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**Dr. Christine Norton Receives
2022 AEE TAPG Heart of Adventure Therapy Award**

Presented annually to honor an Adventure Therapy organization or individual who provides exemplary adventure therapy services and embodies the heart of adventure therapy

[Black Mountain, NC, November 11, 2022] -

The Heart of Adventure Therapy Award was established by the [Association of Experiential Education's](#) (AEE) [Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group](#) (TAPG). It is presented annually at the TAPG Pre-conference to "honor an Adventure Therapy organization or individual who provides exemplary adventure therapy services and embodies the heart of adventure therapy." The award was established in 2014 and it has recognized two organizations and 9 individuals since its inception.

Christine Lynn Norton, PhD, LCSW-S, was the recipient of the award for 2022. She was honored at a ceremony preceding AEE's annual conference. Surrounded by her peers, colleagues, and friends she listened while Dr. Anita Tucker presented the award via a livestream from Italy. "As a research collaborator, Christine is always thinking first about the clients that are impacted by our work, and the practitioners who are on the front lines doing the work. It is for them that we do research, and the client voice is of the utmost importance to Christine.", Dr. Tucker said. "She leads with her heart because she is always willing to be there for others as a teacher, mentor, and friend and just as willing to engage in hard conversations in which she role models how to take risks in order to build bridges between folks who may have different perspectives."

Dr. Norton received her PhD in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago. She has a Master of Arts in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago and a Master of Science in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato.

She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Board Approved Supervisor in the State of Texas. She has over 20 years of experience working with youth and young adults in a variety of settings including therapeutic wilderness programs, juvenile justice, schools, mentoring and campus support programs. She has taught as adjunct faculty at The University of Denver, Prescott College, and Naropa University. Her areas of practice and research interest and expertise are in positive youth development; innovative interventions in child and adolescent mental health; adventure therapy; outdoor behavioral healthcare; experiential education; foster care support in higher education; and international social work.

“Her practice is extraordinary- she teaches and trains, consults and presents, supervises and counsels, nurtures and challenges- and those who are in contact with her know in their heart the blessing they had just experienced in their time with her.” said colleague Tony Alvarez.

Her biography continues: Dr. Norton is a Research Scientist with the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Center and she helped launch Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success (FACES) at Texas State. She is the Foster Care Liaison Officer to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and is the founder of the Foster Care Adventure Therapy Network, an international group of programs and practitioners who utilize adventure therapy with current and former foster care youth and young adults. Dr. Norton has over 25 peer-reviewed journal articles, has edited three books, and has authored over ten book chapters. She has secured over \$3,162,154 in internal and external research funding as Principal Investigator (PI) and co-investigator, is a leading social work scholar who has presented her research nationally and internationally. Dr. Norton is active in study abroad and is also a Fulbright Scholar, teaching adventure therapy in the Department of Civic Education and Leadership at National Taiwan Normal University.

One of the individuals who nominated Christine wrote on the nomination form: “Christine Norton has worked tirelessly to be a bridge in our field among diverse perspectives and disparate views on critical topics related to client care. She is an advocate, teacher, questioner, learner and helper. She has contributed in countless ways that have transformed our field in positive ways over the last two decades. She bravely tackles difficult topics with an open heart that welcomes dialogue and self-reflection.”

In addition to her impressive academic & professional achievements, Christine has been an incredibly active AEE volunteer. She was an inaugural speaker of the [ActivatEE](#) keynote series held annually at AEE’s international conference. She has continued with

ActivatEE being a coach and a mentor for many speakers over the last 10 years. In addition, Christine has served on Regional Councils, the TAPG Leadership Council and lately the Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist Certification Council. She continues her volunteerism by being part of the Social Justice Task Force.

Colleague Dr. Lynette Spencer wrote, "She is one of the most prolifically experienced, connected, encouraging, lovers of our field, and one who puts her entire self into her work - not for her own gain but for the benefit of the field overall. She takes time to get to know others in our field and is the ultimate connector of people. She is an amazing person, with an amazing heart."

Therapeutic Adventure is the professional group for those AEE members who work within the fields of health, mental health, corrections, education, and other human service fields. Their primary purpose is to facilitate networking for professionals within the various fields and share information, techniques, and concerns regarding the therapeutic use of adventure. They define therapeutic as moving toward healthy change with intentional interventions. They represent the interests of this community to the Board and larger professional communities through workshops, conference and pre-conference activities, and best practices development.

AEE is a nonprofit, professional membership association dedicated to experiential education and the students, educators and practitioners who utilize its philosophy. It is a global community of experiential educators and practitioners with the shared goal of elevating the field of Experiential Education. AEE enriches the community through conferences, defining professional standards, providing accreditation to organizations and certifications to individuals, and presenting the latest news and research through the AEE newsletter, the podcast "It's In the Experience", and the Journal of Experiential Education.

Sherry Bagley, AEE's Executive Director, is pleased to have Dr. Norton recognized for her work. "All of the nominations for Christine mentioned her heart and how she uses it fully in her work, in her relationships and in life. I have experienced Christine's whole-hearted approach in the work she has done with AEE and we as a community are better because of her. I am a better person because of her. She is truly deserving of this award."

If you would like more information, please visit aee.org or contact Sherry Bagley at sherry@aee.org



Surrounded by friends, Dr. Christine Norton listens to the introduction for the Heart of Adventure Therapy Award at the 2022 AEE International Conference TAPG Pre-conference.



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