A great deal of work and coordination was involved in making the 2016 annual AATA Conference a success! Our largest conference to date, with 1274 attendees, was an historic event, thanks in large part to the team that made it happen behind the scenes. Conference days often mean early mornings and late nights for our National Office Staff, our Conference Committee, and Local Arrangements Committee (LAC). Appearing effortless involves dedication and determination! Those who volunteered their time to ensure a smoothly-run conference did so with grace and good-naturedness. We are very grateful for these individuals and want to provide a brief glimpse into what it takes to run an event of this scale.

Although the conference itself spans just a few days, organization of the event actually begins years in advance. For this year’s conference, Barbara Florence, AATA Director of Events and Education, Jane DeSouza, MPS, ATR-BC, LCAT, Chair of the Conference Committee, and Christina Easterly, AATA Administrative Assistant, spearheaded the logistical organization of over 250 presentations and workshops.

On-site preparation for the conference gets underway several days before registration officially opens, with the Staff and LAC coordinating everything from art materials to schedules and to content for morning announcements and introductions. Papers are stacked, tickets placed, badges printed, all part of a carefully crafted process aimed at ensuring each attendee arrives with a conference package fully prepared and ready to go. This year, the AATA Board of Directors kindly contributed some of their pre-conference time by helping to assemble tote bags with informational pamphlets and other assorted conference goodies.
The volunteers that worked at the LAC table often took on multiple roles, acting as ambassadors for the conference, for the Maryland Art Therapy Association, or for the city of Baltimore. Through their efforts, conference attendees were able to participate in a rich assortment of offsite activities, including the “Night on the Town” trip to Make Studio, and experience Baltimore in new ways.

Congratulations to our National Office team, the Conference Committee, the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) and all who helped make our Baltimore conference such a success. See you in November, 2017, in Albuquerque, NM!