BC, BATA President
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The Buckeye Art Therapy Association (BATA) hosted Art Therapy in Ohio Advocacy Day on Wednesday, November 29, 2017, at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus. It was a powerful, motivating, and exciting day for Buckeye art therapists and the community! Our future legislative plans include: introducing art therapy licensure, continuing to advocate through offering site visits to art therapy settings around the state, and maintaining the relationships that were formed at Advocacy Day! If any chapters are interested in learning more about how to plan their own Advocacy Day, please contact BATA at info@buckeyeartherapy.org.



Representative Marlene Anielski and Ohio Art Therapists

Here is a rundown of the Art Therapy in Ohio Advocacy Day successes:

- Art therapists attended from all over the state including the following major cities: Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland, Canton, and Columbus. Attendance totaled 25 (4 students and 21 professional art therapists) to advocate for art therapy licensure!

- The group met with 14 Senators/Offices and 12 representatives and had several other important legislative meetings.
- A BATA one pager and Ohio Art Therapy Information packets were provided in every meeting. BATA brochures, BATA art cookies, and “I Support Art Therapy Licensure” magnets were also distributed!
- “Art Therapy in Ohio Advocacy Day: BATA Art Therapy Gallery” was an open event during lunchtime. Members and their office staff could drop by to view displayed images from art therapy sessions and learn more about art therapy’s healing benefits. There were over 20 provoking and powerful images on display addressing clients’ experiences with addictions, medical/health issues, military service, trauma, bereavement, schools, and mental health. There was also an art supply raffle and a snack bar provided. During the afternoon event, 15 legislators/staff learned more about art therapy licensure in Ohio.
- Thanks to Ashley Skelly MA, LPPC, the art therapist (pursuing her ATR) from Nationwide Children’s Hospital and the Epilepsy Foundation, who was the spokesperson for the event! She provided an overview of the field in Ohio, some of the benefits of art therapy, as well as some of the challenges to service expansion. Ashley stated, “I am proud to be an art therapist. This work is meaningful and inspiring, and provides vast benefits to our consumers. The need for services is high, and continues to grow with the challenges we face in our society today. I am confident that art therapy licensure for the state of Ohio will open many opportunities to expand services within our communities.”
- State Representative Marlene Anielski, BATA’s Legislator of the Year and Mental Health Champion, was present and talked to the group about what to expect in pursuing licensure. The Ohio art therapists were excited that she was available speak to the group. Representative Anielski is very determined, passionate, and ready to help BATA attain art therapy licensure!



Rep. Marlene Anielski provides motivating speech to Ohio art therapists.



*Left: BATA President
Molly Kometiani*

*Right: Spokesperson
Ashley Skelly*



Thank you to all the volunteers that helped make this day possible! BATA board members played an active role in facilitating the event. External Relations Chair Mary Sender, ATR created a beautiful slideshow educating participants about art therapy; Second VP Tammy Shella, MA, ATR-BC, set up all of the artwork and made sure the afternoon event ran smoothly. First VP Ashley Rogols, MA, LPCC-S, ATR; Secretary Molly O’Neill Haaga, PhD, ATR, LPC; Publications Chair Diane Fleisch-Hughes, ATR-BC; Clinical Chair Janeane Grisez, MA, LPC, LICDC-CS; and Legislative Committee Member Gail Wetherell-Sack, ATR-BC, BATA HLM were all present to help throughout this monumental day in Ohio art therapy history! We extend additional thanks to The Batchelder Company, BATA’s lobbyists who prepared everyone for their meetings and helped keep the group organized and motivated.

Thanks also to BATA’s wonderful student volunteers: Capital University students Jordan Slagle and Ciatisa Walker facilitated check-in for the afternoon event and Ursuline students Deaira Knox and Olivia Jones made phone calls to remind all of the Senators, Representatives, and their offices to attend “Art Therapy in Ohio Advocacy Day: BATA Art Therapy Gallery.”

BATA’s Facebook page created an event, and #Advocate4BATA is being used by the community to connect and sharing photos!

