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International EAPs: Building a Brave New World



1996 Silver
Anniversary
Highlights

FY 1996 FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT

Northern Ohio and Brazilian EAPA Chapters Linking Up for Mutual Benefits

by Sandra Turner, David Riccardi, and Tim Thomas

The emergence of a world marketplace, growing economic interdependence of countries, and global expansion of American companies are just a few reasons why it is incumbent upon EAPA to grow and expand in countries outside the United States. One major benefit of such growth—standardized EAP policies, practices, and ethics—will undoubtedly strengthen the EAP field.

One step towards this growth is to develop an EAPA chapter outside the United States—a very complex undertaking. Differences in language, culture, money, and laws combine to make the process daunting, even for the most enthusiastic international EAPA members.

Many EAPA members outside of the U.S. want to form chapters in their respective countries, but they are at a loss for knowing how to begin and/or maintain enthusiasm for the benefits of associating with the international EAPA headquarters, which is so many miles away in Arlington, Virginia. Headquarters provides excellent chapter formation materials, but without an EAPA “friend” to call for assistance, wending through the processes of chapter formation, maintenance, electing officers, developing committees, certification, ethics, and other issues can discourage many people.

Some hearty international members do survive the ordeal and grow into very productive EAPA chapters. One such group is the EAPA Brazilian Chapter, which was formed on December 1, 1995. Officers were installed that day and presided over a two-day conference marking the inauguration of the chapter.

In order to nourish this fledgling growth, the EAPA Northern Ohio Chapter voted unanimously in April 1996 to become “linked” to Brazil. Based on discussions with the Brazilian officers, the Northern Ohio Chapter is undertaking the following activities:


- Providing written materials from monthly chapter meetings. Meeting topics include EAP models, managed care, organizational development, EAP contract language, critical incident stress debriefings, workplace drug testing, advisory committees, conflict management, and others;
- Opening a dialogue between Northern Ohio members and those in Brazil from the same industries: oil, communications, manufacturing, automobiles, professional services, etc.;
- Hosting a visiting Brazilian Chapter member in Cleveland and providing a tour of local EAPs, chemical dependency treatment facilities, and outpatient mental health centers;

- Providing information on topics of interest to Brazilian members;
- Acting as an advocate for the Brazilian Chapter to the EAPA international headquarters in Arlington, Virginia;
- Featuring the Brazilian Chapter activities in the monthly Northern Ohio Chapter newsletter, *News Exchange*;
- Raffleing off a cultural artifact from Brazil at an upcoming Northern Ohio Chapter meeting and using the proceeds to defray the expenses associated with linking the Northern Ohio Chapter with the Brazilian Chapter.

How Northern Ohio Will Benefit

What's in it for the Northern Ohio Chapter? Many benefits. For example:

- The next wave of EAP growth is expected to be in the international arena. Knowing firsthand about the unique characteristics of EAPs in one country—Brazil—will afford the Northern Ohio EAPA members greater insight into similarities and differences among EAPs in different countries. Such knowledge will be beneficial to chapter members hoping to start other EAPs for company staff in other parts of the world.
- Awareness of innovations by EA professionals in other countries will augment the knowledge base of Northern Ohio Chapter members about program models, practice standards, policies, and procedures. New ideas may be incorporated into local U.S. company programs.
- Mentors often learn more about their profession or association because of “innocent” questions posed by the person or group being mentored. Often the mentor is challenged to reconsider cherished traditions in the field of practice.
- The Northern Ohio Chapter will be recognized among its peers for sponsoring international chapter development.
- This is a great opportunity to learn more personally about the cultures and people of another country.
- The Northern Ohio Chapter can promote Cleveland, Ohio, to another country!

The Northern Ohio Chapter has just begun this odyssey of linking with Brazil. Check back with us at this time next year for an update. 

Sandra Turner, David Riccardi, and Tim Thomas are members of the EAPA Northern Ohio Chapter.