

OT PROGRAM UPDATE

Chatham's Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy

Joyce Salls, OTD, OTR/L, OT program director

Greetings from Chatham! These past two years have been very exciting for the OT programs at Chatham. The MOT program was reactivated in fall 2006 and our numbers continue to grow annually. We also began our first Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program in fall 2006 with a cohort of 15 students from all over the United States. To date, we have had a total of 45 students enrolled in the OTD program. Our first cohort graduated in December 2007 with Dr. Cathy Dolhi as one of our "First Class" OTD graduates! Our second group presented their capstone projects at Chatham on December 4 and will be completing their OTD degree at the end of December 2008.

Chatham's OTD program is a 30-credit online program that includes two visits to campus over a 16 month period. The emphasis of the program is on developing

advanced skills in evidence-based practice and leadership, and culminates with the completion of an evidence-based occupational therapy capstone project in the students' area of interest. OTD courses are taught by expert educators from all over the country including Dr. Angela Hissong, Dr. Doug Simmons, Dr. Linda Hunt, Dr. Mary Hansen, Dr. Valerie Knotts, and Dr. Wendy Wood. Check out the courses and faculty on the Chatham University website at www.chatham.edu/ccps/OT.cfm

Several of our MOT alumni have completed the Chatham University OTD program, including: Emilia Solinto, MOT '04; Stefanie Pagliaroli Logue, MOT '04; and Kellianne Martin, MOT '01. Alumni Chris Hildeman, MOT '99 and Jennifer Lape, MOT '99 will be completing their OTD degree in December.

Living Life to its Fullest

Kara Simmeth, MOT '09

On November 20, the MOT Class of 2009 held "Open House 2008," in the Welker Room. With the theme, "Living Life to its Fullest," the focus was to demonstrate how occupational therapy can be beneficial in promoting participation and independent living.

Through hands-on experience and additional informational handouts, visitors learned how sensory input can be alerting or calming to the nervous system, and how sensory strategies may be beneficial for children and adults with attention and emotional issues. Another station demonstrated adaptive equipment that can be used to promote independence and safety

at home. Participants had the opportunity to try one-handed dressing techniques and various adaptive feeding tools. The last station contained examples of high and low assistive technology devices that can be utilized to enhance independence at home, work, and the community.

"Open House 2008" was a huge success thanks to the support of the outstanding occupational therapy department. Visitors left highly impressed with the professionalism of the graduate students and the knowledge that occupational therapy may be one of the greatest assets to enhance independent living.

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 simply logging on to our website at www.chatham.edu. Click on the "for alumnae & graduate alumni" link and then the "Alum Directory" link. If you've never accessed the directory before, contact alumni@chatham.edu for your log-in information.

Share your news with your classmates in the *Chatham Recorder* at <http://alum.chatham.edu/alumni/notes.cfm> or return the form on the last page of this newsletter to the Office of Alumni Relations.

Faculty Update

Emily Eckel, MS, OTR/L, CHT

There have been several changes in the MOT faculty since the program reopened in 2006. We are happy that some of the faculty members who took other jobs during the hiatus have returned to Chatham. We also have some new faculty members to introduce. Read on to get the scoop!

Lyn Silverman MS, OTR/L was a member of the Chatham MOT faculty since the beginning of the program. This July she retired to enjoy her two new grandsons and other meaningful occupations.



Joyce Salls OTD OTR/L is also an original member of the MOT faculty and is the MOT program director. During the time the program was in hiatus Joyce completed her doctoral degree, developed the Chatham online OTD program, and travelled to Bolivia with Project Helping Hands. Her scholarly agenda includes evidence based practice, pediatric handwriting interventions, and the outcomes of the online OTD program. She maintains a private practice that provides OT services to the Mt. Lebanon schools.



Cathy Dolhi OTD '07, OTR/L returned to the MOT program in August 2006. While the program was on hiatus Cathy managed the Centers for Rehab Service's homecare contract. She is our fieldwork coordinator and she is writing a module for the AOTA voluntary credentialing of fieldwork educators. Cathy is the president of the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association. She earned her OTD in Dec 2007 from the Chatham online OTD program. Her scholarly work is in the area of student growth and development from the application phase to success completion of NBCOT exam. She also does home assessments for CRS.



Jodi Schreiber MS, OTR/L rejoined the Chatham faculty full time in July 2008. Jodi was a full time faculty member in the MOT program from 1997 through December 2000, and continued teaching in the program as an adjunct professor. She has served on

the state licensure board and has presented continuing education seminars on low vision and occupation based practice. While the program was on hiatus, Jodi worked with preschool children in the DART program. Her scholarly agenda is in the area of low vision.



Emily Eckel MS, OTR/L, CHT joined the MOT faculty in July of 2007 after teaching as an adjunct in the summer term. Her background is in physical disabilities and research assistance. Her scholarly agenda is focused on physical disabilities and object manipulation. She has a small private practice in hand therapy.

Sara Dix MOT, OTR/L is an adjunct professor who teaches the mental health course.

The MOT Classes of 2009 & 2010

Lindsay Swan, MOT '09

Every new academic year, the students in the Master of Occupational Therapy program bring something new and different to the table. This year the class of 2010 is over twice the size of the previous year and is comprised of 24 students. A class this big brings a lot of diversity to the program. The variety of the students can be seen geographically and through their educational backgrounds. The class is comprised of individuals from Russia, Alabama, West Virginia, Ohio, Montana, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Their educational backgrounds range from biology, psychology, political



MOT Class of 2009

“The small class size is why I chose Chatham. I feel that it has allowed the class as a whole to be closer and that benefits everyone. We know each others strengths and weaknesses and learning styles and that lets us work together to make everyone in the class successful.”

Nicole Patroski, MOT '09

science, and child development to business, fashion, textile technology, graphic design, and occupational therapy assistants, just to name a few.

The class of 2009 is comprised of nine students who are preparing to begin their level II field work commitments in January. Field work sites are spread in location, including Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Ohio, and West Virginia. The class of 2009 may be much smaller in size, but they sure make up for the difference with their big personalities! Some meaningful activities the students from the class of 2009 enjoy are swimming, Zumba aerobics, running, walking, baking, and volunteering. Clearly, the class of 2009 and 2010 are different in many ways. However a common thread that ties us together is our commitment to helping others live life to their fullest and the passion for the occupational therapy profession.



MOT Class of 2010

2008 MOT Graduates are “Batting 1,000”

Cathi Dolhi, OTD '07, OTR/L, FAOTA

What they lacked in numbers, they made up for in post-graduation performance. All eight MOT students who completed their Level II Fieldworks in June 2008 passed the NBCOT certification examination as first-time test takers! In addition, all eight reported being employed as occupational therapists within two months of graduation. The faculty, staff, and current students in the MOT program would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Class of 2008 on a job well-done and to wish them nothing but continued success.

“The instructors in the Master of Occupational Therapy program create an energy-filled and exciting learning atmosphere and each brings their own individual backgrounds and areas of expertise into the classroom. The class size allows for individual attention for each student and allows a strong bond to grow between the classmates. Each day is an exciting new learning experience as we get closer to reaching our goals.”

Megan Bowser, MOT '10

CAPS: A Focus on Evidence-based Practice

Nicole Patroski, MOT '09

Critically Appraised Papers (CAPS) were introduced into the MOT curriculum nearly two years ago. A CAP is a paper that provides an in depth summary of a research article. The purpose of introducing CAPS into the curriculum was to prepare students to critically evaluate the literature and to be evidence-based practitioners. In the MOT curriculum, students complete CAPS as part of their Fieldwork I experiences.

Topics for CAPs are chosen based on the interests of the fieldwork site supervisors. The students then develop a PICO question and perform a literature search on the topic. From this, an article is selected to complete the CAP form. The form includes the following sections: purpose of the study, design, sample selection, sample characteristics, interventions, measures and outcomes, results, conclusions, and clinical bottom line. At the end of the term, the finished CAPS are sent to the fieldwork supervisors as a way to say thank you. The CAPS from all students are then

compiled into a CAP library at Chatham University and the titles of the articles are e-mailed to clinical sites throughout the country. If a clinician sees a topic of interest, they may request a copy of the CAP. This offers a wide variety of research to be readily available to clinicians.

This process has been very successful! As reported by one clinical supervisor, “The CAPs are a great way to get all of us to think more about EBP. We loved the Clinical Bottom Line portion. In our hectic days, it is really difficult to do more than to think that we should do more EBP, but it is so tough to get the time to do it. You guys answered a lot of questions quickly and easily for us on topics that seem to come up time and again when trying to determine best practice for our patients. We would love to be included in receiving any that your students do in the future. Thank you for all of your time and efforts. What a great project!”

My Journey through the OTD Program at Chatham

Claudia Miller, OTD '08, OTR/L

As I sit back and reflect on the past 16 months, I can truly say that the opportunity that I had to be a part of Chatham's OTD program is one that affected my professional growth and my ability as an educator in occupational therapy. There are three key areas of growth that have specifically expanded as a result of my Chatham OTD experience.

First, I can elaborate upon the online component of the program. I can honestly say that I was skeptical about the richness of the learning environment in an online format. I have since learned that is not at all true. Other than the flexible nature of the online courses, I found that interacting online required me to respond to all of the required elements of the courses, as well as remaining open-minded to react to my peers' responses. That rich wealth of years in experience provided me

with additional learning and ideas about the topics that I may not have otherwise considered.

Secondly, I can comment on the effective nature of the curriculum design. The ability to help each student transition closer, through each course, to the final EBOT capstone project, is clearly something that was well thought out. I found that each course provided an integral piece that slowly, but deliberately, focused on the end product of the OTD program, the Capstone. It never ceased to amaze me how the assignments and papers were uniquely tied into each other to enable my success with the development to my Capstone.

Finally, I can reflect on the changes that occurred in my own work environment as an OTA program chair at a community college. Although I have taught for 11 years, I can honestly say that the OTD program has

profoundly changed the way I teach. My enlightenment as a “student” has given me a new perspective. I have a much deeper appreciation for the role that my students fulfill. I have also made some significant changes in my course delivery as I have certainly incorporated a variety of teaching and evaluation methods with my own students that were used in the online OTD program.

With that I will close. I sincerely think that the transition to achieve the OTD was a personal and professional growth experience. As my mentor and friend from the program encouraged, over and over again, I enjoyed the journey! I can honestly say that I am not sure what I will do now without my laptop following me everywhere I go. However, I do plan to continue that life-long journey and plan to promote the program at Chatham for years to come.

POTA Conference 2008: Enriching Lives, Creating Possibilities

Angela Soos, MOT '09

Chatham University was proud to once again be a Gold Sponsor for the 31st Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) conference held on October 3-4 in King of Prussia, PA. Chatham

University was well represented at the conference, with contributions from MOT students, faculty, and alumni. Four current MOT students presented their posters; Angela Soos and Lindsay

Swan on *The Efficacy of Bathroom Modification: Decreasing Falls*

Anne Totin and Ashley Wargowsky

among Older Adults; and Anne Totin and Ashley Wargowsky on *Occupational Therapy Impact on Aging in Place*. MOT faculty Cathy Dolhi OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Joyce Salls OTD, OTR/L, Emily Eckel MS, OTR/L CHT and OTD faculty Angela Hissong DEd, OTR/L presented on various topics including evidence-based practice, research, handwriting curriculum, and selection criteria for student success. Also among the presenters were two Chatham alumni: Jennifer Lape MS, OTR/L delivered a presentation on the *Homeward* program and Diana Reichenbach MOT, OTR/L presented on the *CarFit* initiative. Two current Chatham students, Nicole Patroski and Anne Totin served as volunteers for the conference. Through volunteering, these students were able to attend conference free of charge.

This year's conference was especially important for Chatham University as our own Cathy Dolhi accepted her new role as president of POTA at Friday's business

meeting. OTD faculty member Angela Hissong received the Academic Educator award nominated by Joyce Salls. Lindsay Swan, MOT '09 was one of the recipients of a \$1,000 scholarship from the Commission on Education of POTA. Board members were proud to announce that they will continue to award scholarships annually to one student from each accredited occupational therapy program in Pennsylvania. As we all know, being a member of POTA offers many benefits. POTA represents, promotes, and advocates for the profession of occupational therapy. Members of POTA have access to current research through publications and

conferences, as well as support from the POTA Political Action Committee regarding all legislative issues associated with OT. To become a member of POTA, visit www.pota.org and click on the member info link for more information.

Next year's conference will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on October 30-31.

Chatham at AOTA

Cathi Dolhi, OTD '07, OTR/L, FAOTA

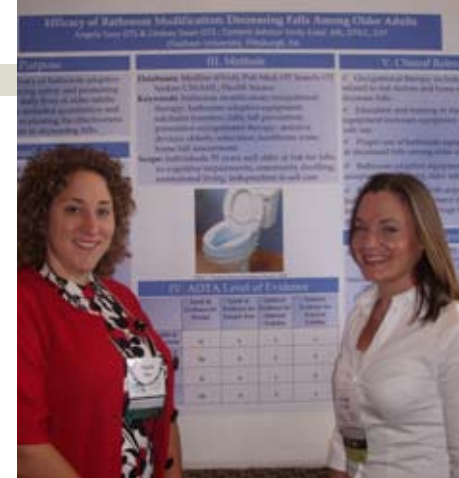
Chatham was well represented at the 2008 American Occupational Therapy Association Conference in Long Beach, CA. Staff from the College for Continuing and Professional Studies joined MOT program director Dr. Joyce Salls at a booth in the exhibit hall to promote the Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy program. Chatham was also the sponsor of the Special Interest Section Networking Reception where practitioners and students gathered to rekindle old friendships, make new professional connections, and discuss the "hot topics" related to their practice.

In addition to this visibility, Dr. Salls was selected for and participated in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) sponsored by the American Occupational Therapy Foundation. In this program, she will explore the SoTL research process and will actively engage in a research project that will be presented at the 2009 conference. Dr. Salls' research will be related to

outcomes in the Professional Doctorate of Occupational Therapy program at Chatham.

Dr. Cathy Dolhi presented a session titled *Connecting Evidence to Practice and Professional Development* with Dr. Denise Chisholm of the University of Pittsburgh. In conjunction with his colleagues, Captain James Burns, MOT '98 of the U.S. Army presented a poster titled *Occupational Therapy in Detainee Healthcare in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Additionally alumna Diana Reichenbach, MOT '01 and adjunct faculty Sara Dix were authors on the poster titled *Evaluating Program Outcomes: Evidence from an Employment Program for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness*.

Both Drs. Salls and Dolhi and Emily Eckel, MS, OTR/L, CHT have had proposals accepted for presentation at the 2009 conference to be held in Houston, Texas.



Angela Soos and Lindsay Swan



Lyn Silverman Retires

Anne Totin, MOT '09

August 2008 marked not only the end of summer term; it also marked the retirement of Lyn Silverman. Lyn was assistant professor and academic fieldwork coordinator for the occupational therapy program since the program began in 1994. Over the past 14 years she helped establish over 350 fieldwork sites nationwide, and placed hundreds of students in fieldwork. Her efforts continue to be appreciated by students and faculty.

On July 28, 2008 a reception was held to honor Lyn prior to her retirement. A plaque honoring Lyn's contributions to Chatham University was presented by President Esther Barazzone. Lyn also received several gifts from past and present students, and from fellow faculty members.

Lyn has been enjoying retirement and says these last few months have been great. She has had the opportunity to increase the number of hours she volunteers as a docent at the Carnegie Museum of Art. As a docent she conducts guided tours of exhibits at the museum. Recently she began training to also be a docent at the Heinz Architectural Center. Another occupation Lyn has participated in is taking classes at Carnegie Mellon University. These classes include Japanese art, Pittsburgh history, and the history of ballet. However, her favorite activity is spending time with her two new grandsons Judah and Sammy, both born this year.

Although Lyn has been enjoying retirement, she does miss the campus, students, and faculty.



Occupational Therapy faculty and staff gather at Lyn's retirement reception. (Back row) Emily Eckel, Denise Devlin, Debbie Juran, Mary Lou Leibold, and Cathi Dolhi (Front row) Joyce Salls, Lyn Silverman, and Jodi Schreiber

Chatham Occupational Therapy Club

Rosemarie Paradiso, MOT '09

The occupational therapy (OT) club at Chatham University was established for undergraduate students interested in learning about the profession of occupational therapy. The OT club committee is run by Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students in collaboration with MOT faculty. The students organize and implement interesting activities on a bi-monthly basis, invite club members to events on and off campus that highlight OT, and serve as mentors for undergraduates interested in exploring a career in occupational therapy. Meetings are scheduled the second Thursday of every other month during chapel hour, from 11:45 to 12:30.

At past meetings, undergraduates who attended learned about the meaning of occupation and made collages highlighting some of their own favorite occupations. The MOT students demonstrated several pieces of adaptive equipment commonly used in OT, and the club members were given an opportunity for hands-on experience in using these items. MOT students also shared experiences they have had at their various fieldwork sites.

At the first OT club meeting of this term, there was a sharp increase in the number of first year and transfer students interested in the MOT program. Participants learned how they can use the Chatham website to find out about the prerequisites courses needed in order to apply to the MOT program. Topics discussed included how students learned about OT, what occupations they enjoy, and the many settings in which OT's can work. Danielle Karhut, a Chatham sophomore and OT club member, said: "OT club has given me a better idea about what occupational therapists actually do. I have learned about the different specializations within OT such as mental health, pediatrics, and rehab and how OTs help people function in everyday life. Because of OT club I know now that this is the career for me."

MOT Students Promote Backpack Safety

Ashley Wargowsky, MOT '09

National Backpack Safety Awareness Day is an annual event sponsored by the American Occupational Therapy Association to teach students about safe ways to pack and carry their backpacks. A study found that “nearly 8 out of 10 middle-school students who changed how they loaded and wore their backpacks reported less pain and strain in their backs, necks, and shoulders” (Feingold & Jacobs, 2002).

On September 18, 2008, the Chatham University MOT Class of 2009 participated in spreading the word about backpack safety to approximately 32 fourth grade students at The Ellis School. The theme of this year’s Backpack Day was “Pack it Light, Wear it Right.” Chatham students instructed the fourth graders how to safely and effectively pack their backpacks. The fourth graders cheered each other on in a relay race where 4 groups competed to see who could pack their backpacks correctly. Students weighed their backpacks to ensure that they were not carrying more than 15% of their body weight. Chatham students provided the fourth graders with handouts on backpack safety to share with their families.

This was the seventh year that Chatham students have participated in National Backpack Safety Awareness Day in school districts in the Pittsburgh area.

MOT Students Wrap-up Final Academic Term Helping the Community

Jodi Schreiber, MS, OTRIL

The MOT curriculum includes three Level I fieldwork experiences. The third and final Level I fieldwork placement occurs during the students’ final fall semester at Chatham. This final, and perhaps most unique placement, requires cooperation with a community organization that does not employ occupational therapists. Successful completion of this opportunity requires the MOT students to consider the setting’s overall mission, services, consumer base, and the potential benefits of occupational therapy.

The Class of 2009 was assigned in groups of 2-3 to complete their community fieldwork in one of three locations; Everyone an Artist in Lawrenceville, Head Start at Overbrook, and the Chatham University Safety & Security Department. After working closely with the supervisors & consumers of the assigned agency, the students developed a plan to incorporate the principles of occupational therapy to each site’s particular needs.

The students involved in this year’s community fieldwork projects successfully developed programs focused on the consumer population of each site versus individual one-on-one intervention. This “out-of-the-box” thinking required the groups to consider and identify larger solutions that would enhance all consumers rather than a few. Reflecting upon the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (AOTA, 2008), the students created highly accepted programs and educational materials for their settings.

The outcomes of the fieldwork experience were varied among the groups. After becoming familiar with the duties and demands of the Chatham police officers, the students involved with the Chatham Safety and Security Department used technology to create several educational programs for this population. A podcast and web-based survey were created for the officers to participate in during their varied work hours. The materials provided to the officers focused

on general work-related body mechanics including use of the Car-Fit program. The students involved with the Everyone an Artist program developed several sensory-based groups, an expanded adaptive device flow chart to assist staff in determining appropriate tools to enhance consumer abilities, and an updated assessment tool to identify consumer skills at lower levels as well as higher level abilities. Parents and staff at the Head Start Program benefitted from activities and educational materials developed by the MOT students. Several topics presented to the Head Start participants related to fine motor, self-care skills, socialization and typical development. Overall, each experience proved to be a positive endeavor for the students, consumers, and staff.

Share your news with your classmates in the *Chatham Recorder*.

Mail this form to:

Chatham University, Office of Alumni Relations, Woodland Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Last Name _____

Maiden Name _____

First Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Country _____

E-mail Address _____

Graduate Degree _____ Class Year _____

Class Note (100 words or less): _____

