

# Idaho Association for Play Therapy Newsletter

January 2013



Greetings and Happy New Year to you all!!!

The board of directors have been busy preparing for the annual play therapy conference on April 18, 19 and 20th. We are excited to invite Dr. Evangeline Munns to Idaho Falls! She will be presenting on Theraplay, something she is well known for. The title of the conference is, "Theraplay-Enhancing Attachment through Play Therapy." I just know you will all enjoy the hands on and active approach to helping children with healthy attachment to their caregivers.

## Executive Council

### *President/ Treasurer*

Molly Gratton  
Phone: (208) 860-0790  
[tvplaytherapy@live.com](mailto:tvplaytherapy@live.com)

### *Secretary*

Staci Jensen-Hart, MSW,  
LCSW  
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### *Board Members*

Rebecca Starr, *President Elect*  
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Dan Bayly

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Evangeline Munns Ph D, C Psych, RPT/S, is a certified clinical psychologist. She is a registered trainer/supervisor with the Theraplay Institute in Chicago, the Association for Play Therapy in the U.S., and the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy (on the latter she serves on the education committee). She is a popular presenter and has given numerous workshops on play therapy across Canada, United States and internationally. In recent years, much of her time has been spent in training and supervising therapists in Theraplay and /or nondirective and Filial play therapy including teaching as a guest lecturer at Western University in London, Ontario and Sir Wilfred Laurier in Kitchener, Ontario. With over forty years of experience working with children and their families, she offers a rich knowledge in the field of children's mental health. She has served as a consultant to many agencies. Dr. Munns has written numerous articles on Theraplay and has edited two books entitled "Theraplay: Innovations in Attachment-Enhancing Play Therapy"(2000) and a second book "Applications of Family and Group Theraplay"(2009). In the past she received the Monica Herbert award from the Canadian Association for Child and Play Therapy (CACPT) for "an outstanding contribution to the field of play therapy in Canada" Recently, she was the first therapist described in a list of the 5 top play therapists in Canada, by CACPT.

I want to inform everyone that we will have online registration this year. Please visit [www.idahoplaytherapy.org](http://www.idahoplaytherapy.org) and check out our "annual training page" under the training tab. You will see that registration is currently open!! Be the first to register and you will receive a special prize at the conference!

As we are preparing for the New Year, it is time to nominate and elect officers for our association. All new board members will begin their terms on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. At that time, our board will be shifting over to new leadership. After four years, I will be stepping down from the president's position. I'm excited to see Rebecca Star, our current president elect, take the reins to continue the leadership of our organization. With a new president coming on board, it is exciting to bring on new blood! We have

a lot of openings this year, three positions remain unfilled and two positions are up for renewal. Dan Bayly and Stacy Jensen - Hart's positions are both up for renewal. I hope you all consider investing in the membership and either step into a leadership role or nominate a fellow member for the board of directors. Please take the time to respond to this nomination process if you or someone you know would benefit our board! (More information at the end of this newsletter)

We are working hard to retain our Gold Branch status with the Association of Play Therapy. The only criteria needed to maintain this status is to increase our membership by 2%. Typically, the criterion is to increase membership by 5%. However, over the last couple of years, APT has held chapter's accountable to maintaining the membership. This year, they are increasing this by 2% to ease all chapters back to the normal 5% increase. Please help get the word out about our association as well as APT. If you know someone who has been thinking about joining APT, now is the time to encourage them to do so!! As previously shared, we will continue our currently recruitment incentive. You will receive a \$5 "Idaho Spud" for every member you recruit to join IDAPT. These may be saved and redeemed at any of our conferences. The deadline to earn your "Idaho Spud" is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Playfully Yours,  
Molly Gratton, LCSW  
Registered Play Therapist – Supervisor  
IDAPT President

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## Announcing the Idaho Association for Play Therapy Spring Conference with Evangeline Munns

**“Theraplay-Enhancing Attachment through Play  
Therapy”**

April 19th and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Idaho Falls, Idaho  
**Free** preconference on Ethics offered on April 18<sup>th</sup>

\*\*Free for APT members

For more information **and to register**, please visit our website at <http://idahoplaytherapy.org> and go to the Annual Conference under the trainings tab.

## Share your knowledge and earn Idaho Spuds!

If you submit a literature review, clinical piece, or some other information for the newsletter that is published; IDAPT will give you a \$10 certificate (Idaho Spud) good for use at our annual conference! Each spud will decrease the cost of attending our annual conference by \$10! So get your submissions in now! Please e-mail your submissions to Molly Gratton at [tvplaytherapy@live.com](mailto:tvplaytherapy@live.com)



**Register On-line!!** You can now register for the Idaho Association for Play Therapy conference on line. Just go to <http://www.idahoplaytherapy.org/> and under the trainings tab you will find the annual conference information.

### CLINICAL CORNER

## Helping Parents Respond to Tragedy and Violence By: Dan Bayly LCPC

Sometimes it seems that violence, crime, natural disasters, and an overall feeling of doom and danger is becoming more and more prevalent in our world. Whether or not it actually is becoming more common, it is definitely true that we are more frequently aware of these things due to increased access to media and 24 hour news cycles. As adults we may have a tendency to overlook this and let it go in one ear and out the other. Then something really horrible happens that demands our collective attention. These events are seen and replayed over and over again on radio, TV, and the internet. They are talked about on the street, at work, at home, and in schools. In the initial stages graphic and dramatic images are shown, witnesses are interviewed, and support is shown for all of the victims and people affected. Over time this gradually shifts and we begin discussions, or sometimes arguments, about a solution; what would make us safe, what the “reason” was, how we prevent this from ever happening again.

Then, slowly, we begin a return to normal. We go about our routines. We turn our attention back to things in our daily life. Throughout this process, children are present; seeing, observing, listening, worrying, and trying to make sense of what is going on, often silently. Many parents (and other adults) have a hard enough time processing their own reactions to these events, without a solid understanding of how children may react. In addition to providing direct counseling services, it is our job as professionals to educate and give guidance during these times in order to help parents and others to do the best they can to help the young people in their lives to process their feelings and emotions regarding what they are seeing and hearing. Here is some basic information that can be shared with parents and other caregivers to help them respond appropriately to the children in their lives.

First, limit a child's exposure to news and coverage of the event. Eventually children are likely to see or hear something or become aware of things that are happening, but overexposure is not helpful and can be harmful. Remember that newscasts are intended for an adult audience and are often driven by ratings and drama rather than information and facts. Depending on the age of the child there may be confusion upon seeing an event replayed time and time again even making it seem as though the same thing is truly happening over and over again. Another thing to remember is that this certainty is not comforting to children. The confusion and misinformation that is often given in the direct aftermath can be troubling to children as it makes it appear that the adults don't really know what is happening, making it more seem more terrifying. In the days and weeks following there is also often confusing, callous, and fear inducing comments made during the arguments and discussions about the event. In my experience following the recent Newtown school shooting, I encountered children who were far more upset about the ensuing debate over things such as gun control than by the incident itself; "Is it true that everyone is going to have a gun?" "What if the principle has a gun and accidentally shoots someone?" "Can 'crazy' people really buy machine guns whenever they want?" These are all comments that I heard when working with children.

When sharing or clarifying information with children give honest but simple explanations. Let them know what has happened or is happening, but there is no need to over expand or share too much. In events that involve children remember that this does not necessarily make it a child's problem. It is still an adult problem, it just may have impacted selected children this time. Universally, it is not a problem for children. Remember to emphasize the care and steps taken to help the victims and to keep your children safe. If it seems appropriate donate to an organization that is helping; Red Cross, United Way, etc. Remember that often times what children are really concerned about or asking is, "am I safe?" Emphasize the steps you take to keep your child safe; smoke detectors, neighborhood watch programs, seatbelts, family emergency plans, etc., whatever is appropriate to the recent event or disaster. Then allow space for your child to talk. Children can find comfort in ways that we may not expect. Again, related

to the recent Newtown shooting, my son shared with me that he had heard about the shooting. I gave him a clear concise description of what had happened. I asked him if he had any thoughts or worries and he then asked where Connecticut was and if it was far away. When I told him it was he then said, “well, the guy that did it killed himself right.” I responded that yes he did. He then said, “well, I’m not worried then because he can’t do it again.” This is not what I had expected and not the thing that I would have thought to emphasize for him to feel safe. However, depending on the child’s age, individuality, personal experiences, and the event itself, reactions will be different. The point is to hold space for your child to respond, ask questions, and come to their own age appropriate understanding. In general it is best for children to return to regular routines and activities as soon as possible. This does not, however, mean that we discourage them from talking and sharing their feelings about an event.

Another important way that children process trauma and events is through play. Following a tragic event children may play out themes of this event in make believe or with their toys. For example they may play car crashes following a crash which they have heard about or been exposed to, may play doctor or hospital if a family member is sick, or may play earthquake if there has been a recent earthquake in the news. Through this play children make sense of what has happened. It also gives them a feeling of mastery or control over the circumstances and may reduce the likelihood that they will experience long term consequences or disturbances as a reaction. It also lets them emphasize the safety factors present. In short, it makes them feel safe. When children are engaging in this sort of play following an event, do not interrupt it or try to stop it. Parents may say things such as, “don’t play that way”, or be worried about how others may react if their children are playing gun games following a shooting. Try not to judge your child’s play based on your own reactions or process. Remember that play is a child’s world, it is how they process and make sense of the larger world around them. Through this re-enactment and themed play they resolve their own issues and concerns and find resolution.

This being said, there are some circumstances where a child’s play can indicate traumatization or something that might best be addressed through counseling or another type of intervention. If the play is obviously upsetting to the child, you may want to limit the amount of time that the child engages in this activity. Similarly if you notice that a certain type or theme of play has taken on a quality of obsession you may want to find ways to re-direct or limit it. Play is generally free from anxiety, danger, and discomfort. Parents should also be aware of any signs or symptoms of traumatization long after an event has occurred, as a child’s reaction to trauma can be delayed. If you see any of the following signs in your child it is best to seek a professional consultation from a play therapist or other counselor with special knowledge of working with children:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Refusal of school or activities

- Noticeable changes in mood or temper
- Nightmares
- Aggression
- Increased startle reflex
- Reverting to younger age behavior such as bedwetting, thumb sucking, etc.
- Seems withdrawn or aloof
- Either won't talk or talks excessively about what has happened
- Overall increase in anxiety or worry

It can be especially difficult for parents to help their children if they are also dealing with their own reaction to an event or tragedy. If someone is finding it difficult to follow these ideas or guidelines, know that their own reaction is getting in the way, or generally have concerns about their child or his/her adjustment or reaction, it would be wise to consult with a professional.

As play therapists we are uniquely qualified to help in situations which impact families, children, and adults. Remember the dual role we also play in educating is providing information for the public about ourselves and the mental well being of those we serve.

**Get involved!!** It is nomination time and you can nominate yourself or someone else to the executive council of Idaho Association for Play Therapy. It is a great opportunity to network and share your passion for play therapy!

## **Refer a friend**

**If you refer someone who joins the Association for Play Therapy (Idaho Chapter) you will get \$5 Idaho Spud that can be used on your IDAPT annual conference registration. Who doesn't like saving money?**

**CHECK OUT OUR *NEW* WEBSITE AT:  
<http://www.idahoplaytherapy.org/>**

# Don't forget to renew your membership!

## Interested in running an ad in the IDAPT NEWSLETTER?

If you are interested in running an ad in the IDAPT newsletter,  
please submit the copy to [tvplaytherapy@live.com](mailto:tvplaytherapy@live.com)

2 X 2 - \$5.00

4 X 4 - \$10.00

half page - \$25.00

full page - \$50.00

Please contact an Executive Council member or Molly Gratton  
at (208) 860-0790 about your interest in placing an advertisement.

312011



Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Rebecca Starr, Nominations and Elections Chair  
Idaho Association for Play Therapy  
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January 2013

TO: Idaho Association for Play Therapy Members  
RE: Executive Council Nominations

The IDAPT fiscal year ends June 30, 2013. It is time to obtain nominations for members of the Executive Council for the new fiscal year of July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014. The qualifications required to serve on the Executive Council are membership in APT and IDAPT and monthly attendance at our phone conference call currently being held the first Monday of every month at 8am. Council members serve two-year terms corresponding to the fiscal year (July 1-June 30). There are three positions open for the upcoming election.

Please indicate your choice of nominee(s) below and return this form via e-mail or postal service dated / postmarked no later than February 15, 2013. You can nominate current members of the Council or non-Council members. You may also nominate yourself if you wish to support Play Therapy and the IDAPT in this way by being an Executive Council member. Copy this form if you wish to nominate more than four persons.

Thank you for your nominations,  
Rebecca Starr LCSW, RPT-S

I nominate the following individual(s) to serve on the IDAPT Executive Council for the next two years.

Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____	Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____  Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____  Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____
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