**A Reflection on the Past Year**

*Heart Break and Social Unrest*

It is the one-year anniversary since George Floyd was murdered publicly in the streets of Minnesota at the hands of a white officer. Though his murderer has been convicted we hope his conviction can be the catalyst to healing in the African American community. While there is a disproportionate level of violence against African American individuals being shot, killed, and mistreated during police interactions, there has also been a significant rise in violence against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. All these tragedies occur on top of the microaggressions and systemic racism BIPOC deal with daily, throughout all multifarious professions. Therefore, NYSATA made a pledge during this last year to focus on increasing diversity and inclusion within the athletic training profession moving forward.

*What Diversity Means to Us*

Diversity is important in any job, but specifically for athletic trainers as we are dealing with the health, safety and well-being of our students or patients. Each age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation comes with a pre-existing set of health issues, cultural practices, values, and experiences that need to be considered when treating a person. It is why cultural competency is so imperative to providing patient-centric care. As said in our past statements, “We remain committed to providing education to our member base on races and multi-cultures, while continuing to educate ourselves.” As displayed throughout our social media pages this entire year we have promoted and encouraged being more educated on other cultures and ethnicities.

*Contributions and Accomplishments*

Our Diversity & Inclusion Committee has been working tirelessly to provide a variety of initiatives to underserved communities in the past and has plans for some amazing programs this year.

Most recently, the committee introduced the:

1. NYSATA Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion Academic Scholarship that awards $2,000 to an eligible athletic training student promoting diversity within the Athletic Training community.
2. The committee also spearheaded a National Athletic Training Month video campaign that featured athletic trainers, coaches, physicians, administrators, and athletes from all levels of competition with the purpose of increasing awareness of cultural competency and ethnic representation in the sports realm.
3. Donations totaling $3,000 to organizations that support minorities, sports with disabilities and women including the Girl Scouts of Nassau County, Sistahood Mentorship Mixer, the NAACP, ACLU, and the US National Amputee Soccer Team.

Prior to COVID, the D&I committee organized events to introduce athletic training via educational workshops to young ladies that may not know about the profession. The Girl Scout Fitness Party was sponsored by Girl Scouts of Nassau County and hosted by Pretty Girls Sweat with the D&I Women in Athletic Training Panel. Together, the three organizations presented a Women in Athletic Training Workshop and fitness education program that more than 40 girls aged 7 – 17 attended. They were put through a five-station interactive rotation designed to educate them on rehabilitation, taping and orthopedic injury, nutrition, concussion awareness, and AT education.

*What Comes Next*

Looking forward, NYSATA is committed to contributing more initiatives to increase inclusion and diversity within the profession. In just a couple weeks, USA lacrosse is hosting a free clinic to teach boys and girls in underserved communities in Long Island. The D&I committee will be providing an educational segment overview of athletic training specifically as it relates to diversity and inclusion.

Additionally, the D&I Committee will be hosting a three-part Cultural Connection Series in November 2021 to inform current athletic training students about diversity and inclusion concerns in the sports medicine profession while helping them develop a profound connection to their athletes as health care professionals.

We will be looking to offer our services to sports traditionally of Asian culture to ensure that the Asian community is supported and can stay healthy and safe while competing.

Lastly, we are planning social media takeovers of the different athletic training education programs where AT students will give insight of a “Day in the Life” of an athletic training student. This is to show prospective students what an AT program is all about and bring light to the profession to those who may never had otherwise been introduced to it.

*Conclusion*

To say this past year has been a struggle is an understatement and it is easy to feel helpless at the magnitude of issues we face. But one thing this year has taught us, is that if you focus on what you can control, things can get better. NYSATA will continue to educate ourselves and our members and provide support for communities in need. We encourage our members to reach out to us about any of these initiatives, or ideas you have of your own. Together, we can make the athletic training profession a welcoming and inclusion environment for everyone.

*“Remember that in difficult times, we don’t give up. We don’t discard our highest ideals. No! We rise up to meet them.” – Michelle Obama*