

Annual Report: July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association



PRESIDENT JUDITH KELLER

Last year, in this same space, I wrote that membership was up, conference attendance was up and that the board and council came well under projected revenues! Well, ditto for 2008-09!!! The Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (TSHA) now boasts more than 5000 members! More than 4000

of those members attended the state convention. Some number between 400-500 (we lost count!) walked the halls of the Texas Capitol building to encourage legislators to support five TSHA bills. TSHA hired a marketing firm who was instrumental in helping us with our legislative issues. And all of this happened in a year when the stock market was on a roller coaster! Now, I am mixing metaphors but the TSHA Executive Board battened down the hatches and prepared for the worst of financial storms. And maybe it was this fear of what was going to happen to the association financially, that everyone worked harder with fewer dollars to accomplish these successes! Now that the storm seems to have subsided, there are surpluses from 2007-08 and 2008-09 which will be "save for a rainy day" or the next storm. This annual report truly reflects all of the outstanding work of the Association and the incredible accomplishments for this year.

HONORS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Chaired by **Martha Wristen**

This committee reviewed applications for the Awards of the Association, and the Jack L. Bangs. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) awards (DiCarlo and Van Hattum) were not offered this year due to the financial situation.

The Award of Honors which is presented to speech-language pathologists and audiologists who have contributed significantly to TSHA and demonstrated outstanding leadership in the profession was presented to Becky Gonzales, Jennifer Watson and Roya Daryaparma.

All of these recipients received their awards at the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation (TSHF) Luncheon, April 3, during the state association convention in Austin.

ETHICAL PRACTICES

Chaired by **Benna Askew**

No reports of ethical misconduct for the year were made.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Chaired by **Carolyn Perry**

Carolyn and her committee submitted a full slate of candidates for the 2009 elections. Candidates for President-Elect were Debbie Sears and April Smith; Candidates for Vice President for Public Information and Marketing were Rebecca Linke and Olivia Whitefield; candidates for Vice President for Professional Issues were Gina Glover and Jo Ann Wiechman.

This was the second year for members to have a choice to vote on-line or by paper ballot. The on-line voting was provided by Election Services Corporation which is the same group who manages the ASHA on-line voting. This committee is considering ways to increase participation in the election process and ways to better market the candidates to the membership. They are already looking ahead to the next election cycle, which will include Vice President for Social and Governmental Policy, Vice President for Research and Development and Vice President for Educational and Scientific Affairs

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Liz Mathukutty (SFA) and **Samantha Barrera** (TA & M-Kingsville)

Liz and Samantha attended all of the Executive Board meetings this past year and provided valuable input from a student's perspective. They coordinated the student volunteer efforts for convention and wrote articles for the *Communicologist*. Liz rotated off the board at the end of June and the new student who will join the board is **Kalli Donaway** from Abilene Christian University where she completed her undergraduate work. She will attend Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in the fall of 2009. She will attend her first board meeting in September.

PUBLIC SCHOOL SLP VACANCY COMMITTEE

Chaired by **Cherry Wright**

The TSHA/TCASE Joint Committee met three times during the past year and hosted three meetings of the coalition of related professional associations. The Joint Committee continued to work on the Action Plans developed to improve the quality of services in the public schools and to address the shortage of speech-language pathologists (SLPs). New and updated information was posted on the TSHA website which included SLP Credentials and Assignments Chart, Eligibility Guidelines and information related to the guidelines, links to ASHA Resources and a Texas Alert for SLP and assistive technologist (AT) services.

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The THSA Public Information Exhibit with an accompanying "Career Awareness" packet and recruitment/retention information was displayed by the Joint Committee at the following related professional associations including the Texas Elementary Principals' Association, the Texas Association of Personnel Administrators, the Texas Association of School Administrators, the Texas Council of Administrators in Special Education (TCASE) and the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Several presentations and publications were completed and others were planned. "SLP-As in the Schools" was presented at TCASE and at the TSHA Convention. Upcoming presentations include, "What's So Special About School-Based Speech-Language Therapy?" which was accepted for the Annual Texas Parent-to-Parent State Conference in June and "Dismissal from Speech-Language Pathology Criteria" and "Executive Summary of Eligibility Guidelines" (Power Point on CD provided) which was accepted for Summer TCASE Conference. An article titled "Guidelines Help Texas Clinicians Manage Caseloads" was published in the *ASHA Leader*, March 3, 2009. A report to the TSHA membership regarding the activities of the Joint Committee was presented at the Public School Advisory Committee "Update on Current School Issues" at the TSHA Convention.

The Joint Committee continued to develop a system of communication with the 20 Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) and District Lead SLPs. Approximately 144 District Leads have requested that their names be included on an e-mail contact list. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Alert for Texas was emailed to Regional ESC contacts, to District Leads, and was posted on the TSHA and TCASE websites.

At the request of Kathy Clayton with the Texas Education Association (TEA), the Committee worked with the Response to Intervention (RtI) Task Force to develop an "RtI Best Practices" document for the TEA website and with the Eligibility Guidelines Task Force to address the need for trainers for each of the templates at the 20 Region ESCs.

The Joint Committee met with the Coalition of Related Professional Associations and continued to work to support joint legislative efforts. A meeting with University representatives was held and the following topics were addressed: Training on the Eligibility Templates for university instructors, non-traditional programs, university and district collaborative projects, practicum models for undergraduates, training bilingual SLPs, and special education certification and the Federal Loan Forgiveness

program. Testimony on behalf of the Joint Committee was presented on SB 1141 and HB 3576 – Loan Repayment during the 2009 Legislative Session. A grant was submitted to and awarded by ASHA to develop a public service announcement regarding the shortage of SLPs in the schools. A meeting of select officers of both TSHA and TCASE was scheduled.

TSHA PUBLICATIONS BOARD

Chaired by **Melinda Corwin**

Dee Kirby and **Lynly Stephen** completed their terms as alternating editors of the *Communicologist*, which was published on time every other month. **Lisanne Taylor** completed the second article tracking guide for the *Communicologist* to better document the type and volume of information that TSHA is providing to its members and she also completed (and Publications Board approved) the writing style guidelines, which were added to the Policies & Procedures Manual for 2008-2009. The 2008 issue of the *TEJAS* was published and mailed to members. **Tim Meline** served as editor. All previous *TEJAS* issues are now archived on the TSHA website. **Tim Meline** and **Donise Pearson** will investigate the possibility of making the *TEJAS* an online journal for 2010.

The Publications Board solicited and reviewed an article authored by **Cherry Wright** and **Debra Bankston** regarding TSHA's efforts to address the SLP shortage via public school eligibility templates and the training of trainer models. The article was published in the *ASHA Leader* in March of 2009 so that TSHA news was shared at the national level. The Publications Board reviewed, edited, and approved over 50 items for TSHA in the forms of a journal, newsletters, brochures, booklets, letters, posters, e-mail blasts, magazine ads, press releases, flyers, billboards, and website postings. **Melinda Corwin** completed her 3-year term as Publications Board Chair on June 30, 2009. **Donise Pearson** is scheduled to begin her 2-year term as Publications Board Chair on July 1, 2009.



**PRESIDENT ELECT
DENISE BARRINGER**

BYLAWS

Chaired by **Denise Barringer**

In response to recent discussions with the Council of State Association Presidents, TSHA's legal counsel, and an outside consultant on best practices for non-profit boards, TSHA will now

require that all members of the executive board sign an

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annual conflict of interest statement. This will ensure that TSHA governance includes best practices for non-profit boards.

This required a bylaw change which was presented to the membership at large at the 2009 annual business meeting held in Austin, Texas. **Bylaws Amendment: Section 10.** "All board members will sign an annual conflict of interest form."

FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chaired by **Denise Barringer**

Members: Lynn Flahive, Debra Bankston, Lynda Barbee, Tiffany Sears-Leach, Judy Rudebusch, Becky Gonzalez, Judith Keller (President, ex-officio) and Don Canada (Executive Director, ex-officio) The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) held a face-to-face meeting in October in Austin to complete an internal review. Long-term and short-term investments were reviewed and discussed in detail. A number of questions were asked and answered. The FAC requested that the 2009 external audit be completed by a firm that specializes in non-profit organizations. Request for Proposals (RFPs) were sent out to 4 firms in Austin.

Given the state of the banking institutions in late 2008 and early 2009, the FAC and Executive Board made an important decision to ensure that all of the TSHA monies were insured under the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insurance.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chaired by **Denise Barringer**

The TSHA Strategic Plan was reviewed by the Executive Board and updated in January 2009. Jean Block attended the strategic planning retreat and provided the Executive Board with "Best Practices" for non-profit boards.

TSHA OPEN HOUSE AT THE ASHA CONVENTION

Chaired by **Denise Barringer**

The TSHA sponsored an open house at the 2008 ASHA Convention in Chicago. The event was attended by approximately 200 TSHA members and friends of Texas. Attendees were treated to wonderful appetizers, drinks, and a great Texas party.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS AMY MARCINIAK

TSHA worked diligently this year to continue to provide continuing education activities to our members. One of these activities included the 53rd annual convention in Austin which hosted 4,413 attendees. Through the dedication of volunteers and our state office this convention was the largest to date.

VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT FOR EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

Lauren Matthews

Lauren participated in all areas under this vice presidency. She worked closely with the program co-chairs to help organize and streamline convention procedures. Lauren provided great insight as we moved forward with a new continuing education system at convention. She has worked on putting together an organization/timeline binder to be able to pass on to the next vice president.

COUNCILOR FOR ANNUAL TSHA CONVENTION

Chaired by **Melanie McDonald**

Melanie provided a great deal of support this year in sharing her expertise and previous experience to help bring the 2009 convention to a huge level of success. She participated in the program planning for convention. She was an integral part in being the contact for all three of our major speakers and helped arrange transportation. Melanie helped monitor programming at the 2009 convention. She recently participated in the post-con/pre-con meeting and is in the process of moving into local arrangements co-chair for the 2010 convention.

TSHA CONVENTION PROGRAM

Co-Chaired by **Tori Gustafson** and **Renee Attaway**

Tori was in charge of the Program Committee's review of each Call for Papers submission and approving of all convention sessions. It was her task to schedule each session and collaborate with the State Office to attend to issues such as handouts and audio-visual needs. Renee then took over the reins and helped organize the program committee with the edits needed for the pre-con brochure and onsite brochure. Both Tori and Renee, coordinated the many details of short course and advanced speakers. We offered 135 continuing education opportunities. This included: Keynote Address, 2 major speakers, 8 short courses, 4 advanced courses, 12 product promotions, 107

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traditional presentations, 3 repeat courses, and 26 poster sessions. We had 7 cancellations and 22 closed sessions (mainly due to small room sizes and a major speaker having to cancel due to weather). Recently, the program chairs met in May for post-con/pre-con meeting. The program chairs got a jump start planning major, advanced and short course speakers for the 2010 convention in Ft. Worth, Texas.

LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Co-Chaired by **Bobbie Kay Turkett** and **Michelle Mendieta**
Local arrangements committee helped make everyone feel welcome in Austin for the 2009 convention. They were responsible for the various convention subcommittees in order to ensure quality and efficiency during convention such as registration, hospitality, signs, transportation, photography, and social chairs. After convention they compiled reports from all subcommittees with suggestions for the following year. All information was organized and placed on a CD and in the two local arrangement co-chair binders. Bobbie Kay and Michelle participated in post-con/pre-con meeting in Ft. Worth and made suggestions to help the local arrangement committee co-chairs for 2010.

EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

Co-Chaired by **Rebecca Linke** and **Monica Haynie**
Rebecca and Monica did an excellent job organizing exhibitors at the 2009 convention. They were responsible for registering the exhibitors and handling any of their needs throughout convention. They put their creative side to work and designed and implemented the ever-popular exhibit hall game. Rebecca and Monica along with TSHA state office worked to provide 528 exhibitors for TSHA members this year. Other Exhibit Hall activities included Cyber Café, beverage breaks for members, exhibit drawings, and door prizes. After convention they compiled feedback forms from exhibitors and reported the information during the post-con/pre-con meeting in Ft. Worth.

JOB PLACEMENT COMMITTEE

Chaired by **Raedeen Wingate** and **Erin Bellue**
Job placement was a big success at the 2009 convention. Raedeen and Erin continued to make improvements to the job placement procedure. They were responsible for helping design the job placement set up, gaining volunteers to work shifts, and setting up the dry erase board schedule grid. We had 73 companies interviewing and 146 applicants looking for jobs. Raedeen and Erin submitted an article for the *Communicologist* and wrote a post-con report with suggestions for next year. They participated in the post-con/pre-con meeting in Ft. Worth.

CONVENTION VOLUNTEERS

Chaired by **Arron Preston**

Arron worked with the student executive board members to organize student volunteers. He made a trip to Austin to encourage local establishments to donate items for a professional volunteer drawing. He put together a VIP (Volunteers are Important People) happy hour with prizes that were given away. He designed a flyer to attract volunteers using the live music theme of convention. Arron attended local arrangements meeting in Austin. He organized all volunteers at convention.

TSHA COUNCILOR FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by **Karen King**

Karen provided input into the new convention continuing education (CE) system that was implemented at convention this year. She organized volunteers to review and input convention CE hours and is the contact for any questions pertaining to convention CE hours. She is currently collaborating with her committee on a more efficient process for inputting convention hours for the 2010 convention.

CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) PROCESSOR

Chaired by **Leon Barbee**

Leon continued to help TSHA look to the future in continuing education. He made sure the TSHA CE application process is efficient and easily accessible for the members. Anyone interested in hosting a TSHA CE sponsored event can easily apply for TSHA CE hours online at www.txsha.org. Leon processed 568 continuing education activities. He continued to make sure all CE hours are transferred onto the TSHA CE registry which is free to all TSHA members. He was instrumental in getting the new convention continuing education system in place for the 2009 convention. Leon is working on a more efficient process for inputting convention hours for the 2010 convention. He is also supporting a process for providing TSHA CE approval for online courses.

ASHA CONTINUING EDUCATION PROCESSOR

Chaired by **Loretta Lee**

Loretta processed ASHA CE applications as well as all the TSHA Annual Convention ASHA hours. She also helped to ensure that all CE processes were in compliance with ASHA standards. Loretta was selected to be interviewed by ASHA for their continuing education publication.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Chaired by **Janice Stroud**

Janice met the needs and interests for many of the TSHA's members by providing CE opportunities that were

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individualized. She processed the TSHA/ASHA independent study applications; supplied necessary information about the study; and approved, monitored, and processed independent study projects. The application process is online and very user-friendly for the membership. She will continue to work with the committee on an ethics online course offered through TSHA.

SPEECH CE APPROVAL

Chaired by **Margaret McAughan**

Margaret received and approved the speech CE applications. After reviewing the information she determined if the programs met the criteria for TSHA CE hours and then submitted the approval to the CE Processor who completed the procedure.

AUDIOLOGY CE APPROVAL

Chaired by **Pam Bender**

Pam received and approved the audiology CE applications. After reviewing the information she determined if the programs met the criteria for TSHA CE hours and then submitted the approval to the CE Processor who completed the procedure.

REGIONAL SEMINAR FUNDING GRANTS

Chaired by **Renee Bogschutz**

Renee received and processed applications with her committee for the TSHA Seminar Grants. The purpose of the grants is to allow local associations, NSSLHA chapters, or other groups to defray costs incurred in providing regionally advertised seminars or workshops for speech-language pathologists and/or audiologists. The application for the regional seminar grants is online to make the procedure easier and more efficient for the applicants. Renee and her committee followed a criteria rating form to rate each individual program. Four grants were awarded this year and were announced in the *Communicologist* and at the TSHA Annual Business Meeting held during the annual convention in Austin.

SUMMER SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE

Co-Chaired by **Lynn Flahive, Sherry Sancibrian, and Robyn Martin**

Lynn, Sherry, and Robyn hosted this special summer symposium in Breckenridge Colorado in July 2008. Ten CE hours were offered. They compiled case studies sent in by attendees for Dr. Barbara Hodson to review prior to the symposium. There were 45 attendees. All 45 attendees rated the symposium as outstanding. An article was written for the *Communicologist* to inform the members how well this unique CE opportunity was received.



**VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
KERI GONZALES**

The committees and task forces under this vice presidency are involved with the identification and promotion of issues related to the advancement in clinical practice of various work arenas. Each committee and task force has worked throughout the year

to address the needs of our TSHA members and what a year it has been! Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to provide such wonderful information to our membership.

COUNCILORS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Becky Gonzalez, Jan Lougeay, Vice President-Elect for Research and Development, and Christy Weddington

A big thank you goes out to each one of these ladies who helped with the organization of quarterly reports, email reminders, and contacts with each of the committees and task forces. They made my job much easier!

PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chaired by **JoAnn Wiechmann**

The Public School Advisory Committee (PSAC) researched issues of concern for speech-language pathologists working in the public schools. A card survey was taken at the convention on: public school issues and workload/flexible scheduling. The Committee continues to work on creating a document showing a comparison of speech-language pathology services in public schools vs. private services (i.e., medical, private practice) and also to create a guidance document for private speech-language pathologists to use when conducting Independent Educational Evaluations (IEE). The Committee also presented a wonderful session at the convention and will continue to collaborate with TCASE on state topics.

TRAINER OF TRAINERS COMMITTEE

Chaired by **Christy Weddington and Sue Johnsen**

This Committee has had a very busy year! The Language and Fluency Template Trainings were scheduled as short courses at the convention. Updates were also scheduled for trainers from across the state and were a big success. The Committee placed a Template Training Application on the TSHA website to encourage new trainers in all areas. The Generic Eligibility Template is in the final stages for universities, special education directors and regional service centers. The Committee is also researching new innovative

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ways to train speech-language pathologists in the Eligibility Templates which might include webinar training or a possible summer institute. The Committee also continues communication with TCASE/TSHA Joint Committee to collaborate on template trainings and needs.

TEMPLATE REVIEW/TRAINING TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Ann Shaw-King**

This new task force recruited its members and began a very busy year with the 2009 convention! It began with announcements in the *Communicologist* and email blasts letting members know about trainings and updates to be scheduled at the convention. Once these announcements were provided, then came the overall organizing of CEU's, printing of handouts, and responding to email questions regarding the trainings and updates. The task force is now planning new goals and activities for the upcoming year in conjunction with the Trainer of Trainers Committee.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Tina Lombardi** and **Lisa Zimmerman**

This task force had 2 new co-chairs as leaders and was busy writing articles for the *Communicologist*, and keeping the email distribution list busy with questions and information. The task force completed an AT/AAC Resource Guide which is in the process of being edited. Once this Resource Guide has been edited and approved, the goal is to place the guide on the TSHA website for our membership. The task force also participated in the 2009 convention Round Table discussions which saw a continued growth of membership participation.

CLD COMPANION: LANGUAGE TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Roxanna Ruiz-Felter** and **Ellen Stubbe Kester**

This task force has diligently worked on reviewing the laws that deal with the bilingual population at the state and national levels. Several sections have been reviewed by the members and assignments have been made for other sections to be reviewed. Once these areas are completed, the members will move on to documents that relate to student support teams, and parent and teacher interviews. The final portions of the review will be the formal and informal assessments and eligibility guidelines. The task force is also seeking information regarding the training modules for bilingual speech-language pathologists. This will be a wonderful document for our TSHA members once it is completed.

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY (CLD) TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Ellen Stubbe Kester** and **Gina Glover**

This task force was very active publishing articles in every

issue of the *Communicologist*. The committee members were a resource for the TSHA membership on CLD issues. Updates on the TSHA website in the areas of questions/answers, resources, materials and recommendations were provided. The task force was also very busy participating and hosting the CLD Round Table discussions and provided presentations on CLD issues at the TSHA Convention. The task force is also researching various ways to provide support/training to university programs on CLD issues. They plan to continue recruiting graduate student members in order to provide these students with an avenue for involvement into TSHA.

EVIDENCED BASED PRACTICE TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Jenny Katz**

This task force is new, so members were recruited from several work arenas. The task force participated in numerous activities throughout the year. Several articles were published in the *Communicologist*. The task force presented at the 2009 convention on "Evidence-Based Practice: What Does That Mean to Me?" which was well attended. The task force will continue working diligently to complete website information for our TSHA members.

TELEPRACTICE TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Angie Geurin** and **Diana Christiana**

This task force hosted **Janet Brown** at the TSHA 2009 Convention. The presentation was well attended. The task force has been collaborating with The Texas State Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists Ad Hoc Committee on reviewing standards for future guidelines in the area of telepractice. Several articles have been published in the *Communicologist* throughout the year. Diana is currently serving on the ASHA Ad Hoc Telepractice Committee and the American Telemedicine Association Standards and Guidelines Committee for Tele-rehabilitation. Diana provided the task force the most current information on national trends in telepractice, updates on the newest equipment, and suggested guidelines and standards. **Gilda Lopez** presented at the San Antonio Speech-Language-Hearing Association on telepractice and she continues to maintain ties with SHARS representatives. Angie presented at the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District Parent Advisory Council meeting on telepractice and hosted several speech-language pathologists for observations.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI) TASK FORCE

Chaired by **JoAnn Wiechmann** and **Judy Rudebusch**

This task force was off and running from the start! The task force was busy submitting articles to the *Communicologist*

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and several more articles are planned. Information on Rtl is being organized for the TSHA website. The committee planned to work on an Rtl position statement to propose for TSHA approval. The position statement will be presented to TEA once the TSHA Executive Board has reviewed and approved it.

PRIVATE PRACTICE TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Lisa Famiglietti** and **Barbara Samfield**

This was another eventful year for this task force. This task force was continuously working for the betterment of our TSHA membership. The task force had a very active email distribution list with on-going issues which included major insurance companies and denial of coverage for speech services, employee contract issues and non-compete issues. Task force members worked diligently and completed the Summary Analysis Reports of Response Summaries for all 3 surveys. What great information will be shared with our TSHA membership! Another success this year was the Business Institute Programs and Networking Dinner at the 2009 convention. What a success! Several articles were published in the *Communicologist* throughout the year regarding issues in the area of private practice.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MARKETING MEREDITH MOORE

Public Information and Marketing Task forces were very busy this past year. In January 2008, the Executive Board members, along with an ASHA representative, created a strategic plan for TSHA and the upcoming years. With this strategic plan, it became

apparent that the task forces and committees under Public Information and Marketing play a vital role in this Association. Each of the following task force chairs and co-chairs worked diligently all year long to address the needs of our membership and our consumers. Heartfelt thanks goes out to every one of these amazing individuals, who so willingly gave of their precious time, energy and efforts. It is truly an honor to be apart of such an outstanding group of leaders and our amazing Association.

COUNCILOR/MEMBER BENEFITS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chaired by **Olivia Whitefield**

Olivia helped keep this vice presidency organized and goal oriented. Her continuous support was noted as she was readily available and willing to jump in and help wherever needed. She regularly communicated with all of the tasks force chairs to help and give guidance as needed. Olivia gathered and reviewed Quarterly Reports from all of the

task force chairs and committee members. She is truly an outstanding leader and will do an excellent job at Vice President Elect for Public Information and Marketing.

SHOPPE TSHA MEMBER BENEFITS TASK FORCE

Co-chaired by **Bobbie Kay Turkett** and **Emily McRae**

Providing member benefits and impressive TSHA items is the goal of Shoppe TSHA. It was a huge success again this year. Shoppe TSHA included the sale of convention and TSHA shirts and many other wonderful products. A very popular item for sale was Schuyler's Monster: a Father's Journey with His Wordless Daughter, the book by our keynote speaker, Robert Rummel-Hudson. Bobbie Kay Turkett and Emily McRae need to be applauded for all their efforts on another successful Shoppe TSHA.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chaired by **Katie Stoneman**

One key goal on the TSHA Strategic Plan was membership recruitment and retention. With the help of our state office and Katie Stoneman, membership is on the rise! Just to name a few of your TSHA membership benefits: inexpensive continuing education, job placement, grassroots opportunities, FREE Career Awareness packets, 25 FREE Matt Learns to Read books, FREE use of the Public Information Exhibit (PIE), fantastic publications, such as the *Communicologist* and *TEJAS* journal, and so much more. I hope you take advantage of all that TSHA has to offer you. Katie has also worked with local school districts to advertise and recruit membership. Here is how TSHA members can help Katie and all her efforts, please tell fellow colleagues about TSHA! If they are not a member, let them know what they are missing!

MAY IS BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Kalli Donaway**

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month task Force chair Kalli Donaway, worked hard to create a "top ten" list of ways to promote our wonderful professions for the *Communicologist*. TSHA placed several advertisements in local Family and Baby magazines to raise public awareness of the vital roles that our professions play in their lives, as well as to celebrate this special month that is dedicated to all speech-language pathologist and audiologists. Plan something special in the area where you live or work to let others know about our incredible professions during May.

CAREER AWARENESS DISTRIBUTION TASK FORCE

Co-Chaired by **Jenny McGlothlin** and **Suzanne Bonifert**

The Career Awareness Task Force co-chairs, Jenny McGlothlin and Suzanne Bonifert received numerous requests for the educational packets that promote our professions to students in upper elementary, middle school, high school

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and college undergraduate programs. Although the career awareness packets are fairly new, these hard working ladies never stopped. They continually strived to make things better by updating and creating a new power point to go along with the presentation. Take part in the "TSHA Talks to Texas" initiative by scheduling your presentation. The packets are FREE and very easy to use. They provide a power point, brochures that list the 18 accredited universities in Texas, book marks to give away and a DVD that highlights what speech-language pathologists and audiologists do everyday. It is never too early to get students interested in a career in speech-language pathology or audiology. Order your packets today and start telling others about our rewarding professions. To order, please call TSHA at 888-SAY-TSHA (888-729-8742)

UNIVERSITY VISITS TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Jaclyn Molina**

This year the current executive board members and the newly elected officers visited 18 Texas Universities that offer graduate and undergraduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology. Jaclyn created an excellent power point that was informative and encouraging to the students. It is exciting to see how many students are interested in our professions.

WORK ARENA PUBLIC RELATIONS TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Meera Ravel**

The Work Arena Public Relations Task Force chair worked with the TSHA state office on creating various ways that members could promote our professions across work settings all year long. No matter the environment, TSHA members make a difference in their job setting and communities. It is vital that TSHA professionals promote our fields, regardless of the work setting.

STUDENT INTEREST COMMITTEE

Co-chaired by **Lora Katkic** and **Paige Preston**

The Student Interest Committee co-chairs, Lora Katkic and Paige Preston, worked diligently to create another outstanding event at convention. The energy was evident as attendees entered the convention hall, where the Praxis Bowl was being held. Each University was represented by a student team; all participants and spectators were bubbling with excitement. With the help of **Carolyn Perry**, the Praxis bowl questions were up to date and practical for the students. The Praxis Bowl is a great way for the student to review their knowledge as they prepare for the Praxis exam. And the food and the give-away prizes were an extra bonus!

PUBLIC INFORMATION EXHIBIT TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Jennifer Pate**

The Public Information Exhibit (PIE) task force chair, Jennifer Pate, enthusiastically worked to encourage the use of the TSHA PIE. The TSHA PIE is available to all members for use at no cost! The PIE comes complete with graphics and up to date information regarding our professions. It is compact, light weight, easy to assemble and best of all the TSHA state office will ship it anywhere you would like to take it! The TSHA PIE is the perfect display for any presentation or workshop. To reserve the PIE, please visit www.txsha.org/advertising/publications_info_exhibit.asp

PUBLIC INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Erica Dinkins**

WOW! Public Information Distribution task force chair, Erica Dinkins, was extremely busy and Matt Learns to Read has become tremendously popular this past year. TSHA helped increase literacy skills and awareness throughout Texas by providing children with their own copy of Matt Learns to Read. Last year, the fourth printing of Matt Learns to Read was completed in both English and Spanish. Many of these wonderful books were distributed to our members. As a member, anyone can receive 25 copies free each year to distribute. Many members used these books as therapy tools, gave them to children as they mastered various speech and language skills, gave them to Head Start libraries or provided them to doctor's offices. To receive your free copies, please download a request form www.txsha.org/publications/matt_learns_to_read.asp

PAST PRESIDENTS' POWERHOUSE (P³) TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Donise Pearson**

TSHA's Past Presidents' Powerhouse, was led by none other than Donise Pearson, who eagerly and with enthusiasm took on any task asked of her. Donise has held many offices on the TSHA Executive Council and Board. She continued to work to make TSHA an exceptional state association for all of the members. She and committee member **Cherry Wright** testified at the Higher Education Committee hearing. Her hard work and dedication also shined through at convention, when one of the major speakers was unable to attend due to inclement weather. She and **Sherry Sancibrain** volunteered to present an extra ethics course session. TSHA is fortunate to have outstanding past presidents who continually work to better the Association.

TEXAS REGIONAL ASSOCIATION COALITION TASK FORCE

Co-chaired by **Kelli Gibbons** and **Michelle Medietta**

The Texas Regional Association Coalition (TRAC) task force co-chairs, Kelli Gibbons and Michelle Medietta, did an

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outstanding job of drawing together the various regional associations, so that they could help support and encourage each other. Along with organizing the regional associations, they also did a terrific job of coordinating events, maintaining contact among the members, providing information and generating articles for the *Communicologist*. The majority of the 15 Texas regional associations were represented at the TSHA-hosted statewide meeting in the summer of 2008. All of them are invited to attend another meeting July 31-August 1, 2009, in Dallas.

The Public Information and Marketing task force chairs and committee members were very busy and TSHA members benefitted from their hard work! To help with all of TSHA's efforts, TSHA has hired Vollmer Public Relations firm to assist with internal and external public relations, marketing, and legislative efforts. The firm did an excellent job, by quickly familiarizing themselves with TSHA as an association and with the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology. They created numerous press releases, developed key messages, contacted local media, both radio and print, and worked on various legislative documents. Those who attended the Capitol visit, saw the strong talking points that were put together so that the message could be clearly communicated and heard by every legislator.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR SOCIAL AND GOVERNMENTAL POLICY BESS SIRMON FJORDBAK

This year began with great anticipation, thanks to many months of organization and preparation by **Stacy Reaves**, Vice President for Social and Governmental Policy (July 1, 2007 – January 1, 2009) and her team, Larry Higdon, Director of Legislation, and Mark Hanna, Legal and Legislative

Counsel, and Bess Sirmon Fjordbak, Vice-President-Elect. The legislative priorities were set in preparation for the advent of the 81st Session of the Texas Legislature. Due to other commitments, Stacy stepped down from her position as vice president half-way through the year, but remained available as ad hoc Councilor, advisor, task force dynamo, and cheerleader for Bess as she stepped into the position.

TSHA was directly responsible for the introduction of five bills during this session, as well as monitoring and offering testimony on numerous others that directly or indirectly had an impact on the professions of speech-language

pathology and audiology. Members of TSHA from across the state were actively involved with the legislative process this year, writing letters and e-mails, making phone calls, and scheduling face-to-face meetings with their senators and representatives. The Voter Voice program was fully deployed during the session, and provided a vehicle for immediate contact and response when action was required on critical pieces of legislation. The legislative team expanded to include **Marcus Neal**, who served as legislative assistant, and was involved in on-site contacts at the Capitol, as well as development and expansion of the grassroots member data base. TSHA also contracted the services of Vollmer, Inc., a public relations and marketing firm, and benefited greatly from the expertise of **Peggy Hubble** and **Kim Tillinghast**, who prepared press releases, established media contacts, and contributed to the success of the legislative agenda on many levels.

For the first time in many years, TSHA was successful in getting legislation passed, as the Governor signed the bill that would allow for liability protection for audiologists and speech-language pathologists who volunteer their services. In addition, he also signed the education finance bill that includes SLPs in the \$800 annual pay raise for teachers and other professionals in public schools. Other bills died in committee, but the most disappointing outcome came when the Governor vetoed the bill which provided for repayment of student loans for graduate education of speech-language pathologists and audiologists. This bill passed through the House and Senate with overwhelming support, and would have served to alleviate the shortage of qualified service providers in the public schools, as well as faculty members at Texas universities.

Despite the frustration with the mixed outcome this session, the legislative team is already planning strategies for the 2011 session, and given the response of the membership to the calls to action, and the motivation and support demonstrated this year, the outlook is very favorable. The goals for the upcoming year will involve increased PAC visibility, expanded grassroots involvement and training, and regional association involvement with legislative contacts.

COUNCILOR FOR LEGISLATION

Position held by **Bess Sirmon Fjordbak**

Stacy Reaves and Bess served as the back-up for each other, providing support and encouragement to this vice presidency and the legislative team.

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GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Co-Chaired by **Heather MacFadyen** and **Lori Cochran**

Through the work of this Task Force, members of TSHA were provided with multiple opportunities to become legislatively active this past year. The goal of this working group was to increase visibility of the association to the elected officials, and under Stacy's leadership, this committee broke into subcommittees that targeted specific tasks. District Legislative Day provided an opportunity for TSHA members to meet with legislative staff in the local offices of senators and representatives. Lori Cochran coordinated this effort, and provided incentives in the form of gift cards for members who reported on their experiences. Heather MacFadyen coordinated the Capitol Visit at convention, with 40 team leaders wearing red TSHA t-shirts, seven consumers and family members, and 450 member participants. This was a Herculean effort that involved preparation of gift bags for each legislator, assigning all participants to team leaders, training all the participants on the legislative process and the TSHA agenda, transportation from the convention center to the Capitol on shuttle buses, arranging for barbecue sack lunches for all the participants, and many, many other details. Also at the convention, Lori Cochran coordinated the Voter Voice registration, increasing the number of participants and most importantly, identifying members who have established relationships with key legislators (e.g., attending the same Sunday School class, children in the same scout troop). As noted, Voter Voice became an important tool for legislative contacts during the session, and the elected representatives noticed.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)

Co-Chaired by **Larry Barnes** and **Angela Kennedy**

The organized efforts of the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association Political Action Committee (PAC) and the commitment of many TSHA members led to a successful PAC fundraiser and silent auction at the TSHA 2009 annual Convention. The PAC set an ambitious goal of raising \$40,000 after the last election cycle, which was not unreasonable if each member contributed only \$10. This goal was not met, although the five minute massages at convention were very popular, and the silent auction donations were all quite impressive. Another election cycle is approaching, and as members are renewing TSHA membership dues, they have an opportunity to express their commitment to the PAC and the efforts of the legislative team who is working on their behalf.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES TASK FORCE

Chaired by **April Smith**

This Task Force has been committed to seeing that TSHA

members are kept informed of legislative initiatives and activities. In this role, April served as a resource for legislative issues, most importantly as the insurance mandate bill picked up steam. Unfortunately, this bill was one which died in committee, but important inroads were made and relationships were built with key officials, which will allow the legislative team to spend the next year preparing to bring this issue to the Capitol again next session.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVE STUDENTS TASK FORCE

Co-Chaired by **Marcus Neal** and **Beth Jones-Morgan**

The Legislative Active Student task force worked collaboratively to form a committee of student representatives from the universities around the state to support TSHA's legislative team. This committed group of students volunteered their time by working closely with the Political Action Committee during convention and soliciting baskets for the PAC silent auction. All participants expressed interest in participating in future legislative activities

PUBLIC MEMBERS FOR LEGISLATION TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Cori Weaver**

This Task Force was responsible for the collection of testimonies from consumers and their families, formatted into a booklet entitled "Texans Talk." This was shared with legislators at the Capitol Visit, and will also be available at the TSHA state office for future advocacy initiatives.

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TASK FORCE

Co-Chaired by **Debra Kerner** and **Bobbie Kaye Turkett**

The Regional Association Task Force continued outreach to the regional associations in Texas in an attempt to provide continuing education on legislation at the regional level. More than half of the regional associations in the state have responded to this educational initiative. Increased participation in Voter Voice, increased volunteerism, and increased awareness of the importance of legislative advocacy have been products of this effort.

SUNSET REVIEW TASK FORCE

Chaired by **Sherry Sancibrian**

The Sunset Review Task Force continued to educate speech-language pathologists and audiologists about the importance of licensure and how it directly affects our jobs. Notably this year was the provision of information regarding the continuing education requirement for training in ethics. This task force was in close communication with the licensure board and was monitoring activity related to our licensure law. Discussions will continue regarding preparation of a new draft of our licensure law.