



ANNUAL REPORT
For the Year
2024

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ACTING PRESIDENT

As Acting President, it has been an honor to lead the Music Therapy Association of Ontario (MTAO) through the last six months—a period defined by both challenges and achievements. This year has been marked by significant transitions, impactful advocacy, and a steadfast commitment to supporting music therapists across Ontario.

First, I would like to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to **Amy Di Nino** for her dedicated service as MTAO President. Amy led the organization with passion and vision, navigating a pivotal time for our association. In August, Amy made the difficult decision to step down to focus on her personal health. Her leadership and unwavering dedication to the MTAO and its members have left a lasting impact on our community. Amy, your contributions have been deeply appreciated, and we wish you strength and peace as you prioritize your well-being.

Amy's transition was marked by a heartfelt message to the board, expressing her gratitude for our support during this time. Her words reminded us of the strong community we have built together and the importance of supporting one another through every season of life.

Highlights of 2024:

Leadership Transition

- In August, I stepped into the role of Acting President to provide continuity and stability during this leadership change. This transition underscored the importance of teamwork, clear communication, and a shared commitment to advancing the mission of MTAO.

Advocacy and Public Engagement

- Represented MTAO at Queen's Park, advocating for the inclusion of music therapy in Bill 121, which highlights the critical role of music therapy in dementia care.
- Delivered a speech on dementia care to the Standing Committee on Social Policy during public hearings on Bill 121, emphasizing the transformative power of music therapy and fostering meaningful connections with Ontario's parliamentarians.

Membership and Community Engagement

- Supported the **Members Relations Chair** and regional representatives in enhancing communication and engagement with members, ensuring that local voices and needs were prioritized.

Event Successes

- Assisted the **Education Chair** with the Student/Intern/Supervisor Conference (SISC) at Wilfrid Laurier University, a key event that fostered learning and collaboration among students, interns, and supervisors.
- Collaborated with the board to prepare for the Annual Conference and AGM, ensuring accessible and enriching programming to meet the needs of our members.

Operational Improvements

- Worked with the board to address digital security challenges, including phishing scams targeting board members and members of MTAO, implementing measures to enhance operational efficiency and safeguard our communications.
- Explored updates to membership management processes, focusing on improving the experience for members and ensuring streamlined operations.

This year has been a testament to the resilience, passion, and dedication of the MTAO community. I am inspired by the incredible work of our board, regional representatives, and members who continue to elevate the profession and advocate for its recognition across Ontario.

To Amy Di Nino, thank you for your leadership, vision, and the foundation you built for the MTAO. To the board and our members, thank you for your trust and collaboration during this time of transition. As I formally step into the role of President, I am committed to continuing the important work of supporting our members and advancing the mission of the MTAO. Together, we have accomplished much, and I am excited to see the continued growth and success of our association in the future.

Respectfully submitted by Steffi Friyia, MA, BMT, MTA, NMT
Acting President
Music Therapy Association of Ontario

2024 MTAO Board of Directors:

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|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| President: | Amy DiNino/Steffi Friyia |
| Vice President: | Steffi Friyia |
| Secretary: | Hope Pascoe |
| Treasurer: | Kaitlyn Aquino |
| Public Relations Chair: | Callahan Connor |
| Education Chair: | Kimberly Dolan |
| Ethics Chair: | Kristen DiMarco |
| Government Regulation Chair: | Ashley Kurkjian |
| Member Relations Chair: | Kylie Klym |

2024 Regional Representative Committee Members:

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Barrie-Muskoka: | VACANT |
| Durham Region: | Antonietta Mongillo Desideri |
| Eastern Ontario: | Jennifer Cunningham |
| GTA: | Steffi Friyia |
| Hamilton-Brantford: | VACANT |
| Niagara: | Alejandra Arevalo |
| Northern Ontario: | Kaelyn McCallum |
| Waterloo Region and surrounding areas: | VACANT |
| Windsor-Chatham-Sarnia: | VACANT |

2024 Social Media Committee Members:

Steph Cork

2024 Conference Committee Members:

Eryn Russell
Tim Lee
Ivory (Yiqing) Xiang

VICE PRESIDENT

Serving as Vice President of the MTAO has been an enriching experience. As I prepare to step down from this role at the upcoming Annual General Meeting, I look back with gratitude on a year filled with growth, collaboration, and meaningful contributions to the music therapy community in Ontario:

1. Policy and Process Enhancements:
 - Updated the Policies and Procedures Manual, ensuring smooth operations and clear role definitions for current and future board members.
 - Worked closely with board members to strengthen organizational practices and streamline internal communications.
2. Event Support and Advocacy:
 - Played a role in organizing the Student/Intern/Supervisor Conference (SISC), contributing both to the planning process and as a presenter.
 - Supported the preparation for the Annual Conference and AGM, helping to ensure diverse programming and strong engagement from our members.
3. Strategic and Member-Focused Contributions:
 - Actively collaborated with the board to improve communication with regional representatives and enhance connections with our membership.
 - Initiated and supported efforts to recruit new board members as part of the Nominations Committee, ensuring a strong foundation for the future leadership of MTAO.
4. Advocacy and Leadership Transition:
 - Provided leadership support during a significant transition period, ensuring continuity and focus on MTAO's mission to promote, develop, and support music therapy in Ontario.

This year has been one of meaningful service and personal growth. It has been a privilege to work alongside such talented and dedicated board members, and I am proud of what we have achieved together. As I step away from this position, I remain deeply committed to the values of our organization and look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of the MTAO in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted by Steffi Friyia, MA, BMT, MTA, NMT

SECRETARY

Serving my second term as the Secretary for the MTAO Board of Directors has been a great delight. As I work alongside a team of amazing music therapists that comprise our board, I am continually inspired by their dedication to the MTAO, our members, and the broader music therapy community. Likewise, witnessing the passion of our membership at various events this past year continues to motivate me to help grow the MTAO to be the best it can be so we can support our members in being the best music therapists they can be. I am honoured to continue being the Secretary in 2025 and excited about the new opportunities ahead for the MTAO and our members in the coming year.

In 2024, I continued to support the MTAO Board of Directors with the standard secretarial tasks, such as scheduling various meetings, maintaining our archives and records, and writing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes. Other annual tasks completed in the past year include updating our board member contact lists, compiling the annual report, and recording the minutes of our Annual General Meeting.

Alongside these responsibilities, I had the joy of supporting our President and Vice President in providing orientation to our new board members and further streamlining this process. Out of engaging with others in their orientation came the inspiration for a new initiative, creating a MTAO Board Member Agreement. This document outlines the board members' and MTAO's responsibilities to one another and serves as a formal statement of the individual's agreement to serve on the MTAO Board of Directors.

To further support the MTAO Board of Directors and other volunteers, I also created a document for tracking their Continuing Education Credits (CECs) to simplify the process of reporting these hours to the Canadian Association of Music Therapists. It will also serve as a useful resource for the MTAO to track the number of hours of service our dedicated team of board members and volunteers commit to the MTAO and our members. Besides these administrative tasks, it has been my pleasure to take part in the MTAO Round Table discussions and conferences this past year, in the planning and preparation, as well as the participating and presenting.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as Secretary to the MTAO Board of Directors this past year. It has been a great year and I am excited to continue this work as I finish my second term in 2025. I would love to hear what you hope to see from the MTAO in 2025, and I encourage you to share your thoughts with me at secretary.mtao@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted by Hope Pascoe, MTA, MA, BMT

TREASURER

The MTAO had a strong fiscal year. We were above budget by \$3,169.08, with an income of \$1,162.08. This greater variance to budget is due to the cancellation of the CAMT conference. The MTAO held two in-person conferences: our annual conference and AGM in February, and the SISC (Student, Intern and Supervisor Conference) in October. Both conferences received positive feedback! While memberships continue to be the primary source of income for the MTAO, the annual conference and AGM saw high registration rates which we hope to continue in 2025. The MTAO currently has 137 memberships, 109 active MTA's, 6 associate members, 3 MTA-R, 2 MTA-S and 17 MT-S memberships. We have 92 paused memberships, meaning that these members have not renewed in 2024. Due to issues experienced in 2022-2023 with the new website, emails were not being sent out to members to notify them of their upcoming renewal. Please reach out to the treasurer if you are experiencing any concerns or issues with your membership. The MTAO is considering a move to a universal renewal date to avoid any issues with membership renewal. Due to some necessary updates to ensure the sustainability of the MTAO, such as a cyber security policy and mailbox renewal, as well as a non-profit accountant and lawyer, the MTAO is expected to be in a deficit of \$4,279.36 for the 2025 fiscal year.

Some financial notes to consider:

- The MTAO ended the year with a cash balance of \$9,974.74, which was down from our projected number of \$10,539.55.
- The Wild Apricot account remained until May 2024 due to difficulty moving information to the new account, Wild Apricot is no longer in use and this decrease is reflected in the 2025 budget. The website is now functioning normally and we do not foresee any new or surprising costs associated with this.
- 2023 and 2024 taxes were filed pro-bono, as will 2025. The MTAO will be transitioning to a non-profit accountant following the tax season. This is reflected in the 2025 budget.
- The MTAO board member insurance cost increased. Due to concerns with email scams, the board has also opted to include a standard cyber security insurance policy for \$1,150.00 that renews yearly. This is reflected in the 2025 budget.
- Our Mailbox through UPS was renewed in August 2025. The board has decided to keep the mailbox which renews for \$550.00 every 2 years.
- The MTAO is seeking out a non-profit lawyer to assist with updating the bylaws and policies and procedures. This is reflected in the 2025 budget.
- There has been ongoing discussion to try implementing a universal

membership, meaning that everyone will renew at the same time each year, similar to the CAMT. If this is approved there would be a slight cost increase for our website host to adjust this in the system. This is reflected in the 2025 budget.

- The CAMT 2024 conference was cancelled, therefore there were no related expenses for 2024. There will be a CAMT conference in 2025, which is reflected in the 2025 budget.

For detailed information about the MTAO's revenue and expenses, please refer to the 2024 Financial Report and the 2025 Budget.

As Treasurer, I continue to monitor accounts to ensure that members have access to the appropriate resources and services, monitor Paypal and TD accounts, and process payments as new orders come through. I am excited to continue to serve as Treasurer in 2025!

Respectfully submitted by Kaitlyn Aquino, MTA, NMT, MMus

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR

This year was my second year as the Public Relations Chair of the MTAO, and I am reflecting on lessons learned, skills grown, and lessons still to be learned.

I have been diligently managing the inflow of referrals and submitted job postings, sending these opportunities to our Active MTA members via regular emails, and updating our members on our MTAO Members' Group on Facebook. I fell rather ill a few times throughout the year, which led to brief periods where I was not as prompt with referrals or job postings as our community would deserve, and going forward I will be creating a backup system where another Board member may take up those tasks if I am briefly out of commission.

Newsletters throughout the year have often been collaboratively created with Member Relations Chair Kylie Klym, a process that has been helpful, effective, and pleasant. The release schedule has been somewhat irregular, and often tied to seasonal MTAO events rather than general news or happenings in the world of music therapy, and I plan to expand the scope of the newsletters in the year ahead by actively inviting more collaboration in the form of guest writers, other topics and media forms, etc.

A major success from last year was the final transfer of our mailing list services from Wild Apricot over to MailChimp, which helped to substantially reduce our monthly costs.

A few technical challenges remain on MailChimp which require individual troubleshooting - for example, sometimes when a Student Member transitions to become a full MTA Member of the MTAO, their MailChimp tag will not be automatically updated and they will not begin to receive the MTA-only emails until this is manually updated. We believe that we have caught all instances where this update has been required, but going forward we will enhance the automation and oversight for the process.

In last year's report, I expressed an intention to venture into a more creative and expressive exploration of the MTAO's social media presence and philosophy, while slowly transitioning away from the less public-relating roles I had inherited in terms of managing referrals, job postings, emails to our MTAs, etc. Neither element has fully come to pass, but I am taking stock and seeing how I can follow through in the year ahead.

On the job postings and referrals side, I will continue to slowly phase these tasks into a non-Public Relations domain, in collegial consultation with other Board members.

On the social media side, I have formed a social media committee with Steph Cork, who has excellent expertise in social media management, graphic design, Canva, etc. I also have developed a collaborative rapport with Tim Lee and Yiqing Xiang, and we all will be assisting Education Chair Kim Dolan with social media and marketing for the MTAO 2025 Annual Conference. I trust that this synergy will enhance and inspire our social media efforts in the year ahead!

Respectfully submitted by Callahan Connor, MTA, MMT, NMT

EDUCATION CHAIR

2024 brought many opportunities for connection, honest conversation, music making, and being in community. We are grateful to have hosted two conferences along with some fruitful virtual round tables and candid conversations throughout the year.

On Saturday, February 24th we gathered online and in Oakville Ontario for the 2024 annual conference and AGM: Growing & Groovin' Together. We were thrilled to get to connect with some members in 'real life' at the Sandman Hotel Oakville for our first in person Annual conference since pre-pandemic. The day was filled with fantastic content both online and in person and included the following:

- Explorations into Groove-Based Music Therapy- Len McCarthy
- Implementing and Evaluating Intergenerational Music Therapy in Long-Term Care-Melissa Jessop, Kathy Lepp, Kate Dupuis
- Implementing a Standard of Practice for the Delivery of Music Psychotherapy Services-Ashley Kurkjian
- Clinical Vocal Techniques-Jessica E. Teich
- Reiki As A Practice for Mitigating Burnout Among Music Therapists-Daiva Zemaitis
- Exploration of Music-Based Experiences in the EMDR Therapy Sessions-Aksana Kavaliova-Moussi
- Sounds of Progress: Music Psychotherapy and Registering with the CRPO-Kristen DiMarco
- Vocal Intonation Therapy for Spastic Dysarthria Post-Stroke: A Neurological Music Therapy Technique-Steffi Friyia
- Growing & Groovin' Through the Years: A panel discussion with members of the MTAO Board- Amy DiNino, Steffi Friyia, Kimberly Dolan, Callahan Connors, Hope Pascoe, Jane Proctor, Kristen DiMarco

This conference also included a video library of some of the content for participants to access and review following the event.

Following this and based on some of the feedback received at the annual conference of what our community was looking to discuss, we hosted an online virtual roundtable. Questions and topics brought forward included inquiries about additional support and training for supervisors, Growth and advocacy of music therapy in Ontario including opportunities for collaboration, and methods for enhancing a sense of community and connection within the MTAO community. The conversations continued into the SISC 2024 conference and the board hopes to continue these round table opportunities into 2025.

The 2024 Student, Intern, Supervisors Conference (SISC) was hosted on Saturday, October 26th at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. The day was filled with music making, thoughtful presentations, and opportunities for discussion and included the following content:

- Drum Circle: The Heartbeat of Expression, Support, and Togetherness.-Karen Kwok and Samuel Liu
- Clinical Applications in Adult Day Programs and In The Community- Meredith Woodiwiss and Mason Gibson

- Enhancing Verbal Counselling Skills for Emerging Music Therapists: Techniques for Working with Aging Adults-Miya Adout
- Neurologic Music Therapy and Brain Injury Recovery-Kaitlyn Aquino
- Music Therapy Interventions With At-Risk Youth-Emma Burke-Kleinman
- Post-Grad: Next Steps in Music Therapy After your BMT-Hope Pascoe, Jessica Kwong, Adrianna Suppa, Joanne Tseng, and Julia Lee
- Understanding Music Therapy Contractor and Subcontractor Rights in Ontario-Steffi Friyia
- Thoughts and Considerations when Choosing a Clinical Population-Ashley Kurkjian

At the time of writing we are hard at work preparing for our 2025 Annual Conference, Chords of Connection: Navigating the future of Music Therapy in Harmony taking place in Hamilton Ontario and online.

To register for the 2025 annual conference and to stay up to date with future events please visit: <https://musictherapyontario.com/events-resources/> by February 20th. The annual general meeting will be taking place at the conference (hybrid) at 11:45am EST. Please note, MTAO members, while we would love to have your attend the duration of the conference, if you are only available to attend but still wish to access the AGM, it will be made available to non-registrants to attend.

In addition to preparing for the upcoming conference, we have been working hard at developing templates, policies, and procedures to assist with future event planning and board operations. We continue to learn and adapt, and hope to continue having honest conversations with membership to help inform current opportunities and future directions. Should you wish to volunteer for a conference/event, or have a conversation to share your thoughts and experience, please reach out to education.mtao@gmail.com and we will be more than happy to connect.

Thanks for a fabulous year, and hope to see you March 1st in Hamilton Ontario!

Respectfully submitted by Kimberly Dolan, RP (Qualifying), MTA, NMT

ETHICS CHAIR

It is an honour to be appointed as the Ethics Chair for the 2024-2026 term. I would like to extend many thanks to my predecessor, Jane Proctor, for her six years of dedicated service on the MTAO board and for her guidance during my transition into this role.

In 2024, the board received one ethics-related inquiry which pertained to integrity and responsibility in therapeutic relationships. The Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT) Ethics Chair was consulted for additional support in reviewing the case. Moving forward, I will continue to review and respond to inquiries, consulting with the CAMT as needed to support our provincial members in upholding our Code of Ethics.

All inquiries from MTAO members and the public will be treated with the utmost seriousness, while ensuring confidentiality is maintained. Please feel free to reach out with any ethics-related questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen DiMarco, RP, MTA

GOVERNMENT REGULATION CHAIR

It has been such a pleasure serving on the MTAO Board in 2024 as Government Regulation Chair for my first year, and I am very much looking forward to growing even more into my role as the next year unfolds!

The MTAO continued their membership and partnership with the Partnership of Registered Psychotherapist Associations (PRPA), which helps give Music Therapists a voice in responding to and advocating for issues that relate to the practice of music psychotherapy in Ontario.

This year I represented the MTAO in person at 1 PRPA meetings and followed the updates closely for the remaining meetings, where discussions continued to create action plans for advocacy issues impacting RPs in Ontario and across Canada. As of June 2024, psychotherapy services delivered by licensed professionals are officially exempt from HST. While there have been many clarifications pertaining to which services are exempt from HST, some clinical situations remain unclear, and it is still advised to reach out to your financial advisor or accountant on how to best approach the new guidelines from a purely financial standpoint. Any questions or clarifications regarding clinical guidelines can be sent to regulation.mtao@gmail.com as we continue to navigate a truly groundbreaking and exciting time in the accessibility to mental health services.

In May 2023, I also attended the CRPO's annual Association Stakeholders Meeting. The CRPO has created a guideline for a 30-hour training module of the competencies required to become a clinical supervisor through the college. Members are still

encouraged to consult their affiliated associations for specific training. The college saw a successful first year of the Case-Based Assessment and they are continuing to develop their entry-to-practice competencies, as well as professional practice standards and disclosing student status when performing the Controlled Act of Psychotherapy (CAP).

2 big goals for the upcoming year are as follows:

- (1) Offer education opportunities for our members on applying with the CRPO and issues pertaining to music psychotherapy, and to ensure that music therapy is properly represented and advocated for in our current healthcare field. Any questions or topic requests can be sent to regulation.mtao@gmail.com.
- (2) With the rise of healthcare bills such as Bill 121 and Bill C-414, I will be creating an advocacy committee with the help of our President (Steffi Friya) to ensure that music therapy and music psychotherapy is properly represented and advocated for in upcoming healthcare legislation. Information on how to join this committee will be in the MTAO Newsletter as it becomes available.

Thank you again to the MTAO members and the MTAO Board for support as I served as Government Regulation Chair for my first year. It's been a privilege to work with such talented individuals as we continue to navigate the ever-growing profession of Music Psychotherapy.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Kurkjian, RP, MTA, MMT

MEMBERS RELATIONS CHAIR

Dear MTAO Membership,

Thank you for your on-going support of the MTAO Board as your Member Relations Chair. It has been a privilege to serve our membership in this second year of my term. I have been working behind the scenes since taking on the role supporting the other members of the board. I continue to help facilitating the Private 'MTAO Members Group' on Facebook and assist the Public Relations Chair with the Newsletter.

I continue to recruit new Regional Representatives to connect with the different regions, inform the Representatives of the board's activities and to gather feedback. The Representatives and I have designed a form that will be used in 2025 that will help improve the communication between the board and the Representatives.

The list of our fabulous Regional Representatives can be seen below this report. This year we welcome Alejandra Arevalo as the Niagara Region Representative and we thank Antonietta (Toni) Mongillo Desideri, who recently left their Durham Region Representative role for their hard work. We currently have five openings for Regional Representatives currently. If you are interested in taking this on, please email me at memberrelations.mtao@gmail.com.

I wish to remind all MTAO Members that my position on the board is here for you. Members are welcomed to contact me at memberrelations.mtao@gmail.com at any time with input or concerns for the Board. I am excited for the projects I have planned for the entire membership in 2025. More to come!

Respectfully submitted by Kylie Klym, BMT, RP, MTA, NMT