

AAEA UPDATE

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Mark your calendar for our next quarterly event on March 20, 2003!
 Visit www.evalatl.org for more information about this upcoming event.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear AaEA Membership:

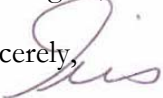
Let me begin by saying, “thank-you” for your continued support of our organization. As I reflect upon the past two years, I am astounded by what we have accomplished. We are now an active and viable AEA affiliate with a diverse membership that includes students and new evaluation professionals as well as internationally known experts in the field of evaluation.

I am also both pleased and honored to be a part of an outstanding Executive Council. Our newly elected officers bring a wide range of expertise as well as a strong commitment to moving the organization forward. If you have not done so already, please visit our website to learn more about our new officers and what they are bringing to the work of AaEA.

We are anticipating an exciting and productive year for the Affiliate. We will continue to provide outstanding opportunities for professional development through our quarterly events, Professional Development and New Evaluator workshops. In addition, in response to feedback from some our members, we will be organizing opportunities for informal networking as well. This will afford us an opportunity to get to know each other socially and professionally and, we hope, will encourage more of you to become actively involved in the activities of the Affiliate.

One of our primary goals for this year is to continue to increase and diversify our membership. For this, we need your help. We need individuals who are interested in working with our Membership Committee to develop a member recruitment strategy that will engage new members and help us to re-connect with members who are currently not active. If you are interested in working with our Membership Committee, please contact Julie Chambliss (e-mail: chambj@bellsouth.net). We welcome your ideas and recommendations!

Once again, “thank-you” for your continued support. I look forward to seeing you at our next event.

Sincerely,


Iris E. Smith
 AaEA President

Atlanta area Evaluation Association Quarterly Event

March 20, 2003

When Evaluation Influences Policy: Lessons from Research and Personal Experiences

Presented by: Gary T. Henry, Ph.D., Georgia State University

Presentation

When: Thursday, March 20, 2003, 3:30-5:00 pm (Registration 3-3:30pm)

Where: Girl Scout Council of Northwest Georgia, Inc.

1577 Northeast Expressway; Atlanta, GA 30329

Phone: (404) 527-7500

Register for this event at the
AaEA website: www.evalatl.org

Social Hour

When: Following the Presentation

Where: Cedars Restaurant (specializing in Mediterranean and Lebanese food)

2770 Lenox Road Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30324

Phone: (404) 261-1826

Cost for both Events: FREE to AaEA members (annual membership \$40, or \$25 for students)
\$20 for non-members; \$10 for non-member students

Members and Non-members are asked to register at <http://www.evalatl.org> (Note that there is separate registration for the Presentation and Social Hour.)

The Presentation: Many evaluators seek to influence policy with their findings. Gary Henry will discuss how to increase the chance that evaluation findings will turn into policy change, using experiences and examples from his own practice. He first will orient the audience to the policy-making process, and then will describe how evaluation findings have been able to influence policy, using specific case examples. Finally, Professor Henry will discuss some of the research-based strategies others can use to increase the influence of their evaluation findings on policy decisions.

The Presenter: Gary T. Henry is a professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University, and previously served as the Director of Evaluation and Learning Services for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. He also served as Director of the Applied Research Center at GSU, and currently is jointly appointed in the Department of Public Administration and Policy Studies, and the Department of Political Science. Dr. Henry has evaluated a variety of policies and programs, including Pre-K and the HOPE Scholarship in Georgia, as well as school reforms and accountability systems. The author of *Practical Sampling* (Sage 1990), *Graphing Data* (Sage 1995) and co-author of *Evaluation: An Integrated Framework for Understanding, Guiding, and Improving Policies and Programs* (Jossey-Bass 2000), Henry has published extensively in the field of evaluation and policy analysis. In addition, he served as deputy secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Virginia and chief methodologist with the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, Virginia General Assembly. He received the Evaluation of the Year Award from the American Evaluation Association in 1998 for his work with the Georgia's Council for School Performance and the Joseph S. Wholey Distinguished Scholarship Award in 2001 from the American Society for Public Administration and the Center for Accountability and Performance.

The Social Hour: Join us for a time of networking and discussion. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks will be provided at the Social Hour. There is no additional charge to attend; however, we do ask for separate registration for the Social Hour so we can ensure an adequate amount of space and refreshments.

Meet Our 2003 AaEA Officers

President - Iris Smith, Ph.D.

Emory University

(404) 727-2925; ismith@sph.emory.edu

Iris is a faculty member at Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health. In addition, she was Director of National Evaluation Services for the American Cancer Society (ACS). In this role, she was responsible for developing and managing evaluation studies for Departments at the ACS National Headquarters that are of national interest or nationwide in scope. She is an adjunct faculty member for the Master of Public Health Program at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Iris has been involved in AaEA since early in its creation. She holds a Master of Public Health from Emory University and a Ph.D. in Community Psychology from Georgia State University.

President Elect - Liz S. Grossman, M.P.H

ORC Macro

(404) 592-2126; elizabeth.s.grossman@orcmacro.com

Liz has 10 years of project management experience in health care settings including managed care, inpatient and outpatient hospital settings and nonprofit organizations. As a Project Manager at ORC Macro, she has been involved in numerous program evaluation, strategic planning, and evaluation design projects primarily for public organizations. Her recent work has focused on training and technical assistance for a multi-site, multi-level national children's mental health initiative designed to implement community-based, family-centered systems of care for children with severe emotional disorders in 67 communities across the country.

Secretary - Julie W. Chambliss, Ph.D.

Chambliss and Associates, Inc.

(770) 579-2726; chambj@bellsouth.net

Julie is President of Chambliss and Associates, Inc., an independent evaluation consulting firm located in the metro Atlanta area. She received her Ph.D. in community psychology from Georgia State University. With more than 12 years of evaluation experience, Julie has worked extensively with primarily nonprofit organizations to design and implement their program evaluations using a participatory approach. She has developed many technical products including several evaluation training manuals. Her work frequently centers on the cross-site evaluation of prevention and health promotion programs at the state and national levels.

Treasurer - Rebecca Glover-Kudon, M.P.H.

American Cancer Society

(404) 329-7709; rglover@cancer.org

Rebecca has served on the Professional Development Committee since its formation. For six years, she has worked for the Department of Evaluation in the American Cancer Society's National Home Office managing program evaluation projects, providing training and technical assistance on evaluation topics, and developing print and electronic materials for use in the Collaborative Evaluation Fellows Project. Rebecca also oversees the ACS's Public Health Internship Program. Rebecca was previously responsible for community health assessment, planning, and notifiable disease surveillance for the Georgia Division of Public Health, in Valdosta.

Message from the Past President

I Can't Stand the Heat, Let Me Out of the Kitchen



We're all familiar with the "new restaurant" phenomenon. In the first weeks, rave reviews are followed by lines out the door and bouncers only letting in the beautiful people. In time, tastes change and attention wanes and it's on to something else—unless the place is intentional about keeping people coming back. Small organizations are the same way. An initial wave of enthusiasm produces hordes of participants and new members. But in time, the demands of keeping the organization alive compete with real life, and extra attention must be spent to keep people coming back.

All this is preamble to the happy announcement that AaEA is in great shape. At almost 3 years old, we've passed the "initial enthusiasm" stage, yet the organization continues to thrive. We have 146 members at last count, and, more importantly, our renewal rate is a healthy one, well under the average turnover of most professional organizations. In three years, we've produced a quality quarterly event *every* quarter without exception, and expanded the diversity and size of the audiences to boot. We have a thriving New Evaluators group, and as we enter 2003, we are about to kick-off several professional development events.

But, how often the fate of the new restaurant *and* the new organization falls to the faithful few in the kitchen. In 2003, our aim is to transform AaEA's sizeable membership to an active one that plays a role in the operation and advancement of the organization. This issue of our newsletter highlights not only the many accomplishments of the past year, but the opportunities for involvement. AaEA is doing great, but will continue to thrive only if we continually engage new blood and enthusiasm.

Tom Chapel
AaEA Past-President

We're on the Web!
Visit <http://www.evalatl.org>
for more information on
upcoming events.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION (AEA) 2002 ANNUAL MEETING

By: Bobby Milstein and Tom Chapel

The theme of Evaluation 2002, awkwardly titled “*Evaluation: A Systemic Process that Reforms Systems*”, was close to the heart and squarely in the scope of work of many evaluators. Based on an admittedly subjective review of the conference, here is a list of several topics that are currently stimulating thought and dialogue among evaluators and evaluation stakeholders in the United States.

Best Practices or Best Processes. Precisely what kind of evidence is required to satisfy calls for “evidence-based” practice? Should evaluations demonstrate the effectiveness and applicability of specific prescribed practices? Or, should evaluation studies instead aim to establish the effectiveness of developmental processes that, when followed, will allow local stakeholders to craft effective practices of their own? This debate raises difficult questions about the relative importance of internal and external validity, the extent to which the past is a good model for the future, and the influence of community/organizational “context” on evaluation findings.

Keeping Pace with Rapidly Evolving Programs. Program strategy usually changes much faster than the evaluation systems that accompany it. What can be done to anticipate and accommodate the evaluation needs of a rapidly changing program? To what extent is it even possible to evaluate something that is changing all the time? When program and evaluation strategies diverge, which becomes the lesser value? In other words, should programs be designed to ensure their evaluability, or should evaluations be redefined in light of program strategies that have the best chances of success?

Evaluation Without Comparison or Control Groups. The vast majority of organizational learning occurs in the absence of formal comparison or control groups. What is the value of such learning? What are the main advantages and limitations of having a comparison or control group? How have ideas about the use and necessity of comparison and control groups evolved over the past 20-30 years, especially in light of recent developments in social ecological theory and systems modeling? Are there any circumstances when it is *inappropriate* or *misleading* to use a comparison or control group? What does all this imply for the effort to promote “evidence-based” practice, and for systematic reviews of “evidence”, most of which will exclude studies that lack a comparison or control group)?

Measuring Evaluation Capacity. Evaluation is an essential organizational practice, and as such it implies the need for investments in evaluation capacity (i.e., the ability to conduct evaluations that meet accepted standards). How shall we measure change in evaluation capacity? What are the many dimensions to consider? How can those dimensions be defined operationally for the purposes of measurement? What issues are involved in simultaneously assessing the effectiveness of programs/policies as well as efforts to build evaluation capacity?

The Atlanta area Evaluation Association (AaEA) was well-represented at the annual conference, with no less than a dozen members presenting panels or offering professional development workshops. Hope to see many of you in Reno/Sparks in November for Evaluation 2003. And, as mentioned elsewhere, our local affiliate will be playing a key role when the AEA conference comes to Atlanta in 2004.



AaEA / United Way Partnership

For the second year running, an AaEA and United Way partnership is offering technical assistance and support on evaluation to United Way funded organizations in Atlanta. This year, approximately five projects are in operation, serving the needs of organizations that attended an initial orientation at United Way on evaluation and outcomes measurement and then initiated a relationship with an AaEA consultant. Most projects pair individual consultants with organizations, but the potential for team projects exists. Technical assistance ranges from very simple to very complicated issues, and the extent of the relationship is determined by both the organization and the consultant. In 2003, we will be offering this expertise to any community-based organization with an interest in or need to do evaluation. If you have an interest in offering technical assistance, or if you know of an organization that needs this assistance, feel free to contact Tom Chapel at Tchapel@cdc.gov or 404-498-1145.

New Evaluators Group

What is the AaEA New Evaluators group? The New Evaluators group is a subgroup of the Professional Development Committee of the Atlanta area Evaluation Association (AaEA). It is open to anyone new to the field and/or practice of evaluation, including students. The group strives to provide educational opportunities related to evaluation skills, current topics in evaluation, and the profession of evaluation. Members of the group are also provided with opportunities to network with accomplished evaluation professionals. The New Evaluators group currently offers meetings with invited speakers and skill building activities.

Events for the New Evaluators group will be advertised on the AaEA website (<http://www.evalatl.org>) and distributed electronically to all members of the group. To be placed on our electronic distribution list, please contact Tamara Lamia at Tamara.L.Lamia@orcmacro.com or Audrey Reichard at AREichard@cdc.gov.

What has the New Evaluators group done most recently? The AaEA New Evaluators group wrapped up 2002 with a case study workshop lead by Steve Erickson, from EMSTAR, and Julie Chambliss, of Chambliss & Associates, Inc. The event was entitled "Outcomes Mania" and featured two intensive case studies that allowed participants to work through the nuances, dangers, and real payoffs from outcome evaluations. The group began 2003 with a presentation titled "Evaluation, Planning, Implementation, and Use" by Dr. Larry Green and Dr. Goldie MacDonald. Dr. Green and Dr. MacDonald shared practical lessons on evaluation from the National Tobacco Control Program, and provided an opportunity for discussion with attendees regarding the tobacco control evaluation efforts at CDC.

What upcoming events does the New Evaluators group have planned? The New Evaluators group is currently planning an event to be led by Dr. Theresa Sipe from Georgia State University. She will present information on how to evaluate a program when stakeholders limit access and methods of sharing results and making recommendations in such a situation. Her presentation emphasizes being creative and thinking outside of the box. This event will be held Wednesday, April 23, 2003 from 3:00-4:30 at ORC Macro. Complete details will be posted on <http://www.evalatl.org> when they are available. Please visit the website often for information regarding upcoming AaEA New Evaluator events.

WANTED:

Volunteer trainers, who are specialists in evaluation, to offer workshops for the Georgia Center for Nonprofits. We pay mileage for more than 100 miles outside Atlanta. We already offer classes on Logic Models. We need general evaluation process and some advanced classes. We also want evaluation professionals who have used software such as NonprofitBooks Office to track outcomes. Please call Susan Goodman 404-688-4845, ext. 3108 or e-mail Susan with ideas and resume to sgoodman@gcn.org.

Atlanta-area Evaluation Association Financial Report for 2002

In our second year as a professional association we have done much to establish a stable operational foundation for the organization. Significantly, we established a new “e” home for AaEA at www.evalatl.org and are now officially a non-profit organization operating under 501 (c) 3 status. We have continued to organize successful quarterly events, have provided encouragement to students and others new to the evaluation profession, have increased our visibility in the Atlanta area and beyond, and are recognized and appreciated as an active affiliate of the national AEA.

We continue to have a strong membership base. Eighty-seven people joined or renewed their memberships to AaEA in 2002, paying \$40 or (in the case of full-time students) \$25 each. These membership dues have provided AaEA with \$3,240 in income, in addition to \$815 in event registrations by non-members (members attend events at no additional charge). We received \$1,400 in cash donations. This brought the total cash income for 2002 to \$5,455. In addition there were many generous gifts-in-kind, including web site, meeting space and pro-bono speakers. Starting with \$5,295* carried forward from 2001, and only \$3,338 in expenses (thanks in large measure to those gifts-in-kind), we ended the year with a healthy bank balance of \$7,413.

The figures for 2002 show that AaEA has established an efficient and stable pattern for its current activities and is in a good position to launch more aggressive programming for 2003. In the upcoming year, we need to revitalize our membership and renewal systems while continuing to provide sufficient benefits to ensure that members recognize there is value in being active in AaEA. On the cautious side, we need to keep in mind that if any of our generous gifts-in-kind benefactors are unable to continue to provide free services, that bank balance would be drawn down very quickly. We express our profound thanks to: ORC Macro, Girl Scouts of America, American Cancer Society and Emory University for providing meeting space for quarterly membership meetings; ORC MACRO for providing meeting space for the new evaluator’s group and meeting space for the AaEA Council’s monthly meetings; William Trochim, Barry Cohen, Kathy Miner, Don Compton, Jim Emshoff, Julie Chamblis and others for pro-bono presentations.

Now, let’s do the numbers:

2002 Affiliate Budget

Financial Report 2002

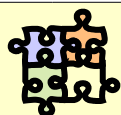
Regular Memberships (82)	\$2,840
Student Memberships (25)	\$400
Fees for individual events	\$815
Donations	\$1,400
2001 Cash reserve returned	\$100
Other	\$34

Expenses by Committee

Program	\$1,960
Professional Development	\$89
Communications	\$982
Membership	0
Finance	\$272
TOTAL	\$3,337

Balance Sheet

Starting balance (1/1/02)	\$5,195
Total income	\$5,555
Total expenses	\$3,337
Ending balance (12/31/02)	\$7,413
TOTAL INCOME	\$5,555



**You can now become a member or
renew your membership online at: www.evalatl.org**

Atlanta-area Evaluation Association (AaEA)

Who are we?

The Atlanta-area Evaluation Association (AaEA) was formed in 2000 to support the broad and diverse group of evaluators in our area. The Association has three broad goals: (1) to improve the quality of evaluation; (2) to enhance the professional life of evaluators; and (3) to add credibility and visibility to the evaluation field. As part of our overall goals, we hope to:

- Stimulate new evaluation ideas and opportunities
- Facilitate the identification and organization of evaluation services for the community
- Decrease isolation among area evaluators
- Provide networking opportunities among evaluators
- Cross-fertilize evaluation ideas among various professions, settings, and content areas
- Bring students into the evaluation field and mentor their professional development
- Help strengthen the American Evaluation Association

We seek to achieve these goals and objectives broadly, but put special emphasis on our Atlanta-area community. By joining us, you support the Association's purposes, as well as find personal benefits for you as an evaluation professional.

Benefits of AaEA Membership

Current benefits:

- Professional development
- Quarterly educational programs (at no additional cost)
- Discounts on special programs and events
- New evaluator group with field visits and local contacts
- Networking opportunities
- Mentoring support
- Website with links to national and local sites: <http://www.arc.gsu.edu/aea/default.htm>
- Opportunities to provide leadership in the evaluation field
- Newsletter

Coming soon:

- Job exchange
- Access to member-only electronic communications via the listserv or the website
- Access to the current AaEA Membership Directory

Join Today!

Become a new member or renew your membership

online at: www.evalatl.org

Atlanta-area Evaluation Association (AaEA) Annual Membership Application

To become a member of the AaEA, please complete the following form and mail your check payable to:
Atlanta-area Evaluation Association, P.O. Box 95273, Atlanta, GA 30347.

- Please check one:
- I am a new member
[SKIP TO SALUTATION]
 - I am renewing my membership and **DO NOT** have changes to my contact information
[SKIP TO TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP]
 - I am renewing my membership and **DO** have changes to my contact information
[CONTINUE TO SALUTATION]

Salutation: Ms. Mr. Dr.

Highest degree earned: Bachelors Masters Doctorate Other: _____

Job Title: _____

Organization: _____

The following mailing address is my:

- business address for the above organization
- home address
- Other: _____

Address line 1: _____

Address line 2: _____

Address line 3: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Best number to reach you during the day: (____) ____ - _____ Fax #: (____) ____ - _____

Email address: _____

- Type of membership:
- \$40.00 yearly (regular membership) [SKIP TO WORK SETTING]
 - \$25.00 yearly (full-time student membership) [CONTINUE TO NAME OF SCHOOL]

Name of school: _____

Concentration of study: _____

Please continue on the other side.



Atlanta-area Evaluation Association (AaEA) Annual Membership Application [*Continued...*]

Work Setting:*(Check All That Apply)*

- Education
- University
- Full-Time Student
- Government
- For-Profit
- Not-For-Profit
- Independent Consultant
- Cultural/Diversity Issues in Eval.
- Other: _____

Areas Of Interest:*(Check All That Apply)*

- Health Evaluation
- Education Evaluation
- Crime/Justice Evaluation
- Business/Industry Evaluation
- Human Services Evaluation
- Qualitative Methods
- Quantitative Methods
- Community / Participatory
- Other: _____

Areas Of Expertise:*(Check All That Apply)*

- Health Evaluation
- Education Evaluation
- Crime/Justice Evaluation
- Business/Industry Evaluation
- Human Services Evaluation
- Qualitative Methods
- Quantitative Methods
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Which of the following AaEA committee(s) would you like to serve on?

(Check all that apply)

- Finance:** This committee initially worked on structural issues for the AaEA such as by-laws & 501c3 status. Once a structure is in place the committee will be concerned with the financial solvency of the affiliate.
- Professional Development:** This committee focuses on ways to bring new evaluators into the field and to support and stimulate the development of practicing evaluators. How can I continue my own learning? What can I share with someone else?
- Program:** This committee helps identify topics, venues, and formats for AaEA events. What would be interesting and how can we make that happen?
- Communications:** This committee is focused on internal and external communications among evaluators in the Atlanta area and beyond, including websites, listservs, newsletters, marketing materials, and e-mail exchanges.
- Membership:** This committee focuses on the mechanism, advantages, fee structure, and database for the affiliate membership. Why join? How do you join? Who are members?
- New Evaluators:** This group includes students and others who are new to the field of evaluation. The group organizes events that not only expose participants to a variety of evaluation career paths, but provide them direction regarding the types of education and training that can support an evaluation career. Participants benefit from the insights and ideas of others who have already made choices along this career path.

How many years have you been in the evaluation profession? ____ years

How did you hear about us?

(Check all that apply)

- A colleague
- Affiliate link from AEA website
- Other: _____

Can we share your contact information with the AaEA membership via a member directory? Yes No

Questions? Contact the Membership Committee Chair “_____” at “**phone #**” or via email at “***”.

Would you pay online if AaEA offered this option? Yes No

PLEASE MAIL YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION AND CHECK (MADE PAYABLE TO THE ATLANTA AREA EVALUATION ASSOCIATION) TO:

P.O. BOX 95273, ATLANTA, GA 30347