

From the Director



► We are pleased to share our annual OT newsletter highlighting the many exciting activities that our faculty, staff and students are engaging in both inside the classroom and out in the community. From advocacy and professional presentations, to service locally, nationally, and internationally, our students are taking on leadership roles in support of our Centennial Vision.

This past year brought new people and exciting opportunities to the Chatham OT programs. We welcome our newest faculty,

Dr. Janet Bucey, and our new program assistant, Tyson Schrader to our OT team. Dr. Cathy Dolhi has become an “Emeritus Professor” after retiring in January of 2017, and we welcomed Theresa Delbert into the fulltime fieldwork coordinator role. The OT program began its first MOT to OTD track program, and is in the process of developing our entry level doctorate for fall 2019. Our post professional OTD students are implementing innovative evidence based programs and presenting and publishing their capstones in peer reviewed venues. If you have news to share, we encourage you to stay connected and share your news and accomplishments on our alumni Facebook page!

Enjoy reading about the highlights of the past year in this 2017 issue of the *OT In Touch Newsletter!* As is our custom, the majority of these articles are written by our current students and alumni.

Best Wishes,
Joyce Salls, OTD, OTR/L

Do you have professional news? Are you interested in accessing the online directory? In order to get the most up to date information from your alma mater, please be sure to keep your contact information updated with the Office of Alumni Relations.

Keep in touch with Chatham and your classmates by visiting chatham.edu/alumni. There you can become a member of the alumni directory, view and share classnotes, as well as register and pay for events online! Contact alumni@chatham.edu for your unique ID needed to login!

From the Dean



► Chatham University’s School of Health Sciences has spent the past year getting to know President David Finegold, who was officially inaugurated on October 13. It has been an exciting year since Dr. Finegold joined us and we appreciate the energy, ideas, and wealth of knowledge that he brings to Chatham. In addition,

his wife Sue Finegold has generously shared her time and expertise in leading a weekly yoga class at Chatham Eastside to help keep us focused on our own personal health and wellness.

Highlights from the School of Health Sciences during this past year include: the Master of Science in Counseling Psychology Program received a full 10-year accreditation from MPCAC; the Department of Movement Science was formed as part of a re-organization process that brought physical therapy, exercise science, and athletic training together; the athletic training degree was approved as a five-year master’s degree built on the strength of the exercise science program (www.chatham.edu/athletic-training); the successful start of the fully online Masters in Healthcare Informatics (www.chatham.edu/mhi), an interdisciplinary degree that brings together clinicians and information technologists; the physician assistant studies program announcing that Judy Truscott was promoted to program director; and finally, two School of Health Science (Doctors of Nurse Practice) alumni, Dr. Kathi Elliot and Dr. Sandra Radar joined Chatham’s Board of Trustees.

My best to you all,

Dr. Patricia Downey

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publications

Tal-Atzili, O., & **Salls, J.** (2017). Qigong sensory training pilot study: A tactile home program for children with or at risk for autism. *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention*, 6(2), 131-142.

Lape, J.E. & Scaife, B.D. (2017). Use of the KAWA model for teambuilding with rehabilitation professionals: An exploratory study. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 15(1), Article 10, 1-8.

Mani, K. & **Provident I.** (2017) Compensation received by occupational therapists in India: A national survey. *Indian Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 49:1 22-28.

Keane, E., **Provident, I.** (2017). Combining online education with international service learning to increase cultural competence. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 15(3), Article 6.

Rebovich, A. M. & **Schreiber, J.** (2017). *An introduction to low vision rehabilitation for occupational therapists*. Brockton, MA: Western Schools.

Novalis, S.D., Cyranowski, J.M., & Dolhi, C.D. (2017). Passing the NBCOT examination: Pre-admission, academic, and fieldwork factors. *Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 5(4), Article 9.

Presentations

Lape, J. (2017, April 1). Using Storify to Promote Student Engagement & Learning [Tech Day presentation]. Professional Presentation, American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Lape, J., Skaletski, E., Copney, J., Landen, C., & Panova, A. (2017, March 31). Use of Multisensory Environments in Dementia Care: What's the Evidence? Professional Presentation, American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Salls, J. (2017, March 31). *Sweet dreams: Interventions for pediatric sleep issues.* Poster presentation at the AOTA Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Salls, J. & Breen-Franklin, A. (2017, March 30). ***Voices of mothers of children with disabilities in two distinct communities.*** Poster presentation at the AOTA Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

Novalis, S. & Salls, J. (2017, March 1). *Suicide awareness and occupational therapy*. POTA District II, Pittsburgh, PA.

Mollo, K., Merizalde, B.A., & **Lape, J.** (2017). Competency for Parents of Adolescents with Executive Functioning Deficits: Enhancing Occupational Performance with Mindfulness. *Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

Bucey, J. (2017, May 25). Strengthening leadership and professionalism: A peer mentoring model in the USA. Deutscher Verband der Ergotherapeuten E.V. Kongress (DVE), Bielefeld, Germany.

Lape, J. (2017, February 27). *Conflict management and resolution*, Guest Lecture, West Virginia University, Morgantown, PA.

Provident, I., Bucey, J., & Strong, G. (2017, Nov. 2). SBIRT for Occupational Therapists. Presented to FW Educators, Chatham University, Pittsburgh, PA.

Novalis, S.D., and T. M. Delbert, "Student Teaching-Learning Strategies for Success." 2017 Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, State College, PA (2017)

Novalis, S.D., "Talk Saves Lives." Chatham University, Death and Dying Course. Chatham University, Pittsburgh, PA (March 15, 2017).

Lape, J.E., & Scaife, B.D. (2017, October 7). *Exploring Use of the KAWA Model for Teambuilding*. Professional Presentation, Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, State College, PA.

Welcome...



► **Janet Bucey, OTD, OTR/L** joined our faculty in August 2017 and is teaching in both the MOT and online OTD programs. She received her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Temple University, and her

OTD from Chatham University. Her occupational therapy clinical experience includes school, community, rehabilitation, acute care, neonatal, burn and home care settings. Dr. Bucey was named Master Clinician in 2014 for the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association. She is trained in S-cool Moves, the use of therapeutic groups and certified in the Sensory Integration and Praxis Test.

Dr. Bucey pursues personal wellness and positive mental health through yoga, meditation, whole foods eating and her favorite leisure activities of bicycling, running, and having coffee with friends.



► After ten years at Chatham University as program assistant, Debbie Carter re-located to Austin, Texas to be closer to her daughter, and **Tyson Schrader** stepped in to fill this position. Tyson earned

his Bachelor of Arts in English from Carnegie Mellon University and his Master of Arts in Education from New York University. Tyson taught theatre arts, English literature, and academic writing skills at

secondary schools in New York City for two years before moving back to Pittsburgh in 2009. Since then, Tyson has served as a teaching artist in local schools, managed the box office at several local theaters, supervised front-of-house staff at a fine dining restaurant, and managed fundraising and marketing for a non-profit events venue.

At Chatham, Tyson started as the clinical administrative assistant for the PA program and has since become the program assistant for the MOT and OTD programs. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, acting, and spending time with family and friends. Tyson's background in acting has been extremely beneficial for role playing activities in the classroom, as well as playing the part of "patient" for our competency exams!

Fieldwork Educator Appreciation Event: Occupational Therapy's Role with Substance Use Disorders

Theresa Delbert, MS, OTR/L

► This year marks the Chatham University MOT program's 7th annual Fieldwork Educator Appreciation Event, which is held as a way to thank our fieldwork educators who give their time, energy and expertise supervising and mentoring Chatham University level I and level II fieldwork students. With record-setting attendance, the Fieldwork Educator Appreciation Event welcomed 33 fieldwork educators and Chatham partners representing various practice areas and fieldwork settings. This year's topic was occupational therapy's role with substance use disorders.

The evening started with the Class of 2018 presenting their Evidence Based Practice Posters to the group of fieldwork educators and Chatham partners.

Attendees viewed the posters while asking students questions about their evidence and connections to practice.

Carson the Cougar, Chatham's mascot, made an appearance while guests enjoyed catering from Moe's Southwest Grill, which was in support of Chatham's community fieldwork partner, Beverly's Birthdays. Beverly's Birthdays believes that every child, regardless of personal or financial circumstances, deserves to feel the joy and recognition of celebrating their special day each year. As a result of our fieldwork educator event, Beverly's Birthdays will receive free Moe's catering at a birthday party.

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“100 Things Occupational Therapists’ Do”

Victoria Davis, OTS; Jessica Moritz, OTS; Meghan O’Hara, OTS; and Nicole O’Donnell, OTS

▶ As part of Chatham’s interprofessional education events, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy, physician assistant, counseling psychology, and nursing programs collaborate together through case scenarios as an opportunity to learn to work together once out of the classroom. During these events, the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) Class of 2018 saw the importance of educating other healthcare professionals on the role of OT in order to provide personalized care for each client through team collaboration. While deciding how to celebrate the OT profession’s month and centennial year, we chose to focus the festivities on strengthening the professional relationships between future OTs and potential coworkers in other fields through hosting mOTivational Monday. The event’s goal was to educate other Chatham healthcare students on the vast scope of OT practice as well as how we can partner with other healthcare professionals to benefit clients.

To represent the 100 years OT has been a profession, the MOT students brainstormed 100 therapeutic activities that OTs implement. In order to symbolize how OTs give a lending hand to clients, the activities were written down on construction-paper hands. The multiple colors

of hands represent the variety of diagnoses and people OTs see on a daily basis. Collectively, the poster shows the vast amount of therapeutic activities and clients OTs treat. This poster was hung up during mOTivational Monday for all healthcare students to see.

As healthcare students entered the Chatham Eastside mezzanine, where mOTivational Monday was held, they were offered snacks and a cake which read “Happy 100th Birthday, Occupational Therapy.” There were various activities and educational stations for healthcare students to learn more about OT. The activities included making stress balls and learning how to use adaptive equipment, such as long-handled reachers, buttonhooks and long-handled shoe horns. Equipment used for preparatory activities was also available for everyone to explore. After learning about an adaptive device or piece of equipment, students were able to enter their name into a raffle for a chance to win a \$25 Chipotle gift card. Many healthcare students stated they enjoyed learning about the interventions OTs provide, and making their own stress balls around finals time!

While planning and implementing this event, we were energized by the opportunity to inform



other healthcare students about OT. It allowed us to practice our definition of OT and explain how the profession looks different in various settings. After the event, we hung the poster in one of the OT classrooms so that it could continue to spread awareness and make an impact on other individuals that utilize the room. The event was beneficial in that it not only spread a message about OT’s role in healthcare, but was also a great opportunity for the MOT Class of 2018 to work together to advocate for our profession.

100 YEARS

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Leslie Paat, MOT '00, OTR/L

Tyson Schrader, OT program assistant



► Leslie Paat, MOT '00, continues to feel the passion for occupational therapy now more than ever in her new role as Clinical Manager of Occupational Therapy

at the Children's Institute. For the past five years, she honed her skills as a certified lymphedema therapist. With a changing population and less direct care time, Leslie has seen fewer opportunities to practice these skills; nevertheless, she says, "it feeds my soul to know that we are able to help clients and families do the things that matter most to them – whether that means helping a teen with chronic pain be able to return to school... or assist a child who struggles with depression and anxiety to establish healthy leisure outlets and social participation." Leslie still gets to participate in weekly feeding evaluations, and collaborates with the behavioral health team on providing OT services as part of the inpatient behavioral health unit. "After all," she quips, "mental health is where OT got its start!"

Since her promotion, Leslie's biggest challenge has been managing time to cover all areas of need in the department. With five sites across Allegheny County – including Squirrel Hill, Pleasant Hills, Norwin Hills, Wexford, and Bridgeville – the Children's Institute keeps Leslie on her toes, traveling

from site to site to check in with staff and observe therapists. "I have been learning a lot from them in ways that enhances my own practice," she says, adding that she is "much more attuned to organizational processes."

Some of Leslie's best memories from Chatham are "the lasting relationships I developed with the faculty." From her time as a student and later in her rising career, Leslie has found "inspiration, mentorship, and support" from Chatham's Occupational Therapy team. Her advice to the Class of 2018 is to recognize the importance of active leadership and engagement in the state and national associations. "Membership benefits each individual therapist," she says, "as well as the profession." Leslie encourages MOT graduates to seek opportunities for continuing education, stay on top of legislation, and network with their peers.

When Leslie steps outside her OT role, she enjoys being a full-time mom to her 7-year-old son. "I do all the typical mom stuff," says Leslie: "help with homework, pack school lunches, attend school functions, go to basketball practice, do loads and loads of laundry." She loves it! And even though Leslie travels a lot for work, finding time to travel for leisure is a little trickier. With the holiday season approaching, Leslie is anticipating traveling to New York City and taking in the sights. A big trip to the Big Apple is much deserved for this passionate OT.

MOT to OTD Track at Chatham University

Ingrid Provident Ed.D, OTR/L FAOTA

► As you may already be aware, ACOTE, with the support of the AOTA Board of Directors, has passed the Mandate, whereby all occupational therapy programs will be at the entry level doctoral level by 2027. We at Chatham have two distinct OT educational programs currently, the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) and the Post-Professional Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD). Last year, the faculty worked together to create a unique track for students in the Master of Occupational Therapy program to apply to the Post-Professional program with the MOT to OTD Track, also referred to the Fast Track, on our website at www.chatham.edu/ot/fasttrack.cfm.

This program, designed solely for our Chatham MOT students, provides a financial incentive in that the students begin taking OTD classes while on fieldwork for no additional tuition. They are also waived from one course for which the content was covered by multiple courses in their MOT program. This fast track then requires the students to take seven rather than ten Post-Professional OTD courses after they graduate, pass the NBCOT exam, and secure their first position as an entry-level OTR/L. We recognize that this program is rigorous, however, within the current programs which are offered at Chatham it allows those students who have the motivation to earn the doctorate an opportunity to do so while the OT profession gears up for doctorally prepared entry-level practitioners.

In order to pursue this opportunity, the MOT students are required to formally apply to the program, participate in an interview, and write an essay on their

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MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Falls Prevention Awareness Day: Watch Your Step!

John Boharic, OTS; Leanna Lubinski, OTS; Matt Weidner, OTS; Stephanie Weir, OTS

► Each year, Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program provides students with leadership opportunities. This year a group of ten students presented an interactive falls prevention program at Bethel Park Holiday Retirement, which is an independent-living community for seniors. Residents are able to maintain an active lifestyle and are involved in the local community, while also receiving some supports, such as transportation and meals.

Falls are the leading cause of injury related to emergency department visits and hip fractures for older adults, and they are responsible for more than half of fatal head injuries (AOTA, 2017). In order to address the variety of factors which may contribute to falls, the MOT students divided into three groups focusing on environmental, personal, and community risk factors. In the environmental group, students discussed factors that are present in homes that may place people at risk for falls. The group included photos that portrayed unsafe scenarios of room setups; for example, a picture of a living room displayed electrical cables crossing thresholds

and clutter on the floor. Next, students facilitated discussion with residents by examining each photo and pointing out the environmental hazards of each room. Afterwards, they talked about how those factors place people at risk for falls and provided tips to reduce these environmental hazards.

The second group of students presented various ways for the residents to stay safe while out in the community. They discussed the importance of looking for and utilizing curb cut outs while walking on sidewalks and using grab bars that are available within community buildings, such as in bathrooms. Furthermore, the group suggested that it may be helpful for residents to call the destination ahead of time to ask about accessibility. In regards to emergency communication, the residents were informed that it is important to have a device, such as a cell phone or life alert, on them in the case they fall. After receiving a demonstration on proper ways to sit and stand from a chair, the residents then interacted as a group by answering true and false questions about this information as well as other community risk factors.

Lastly, the students addressed how personal risk factors are important to consider when thinking about falls prevention. The group first discussed how internal influences can increase one's risk for a fall such as advanced age, gender, current health conditions, prescribed medications, visual impairments, changes in posture and balance, and a

Safety for Seniors

Maria Scanlon, OTS; Dana White, OTS

► On Tuesday, May 23, 2017, Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students ventured out into the community to participate in Safety for Seniors home safety assessments. The Safety for Seniors home assessment was provided by Family Services of Western Pennsylvania. In July of 2017, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania merged with Wesley Spectrum to form Wesley Family Services.

Wesley Family Services provides high-quality services across the lifespan of clients. Their mission is to empower children, adults, and families by providing transformational care (wfspa.org/about). Various services are provided under multiple categories such as aging services, autism, Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, community empowerment, behavioral health, education, foster care and adoption, and intellectual and developmental disabilities disorders. Safety for Seniors is a service provided under the aging services category. It is a non-profit service initiative providing a safety inspection of residences as well as recommendations to encourage safe living for individuals 60 years or older. This charitable service is free of charge for citizens of Allegheny County. Along with inspection and recommendations, Safety for Seniors provides residents with supplies to make their home safer, such as new smoke detectors, flashlights, and the option of installing grab bars in tubs or showers to prevent potential injuries.



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The Virtual Dementia Tour: Stepping into Reality

Sylvia McCauley, OTS; Meghan McGowan, OTS; Alex Vinelli, OTS; Carlie Zatko, OTS

► Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students had the opportunity to participate in the Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT). This tour attempts to replicate the difficulties, as well as behaviors, that individuals with dementia experience on a daily basis. Brown & Stoffel (2011) defines dementia as, "an acquired syndrome that results from a disease or disorder of the brain that affects cognition, thinking, and memory" (p. 225). Symptoms of dementia vary from person to person, but some of the more common ones include memory loss, visual perceptual changes, decreased ability to focus/pay attention, increased agitation, and a decline in physical functioning (Brown & Stoffel, 2011).

Each student walked through the tour as an assignment within OTH 623: Occupational Performance in the Aging Population. In addition, some MOT students received training from the lead facilitator in the VDT protocol, and then prepared others to enter the simulation, assisting in a debriefing process which occurred after all students had completed the tour. Students were given a pre-survey to gauge their current attitudes and beliefs toward interacting with individuals with dementia. Before entering the VDT, students were provided materials that altered vision, hearing, and touch in order to simulate dementia-related symptoms. During the VDT, participants are provided vague directions to simulate what individuals with dementia go through on a daily basis.

Upon completion of the VDT, the participating MOT students and lead facilitator held a debriefing session to reflect on the experience and to gain insight into the thoughts and actions of other students during the tour. The debriefing session allowed students to immediately reflect on how the simulation of symptoms of dementia impacted their occupational performance. Through this discussion, students expressed that they were able to better understand behaviors displayed by those with

dementia. They also noted the positive impact that this experience will have in their future interactions and occupational therapy interventions with those with dementia.

Additionally, MOT students were asked to answer questions on their own to further reflect on the VDT and their experience. Students answered prompts related to their level of anxiety and frustration after the VDT. They also discussed if this experience altered their impression of those with dementia. The participating MOT students reported experiencing helplessness and frustration, similar to what some individuals with dementia experience every day. Another student stated, "I think that by attempting to put my feet into a person with dementia's shoes, I can experience some of the things they do, and in that way, adjust how I view their occupations, tasks, and environments to the best of my ability."

It is important to remember that the behaviors and feelings experienced throughout this simulation are not temporary to someone with dementia. It is their life, and their 'tour' never ends. However, it is possible to step into the reality of those with dementia. Simple environmental modifications, such as decreasing clutter and increasing illumination, can make everyday life more manageable for those with dementia. Additionally, modifying one's own therapeutic approach can have a positive influence on his or her interactions with individuals with dementia.

Recommendations to consider incorporating into practice are to speak slowly and clearly, as well as to remain patient and empathetic. Based on our experiences with the VDT, we feel more prepared to incorporate meaningful tasks and activities into our future practice. Furthermore, we will continue to utilize our therapeutic use of self as a means for providing client-centered care for individuals with dementia across all OT settings.



References

- Schaber, P. (2011). Dementia. In Brown, C., & Stoffel, V.C., (Eds.), *Occupational therapy in mental health: A vision for participation*. Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis.



Fall Prevention *continued from page 6*

fear of falling. Next, students provided a step-by-step demonstration of how to safely get up from a fall and how residents can call for help if alone in their home. Additionally, they pointed out the importance of balance as well as how regular screenings of one's vision and hearing can greatly decrease the risk for a fall. A true and false review game allowed residents to demonstrate understanding of personal risk factors related to falls, and a handout was also provided.

Overall, the MOT students were well received by the residents. Initially, students had planned on a larger number of residents who would be split up into smaller groups that would rotate through each station. However, upon arrival, the group realized attendance was going to be less than planned and the layout of the available space was not ideal for having the residents move from station to station. So, in the spirit of occupational therapy, the class remained flexible and adapted to the situation, deciding to present the program to the residents as a whole. This last minute adjustment proved to be advantageous, as it permitted for increased interaction among the residents and students. Furthermore, adapting to this situation helped the students enhance their skills as leaders and strengthened their ability to provide effective education to their clients. Overall, the residents displayed enthusiasm, participated actively, and expressed gratitude for the information received at the end of the program.

American Occupational Therapy Association (2017). National falls prevention awareness day. Retrieved November 5, 2017.
<https://www.aota.org/Practice/Productive-Aging/Falls/Falls-Day.aspx>

Safety *continued from page 6*

After participating in a volunteer orientation at the Wesley Family Services Center, MOT students were divided into small groups and given a residence to complete a home safety visit. Prior to the inspection, students and seniors discussed their current living situation and browsed the supplies provided to determine their use, as well as answer any questions regarding the items. Students then completed a Safety for Seniors checklist as they inspected areas of the residence, including the outside, stairs, carpets/rugs, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, basement, lighting, electrical, and general household considerations that may pose a potential threat to safety. Following the inspection, recommendations were determined by areas of concern regarding the residence. Modifications included removing clutter in walkways, increasing lighting, and securing loose electrical cords. If needed, students referred the seniors for additional services provided by Wesley Family Services.

Safety for Seniors home safety assessment allowed the MOT students to practice pertinent clinical skills such as communication, therapeutic use of self, observation, and critical reasoning and judgment skills. The students collaborated, openly communicated, and displayed therapeutic use of self with the residents to gain an understanding of their current living conditions and home safety concerns, as well as opportunities for improvement. During inspection, the occupational therapy students used their observation skills to identify potential hazards and to ensure the safety of the residents. Using the information provided by the resident interview and observations of their homes, the students utilized critical reasoning and judgment skills to provide effective suggestions for home modifications and determine the need for additional services provided by Wesley Family Services. The Safety for Seniors home assessments allowed the MOT students to use their educational background and further develop skills to become knowledgeable and client-centered practitioners.

MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Let's Pack This: Backpack Awareness Day

Aly Hollibaugh, OTS; Megan Jerome, OTS; Savanna Major, OTS; Kara Nelson, OTS

► On October 25, 2017, twenty students from the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) Class of 2018 visited two elementary schools within the Pittsburgh area to celebrate the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Annual National School Backpack Awareness Day. AOTA emphasizes the importance of packing the appropriate weight in a backpack, and wearing a backpack correctly. Chatham MOT students have participated in AOTA's Backpack Day for several years. The MOT students split into two groups of ten to prepare information and activities that reflected AOTA's main educational goals for backpack safety at the Ellis School and the Donaldson School. The students prepared activities for fourth and fifth graders in an engaging and entertaining way — including a song and dance, games, scavenger hunts, and a demonstration on the important aspects of backpack safety.

At the Donaldson School, 40 fifth-grade students gathered in a common area and were given an introduction to occupational therapy (OT) and its role within a school setting. To kick off the importance of backpack safety, two MOT students presented an original song and dance that provided the students with several tips on how to properly pack their backpack. This created a fun and upbeat atmosphere for the students before they were split into groups. The fifth graders were divided into four groups to participate in stations around the room. The four stations included (1) how to pack a backpack, (2) how to properly wear a backpack, (3) the appropriate weight of a backpack, and (4) a true or false game quizzing the students' knowledge from the day. Once each group completed all four stations, the fifth graders regathered as a whole as the MOT students summarized backpack safety information. The students were asked to identify one thing they learned from each station, and easily and eagerly did so. The session was then repeated to a second group of 40 fifth graders. It was a great and successful day educating Donaldson Elementary School's students on the importance of backpack awareness and safety!

At The Ellis School, fourth-grade students gathered in the gymnasium to learn about backpack safety. They were introduced to OT and split into five groups to play a Mission Impossible game. This game required the students to work together to collect items for their backpack throughout the gym without touching the "lava" floor by using carpet squares, hula hoops, and scooter

boards as a team. Items consisted of objects that should go into a backpack, such as a math book, and things that should not go in a backpack, such as a hamster. The MOT group instructed the students to identify which items would go into a backpack and in what order they should be packed. The group also explained the importance of keeping heavier things closer to their

bodies to avoid injury to muscles and bones. The students were then given the opportunity to reorganize and pack their own backpacks. For this activity, the MOT class explained how backpacks should be correctly positioned and helped the fourth graders to avoid injury and bad posture. The smaller groups then regathered into one large group to learn how much a backpack should weigh based on a person's body weight and the importance of carrying a backpack with the appropriate amount of weight. The students divided back into their smaller groups and were provided the opportunity to weigh their backpack and themselves in order to determine the appropriate weight.

At the conclusion of each session at both schools, students were provided with an informational handout to take home and share with their families. They also took home a small prize for participating in the backpack safety event. Lastly, the students demonstrated how to properly position and carry their own backpacks before going back to class. Overall, the MOT group left a positive impact on the students and staff at the two participating schools. The Chatham students had a lot of fun in the process of creating and presenting these sessions. Both the Ellis and Donaldson School provided positive feedback and look forward to utilizing the tips and tools that were provided throughout these interactive sessions.



MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Blessing Bags

Elise Augustine, OTS, Kaylee Lemmon, OTS, Kristy Rutkowski, OTS

► Each year, Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students serve on several different committees over the duration of the program. The Community Service Committee of the Class of 2018 wanted to do something to help individuals experiencing homelessness in the Pittsburgh community. As suggestions mounted, the idea to create “blessing bags” won over many hearts and became the first big project for the Community Service Committee. The purpose of these bags was to ensure that people were receiving items to which they may not have otherwise had access. Over the course of the fall 2016 term, the class collected donations of various items to include in blessing bags for homeless individuals in Pittsburgh. These items were important to personal hygiene, well-being, and quality of life, especially during the winter months. The occupational therapy students were very excited to get involved, donate, create, and hand out the blessing bags. From all the donations, the committee created a total of 25 blessing bags to distribute around the city.

Each plastic gallon Ziploc bag or “blessing bag” consisted of:

- 2 non-perishable snacks
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- 1 bar of soap
- 1 pair of socks

- Facial wipes
- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Word-searches, notepads or other recreational activities
- Feminine hygiene products
- Hand/feet warmers

At the conclusion of the collection phase, students organized the items by product type, and an assembly line was made to fill each bag with the contents. Certain products were included



or excluded depending on whether the bag was intended for a male or female. Each bag was marked to indicate as such so when distributing the bags, the contents would aim to benefit that specific gender as best as possible.

After the holiday season, students volunteered to take bags from the classroom to keep in their cars and hand out. The class chose to begin handing out the blessing bags at this time of year because most of the other fundraisers and events benefiting this population in the Greater Pittsburgh area conclude shortly after the holiday season. The winter months can be long and difficult for anyone; therefore, this specific timeframe was targeted for blessing bag distribution. Some students had specific individuals in mind that they believed could benefit from the bags, while others waited until they saw someone that appeared in need.

At first, many students were nervous to hand out the bags to strangers on the street; however, students came to find that the strangers receiving the bags were incredibly appreciative. Overall, it was a feel-good experience for the students. It made them realize how easy it is to make a positive difference in someone’s day. We hope that the “blessing bag” tradition will be passed down to each new occupational therapy class in order to benefit individuals who are experiencing homelessness for years to come.

MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

OT Kits in a Fix

Mandy Durham, OTS; Jacy Clark, OTS; Brooke Chaney, OTS

► While working or completing fieldwork in a busy setting, time constraints can prevent occupational therapists or occupational therapy students from utilizing dynamic intervention techniques. In order to bridge this barrier, Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students created diverse intervention kits as part of the course curriculum. Designed to meet the needs of clientele ranging from pediatrics to geriatrics, these kits serve a wide population with a vast array of diagnoses. The kits were created to be easily obtained and implemented during therapy sessions. Additionally, these kits are cost effective, with the majority of materials including recycled, everyday household items, or dollar store items. These interactive, space saving kits are portable and are able to be reused for numerous clients. All kits can be easily upgraded or downgraded to meet the personal needs, abilities, and interests of each client.

The intervention kits addressed various domains within the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework such as: activities of daily living (ADLs), instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), roles, and occupations. Students created self-care kits that addressed beauty care, shaving, nail care, medication management, and incontinence issues. Occupational-based kits included topics such as fishing, painting, gift wrapping, grocery shopping, pet care, and gardening. Other students created exercise oriented kits, such as a home boxing program for individuals with Parkinson's Disease and much more.

In general, all kits are very simple to make. Kits are developed around a client need or a need within the clinic. Once a need is determined, materials are gathered. As previously mentioned, these materials are often recycled or collected in a donation drive, found around the house, or able to be purchased from the dollar store. Materials are best stored in a container with a lid for easy transport and storage. Overall, these cost effective, graded kits can benefit seasoned therapists and fieldwork students by providing client-centered therapy and eliminating tedious planning. The following includes two kit examples created by students from Chatham University's Class of 2018.

Project completed by Meghan McGowan and Maria Scanlon

- **Kit Name:** Beauty Intervention Kit
- **Target Populations:** Adults and children who would want to maintain a grooming routine. This includes but is not limited to individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury, low vision, dementia, conditions affecting balance and coordination, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, and arthritis.
- **Items included:** Desired makeup/self-care items. Additional materials may include slip-resistant material (shelf liner), built-up handles, magnification mirror with attached lighting, armed chair, wheelchair, stool, or other seating, desk, table, or countertop, and other materials.



Project completed by Brooke Chaney and Mandy Durham

- **Kit Name:** Pet Care Kit
- **Target Populations:** Individuals who have/would like to have a pet and who have a diagnosis of but is not limited to cerebrovascular incident, spinal cord injury, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, brain tumor, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, dementia, amputation, or intellectual disability.
- **Items included:** Stuffed animal dog, dog food (small bag), dog brush, dog leash, dog bowls (2), dog treats, dog toy, water, measuring cups, plastic bin, and plastic dog bags to pick up feces.



MOTivating and Educating High School Students

Madison Haswell, OTS; Nicole Haynes, OTS; Amber Starr, OTS; Katie Uhring, OTS

*"In occupational therapy you need to be creative and able to adapt to the patient's needs."
- High school student*

► During the fall 2017 term, Chatham University's health science graduate programs held an open house for local high school juniors and seniors. These students were interested in exploring different career path options in the health science field. The graduate programs represented at the event included healthcare informatics, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and psychology. As Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) second-year students from the Class of 2018, we volunteered our time to interact, answer questions, and lead sessions for the high school students. We represented our program with the help of Professor Delbert.

The morning started with informational tables where high school students could explore and ask general questions about each of the different programs. At the occupational therapy table, adaptive equipment was available for prospective students to learn and experience. For example, the students tried out different self-care tools such as a long-handled sponge, a reacher, and a

dressings stick. While using the equipment, many students asked questions about the difference between occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT). This gave us the opportunity to share what makes each profession different and why we chose OT as our career field. We explained that OTs help with everyday activities and getting individuals back to the things they want to do and need to do.

After the introductory table sessions, the students split into different groups and attended individual sessions with each program. The OT session started with a short video about a little boy who lived out his dream of starting a lemonade stand with the help of his occupational therapist. The video was followed by a brief overview of the OT profession and a question and answer session with the students. For a more hands on experience, the students then participated in making their own lemonade while wearing visual impairment goggles. The goggles simulated what it would be like to live with diagnoses such as diabetic retinopathy, tunnel vision, and left neglect. Several of the students commented on how hard it was to see out of the goggles to be able to pour the lemonade. After making the lemonade, students were also tasked with using switches to activate a mixer to make



whipped cream. The switches included a Wobble Switch and a Big Red Button. From this activity, we demonstrated how adaptive equipment can help people with disabilities complete their everyday tasks. We went into more detail about the different assistive devices such as reachers, sock-aids, and built up utensils that OTs commonly use.

Following the formal presentation and simulation experiences, the high school students asked questions about college and life as an undergraduate student. We shared tips that we learned throughout our college careers, as well as our own personal experiences, with the high school students. After the presentation, one student reflected on all the presentations and said, "Occupational therapy was my favorite and I am really looking forward to look more into it." We enjoyed the opportunity to share our experiences at Chatham University and the field of occupational therapy with the high school students.



Two MOT students preparing the adaptive equipment table for the next session.

Chatham University Hosts “Out of the Darkness” Campus Walk

Paul Ryan, OTS; Paige Slowik, OTS; Lori Spires, OTS

Chatham University’s occupational therapy program partnered with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) to host the first annual “Out of the Darkness” Walk on April 8, 2017. The purpose of the event was to help decrease stigma for individuals seeking mental health services and promote potentially life-saving conversations through education, advocacy and available resources. Community members created a supportive environment for all individuals who have been directly or indirectly affected by this issue. The event was a major success which featured over 250 walkers who helped to raise over \$15,000.

Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students are educated on the increasing prevalence of this issue. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. Each year approximately 44,193 individuals lose their lives to suicide. For every completed suicide, there are roughly 25 others who have attempted the act (AFSP, 2016). With these startling statistics, there is a growing need for healthcare professionals to address this epidemic. Chatham University MOT students will answer the call to be holistic practitioners who assist with all of the needs of clients. Coursework prepares students to identify potential warning signs and the proper steps to take to

aid clients in need. This education allows for the students to take a client’s mental health needs into consideration when providing occupational therapy services.

As a topic of personal interest, Chatham University MOT faculty

and students sought to raise awareness of suicide prevention by hosting their own “Out of the Darkness” Campus Walk. Faculty and students spent many months organizing and volunteered at the event. The planning committee set fundraising goals and reached out to friends and family for support. Additionally, the walk was sponsored by local businesses contributing financial assistance and other donations. On the day of the event, students helped to guide the participants through the scenic Chatham University course. They also assisted in the registration of walkers, distributed memorial beads and buttons, and provided guidance to those who wanted to utilize the hope tree which consisted of positive quotes or remembrance notes/pictures of loved ones. Other Chatham students read poetry, provided music, and helped plant a memorial tree on campus grounds. Also in attendance were community organizations representing the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Resolve Crisis Network. Both organizations provide support and resources for individuals who are currently struggling. The enthusiastic presence of Chatham students, faculty, staff, volunteers, and community support resources served to create a welcoming environment for those who attended.

The Second Annual “Out of the Darkness” 5K Campus Walk will occur on April 7, 2018. An even larger turn out is anticipated for the upcoming event and the fundraising goal has been set at \$10,000. The MOT students plan to continue providing hope and fostering support for those affected by this issue. To register for this event, visit: <https://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=5102>

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Chatham University MOT students lead the First Annual “Out of the Darkness” Campus Walk.

CONFERENCES

Professional Growth Through Conference Immersion

Megan Cairns, OTS

► This year, Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students had the unique opportunity to attend both the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) conferences. The 2017 AOTA conference was held March 30-April 2 in Philadelphia, PA. MOT students and faculty took advantage of the close proximity of the event and journeyed to experience the centennial celebration and learn about how the profession of occupational therapy has evolved over the past 100 years. Students networked with practitioners as well as other students and learned about various innovative products and services from vendors in the expo hall. They also attended numerous sessions covering a wide range of

interesting topics including a student-only session where they learned about the new Vision 2025. To conclude this session, students signed a new practitioner pledge in which they vowed to renew their AOTA memberships following graduation. This experience enabled the students to broaden their horizons and better understand the expansive possibilities of the field of occupational therapy.

The 2017 POTA conference was held October 6-7 in State College, PA. Leading up to the conference, students worked in groups from January to October with the support of faculty mentors to complete evidence-based projects. Students worked diligently to uncover and critically appraise relevant research articles to gain a comprehensive understanding of their given topic. Many projects also included

the development, distribution, and analysis of a survey or questionnaire to add support and provide additional understanding to current research information. While students each gained extensive knowledge and confidence in their specific topic area, all ten groups were accepted to present their posters at the POTA conference and impart their knowledge to others.

The following are the posters that were presented by Chatham MOT students at the 2017 POTA conference:

1. **Coaching Model: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work**
Kara Nelson, Kristy Rutkowski, Amber Starr, Matt Weidner
2. **CO-Operate to Rejuvenate After Stroke**
Amanda Durham, Alyssa Hollibaugh, Paul Ryan, Lori Spires
3. **Health Literacy: How Do You Communicate?**
Megan Cairns, Rachel Day, Paige Slowik, Carlie Zatzko
4. **Keeping the Spirit: Dementia and Spiritual Care**
Brooke Chaney, Leanna Lubinski, Savanna Major, Nicole O'Donnell
5. **Keeping Up With The KELS**
Madison Ihrke, Meghan O'Hara, Alexandria Vinelli, Melissa Wawrzyniak
6. **OT's Role in Addressing the Substance Use Epidemic**
Jesse Hinkle, Sylvia McCauley, Jessica Moritz, Maria Scanlon



▲ (From left) Paige Slowik, OTS; Carlie Zatzko, OTS; Theresa Delbert, MS, OTR/L; Megan Cairns, OTS; Rachel Day, OTS

◀ (From left) Paul Ryan, OTS; Melissa Wawrzyniak, OTS; Emily Skaletski, OT '17, OTR/L; Meghan McGowan, OTS; Brittney Wolfendale, OTS; John Boharic, OTS; Alex Vinelli, OTS; Victoria Davis, OTS; Madi Ihrke, OTS

continued on next page

MOT to OTD *continued from page 5*

understanding of the difference between evidence-based practice and research. In 2016, we had eight applicants and five were selected. These five students started the program while in FW taking online courses, specifically OTD 760: Leadership and Professionalism and OTD 752: Education Theory and Technology. During the leadership course, they were exposed to different leadership theories which built upon the foundation from the MOT program. Assignments included interviewing an OT leader, creating a professional website highlighting their OT accomplishments, and preparing and delivering an online journal club. In the Education Theory and Technology course students created two online modules using various technologies (narrated Powerpoint, Prezi Presentation, Weebly Website development, YouTube video and facebook group creation) which they delivered in their FW setting.

Topics included:

- From Clinical Practice to Home Programs: The Benefits and Implementation of Pediatric Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT)
- The KELS: An Assessment for Discharge Planning
- Utilization of Safe-Patient Handling Techniques
- Addressing executive functioning in adolescents with TBI
- Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Education
- The Benefits of Yoga for Children Diagnosed with Autism
- The Vestibular System and its Importance for Functioning
- Positioning: A guide for those providing hands-on patient care
- Promoting the use of infant massage in your everyday life
- Facebook Group: Syncing your child's senses

The MOT to OTD Fast Track students have had the opportunity to engage with two separate cohorts of OTD students in various stages of the program. The leadership courses had them engage with post professional students in the first semester, while the Education Theory and Technology allowed interaction with students in their 3rd term. The Fast Track students are set to start their capstone courses beginning spring of 2018. As we prepare for this first group of MOT to OTD students to develop a practice change project in their first professional setting, we are interviewing nine additional students in the current masters program to offer admission to the program. We are excited to prepare these young professionals to earn their OTD degree and to guide the practice change projects they will be creating in their OT work sites.

Conferences *continued from page 14*

7. **PromOTing the Profession: OT and Student Advocacy**
Victoria Davis, Megan Jerome, Meghan McGowan, Brittney Wolfendale
8. **Telehealth: Can You Hear Me Now?**
Elise Augustine, Megan Swaney, Katie Uhring, Dana White
9. **Trauma-Informed Care: A Model for OT Practice**
John Boharic, Madison Haswell, Nicole Haynes, Stephanie Weir
10. **Turning Stress into Success: OT Students and Fieldwork**
Ryan Adams, Jacy Clark, Kaylee Lemmon, Annie Shank

For the remainder of their time at the conference, students explored the expo hall and attended a variety of continuing education sessions. Three students, Victoria Davis, Nicole O'Donnell, and Paul Ryan, also took the initiative to participate in an emerging leaders program offered by POTA. On Thursday, October 5, these students attended a day-long workshop where they participated in activities geared toward developing and utilizing leadership skills vital for the OT profession while becoming more engaged in POTA. The program also stressed the importance of POTA membership and how increased participation would affect greater change in the community. They were each paired with a mentor with whom they will work with over the course of the next year to aid them through the transition into the professional world of occupational therapy.

A Chatham alumni reception was held by the Office of Alumni Relations at each of the conferences. The events were open to current and former students and faculty members, and attendees were provided with drinks and appetizers free of charge. The receptions presented individuals with the opportunity to interact and socialize as a Chatham community. The importance of retaining membership in professional organizations is stressed throughout the Chatham MOT program. Through these AOTA and POTA conference experiences, students had the opportunity to see first-hand the ultimate representation of what it means to be a part of the close-knit community of OT practitioners.

Cultivating Cultural Competence: Service Learning in Ecuador

Rachel Day, OTS; Jesse Hinkle, OTS; Madi Ihrke, OTS; Melissa Wawrzyniak, OTS; Brittney Wolfendale, OTS

► For the past four years, Chatham's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) and Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs have offered students an opportunity to be selected for a Global Health Perspective course which provides a unique international experience. In August 2017, six occupational therapy (OT) and six physical therapy (PT) students, along with faculty members from each department, traveled to Ecuador to further develop their clinical skills and cultural competence. We prepared for the trip through participation in the course, which focused on the culture of Ecuador, and an OT/PT collaboration in treatment sessions. At the conclusion of the course, we embarked on a ten day trip to immerse ourselves in the Ecuadorian culture and apply our skills in three different settings including CRECER, FUNHI, and a nursing home.

CRECER is an outpatient clinic run by Dr. Elaine Keane (Chatham OTD graduate) that provides free OT services to clients of all ages, needs, and

cognitive levels in the city of Ibarra. The clinic also includes psychology, social work and physical therapy services. The children's had a variety of diagnoses including Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, and hydrocephalus. The adult diagnoses included brain injury, stroke, and accidents impairing physical and cognitive function. We collaborated with PT students to treat clients requiring improvement in areas of motor planning, fine motor, gross motor, social skills and handwriting. We gained experience treating patients with diagnoses and symptoms uncommon in the United States due to the different health care standards and available medical resources in Ecuador. In addition, we improved our flexibility in relation to interventions through utilizing the available environment and equipment such as exercise balls, swings and mats to facilitate engagement in treatment sessions.

Another facility where we volunteered was FUNHI, an adult day program for individuals with cerebral palsy. The individuals ranged from age 18 to 40, with varying interests and ability levels. Some clients were ambulatory and verbal while others used a wheelchair and were non-verbal. Again, we worked with PT students to design several activities that were entertaining and inclusive to each client. Activities ranged from doing a daily orientation board to obstacle courses and painting. We especially enjoyed planning an 18th birthday celebration for



one of the clients which included a piñata, singing, dancing, and fun birthday crafts. Lastly, we were able to enhance our clinical reasoning skills by using our current knowledge of positioning to adjust a few of the clients in their wheelchairs.

The last facility was a nursing home in Ibarra. Here, we facilitated group treatment sessions that promoted socialization and inclusion of all nursing home residents. Each session began with a gross motor activity (they loved dancing to the song "Despacito") and also consisted of fine motor activities which was usually a craft. During this time, Ecuador was celebrating their Independence Day. Therefore, we tailored many of the activities to incorporate the community's traditions and culture which included singing their national anthem and making Ecuadorian flags. It was heartwarming to see smiles and enjoyment on the residents' faces during all of the planned activities.

Though we worked very hard in the different clinics, we also had several opportunities to immerse ourselves in the Ecuadorian culture! We spent the first day traveling in Quito, where we visited several old churches and the equator. We learned that the "Mitad del Mundo" monument, built in 1936, no



Peer Partnering Program: From “Conversation Buddies” to Lifelong Friends

Ryan Adams, OTS; Annie Shank, OTS; Megan Swaney, OTS

► In the fall of 2016, the International Master of Science in Nursing program at Chatham University admitted its third cohort of nursing students from Shanghai, China. For most of the nursing students in the program, this was the first time that they have made the 7,293-mile trip to Pittsburgh. In fact, prior to move-in weekend at Chatham University, many of these students had never set foot on American soil. Therefore, in order to help these students become acclimated to U.S. culture, the nursing department began the Peer Partnering Program.

The Peer Partnering Program, organized by Dr. Debra Wolf, is an opportunity that allows traditional students to partner with international students in an effort to share cultural diversity. With this partnership, traditional students and international students are encouraged to learn from one another by engaging in activities on campus and out in the community as “conversation buddies.” Activities such as dinner, movie night, and other social gatherings are coordinated by both students, in an attempt to form a friendship that extends beyond their time here at Chatham University. The School of Health Sciences recruits traditional students by sending an email during the fall semester that explains how the program is operated. This email emphasizes the potential impact Health Science students could have on these international nursing students; however, as we were soon to find out, the nursing students’ impact on us was just as compelling.



Judging from the initial pizza party where we met our buddies, this was going to be an experience unlike any other. The excitement that the Chinese buddies demonstrated that first night about learning English, being immersed into the American culture, and making new friends would resonate over the course of their remaining time here. We left the pizza party that night with so many ideas of activities we wanted to accomplish, sites we wanted to see, and restaurants we wanted to try with our new friends over the next eight months.

Of course, one of the first things we did together was go out to a traditional Chinese restaurant for dinner. The nursing students ordered typical plates they would have in China, with expectations that we would try their foods. We learned about a “hot pot” dish that is commonly shared among everyone at the table instead of ordering individual meals. It’s safe to say we tried a few foods that night that we didn’t even know people ate! In typical American fashion, we ordered Sesame Chicken, Orange Chicken, and General Tso’s Chicken, which

we soon found out are not authentic Chinese dishes. While eating dinner together, we discussed our families, favorite things to do, and other personal experiences. From instances such as these, we found that cross-language confusion and cultural differences led to so much laughter; however, a lot of learning happened and many memories were made.

Over the remaining months that our Chinese buddies spent in America, we grew very close. The times spent together provided a great mix of them bringing their culture to us, and us introducing America to them. We never imagined that “The Bachelorette” would be such a difficult show to explain until we started watching it together every Monday night! It made for a highly anticipated weekly get together, with a new Chinese snack or dish present each week. Another highlight of our exchange was when a number of the Chinese students joined our class for an Easter brunch. As always, plenty of Chinese food was present and both cultures were shared. These times we shared together are just a small glimpse of what our relationships with the nursing students consisted of. The everyday conversations we had, knowledge and opinions we shared with one another, and memories we made along the way will last a lifetime.

Although our requirement as a part of the program was to meet once a month to work on conversation skills, we made it much more of an experience than that. Reflecting on this experience of being a “conversation buddy” highlights how rewarding it can be to reach out and assist students from abroad during their transition into American society. Getting acclimated to American culture provided these students with experiences that they will cherish for years to come, which we were

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longer represents the location of the equator due to global shifting. Therefore, there is another tourist spot north of the monument that marks the accurate location of the equator, and we had the opportunity to visit both locations. Following our time in Quito, we traveled to the city of Mindo, where we engaged in many activities, such as a butterfly house tour, an orchid garden tour, salsa dancing lessons, zip lining, whitewater rafting, and a tour of a chocolate factory. The last stop was in the city of Ibarra where we spent the majority of trip. In Ibarra we immersed ourselves in the culture and environment by shopping for authentic Ecuadorian merchandise at the Otavalo market, receiving tours where handicrafts were made by neighborhood artisans, indulging in made-from-scratch empanadas and traveling to a beautiful lake called Cuicocha, a crater lake made by a volcanic explosion.

The entirety of the trip was well spent between gaining cultural competency and further developing and applying clinical skills. While the language barrier was initially challenging, it was enriching for us to practice different means of communication. In the nursing home, we had to rely on use of body language and physical cues to communicate; in the clinic, we learned basic Spanish from the children. Additionally, we were able to apply concepts learned in class in real-life situations and expand our creativity with interventions. Through completion of the course and trip, we gained a better understanding of the differences in health care between the United States and Ecuador. This experience allowed us to learn about an unfamiliar culture while making meaningful connections to provide the best care in our future practices.



Peer Partnering, continued from page 17

grateful to be a part of. In addition to absorbing the American influence, the Chinese students provided us with memories and experiences that we were able to grow from as well.

Through our experiences together, we, as the Peer Partners were able to broaden our knowledge and understanding regarding Chinese culture and their native traditions, ways of life, and some words and sounds of their language. Along with that, we were also exposed to many different foods, conversations, and endless laughs, enabling us to grow together as genuine friends. Talking about our families, work experiences, school assignments, and just conversing on a daily basis brought to light how we are all so similar, yet from two different parts of the world. The Peer Partner Program changed our perspectives regarding the experience an individual encounters as they assimilate into American culture. The Program showed how giving such a small amount of one's time can truly go a long way in someone else's journey. As the time we spent together came to an end, we quickly realized that our "conversation buddies" from China had transformed into irreplaceable lifelong friends.



POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Barbara Abbott, OTD '16

► Ever since graduating in 1993 with my BSOT degree I had planned to return to school to get a graduate degree. I always had an excuse to not move forward – it wasn't the right time, I liked being a generalist not a specialist, I didn't have the funds, etc. After my oldest child was diagnosed with ASD and it was clear a traditional school environment was not going to support his success with academics, I focused my energy on learning all I could about ASD and parent advocacy in the public school system. By the spring of 2014 I realized I had to take the step to obtain a graduate degree. I settled on completing an online OTD program, due to the potential for more job opportunities after graduating than a MSOT degree. When I started on my journey in the OTD Bridge program in the fall of 2014, I had no idea how much the process would change my professional goals, my outlook on my practice, or the opportunities that would become available to me.

My first significant change to practice came early in the OTD process – choosing the evidence based question. Originally, I had considered completing a project related to assistive technology and early literacy, an interest of mine and one encouraged by a co-worker. At the same time, my oldest child was beginning to look at his own transition needs for adulthood after starting at a private special education high school. Newly armed with a better understanding of how to effectively complete literature searches (and excellent access to large research databases), I began to investigate what research said about ASD and transition after high school. Through this process, I discovered my passion for working with this age group and experienced a significant paradigm shift in my practice. My evidence based question changed to address occupational therapy's role in secondary transition and my professional life has changed for the best!

One of the first opportunities occurred in March of 2015. I had settled on completing an online

education program for occupational therapists and was exploring what was already available. I sought out the authors of a CE course published by AOTA which was no longer available for purchase. One of the authors with whom I connected was Sandy Schefkind, AOTA's Pediatric Program Manager and facilitator for the Transition Community of Practice (TCoP) group. After several emails and phone conversations, I was invited to join the AOTA's TCoP, even though I was new to the practice area. Although I felt I didn't have the time available to contribute to the group, my invitation was open ended and I joined the group in May 2016 after graduating. Since then I have been able to contribute to the work of the TCoP and have had input into guidance documentation created by the TCoP.

A second network leading to opportunities opened to me in the summer of 2015. I had determined to recruit school based occupational therapists with the help of my state association's special interest group (Occupational Therapists in

Schools [OTIS]). The board of directors wanted me to gain approval for the project from the facilitators of OTIS, Dr. Yvonne Swinth and Dottie Handley-Moore. These two amazing occupational therapists are deeply involved in policy and education on the role and duties of school based occupational therapists, with AOTA and internationally. Dr. Swinth is the department head for the University of Puget Sound Occupational Therapy Department and is the Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Occupational Therapy in Schools and Early Education*. Ms. Handley-Moore is one of the editors of the *Journal* as well. Both gave permission and advocated for me with the state association to recruit OTIS members for the project. Little did I know that this first contact with them would grow to larger opportunities and help shape my five-year leadership plan.

After completing the OTD in May 2016, I felt that I had the skills and the knowledge to continue to follow my leadership plan. One major step was to submit my article for publication and to explore working as an adjunct in an online program. It was approved quickly by the *Journal of Occupational Therapy in Schools and Early Intervention* and was published in December 2016. This initial success gave me more confidence in my ability to produce publishable work and I am currently collaborating on two future articles for publication.

Another step on my leadership plan was to present my work at AOTA conference. I first presented both my capstone poster and an hour and a half session about the content of my modules

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POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE *continued from previous page*

at my state conference — the first time I ever presented at any conference. Both were highly received. The capstone poster presentation was accepted for the 2017 AOTA conference, which I attended for the first time since before my oldest was born in 2000. This experience allowed me to meet members of the TCoP personally and further my network with occupational therapists working in secondary transition practice. Two mentors from the TCoP have been supporting me to continue to submit session proposals for AOTA conferences and develop my next article about occupational therapy's role in secondary transition services. I submitted a session about how I am implementing occupational therapy interventions in a traditional transition program for the 2018 AOTA conference that was approved as a poster session. I also submitted three separate sessions for my state conference in October 2017, all of which were accepted. I received excellent feedback from my presentations! These successes have reinforced my confidence and helped me broaden my options for future presentations.

After presenting at the state conference in the fall of 2016, I was invited to be a guest speaker at two of the state's three occupational therapy programs. I was invited back to speak again this fall again and love the opportunity to talk with entry level occupational therapists about the importance of supporting youth transitioning to adulthood. These experiences have helped me make connections with the local occupational therapy programs (University of Puget Sound and University of Washington). I am now advising two capstone projects in my school – one each from

the local OT programs. One group of students is researching a CAT about the use of the Co-OP model to teach life skills to students with intellectual disabilities and one group is working on designing and implementing a six-week intervention about sexuality and sex education for adolescents with physical disabilities. I also have had level 1 field work students from both programs and am hoping to have a level 2 fieldwork student next year.

Shortly after graduating, I was fortunate to be accepted as an adjunct faculty for Chatham's OTD program. I have been teaching OTD 752 – Education Theory and Technology for the past three semesters and collaborating with Dr. Ingrid Provident. This experience has helped me strengthen my rubric writing skills and given me experience with curriculum design. I am also collaborating with the University of Washington Occupational Therapy program and their pediatric coursework. My school is now a clinical site for the course – four students come for a two-hour session to observe me administer an occupational self-assessment to one of my clients. Each of the students then administers the assessment to a client of their own. My experience working with Dr. Provident gave me the skills to propose using my school as a community practice site and helped me design the assignment and accompanying rubric with the professor at UW. My five-year leadership plan is to transition to academia full time and these experiences have strengthened my passion for this part of my plan.

However, I consider my job as the greatest professional success since completing my OTD.

I currently work full time in a vocational-based transition program for students ages 18-21. I am there because I created the job I wanted. I advocated for more occupational therapy services with the secondary education population, with other occupational therapists and administrators. I started at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year part time in the program and am now full time with an additional occupational therapist working part time. Two years ago, before I advocated for change, an occupational therapist was at the program one day a month. I used the skills learned in the OTD to design curricula and outcome measures to document that what I am doing is successful and having meaningful outcomes for students. I have been asked if the assessments and rubrics I created can be used as part of a national conference presentation on evidence based documentation practices in the school setting. In this position, I consider the staff, the program, and the school district as clients as well as the students who have direct services listed on their Individual Education Plans. I advocated for and headed a committee to address transition assessment needs in the district. I am providing feedback for systems wide processes to facilitate change to benefit all students in special education, not just the students on my caseload.

My life is just as busy as it was during the OTD program, however I have a better vision for what I want to do professionally, how to do it, and the opportunities to create the professional life I want to lead.

POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Teresa Fair-Field, OTD '16, OTR/L

► With a great deal of my mental energy being devoted to the chapters of the OTD capstone, it would have been easy enough to give only modest attention to the associated coursework of the OTD curriculum. It was certainly a temptation, but one that didn't persist. In truth, I'd had a number of projects swimming in my head that were 'good ideas' or 'process improvements' for my clinical practice, but which I'd never had the time (nor made the time) to fully develop. It seemed like a good time to bring these ideas to fruition, if only because I had what I may have needed most of all—a deadline.

The projects I'd envisioned did seem well aligned: the new evaluation process I'd been considering rolled into OTD 742 (Advanced Practice Concepts), that business expansion press release I needed to write, into OTD 750 (Occupational Therapist as Entrepreneur), and a shift towards outcome measurement via Goal Attainment Scaling, into OTD 752 (Education Theory & Technology). I began to appreciate the wisdom of the curriculum design and understood that it wasn't just 'busywork' or academic 'filler' (a popular rumor); I actually needed all of these pieces to fully redefine myself and my practice at a doctoral level.

My preliminary work on Goal Attainment Scaling, which began in Prezi format to meet requirements for OTD 752, ended up being a turning point. Already consulting with MedBridge Education, a Seattle-based online CEU company, I was frequently tapped for Q&A panels where I tagged onto the end of other presenter's courses in a casual 'discussion' format to lend relevance and clinical anecdotes to the previous chapters' work. It was at the conclusion of such a filming that an opening occurred for me to market my own content as a course instructor—in front of the camera. A

handful of months and several conversations later, what began as an OTD assignment turned into the just-released MedBridge Education course, "Goal Attainment Scaling in Pediatric Clinical Practice" (<https://www.medbridgeeducation.com/about/instructor/teresa-fair-field-occupational-therapy-pediatrics>). The day we booked for filming was four months prior to graduation, but I've gained the most insight in the months since. While I cannot discount the role of serendipity, there remain several take-aways:

Do Complete Work the First Time By committing my best effort to the assignment (for any of the OTD courses), I have a quality work product that I am confident about. I would not have been as eager to make a commitment to deliver a course from material I considered unrefined, or which (on reflection) would require hours of additional handling. I knew it was good work out of the box, so I was able to confidently say I had a ready 'deliverable' once the opportunity presented itself. Always begin with your best work.

Be Ready or Get Ready, Just Don't Wait to Feel Ready Even with ready work, I didn't necessarily *feel ready*. I had developed over many years, the

ability to talk confidently in front of an audience. Even doing Q&A panels in the studio felt more like a casual conversation between professionals. Still, even with experience, speaking to the giant void of a camera lens was intimidating. I said yes anyway. Consider making a commitment without *feeling* ready, and then fill in the gaps you need to get there. Read about and practice public speaking (Suggestion: Anderson, C. (2016). *TED talks: The official TED guide to public speaking*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). If you've committed to a large event in the future, fill in the present and the near future with some preparatory events and coaching. I didn't necessarily *feel ready* even afterwards, so don't hinge your success on a feeling, just check the boxes and be prepared to declare readiness when you get there.

Stay Agile With Your Work Product The concept of 'agility' has been at play in software and the corporate world for the last ten years, but we don't always deliberately think about how agility affects our own work. In fact, healthcare and academia are considered some of the least agile institutions, gaining agility only as the market demands it. However, there are valuable lessons we can learn from agility principles, if we are consistent at applying them to our work. In the field, we can be exceedingly agile to meet the needs of our customers/consumers/students. Yet we approach our academic work as fixed and complete contributions, and tend to dig our heels in defeat if they aren't accepted for presentation, publication,

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or display as we have meticulously crafted them. I didn't receive an invitation to build a course on Goal Attainment Scaling because it was part of MedBridge's strategic plan. I was able to describe how Goal Attainment Scaling was an enhancement to their existing curriculum, modify the 'assignment' to target a new audience, and provided their subscribers with a necessary tool to move their other courses into clinical operation. In other words, know the strategic needs of the organization you are marketing to, and be prepared to meet them. Better yet, be an agile contributor and meet a need they didn't know they had.

Diversify Your Sources of Input 'Filter bubbles' are described as the invisible algorithms that customize the content that is more frequently

presented to you on the web, your Facebook page, and your preferred search engine. Whereas the internet has the capacity to present us with a wider world view, 'filter bubbles' narrow the field of information that is presented to you, such that over time, you are only presented with perspectives that are already similar to yours, your favorite associates, and the things that you already 'like' (See: Pariser, E. (2011, March). Eli Pariser: Beware online "filter bubbles" [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles#t-108683). While this makes the internet feel more like a friendly 'neighborhood,' it can also become perspective-limiting. We sometimes limit ourselves in our industry silos in the same way. If you want further support to make

your OTD, your post-OTD content, or your career more agile, broaden the range of topics you are prepared to discuss, and the language you use to discuss them. This is especially important if you are setting your sights on leadership, education, or non-traditional settings.

When I returned to the workforce after completing my OTD, suddenly back in a staff occupational therapist job, I discovered an ingrained set of *process skills*; not just the cognitive muscle to produce content, on almost any topic, and on demand, but the drive and curiosity to do so. It may be awhile before I solicit another IRB review, but as for that other academic 'busywork?' You could say that's what really made the doctor out of me.



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The evening concluded with Jan Bucey, OTD, OTR/L, SIPT; Ingrid Provident, Ed.D, OTR/L, FAOTA and Gabrielle Strong, MBA, presenting "Occupational Therapy's role in assisting clients with substance use disorders." The presentation included an introduction to using the evidence-based techniques of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) to assist persons with substance misuse and those at risk of developing a substance use disorder. Attendees also learned about the statistics of substance use disorders and how occupational therapy can be part of the solution.

Based on the success of this year's event, we look forward to providing future programming as a thank you to our fieldwork educators for their continued commitment to our students' learning and to the profession at large.