

# APT and Universities Link to Advance Play Therapy!

The Approved Center of Play Therapy Education Program was launched in July by the Association for Play Therapy (APT) to expedite the advancement of the field of play therapy in the decades ahead by partnering with universities.

The rationale for designating Approved Centers is twofold. First, the career paths or professional affiliations for 38%<sup>1</sup> of us are most influenced by our university courses and instructors. Second, no single entity has popularized play therapy more than the University of North Texas (UNT) Center for Play Therapy whose graduates are today teaching at other universities and introducing play therapy to future instructors and practitioners.



Garry Landreth

"My primary motivation in establishing the Center for Play Therapy was to promote an understanding of children and to provide help for children and families through the medium of play therapy," says Founder Garry Landreth (TX). "To accomplish this objective, the Center was

structured to provide graduate play therapy courses, conferences, intensive workshops, supervision experiences, seminars, research projects, and a library housing a comprehensive collection of play therapy literature."

APT will foster and assist the establishment of campus centers focused upon generating more play therapy research, publications, instruction, supervised clinical experiences, and producing more credentialed faculty and practitioners.

"The success of our program rests upon designating Approved Centers that somewhat model the UNT Center – that build on an expanded play therapy curriculum with research and publications," says Linda Homeyer (TX) who was APT president when this concept gained momentum. "Over the last decade, the number of universities offering play therapy instruction has doubled. The Approved Center program acknowledges those universities offering substantially expanded curriculums and especially more research and publications."



Center Director Sue Bratton with University of North Texas President Gretchen M. Bataille, DA (center), and Jerry Thomas, EdD, Dean of the College of Education.

Today, 160-plus universities offer play therapy courses and nearly half also offer internships. By contrast, an Approved Center is expected to minimally offer at least six (6) graduate hours of instruction a year, ensure quality by employing or contracting a Registered Play Therapist (RPT) or Supervisor (RPT-S), and routinely disseminate information about play therapy and APT to students, faculty, and administrators. During its initial three-year approval period, an Approved Center must earn at least six (6) additional points by providing more play therapy instruction, supervised clinical experiences, supervisor training, and by generating research and publications. It must earn 12 or more points during subsequent approval periods.

"To protect the integrity of this designation and to achieve our vision," says Executive Director Bill Burns (CA), "an Approved Center will need to offer considerably more than an annual introductory play therapy course, internship, and continuing education workshop."

Congratulations to these first six Approved Centers designated by APT in July (contact them via the online Find University Play Therapy Directory):

- **Center for Play Therapy, University of North Texas, Denton.** Director and Associate Professor Sue Bratton, PhD, LPC, RPT-S.

Director and Associate Professor Sue Bratton, PhD, LPC, RPT-S.

Degrees offered: MEd, MS, PhD. Established in 1982 as an independent and self-funded center on campus. Full-service focus on instruction, practicums, supervisor training, research and publications, library, and continuing education. Bratton says,



Center Director Lauren Wynne (center) and Founder JoAnna White with Georgia State University President Mark Becker, PhD.



Center Director LeAnne Steen with Loyola University New Orleans Associate Dean Philip Frady, MSW.



Center Director Stephen Demanchick with Nazareth College President Daan Braveman, JD.

"Centers housed in universities that offer coursework can help legitimize play therapy, particularly when such coursework is viewed as core coursework requirements either for all students or for students specializing in working with children. The results of this action would be more students trained in play therapy as part of their graduate work which would likely result in more practicing play therapists."

- **Play Therapy Training Institute, Georgia State University, Atlanta.** Director and Assistant Professor Lauren Wynne, PhD, LPC, RPT-S.

Degrees offered: MEd, MS, EdD, PhD. Established by JoAnna White, EdD, LPC, RPT-S in 2007 and funded by university. Focus on instruction, practicum, and continuing education. Wynne says, "We will continue to offer rigorous, highly experiential play therapy coursework, contribute to the literature by publishing play therapy research, and train doctoral students who will become tomorrow's play therapy educators throughout the country."

- **Play Therapy Center, Loyola University New Orleans.**

Director and Assistant Professor LeAnne Steen, PhD, LPC, RPT-S. Degrees offered: MS. Established by Steen in 2009 and funded by university. Focus on instruction, practicum, and publications. Steen says, "We will foster research about the effectiveness of play therapy with a variety of populations, thereby increasing the significance of play therapy as evidence-based and beneficial."

- **Play Therapy Center for Children & Families, Nazareth College, Rochester, NY.** Director and Assistant Professor Stephen Demanchick, PhD, LMHC, RPT.

Degrees offered: MS, MSW. Established by Demanchick in 2009 and funded by the

college. Focus on instruction, publications, and continuing education. Demanchick says, "Our goals are to provide play therapy services, engage in play therapy research, provide high quality play therapy education, and offer affordable play therapy training for professionals and families."

• **Play Therapy Certificate Program, St. Mary's University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.**

Director and Associate Professor Steven Peltier, PhD, LP, LMFT. Degrees offered: MA, PsyD. Established by Peltier in 2009 and funded by university. Focus on instruction, practicum, and supervisor training. Peltier says, "Over 150 students took play therapy courses at Saint Mary's University over the past 3 years and the interest continues to grow. The credibility that comes from being part of a respected university enhances the acceptance of play therapy in the field."

• **Play Therapy Center, MidAmerica Nazarene University, Olathe, KS.**

Coordinator and Adjunct Professor Rebeca Chow, LCPC, RPT-S. Degrees offered: MA. Established by Mary Fry, LCPC, RPT-S, and Mary Roy, LCPC, RPT-S in 2004 and funded by the university. Focus on instruction, practicum, publications, and continuing education. Chow says, "Our center owes much to Professor Roy Rotz, PhD, the first chair of our counseling department, who returned from a filial therapy workshop in 2003 excited about training play therapists."

As the national professional society whose sole focus is the advancement of quality play therapy and play therapists, APT



Center Director Steven Peltier with Linka Holey, MSN, Associate Vice President and Academic Dean at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.



Center Coordinator Rebeca Chow (2nd from left) with MidAmerica Nazarene University Vice President for Academic Affairs Stephen Ragan, PhD (left), Associate Professor Mary Fry, and Center Founder and Associate Dean Roy Rotz, PhD.



Loyola University New Orleans Center Director LeAnne Steen instructs a graduate class while observing a play therapy video.

will continue to assist current and foster new Approved Centers. "Our center's affiliation with APT legitimizes our mission and vision within our college and community," says Demanchick. Peltier agrees, adding, "Our programs should be held to high professional standards by associations with a larger view. APT provides that view and an opportunity to interact with other universities and professionals to both design training models and grow the field."

"The Approved Center program is a key part of our three-prong approach to growing play therapy and the play therapy community," says Burns. "It will boost our credibility with policy makers, insurers, and the larger mental health community with solid research and to encourage our members to invite their colleagues and students to join us!"

"This exciting new program was designed and implemented with the encouragement of Garry Landreth, suggestions by 20 faculty members over a two-year period, and Linda Homeyer's leadership. We thank center organizers and their universities for their commitment to advance play therapy," says APT President Daniel Sweeney (OR).

Universities interested in becoming Approved Centers are encouraged to consult our online guide or contact APT.

<sup>1</sup> The 2007 study entitled *The Decision to Join* by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) surveyed 16,944 individuals

affiliated with more than 5,000 trade and professional associations. The study also concluded that 40% are most influenced by the recommendations of their peers and co-workers.

# Play Therapy Research Grants Awarded!

Two universities received \$20,000 grants from the Association for Play Therapy (APT) for studies utilizing randomized control groups and examining evidence-based play therapy practices.

Investigator April Schottelkorb, PhD, LPC, RPT-S, Assistant Professor of Counselor Education, and co-investigators Diana Doumas, PhD, LP, and Kenneth Coll, PhD, LPC, at Boise State University (Idaho) will compare Child Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). The study is entitled *Effectiveness of Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) with Traumatized Refugee Children: A Randomized Controlled Investigation*. The second study - *Comparison of a Non-Directive and Directive Humanistic Play Therapy Intervention: Effect on Disruptive*



Investigator Sue Bratton with Garry Landreth and the Center for Play Therapy staff at the University of North Texas.



Investigators April Schottelkorb (2nd from left) and Kenneth Coll (3rd from right) and the Boise State University research team.

*Behaviors of Early Elementary School-Aged Children* - compares directive and non-directive play therapy interventions. Investigators at the University of North Texas are Sue Bratton, PhD, LPC, RPT-S, Associate Professor of Counselor Education and Director of the Center for Play Therapy, and co-investigators Dee Ray, PhD, LPC, RPT-S, and Natalya Edwards, PhD, NCC, Denton, TX.

"Such empirical research will cause play therapy to be more valued," says Research Committee Chair Jennifer Baggerly (FL), "and directly respond to the CDC report (September 2008) saying play therapy is 'not known to be effective'." Initially prompted by Janine Shelby (CA), APT has refined its focus after discussions with prominent non-play therapy researchers.

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