

Newsletter

North American Federation of Adapted Physical Activity



President's Message

Stamatis Agiovlasis, Ph.D.

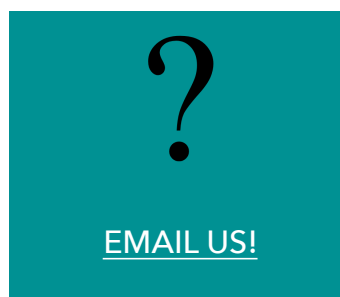
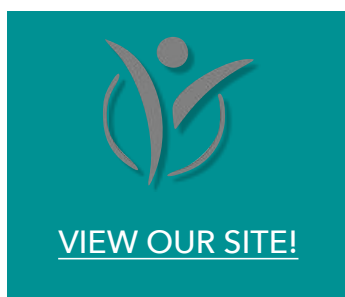
Dear NAFAPA affiliates,

Greetings from the NAFAPA Board!

The NAFAPA Board has been meeting regularly, and here are some updates:

- In response to a proposal by Dr. Greg Reid, the Board voted favorably to name our Leadership Award after Dr. Dale A. Ulrich—a NAFAPA founding father with significant contributions to our field.
- The *Dale A. Ulrich Leadership Award* and the *Allen W. Burton New Investigator Award* will be presented for the first time during our 2020 Biennial Symposium. Information on the awards will be posted on our website shortly. Please consider nominating your peers.
- Student representatives Ms. Chloe Simpson and Dr. Emily Bremer have been further developing our NAFAPA Student Ambassador program.
- We are continuing the work on updating the NAFAPA mission and vision statements.
- Dr. Maureen Connolly who is organizing our 2020 Biennial Symposium updated the Board on preparatory work. Dr. Connolly is doing a superb job, and I am sure that our next symposium at Brock University will be very successful.
- We will soon send out a call for proposals for the hosting site of our 2022 Symposium. If you are interested in hosting this event, please contact me at: sa609@msstate.edu

Please feel free to contact the Board with your thoughts, ideas, and criticism.



Researcher Highlight
Nancy Spencer



Community Spotlight
29 Acres



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Autism and Martial Arts & Eye Gaze

ISAPA Highlights

Researcher Highlight

Nancy Spencer, University of Alberta

The main focus of my research has been to understand and question how physical activity, recreation, and sporting contexts are experienced by children and adults with impairments. This has included settings that are integrated, reverse integrated, and segregated. The mainstay of my scholarship has been a commitment to understanding peoples' experiences of inclusion and exclusion in relation to disability, but is also reflected in my supervisory work with graduate students, who have explored the experiences of children and youth from low income situations and/or who are alienated from recreation, physical activity, and physical education settings. I am deeply committed to making research more inclusive and this necessitates using person-centered, participatory, and community-based methodologies and methods for knowledge generation. I continue to grapple with various ontological and epistemological perspectives and this has prompted an important and critical questioning of the taken for granted beliefs and practices in adapted physical activity (APA). I am fortunate to do this work in my position as an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation at the University of Alberta where I also did my doctoral research with the guidance of Drs. Jane Watkinson and Marcel Bouffard. I am also an Associate Editor with the Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly.



[Connect with Nancy here!](#)

One of my current research directions focuses on the importance and decline of children's free play in nature. The Forest School Project, a collaboration with Edmonton schools and Adapted Physical Activity consultants, engaged children, teachers, and educational assistants assigned to work with children with impairments, about their experiences of an outdoor early learning program taking place in the river valley. We splashed, dug in the mud, climbed trees, and went on adventures every week over a period of two months, while simultaneously experiencing all four seasons. Through interviews, observations, field notes, and photo elicitation, our team of researchers explored how children experienced nature and specifically play that was freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated (Hughes, 2012). Findings revealed key themes of new experiences, choice and freedom, social and imaginative play, and risk taking. My hope is this current program of research will make a contribution to expanding the possibilities for all children to engage with the outdoors and hopefully each other. Ensuring accessible and meaningful opportunities for children to experience play in nature is critical to their development. It is also really, really fun. In the words of one child who took part in the study, "I got my boot stuck in the water, it was fun, my friends helped me pull it out." Akin to this quote, I also hugely value collaboration both within and beyond our field.



Community Spotlight

29 Acres

29 Acres, a nonprofit in the North Texas area, was founded by a group of families in 2015 for the purpose of providing programming and housing to young adults with autism. The organization's website includes a description of their mission, which is "to elevate the quality of life for adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by creating a dynamic housing community enriched with customized programming where every person will be empowered to live with purpose and joy."



The organization's vision includes:

1. Improving access of adults with ASD to people, places, jobs, and activities that they choose while maximizing their self-esteem and pursuit of happiness.
2. Helping adults identify their strengths and challenging them to develop their strengths.
3. Improving outcomes as measured by quality of life indicators, greater independence and productivity, health and safety, community engagement, and inter-personal relationships.
4. Creating a model that demonstrates sustainability and potential for replication in other geographic locations.
5. Maintaining a nurturing environment committed to individual growth of each adult.
6. Helping to build a more euro-diverse community through connection to local communities social, economic and educational ecosystems.
7. Creating a culture of empowerment for paid and volunteer staff by improving training and educational opportunities coupled with appropriate compensation and desirable work conditions.
8. Serving families of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The organization operates a variety of programs including Enrich 29, the Transition Academy, and the Summer Transition Experience. Enrich 29 is a year-round program operating during typical workweek hours. The program uses an Individualized Life Plan to help clients develop goals, objectives, and teaching strategies to develop career and independent living skills. The Transition Academy is the first opportunity for clients to live independently. The Transition Academy is a two-year program in which adults with autism learn career readiness and independent living skills. Finally, the Summer Transition Experience is a six-week summer program designed for adults with ASD 16 years and older. Participants are exposed to a variety of activities and opportunities, including adapted sports, daily living, leisure skills, vocational training, and community involvement. The program has a 1:2 staff to client ratio and incorporates progress monitoring and ABA principles in natural environments. The Texas Women's University Adapted Physical Education program has partnered with 29 Acres to provide adapted aquatics and fitness programming through a university course practicum. The organization's long-term goal is to provide housing and programming for close to 60 adults with autism.

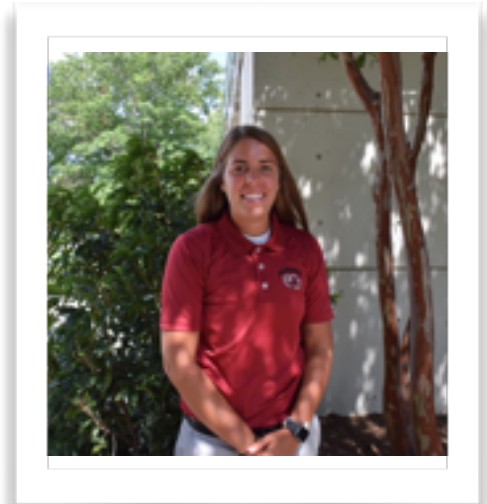
[LEARN MORE AT
THEIR SITE](#)

Student Highlight

Alex Stribing, University of South Carolina

Alex is a third-year doctoral student at the University of South Carolina studying Motor Behavior and Special Education under Dr. Ali Brian. Prior to her doctoral program, Alex completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in adapted physical education at The College of Brockport under Dr. Lauren Lieberman. Her dissertation research will focus on self-perceptions, parents' perceptions and metaperceptions (what the child thinks their parent thinks) of actual motor competence for individuals with visual impairments.

During Alex's master's program, she was awarded the American Kinesiology Association Master's Student Scholar Award where she was nominated by department faculty for her academic excellence, to further the professional competence and dedication of academically accomplished students and to promote kinesiology and its related fields. Alex also received the SHAPE America Adapted Physical Education Graduate Student of the Year Award for demonstrating dedication to families and individuals with disabilities as well as demonstrating leadership skills through physical education/ activity, research, service and other means. While at Brockport, Alex was Dr. Lieberman's graduate assistant for Camp Abilities. She now serves as the assistant director for Camp Abilities Brockport where she helps coordinate activities and write grants to fund camp.



[Connect with Alex here!](#)

During the first two years of her doctoral work, Alex twice received the Bryant A. and Jaqueline F. Meeks Scholarship for students conducting research with the intent of improving the quality of education for underserved children. She has also recently received the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) student research grant to help fund her dissertation, and has received two college-level travel grants to present her work at various conferences.

Alex is a member of the National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID), SHAPE America, NASPSPA, North American Federation for Adapted Physical Activity (NAFAPA), and International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity (IFAPA). During the 2019 ISAPA conference in Charlottesville, Virginia, she was nominated and elected to serve as a student representative for IFAPA through the 2021 symposium.

To date, Alex has published one article as lead author in *Palaestra* and has co-authored two articles in *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly* and *Sex Roles*. She has one article in preparation for the *British Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*.

Outside of her studies and research interests, Alex is a teaching assistant at the University of South Carolina where she teaches a variety of physical education classes to undergraduate students. She enjoys playing sand/grass volleyball and slow pitch softball. During the summer months, Alex serves as a specialist for Camp Abilities which allows her to travel to several camp locations to work and interact with students with visual impairments.

Tip for Young Scholars

Strategies for Reading APA Research: An Easy Choice?

Geoffrey Broadhead | Professor Emeritus | Kent State University

In the late 1960s, as a doctoral student, I was advised to have an identifiable strategy for prioritizing my scholarly reading. At the time, even as our APA sub-discipline was just developing, there was too much to read. Now there is such a massive amount of APA and related literature available to read that no-one can do justice to it all. Therefore, adopting a selective strategy is suggested. Two come quickly to mind, and the choice of strategy might change as each APA individual develops her/his experience and expertise. But the emphasis here is on the relatively new scholar; a doctoral student or new faculty member.

One strategy would be to scan as much literature as possible, in order to develop and maintain some basic understanding of APA and related sub-disciplines. Thus, an individual would be able to communicate with colleagues, albeit in a somewhat limited basis. The strategy could be extremely helpful in the formulation of the person's preferred area of expertise. It could be considered a stand-alone strategy or a precursor to the second strategy

The second strategy would be to read and study, in depth, literature specific to a developing or chosen area of APA research, so that mastery could be legitimately claimed. In-depth study includes understanding sampling and the traits of samples, study-design relative to the stated purposes of the particular study, selecting appropriate treatment of the information gained (eg the data), and, perhaps most critically, not over-generalizing from the results. Some might argue this strategy emphasizes depth rather than breadth, or generality than specificity.

Of course, to be effective, any strategy needs to be tailored to the individual's talents and interests. The overall goal is to enhance the quality of APA science and practice. Therefore, the choice of strategy is very important.

READER'S CORNER

These are some of the titles we have been reading lately:

Pung, J. N., & Goldberg, W. A. (2019). Promoting executive functioning in children with autism spectrum disorder through mixed martial arts training. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10803-019-04072-3

Weissman, S. E., Lithopoulos, A., Tomasone, J. R., & Latimer-Cheung, A. E. (2019). Exploring gaze behaviors toward images of physically active individuals with a physical disability. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.106/j.psychsport.2019.05.002



International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity Recap

Over 200 professors/students from around the world gathered at the University of Virginia for the five day symposium. Over 2/3 of the participants were international representing Africa, S. American, Asia, and Eastern and Western Europe. There also was a three day practitioner track with an additional 40 practitioners from the east coast with one from as far away as Illinois. The success of the program could be measured by the buzz throughout the conference with participants talking about the presentations, future research, and collaborating with colleagues. Many participants took advantage of the many breweries and pubs in Charlottesville to take conversations into a more relaxed atmosphere. By all measures ISAPA 2019 was a big success, and everyone is looking forward to meeting again at ISAPA 2021 in Finland.

Dr. Martin Block
University of Virginia
IFAPA Past-President & ISAPA Host

ISAPA 2019 was my first time attending the meeting, and I was not disappointed. In addition to the wonderfully picturesque setting of Charlottesville, it was enlightening to talk with and learn from scholars from all over the globe. It is always impressive to see the wide impact of our APA community.

Dr. Andy Colombo-Dougovito
University of North Texas
2019 IFAPA Young Scholar Award Recipient

ISAPA presented a unique opportunity for practitioners from around the world to network and share strategies and resources. Dr. Ron Davis's session, "Using Disability Sport in General Physical Education," presented some practical skill progressions for Goalball, Wheelchair Basketball, and Sitting Volleyball. Diane Talarico-Cavanaugh's session, "The Theory Behind Using Visual Supports" was enlightening. Most APE specialists know that using visual supports for students with Autism is an evidence-based practice, but Diane put this in perspective and really explained the "why" behind it. As a proud UVA alum, I am incredibly grateful that I got to be part of ISAPA in Charlottesville. Dr. Block did an exceptional job of bringing professionals from around the world together to share research, instructional strategies, and resources.

Katie Prichard
APE Program Head
Howard County, Maryland

Edited by:

Krystn Orr, PhD(c)
University of Toronto
krystn.orr@mail.utoronto.ca



Steven K. Holland
Old Dominion University
sholl012@odu.edu