



Introducing: Aimee Brunelle, 2020 John Sciera Service Award Winner, NYSATA Governmental Affairs Co-Chair, NYSATA Conference & Education Chair, and Athletic Trainer at Colonie Central High School

Aimee Brunelle is an athletic trainer at Colonie Central High School in Colonie, NY, and currently the New York State Athletic Trainers' Association (NYSATA) Governmental Affairs Co-Chair and NYSATA Conference & Education Chair. She is this year's John Sciera Service Award Winner, awarded for her demonstrated dedication, loyalty, and service to the profession of athletic training and to NYSATA. Previously, Aimee served six years through the NYSATA president elect, president, and past-president positions.

Aimee began her service to the profession nearly 30 years ago while an AT student when she assisted with the NYSATA newsletter. From 2004-2012 and 2013-14 Aimee took on the role of NYSATA newsletter editor and in 2011, she was appointed as the Newsletter editor for NATA District 2, an important role in which she continues today.

"I feel it's important for me to give back to an organization that has done so much to advance the field of athletic training in NYS. While a student at Stony Brook, part of my work study job was to type up the NYSATA newsletter. This introduced me to the current leaders," said Aimee Brunelle. "I left NYS for a few years after college, but soon after I returned, I became the newsletter editor and was reintroduced to all the work being done. In 2011, I was encouraged by my former professor, mentor, and friend Kathy Koshansky (Stony Brook) that it was my turn to step up, and I accepted the challenge." With that, Aimee decided to run for NYSATA president-elect.

During her term as NYSATA President, the association continued the legislative battle for licensure and to update the scope of practice with a current bill in the legislature. Aimee currently works alongside Deanna Errico, fellow Co-Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee, in a tireless effort to seek licensure for the profession in New York State. She has presented to the New York City Council, attended numerous meetings with New York State legislators, and spearheaded the NYSATA partnership with the Brain Injury Association of New York State. She and Deanna have organized round table meetings with organizations that support and oppose the bill. Their work on Lobby Days have attracted more athletic trainers and students than ever.

In early 2020, Aimee and Deanna also led efforts to have the New York State Department of Health recognize athletic trainers as health care providers eligible to assist with efforts to treat and monitor patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, she was selected to serve on the New York State Education Department's Reopening Schools Regional Task Force. Concurrently, Aimee has taken the NYSATA annual meeting process from a one-person effort led by a succession of presidents-elect to a true committee with multiple different panels that review, discuss and implement program proposals, sponsorships and exhibitors, site selection, marketing and communications campaigns, and technology.



“My advice for anyone looking to get more involved with NYSATA is don't feel that you need to know what's happening before you get involved - you will learn! Governmental affairs was a mystery to me prior to my involvement, and still after 8 years, I am learning the intricacies of the legislative process. Be willing to listen and learn - there is a plethora of historical knowledge in the NYSATA leadership and across the state right now... be willing to connect with them, sit on committees, listen, learn, and ask questions for clarification! Whether as a formal title or not - We are all learners, we are all educators,” Brunelle said.

In addition to her NYSATA work, Aimee is an athletic trainer and district wellness coordinator at Colonie Central High School, where she has been for five years. When asked about her favorite part of the job, Aimee said “The personal connection I have with the student-athletes and coaches is what I love the most. Athletic trainers are often the only health care provider that student-athletes are in contact with daily, and this gives us the unusual opportunity to make these connections prior to any injury. When/if an injury occurs, I've already developed that connection with the student-athletes, so assisting them through their worst to bring them back to their best is rewarding. The resilience of young people never ceases to amaze me.”