

# MEET AET VOLUNTEER

## Gillian Barreca



### Level of AET membership:

Professional

### Type and location of practice: (City, State)

Private Practice in Los Angeles area.

### Leadership roles held in AET:

I have been a co-leader of a study group, Co-Chair of Marketing and Outreach, currently Chair of the Outreach Committee and creator of the Mentor Program.

### How long have you been an educational therapist?

6 years

### What brought you to educational therapy?

I will forever be grateful to the late Susan Fogelson who had the foresight, during a chance lunch to say those infamous words, "You would make a great educational therapist." The rest is herstory.

### Areas of expertise:

As a person with a learning disability, I find that I bring a unique set of perspectives to my clients and their families. Through creative and engaging practices, I help build lifelong learners in the areas of reading, elementary math, written expression, self-awareness/self-advocacy, and executive functioning.

### What is the best career advice you can give to new ETs?

The best advice I can give to fellow ET's is to get involved in AET and create your own community of support. Give yourself the space and grace to grow as a person and professional; be kind to yourself along the way. Remember to look back in the rear-view mirror and see the hill you just climbed and celebrate the progress!

### Describe a challenge you have faced as an educational therapist:

I think a challenge that I sometimes face as an educational therapist is not always trusting my skills. I tend to be afraid of making mistakes. This can be a very scary and lonely place. However, when I have reached out to my AET community, I am always amazed to hear that some of my AET Hero's sometimes feel the same way. #Right Track

### Describe a highlight of your educational therapy career:

One of the highlights of my educational career was achieving one of my professional goals, which was to open my own ET practice. When I started working, I was fortunate to work with my BCET supervisor whose mentorship and support helped me to gain the courage I needed to step out of my comfort zone. Connect the Dots Educational Therapy was established in January 2024.

### What do you think the future of the educational therapy profession will look like?

I think the future of the profession of ET will take on more of a leadership presence in educational conversations. Whether we are providing input on how to better support individuals with disabilities at the school, state, and national levels or working on committees for educational reform and inclusion, Educational Therapists will be viewed as a cohesive coalition.

### How have you benefited from your membership in AET?

I have benefited from my AET membership in various ways. First, I have on-going access to information, programs and people that have helped shaped my practice. Second, AET afforded me the opportunity to work along-side some of the brightest colleagues. Finally, it validated my place in field of special education.

### Hobbies/Leisure Activities:

My hobbies are spending time with my family, enjoying my dogs and writing poems, sayings and reflections.

