

Spring 2021

# School of Occupational Therapy

## UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

*By Yvonne Swinth, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Professor, Department Chair*

I remember a year ago, when everything shut down, thinking that it would be a month, maybe two and then things would be back to “normal.” Yet here we are, 12 months later, still walking through the ups and downs of the Pandemic. Some of us have been able to go back to work in-person, at least part-time; some of us continue to work primarily from our homes. We celebrate that a vaccine is available, while at the same time continue to be unsure of what tomorrow will bring. We wonder what will end up being our “new normal” professionally and personally.

Amidst all the uncertainty, there is much to celebrate at the School of Occupational Therapy...

First, we celebrate all of you, the alumni of our program. Many of you have provided Zoom lectures for our classes, have taken a fieldwork student (or two), have become clinic instructors, have participated in student projects and more. The support of our alumni has meant a lot over this past year, thank-you.

There are plenty of opportunities for alumni to get involved with our growing programs. One of the upsides of the Pandemic is that we have figured out how to better collaborate with alumni who live in other cities and other states. In this newsletter there are several opportunities for alumni involvement, including an alumni gathering as part of the AOTA Inspire conference, the Spring Symposium, participating in an evidence project and more. We encourage you to complete our *Alumni Engagement Survey* to share ways you would like to be involved.

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Faculty Professional Development is featured on pages 2-7
- Invitation to Alumni Zoom Party RSVP link
- Registration link to Evidence Symposium
- Purchase Polo Shirt Link until April 8 for SOTA fundraiser

## Professional Development

### Conference Presentations & Posters

Watling, R. & Schoen, S. (2020). Conversations with Sarah Schoen: Renee Watling on Choosing Wisely and Assessment of Sensory Processing. (Ticketed Event) Presented at the STAR Sensory Symposium, virtual.

Houston, R., Hellam, E., Richman, E., Johnson, G., O'Neil, P., & Watling, R. (2021). *Empowering students to integrate learning via ePortfolio: Pedagogical approaches from first-year to professional* panel at the Association of American Colleges & Universities Annual Meeting, virtual. This was a collaboration with faculty across campus who are also using ePortfolios in their courses.

Froelicher, E., Peters, C., & Watling, R. (2021). *Effective interventions for children birth to three with sensory processing difficulties*. American Occupational Therapy Association Inspire Conference, virtual.

Kashiwa, A. (2021). *Occupational therapy's distinct role in suicide prevention*. American Occupational Therapy Association Inspire Conference, virtual.

Swinth, Y. & Laverdure, P. (2020). *Effective School Practice: Using Quality Indicators to Guide, Evaluate and Communicate about OT Services* American Occupational Therapy Children and Youth Specialty Conference.

### UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Second, we celebrate that we are able to have all of our students on campus for in-person labs and the onsite clinic this semester. It is so nice to have students back in the building. While labs and clinic “looks different” students and faculty are enjoying the opportunities to interact in-person. Next fall we are anticipating that all classes will be back in person.

Third, we celebrate the continued tenacity and resilience of the OT community; clinicians, faculty, and students. There has been ongoing collaboration, communication and creativity that has allowed clients to receive services, faculty to teach, and students to participate in learning. While it continues to look different, the outcome is the same: we continue on that journey of life-long learning that enables us to be able meet the occupational needs of our clients. Clinicians, students and faculty have continued to thrive. Some of the many examples are highlighted here in this newsletter. But, I know this is a small sample of a lot of “good work” that has been done.

Fourth, we celebrate the stories that have been written over the past year. Stories of the effectiveness of occupational therapy services during this unprecedented time. Stories of how occupational therapy education has adapted and survived, how services have been adapted so that our clients can continue to engage in occupation, and of how we have gained new knowledge and skills as a result of the work we have done during the Pandemic. It is going to be important to tell our stories as we continue to walk through this time.

Over this semester, I took several phrases from Amanda Gorman’s eloquent inauguration poem as “banners.” These banners helped me during those times when I wondered if I could keep going.....

“We lift our gazes not to what stands between us but what stands before us”

“There is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

“That even as we hurt, we hope.”

Sometimes we learn more; grow more when we “do it hard”...by walking forward even amidst challenges we would rather not face. We have all spent a year of “doing it hard” and now we have the opportunity to identify and keep what we have learned, during this time, that will support ongoing effectiveness of occupational therapy education and services.

## THE DOCTORAL CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

*By Aimee Sidhu, OTD, MA, OTR/L, Clinical Assistant Professor, Academic Fieldwork and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator*

The University of Puget Sound School of Occupational Therapy is dedicated to providing its students with a high-quality educational experience through didactic and clinical experiences. Over the course of its lengthy history, the curriculum has continually adapted to respond to changes in the field of OT. The latest change is the addition of a Doctoral Capstone Project and Experience for Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) students.

The Doctoral Capstone Experience is a 14-week, self-directed experiential experience that allows students to develop advanced, in-depth occupational therapy skills within a particular area of interest. This experience follows development of the Doctoral Project over the course of the preceding semesters and is taken as the students' final experience (following fieldwork) in the third year of the OTD program. Students work with the doctoral capstone coordinator, Dr. Aimee Sidhu, their faculty mentor, and a site mentor to design an immersive learning experience that focuses on one or more of the following: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, or education. One of the unique aspects of the Doctoral Experience, differentiating it from the fieldwork experience, is that it can be mentored by interdisciplinary partners and can happen in new and emerging practice areas.

The University of Puget Sound is currently the only school in Washington State offering this unique, in-depth opportunity. We are excited to partner with our community clinicians to further the development of this process, as our first doctoral students will be anticipating a Spring 2023 Doctoral Experience. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Dr. Sidhu at [asidhu@pugetsound.edu](mailto:asidhu@pugetsound.edu)

### Conference Presentations & Posters (continued)

Kashiwa, A. & Wilbur, K. (2021). *Mitigating suicide risk factors through engagement in activity-based interventions*. Washington Council for Behavioral Health Stronger Together -- A Path Forward Conference, virtual.

### Podcasts

Renee Watling joined Erin Flynn for the first two installments of the Spiral Foundation Live Talk podcast series on Choosing Wisely: Applying the AOTA Recommendations using Sensory Integration with Diverse Populations. Topics included using the recommendations to guide assessment and intervention for persons on the autism spectrum (January 2021)

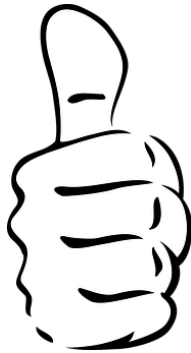
### Major Continuing Education Training & Board and Specialty Certification

Aimee Sidhu - Accreditation Evaluator Training and 3-year Roster of Accreditation Evaluators appointment with Accreditation Council on Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE).

Sheryl Zylstra - STAR Proficiency Certification Level 1: STAR Institute for Sensory Processing

# THUMBS UP! INJURY PREVENTION ELIC EXPERIENCE

By Shelly Norvell, OTR/L, Adjunct Faculty



Acute and chronic work-related thumb musculoskeletal injuries can have a profound effect on job satisfaction, work performance, and productivity. Occupational therapists, like their clients, may fail to incorporate ergonomic principles, joint protection techniques, and activity modification into their daily work tasks, ADLs, and IADLs which can lead to preventable thumb injury.

Throughout my career as a hand therapist I have observed a troubling trend of therapists across a variety of practice settings

sustaining thumb injuries. I aimed to investigate this topic further through my post-professional occupational therapy doctorate research project. Following a review of the literature and identifying a gap in what is taught in occupational therapy programs, I developed a multi-model evidence-based pilot thumb injury prevention program. This program served as an ELiC opportunity for 10 second year MOT students in January and February 2021. Basing the intervention upon the principles of the Health Belief Model and Ecology of Human Performance, students learned risk factors, prevalence, etiology, pathology, barriers to prevention in the workplace setting, reviewed anatomy and physiology of the thumb, and participated in an on-site hand specific assessment and thumb orthotic fabrication lab. Students also learned to evaluate their peers for thumb injury risk and examined how hobbies and leisure activities such as using hand-held-devices can contribute to risk. Students became aware that evidence indicates that work-related thumb injuries are occurring early in the healthcare professionals' career- often within the first five years of practice- which makes early education imperative.

It was my goal through this program to increase awareness in the emerging occupational therapist population, so they can avoid these injuries and implement strategies to ensure career longevity. Early data analysis of this project indicates that both student confidence in applying these strategies and knowledge of risk factors improved significantly from pre to post intervention. My intention is to eventually publish my findings in a peer-reviewed journal and potentially develop a standardized curriculum for pre-professional occupational therapy students.

As I wrap up my post-professional doctorate program at Chatham University this spring, I would like to extend a big 'thank you' to the Puget Sound School of Occupational Therapy for allowing me the opportunity to conduct this project. It was an honor and privilege to work with the students and faculty through this ELiC.

## Journal Publications

Zylstra, S. E. & Doyle, S. (2020). Measuring Client-Centered Outcomes in an Occupational Therapy Student Teaching Clinic Using the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(4):7404205070. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.034892>

Zylstra, S. E., Erler, K., Nakamura, W., & Kennell, B. (2020). Social Media as Occupation: Implications for Occupational Therapy Practice. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 8(2), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1670>

Pitonyak, J. S., Gupta, J., Pergolotti, M. (2020). Health Policy Perspectives—Understanding policy influences on health and occupation through the use of the life course health development (LCHD) framework. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.742002>

Pitonyak, J. S., Nielsen, S., O'Brien, S. P., Corsilles-Sy, C., Olson Lambert, D., & Jaffe, L. E. (2020). Critical thinking in occupational therapy education: A systematic mapping review. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*. <https://encompass.eku.edu/jote/vol4/iss4/>

# MASK MAKING: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN SERVICE TO OUR OT PROGRAM

By Rachel Kasashima MSOT '21, Emma Kosmala MSOT '21, & Jenna Mangiagli MSOT'21



In total, we spent 180 hours making masks, sewing just over 200 masks, for the faculty, staff, and students of the University of Puget Sound Occupational Therapy Programs.

**Jenna:** I was new to mask making as this ELiC surfaced. After we heard the news of not re-

turning to campus in March, 2020, I travelled home to California where I attended virtual class. At the time, a family member of mine was making masks for friends and family in the community. She asked me to help her through the process and I quickly found sewing to be a relaxing leisure activity. I decided to participate in the mask making ELiC to further develop my emerging sewing skills as well as to help faculty, staff, and students get back to campus! This ELiC was challenging for me but also very rewarding knowing I made a small difference in keeping our OT program safe!

**Rachel:** Like Jenna, I was also new to mask making. My aunty had just started teaching me how to sew masks the week that this ELiC opportunity became available, but I thought I might as well try to help out since I was already learning how to make them. Sewing became a hobby that I have been continuing throughout quarantine and in addition to masks, I have made pillow cases, reusable bags, hats, and scrunchies. I hope to continue learning and furthering my skills to learn how to sew more creations, and am so glad I had the opportunity to provide these masks to help keep our Puget Sound OT community safe and healthy.

**Emma:** Like my fellow project members, sewing and mask making was a new skill to me in which there was a fast learning curve. When I learned about the opportunity to design and create masks for the faculty, staff, and my fellow classmates within the OT Program, I jumped on the opportunity. After meeting with a family friend who had been making masks for local community members, I started my mask-making journey. I am honored to have had this experience, learn a new skill, and provide a service to the students within the University of Puget Sound's School of Occupational Therapy to ensure everyone's well-being and safety.

## Journal Publications (Continued)

Pitonyak, J. S., Diamant, R. B., Corsilles-Sy, C. & James, A. B. (2020). Examining the educational and clinical learning contexts where occupational therapy practitioners gained competencies for intraprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*. <https://encompass.eku.edu/jote/vol4/iss4/>

## Practice/Consulting/ Program Development

Renee Watling has been collaborating with the University of Washington Autism Center (Seattle campus) to examine the need to add an occupational therapist to the service delivery team and develop a job description. She has also provided expert consultation to the design team that is renovating the physical space to include features and functions appropriate for providing direct occupational therapy services for clients. This project has included advocacy for occupational therapy as well as education to architects and designers about occupational therapy and the important work we do to help clients develop, recover, and engage in meaningful occupations.



## Textbooks—Edited and Chapters

Tatiana Kaminsky - lead author of *Zoltan's vision, perception, and cognition. Evaluation and treatment of the adult with acquired brain injury* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). SLACK Inc. The book is now through the peer review process and is in the final editing stage. Publication is expected in December 2021 or early 2022.

Pitonyak, J. S. (2020). Occupational therapy evaluation and evidence-based practice. In Hinojosa & Kramer (Eds.). *Evaluation: Obtaining and Interpreting Data* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Bethesda, MD. AOTA Press.

Swinth, Y. & Pitonyak, J. S. (2021). Children with prenatal substance exposure and post-natal trauma. In G. F. Clark & S. Parks (Eds.). *Best Practices for Occupational Therapy in Early Childhood*. AOTA Press.

Pitonyak, J. S. & Milton, L. (2021). Children and youth who have experienced trauma, violence, abuse, adverse life experiences, and toxic stress. In L. C. Grajo & A. K. Boisselle (Eds.). *Adaptation, Coping, and Resilience in Children and Youth: A Comprehensive OT Approach*. SLACK, Inc.

## WELCOME NEW CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS!

*By Sheryl Zylstra, DOT, OTR/L, BCP Clinical Assistant Professor, Pediatric Clinic Coordinator & Amy Kashiwa, OTD, OTR/L Clinical Assistant Professor, Adult Clinic Coordinator*

Our onsite pediatric and adult clinics are underway and offering a combination of in-person and telehealth services to our clients. We are thankful to have so many returning, experienced clinical instructors (CIs)! The following CIs returned to the pediatric clinic this spring semester 2021: Christina Draper, Marge Luthman, Jenn Jarest, and Denise Trembly. Adult CIs returning to share their expertise are Christiane Buhl, Heather Nelson, Melissa Porras-Monroe, and Deb Zahnnow.

We also want to welcome the following new CIs to pediatric clinic: Catherine VanDeraa, Amelia Jones, Tiffany Cunningham, and Lisa Olsen. And the adult onsite clinic is delighted to welcome the following new CIs this semester: Cecile Corsilles-Sy, Amy Kashiwa, Emily Reynolds, and Julie Tinsley Shaefer. In addition to working as a CI, clinical assistant professor Amy Kashiwa is the new adult clinic coordinator. We are profoundly grateful to all CIs working so hard to prepare students for FWII, especially during this semester with many new COVID-19 policies and procedures, as well as transitioning to a new documentation system.

Several new and returning CIs prepared short bio statements so that you can get to know them a little bit better:

### **Lisa Ann Olsen, OTD, OTR/L**

Lisa has been practicing occupational therapy for many years and has worked with all populations from infants to geriatrics. The majority of those years have been in pediatrics with an emphasis on feeding and swallowing. Recently relocated from California with her husband, where she had been working in early intervention in-home, small clinics and a children's hospital she is sharing her skills at a clinic in Puyallup. Lisa found working in the home very rewarding. "You

treat the whole household and use the occupational therapy process to assist the family help their child function in a real life situation." A lot of eating and feeding go on in the home.

Lisa received her BS OT from the University of Southern California and an OTD from Creighton University.

She enjoys walks with her husband, jogging with her puppy, gardening, and visits from her three terrific kids and their spouses.

### **Amelia Jones, MSOT '19**

"Hello! My name is Amelia Jones and I am a recent graduate from the Puget Sound's MSOT program, excited to be back as a clinical instructor for the pediatric clinic experience, after being involved with the mental health clinic this past fall. The clinical instructors I had when I was a student fostered such a positive experience in my education, and

it is such a privilege to be a part of that for current students! I currently work as an OT in the Kent School District serving 18 to 21-year-old students in the transition program. My favorite occupations outside work include hiking as much as possible, and trying out new recipes. It's great to be back at Puget Sound!"

### **Catherine VanDerra, MS, OTR/L**

Catherine is a school-based occupational therapist in Seattle Public Schools, with a special interest in understanding the development and sensory processing in children who have experienced trauma. She is also interested in early childhood education and how it impacts life long

learning and well-being. Catherine previously worked in schools in Phoenix, Arizona. She also worked in private pediatric practice in Chicago, Illinois and Naples, Italy, serving families in the U.S. Navy. B.S., Western Michigan University, 2011; M.S., Western Michigan University, 2015.

### **Denise Tremblay '82, M.Ed., OTR/L**

Denise is an occupational therapist with 36 years of experience, having worked most recently in academia at the OTA level, and formerly in pediatric private-practice, school-based practice, as well as, teaching while traveling abroad. She currently en-

joys a variety of part-time work creating health and fitness programs for special populations. Denise earned her bachelor's degree in OT from the University of Puget Sound and her master's in education degree from Lesley University.

### **Jennifer Jarest '19, DrOT, OTR/L**

Jennifer is a pediatric occupational therapist specializing in Autism and sensory processing disorder at Apple Tree Therapy in Silverdale, Washington. She received her post professional doctorate in occupational therapy last spring through the University of Puget Sound and is enjoying applying her expanded knowledge with her colleagues and students.

She is a proud wife and mother of a November 2020 baby boy and 2 small fluffy dogs. She enjoys reading or listening to audio books and doing anything outdoors in her spare time, and is very excited to be traveling back to the east coast this summer to visit family and friends after an extended separation due to military stationing and COVID.

### **Awards/Grants**

Family mental health program expansion. Tacoma-Pierce County Public Health Department. Tacoma, WA. December 2019-December 2020. Principal Investigator, Pitonyak. Project on hold due to COVID-19.

UA6 Life Course Intervention Research Network (LCI-RN). HRSA-18-103. Maternal & Child Health Bureau. September 2018-present. Advisory Committee, Pitonyak. (LCRN, The Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, UCLA).

### **Webinar**

Waltenburg, J., Swinth, Y., Tucker, V. (2020). *Strategies for ABA and OT Collaboration in Schools* WA-BA Webinar

### **Other Professional Growth**

Aimee Sidhu - appointed to Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities through the City of Tacoma

Amy Kashiwa: participant, AOTA Academic Education Special Interest Section (AESIS) New Educator Mentoring Program (NEMP)

## HAPPY OT MONTH!

The AOTA Inspire 2021 conference is taking place throughout the month of April. While we cannot meet in person, we will host a virtual Alumni Party on **Tuesday April 20 at 4 p.m. PDT** on Zoom. Registration is not required, although registering in advance will allow us to better prepare for our audience. Even if you are not attending the AOTA conference, we would love to “see” you, please save the date and join us if you can! [Please let us know here.](#) You will be sent the Zoom link and additional information after April 15.

This year we would like to highlight all of the amazing work that our students and alumni are doing! If you have a poster or presentation session at the AOTA Inspire Conference, please let us know so we may include your name and presentation title. [Let us know here.](#)

We hope you will join us for our virtual alumni party!

## SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EQUITY TEAM

*By Anthony Sy, OTD '23 and Jessica Kresl, MSOT '21*

At the start of the 2020 fall semester, the newly formed Equity Team with representation from students, staff, and faculty met to develop a vision for the School of OT surrounding issues of equity and inclusion. During the first meeting, key discussions included reviewing the development of professional behaviors within the program and giving voice to diverse experiences. From the language used to the education and delivery method, we were earnest in restructuring the framework which would be used to help future occupational therapists form and grow professional behaviors. Following that first meeting through the next several months, members sought to understand and construct a more inclusive guide for student professional development.

An additional experience presented to the OT Equity Team was the invitation to co-facilitate discussions in the campus-wide event “*Inauguration Day: A Mutual Processing Space during National Transition and Crisis*” held on January 20th, 2021. This space provided an opportunity for members to engage in important conversations with various groups on campus and for the OT profession to be represented in the larger Puget Sound community.

Being a part of the School of OT Equity Team has deepened our understanding of the importance of equity, while allowing us to use our backgrounds to provide insights into occupational therapy practice. The continued work of the Equity Team is necessary for the growth of the program; ensuring that we generate occupational therapists who are ready to serve the numerous populations encountered in practice.

## THANK YOU!

We want to thank everyone who has given to the OT Gift Account. These donations support student research and the presentation of their projects at Local, State and National Conferences. Your support makes a difference.



## LEVEL II FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE DURING COVID-19

*By Madeline O'Leary, MSOT '21*

One year ago, I had a plan. Classes were wrapping up and I had two great fieldwork placements lined up for the summer and fall. By December 2020, I would be able to start studying for the NBCOT and finally become a real occupational therapist. Or maybe not. By May, my fieldwork placements quickly began to fall through as medical facilities were rapidly trying to adjust to a world with Covid-19. Before I knew it, I no longer had a placement for the summer or the foreseeable future. Right before my eyes, the world was falling apart, and so too, was my family. I had two grandparents die in August 2020 within weeks of each other, with one of those deaths due to Covid-19. It's difficult to comprehend the toll that the virus takes until it touches someone you love. Right around the same time, I finally got the news that I would have a placement for the fall in a hospital. I have never been so excited and terrified at the same time. I had just watched someone I love fight this virus with everything she had left to no avail. I couldn't imagine walking into a place where this was happening every day. Just as I started to learn the ropes and feel comfortable in this new setting, I was faced with my own Covid-19 diagnosis. When I got the results, my only thought was who I put at risk. I was so scared for my patients, my coworkers, and my family that I hardly had a second to stop and think about what this meant for me. Thankfully, I learned that I didn't pass the virus to anyone around me and the focus shifted to healing. After a two week quarantine, I returned to my fieldwork site ready and motivated to make up for those two weeks and finish my placement on time. With the support of my fieldwork supervisor, we made it happen. In the end, I finished those first 12 weeks with a newfound love for inpatient rehab and the adult population.



*Continuing to mask up to protect people around me.*

In school, you're taught that the best OTs are those who know how to be flexible. I don't think I (or anyone) really knew what that meant until now. For months, I have watched therapists around me adjust and plan, only to be met with new restrictions and challenges at every turn. No one teaches you how to retrain someone with aphasia or apraxia to brush their teeth when you have a mask on your face. Covid-19 has brought with it plenty of challenges, but I believe that it has also reinforced the importance of what we do. Helping people engage in meaningful activities and participate in their routines is a powerful thing when surrounded by so much unknown. I feel fortunate to have learned from incredible OTs throughout this experience who have provided me with endless patience and support. The saying, "teamwork makes the dream work" has never been more true. Most of all, I have learned that even the best laid plans fall through; but if you can adapt and trust the process, you may find that your new path is even better than the one you planned.

## SOTA HIGHLIGHTS!

*By Clairra Geller MSOT '21 , Jessica Kresl MSOT '21 , & Rachel Kasashima, MSOT '21, Breanna Gabriel MSOT '21 & Shannon Kim MSOT '21*



SOTA has enjoyed a meaningful year navigating hybrid classes and adapting to new ways of learning. Board members and committees (Professional Development, Advocacy, Diversity & Inclusion, Fundraising, Social, and Health & Wellness) have

been hard at work hosting guest speakers and providing learning opportunities for students to engage with advocacy, professional development, and more. Some highlights include:

**Log Jam:** Advocacy committee participated in the annual Log Jam and hosted a virtual discussion to advocate for OT to the greater Puget Sound campus community.

**Resume Workshop and OT/PT Job Fair:** During the fall semester, the professional development committee organized a resume building workshop for students to learn tips and tricks on writing an effective resume. This spring, the OT/PT Virtual Job Fair will be held on April 9th from 12 pm-2 pm.

**Establishment of Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) Chapter:** Both the Diversity and Inclusion committee and the Puget Sound COTAD chapter were established in the Fall of 2020. Throughout the Fall and Spring semesters, committee members held and attended informative events regarding topics such as race, gender and sexuality, religion, and disability, and their relation to health care systems, client care, and occupational therapy.

**Fundraising:** The fundraising committee ended up raising around \$600 for SOTA through the mOTivate t-shirt fundraiser as well as the polo shirt fundraiser! Thank you to everyone who supported! There are two current fundraisers (stickers and Puget Sound OT polo shirt) to raise money for various events and workshops occurring this semester, particularly the end of the year party. (continued in left sidebar)

### Fundraising: (continued)

The end of the year party is intended to celebrate the first year students completing their first year of classes and sending the second year students off to their Fieldwork II experiences, as well as to recognize all of the hard work of the wonderful faculty and staff of the Puget Sound's OT program! Stickers are \$3 each and can be paid for with cash, a check made out to SOTA, or on campus when the fundraising coordinator (Rachel Kasashima) has the card reader available. Polos are \$35 and orders will be open until April 8th. The link to purchase is listed below:



<https://www.customink.com/fundraising/ups-sota-polo-fundraiser-part-2>



## EARN FREE CONTACT HOURS AT THE SPRING 2021 OT EVIDENCE SYMPOSIUM

*By Renee Watling, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Clinical Assistant Professor*

In spring 2020 our OT Student Evidence Symposium went digital for the first time. The event was a great success with over 100 attendees from across the country! We will continue the digital format in 2021 making the event easily accessible to OT practitioners and Puget Sound alumni regardless of geographic location. Save the date and plan to join us on Thursday, May 13, 2021 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. You can earn up to three contact hours for continuing education requirements at no charge. The program will showcase 13 Puget Sound OT student evidence groups presenting their university/community collaborative evidence and knowledge translation projects. Presentations will provide comprehensive reviews of the scientific evidence on a variety of current hot topics and strategies for applying the evidence in practice.

Topics include:

- ◆ treatment for acute phase diplopia in acquired brain injury;
- ◆ strategies to reduce recurrence of UTIs among high-risk individuals;
- ◆ nonpharmacological pain management for infants in the PICU;
- ◆ promoting caregiver engagement in telehealth-based services for students;
- ◆ culturally-relevant assessment practices for BIPOC children and their families;
- ◆ improving school performance in children with attention challenges;
- ◆ reducing readmission to inpatient psychiatric facilities;
- ◆ strengths based interventions to promote positive role identity; and more.

[To register click this link.](#)

Details regarding how to join the event will be sent in early May.

## USING EVIDENCE TO INFORM OT PRACTICE

*By George Tomlin PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Distinguished Professor*

Each year Puget Sound 2nd year OT students partner with community OT practitioners to examine the published evidence to seek an answer for a question of interest to the practitioner. The students find, analyze, critique and synthesize the published literature, then create knowledge translation projects designed to be a first-step in aiding the practitioner in translating (applying) the evidence findings into practice. This sustained effort culminates in the OT Evidence Symposium in which the students present their work to our community colleagues. With the new OTD curriculum, the student groups are beginning their projects earlier. We are currently recruiting new collaborators. For more information or to express interest in becoming a collaborator, contact George Tomlin at [tomlin@pugetsound.edu](mailto:tomlin@pugetsound.edu).

## **Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD)**

The Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) formed in 2014 through a collaboration that occurred between members of the AOTA Emerging Leaders Development Program. COTAD has grown tremendously since its early days and has added individuals to its Executive Board and general membership. Now established as a non-profit organization, COTAD operates as group of individuals from across the United States all working towards a common goal of promoting diversity and inclusion within the occupational therapy workforce and increase the ability to occupational therapy practitioners to serve an increasingly diverse population.

## **SOTA ENGAGES IN ANTI-RACIST WORK: OUR PROCESS OF BECOMING A COTAD CHAPTER**

*By Breanna Gabriel, SOTA Diversity and Inclusion Chair, MSOT '21*

Racism and police brutality have plagued our country long before our current era of phone cameras and social media, however, the Spring of 2020 seemed to be an awakening for many Americans regarding police brutality against brown and black lives. Following the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, civil protests broke out in countless cities across the US. Like many people around the world, I have followed the Black Lives Matter movement closely for the past several years and still found myself wondering how I could deepen my education and take further action to make a change.

In full honesty, as a white woman, I struggled to write this article. I understand the weight and critical urgency for social justice change, the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the importance of intentional work to become an anti-racist society. I understand that these movements are much bigger than myself; I wanted to make sure this article focuses on the movements and the collective work toward becoming anti-racist. While writing this I thought back to a quote from a Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD) event which gave me the motivation to continue writing, someone stated: "speaking up is better than being perfectly drafted... we don't want to remain silent just because we can't perfectly articulate it." With this being said, I hope to respectfully and honestly talk about the impact of racism and biases in America and in the healthcare system as well as highlight the ways we are working towards making a change.

In an effort to expand my knowledge regarding systemic racism and unconscious biases in our country, and particularly their intersection with health care and the field of occupational therapy, I stumbled upon a virtual event hosted by COTAD. The event was 'IGNITE Series: The Black Male OT Experience in the U.S.' and the discussion revolved around the success, challenges, and experiences of Black male OT practitioners. Up until this point in my schooling, I had not had many opportunities to hear the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) practitioners in our field. Although the content was personal and heavy, it felt like a breath of fresh air to be in a group



## **SOTA ENGAGES IN ANTI-RACIST WORK: OUR PROCESS OF BECOMING A COTAD CHAPTER (CONTINUED)**

that was not only acknowledging the impact of race and bias in our profession and the healthcare field but also discussing the experience of a BIPOC person in both the clinician and client role. My experience with the virtual COTAD events inspired me to further my personal knowledge as well as facilitate similar discussions with my cohort and department.

In August of 2020, I had the opportunity to not only establish the Diversity and Inclusion Committee within the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) but also establish the University of Puget Sound's very own COTAD chapter. To me, this was a great honor and an important step for the Occupational Therapy department at the University of Puget Sound. The goals of the Puget Sound's COTAD chapter were as follows:

- ◆ Hosting dialogue among students and faculty regarding unconscious biases in our school's admissions process, our program, our future fieldwork, and the OT profession as a whole.
- ◆ Creating resource lists for staff and students to educate themselves regarding racism in our country and in the healthcare profession, and how they can work towards being actively anti-racist.
- ◆ Promotion and continuation of the SAW (Sociocultural Awareness Workshop) program created by our OT program for the benefit of students entering the program.
- ◆ Creating, finalizing, and producing the OT program's community clinic's stance and statement regarding diversity and inclusion.

My hopes in creating the Diversity and Inclusion Committee within SOTA and the Puget Sound COTAD chapter is to create an environment to openly discuss biases in healthcare, actions we can take, promotion of equity and inclusion in our admitted classes and profession as a whole, increasing our ability to provide culturally competent client-centered care, and be prepared as practitioners to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse clientele. (continued in right sidebar)

### **SOTA ANTI-RACIST WORK (CONTINUED)**

Throughout the year we attended events that discussed Programmatic and Fieldwork Challenges Related to Racism and Discrimination in OT, Racial Equity in Occupational Science, Considering Cultural Safety in OT, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Occupational Therapy, Barriers & Challenges of People with Disabilities in the Field of OT, and more. We hosted educational events regarding topics such as working with LGBTQ+ clients, multi-ethnic and multi-religious seasonal celebrations and traditions, film screenings and discussion, and participation in the national scholar strike and teach in for racial justice.

Although my involvement with the University Puget Sound's SOTA and COTAD chapter are coming to an end this spring, I feel hopeful that the actions SOTA took to become a COTAD chapter will lead to sustainability and a continued commitment to occupational justice and social change for many years to come.