From the Director

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

2014: Oh the places we have been….and the places we will go!

Chatham University recently announced an academic restructuring which included the creation of a new School of Health Sciences. The new School of Health Sciences includes occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, nursing, and counseling psychology programs and provides multiple opportunities for both faculty and student collaboration. We welcome Dr. Patricia Downey as our inaugural dean of the School of Health Sciences! As many of you know, Dr. Downey served as director of Chatham’s physical therapy program prior to assuming the dean position. We also welcome two new occupational therapy faculty, Dr. Sharon Novalis and Dr. Jennifer Lape to our programs. Additionally, after seven years of dedicated service to our program, we congratulate Dr. Emily Eckel on her retirement on June 30, 2014.

2014 was an exciting year for the occupational therapy programs at Chatham University. Chatham MOT students continue to be actively involved in community projects and leadership endeavors, including AOTA’s Capitol Hill Day, Falls Prevention Programs, Backpack Awareness activities, and World OT Day events. The OTD program is thriving and has implemented a new successful mentoring program run by OTD alum. New global initiatives include the first interprofessional OT/PT trip to Ecuador as part of the Global Health Perspectives elective course. Read on to learn more about these and other program highlights of 2014; articles for this newsletter are written largely by our students!

If you have news that you would like to share with us, please send the items my way (salls@chatham.edu). We love to stay in touch with all of you!

Mentoring Program for Online OTD Students

Chatham University’s Doctorate of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program offers a formalized mentor program designed to provide support to the OTD students as they complete the intense 16-month program. The mentor program was created in 2014 by two former graduates, Dr. Christine Holdren and Dr. Tara Kulak, in collaboration with Dr. Ingrid Provident, OTD Program coordinator. The primary motivation for the mentoring program was to stay connected to Chatham while giving back to the program. The mentor program consists of four key features supported by current evidence based literature.

The first key feature of the mentor program is to provide on-line facilitation for both students and the volunteer mentors (alumni of the OTD program).

Christine and Tara facilitate by staying current with research on mentoring, creating the student/mentor pairings, providing resources to mentors on how to become effective mentors, and sharing resources with students on how to utilize the mentor program. The second key feature of the mentor program is to start during the first term of the OTD program to help develop a strong mentor-mentee relationship and give support at the start of the program from someone who has recently completed their journey. The third key feature of the mentoring program is to provide structure and clear expectations.

Mentors and mentees are provided with a training module on effective mentoring. Formalized expectations for both mentors and mentees are explained and revisited throughout the mentoring process to provide structure. The final component of the OTD mentoring program is program evaluation conducted through end of term surveys completed by both mentors and students. Based on the results and feedback from the surveys and new research findings, modifications to the mentor program are made to keep the mentor program vibrant and useful to the participants, Drs. Holdren, Kulak, and Provident have been approached by Chatham University’s nursing department to assist them in developing a mentor program for the Doctor of Nursing Practice students.
NEW FACULTY

Dr. Jennifer Lape, MOT ’99, OTD ’08
Kelli Edmond Brocks, OTS; Jessica Zeif, OTS

We are pleased to welcome one of our newest faculty members, Dr. Jennifer Lape, to the Chatham University OTD program. Dr. Lape received a BS in Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 1997, as well as an MOT degree in 1999 and an OTD degree in 2008 from Chatham University.

Dr. Lape comes to Chatham with 15 years of experience working within many different areas of practice such as pediatrics (school-based, early intervention, home visits), acute care/hospital, home care, and has extensive experience in skilled nursing facilities. Dr. Lape has a strong interest in sensory-based treatments for patients with dementia, rehabilitation management, and teambuilding for rehabilitation staff. Dr. Lape has had the opportunity to participate in two research projects including her master’s capstone project where she examined the differences in responses to the Sensory Profile for typically developing children and children with disabilities, as well as her doctoral capstone where she researched the use of multisensory environments to decrease negative behaviors for clients with dementia.

As an adjunct, she taught all four of the OTD capstone courses; Foundations of OT, Evidence-Based Practice in the MOT program, and a course on Clinical Practice Guidelines to PT & OT students at another university. Dr. Lape currently teaches the evidence-based practice courses in the OTD program which culminates with students completing their doctoral capstone projects. For the past two and a half years, Dr. Lape and a colleague have been developing a textbook titled Research for the Health Professional, which was published in November 2014. When not at Chatham, Dr. Lape enjoys baking, reading books, mountain biking, traveling, taking piano lessons, and spending time with her husband and her beagle, Chloe, at their cabin in the woods.

Dr. Sharon Novalis
Nicole Parker, OTS; Kayla Pace, OTS

The Chatham University MOT program is pleased to introduce Dr. Sharon Novalis, one of our newest faculty members. Dr. Novalis received an associate in science degree in occupational therapy from the Community College of Allegheny County, a bachelor of science degree in general studies, a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from Misericordia University, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Rehabilitation Sciences from the University of Pittsburgh.

She worked in a variety of occupational therapy settings including hospital-based physical rehabilitation and hospital-based mental health facilities. She also practiced in long term care facilities, home health, school-based settings, and served in clinical and administrative capacities. She previously served as adjunct faculty in Community College of Allegheny County’s occupational therapy assistant program as a lab instructor and as an assistant to the fieldwork coordinator and research assistant/associate for the University of Pittsburgh’s occupational therapy program. Dr. Novalis is interested in community-based services, neuroscience, mental health, mindfulness/wellness, geriatrics, and underserved populations. In her free time she enjoys nature, gardening, bird watching, and participating in creative arts through writing and music.

At Chatham University, Dr. Novalis is teaching the Evidence Based Practice Series, Biomechanics and Occupational Performance, and Advanced Topics in Occupational Therapy. She states, “I am very pleased to be a part of the Chatham University occupational therapy faculty! I truly enjoy working with the OT students as well!”
Faculty Scholarly Work 2014

Peer-Reviewed Publications


National Peer-Reviewed Presentations


Provident, I., Bednarski, J., Barton, R., & Dolhi, C. Discover and Develop your Role as an OT Consultant: Promote Health and Wellness in your Community. American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, Baltimore MD, April 2014


State Peer-Reviewed Presentations


Invited Presentations


Mattila, A. Occupational Therapy in the Army. Guest Speaker for Allegheny General Hospital Department of Rehabilitation Grand Rounds, Pittsburgh, PA. April 8, 2014
Julie Miller, MOT ’03
Jessica Goldcamp, OTS; Danielle Sampieri, OTS; Natalie Tonozzi, OTS

Julie Miller is a 2003 graduate of Chatham University’s Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) program and has recently been presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award, an award that is given annually to an alumni who has made significant ongoing contributions to the profession. Julie currently lives in Los Angeles, where she has been promoted to Department Head of Occupational Therapy and Feeding programs at Professional Child Development Associates. She has also been the Occupational Therapy Department Head and Coordinator of the Feeding Team Services since 2008. Julie was kind enough to answer some questions regarding how she advanced from a new graduate to her current standing in the profession.

Interviewer (I): Tell us about your time at Chatham University?
Julie Miller (JM): I attended Chatham as both an undergraduate and graduate student, which gives me an interesting perspective of both sides of the University. I loved my undergraduate experience, largely due to the culture of it being a women’s college and the focus on liberal arts. The fact that Chatham also had a graduate program in occupational therapy is something that helped me make my decision to attend as an undergraduate. After my first four years I considered moving on to a new school, but really valued my undergraduate experience and decided to stay for my graduate studies. As for grad school, I attended during a time that national enrollment in OT programs was down. There were 12 people in my class, which created an incredible hands-on learning environment.

I: How do you feel your experiences at Chatham University prepared you for a career?
JM: Chatham encouraged (required) active engagement in classes, which certainly helps me in my career. I think simply how Chatham focuses on your career, not just your job, is incredibly valuable. I try to support my staff in expanding the view of their career, even if that includes moving on to new places. Our feeding team has 25 different therapists from a variety of backgrounds. We have new graduates as well as therapists who have been working in the field for over 35 years. It is a constant balance to make sure that everyone is contributing and supporting one another in the advancement of their clinical skills to best meet the needs of the clients we serve.

I: Tell us about how you got to where you are today?
JM: Some things in life just work out the way they are supposed to, and I’ve been blessed that my career has been the easy thing for me. While I work at the clinic where I did my 2nd level II FW, I ended up there by chance when the clinic (in Los Angeles) where I was supposed to be a student closed just months before my rotation. I wasn’t even sure I wanted to do a fieldwork in pediatrics, but given the short timeline, I went for it. My fieldwork experience was awesome and I jumped at the chance to stay on as a therapist. I finished my fieldwork on a Friday and the following Monday began as a therapist with a temporary license. I received (and continue to receive) incredible mentorship by OTs, SLPs, RDs, and a developmental pediatrician, which certainly supported my practice. I worked for approximately five years before getting a promotion to assistant department head and a few years later officially became department head of occupational therapy and feeding programs (which includes our interdisciplinary feeding team). Later physical therapy was also added to my department.

I: What sparked your interest in sensory processing and feeding?
JM: I didn’t have any particular interest in these areas during school and was introduced to the depth of this information during fieldwork. I love my work in feeding, which immediately pulls in an identified occupation and is a huge area to support parent/child and family interactions. As an agency, PCDA uses the DIR Floortime model of therapy (Stanley Greenspan), which focuses on social emotional development and parent/child interactions, which significantly impacts my practice as an occupational therapist. My knowledge and use of sensory theory is to facilitate not only an adaptive motor or behavior response, but also seen as a foundation to emotional regulation. Through attending a school on the east coast and then working on the west coast, as well as through speaking at conferences around the US, I’ve learned that much of what we do as therapists is impacted by the regional therapeutic culture where we work and the funding systems in place in various locations.
Falls Prevention

Whitney Meeker, OTS; Lynette Ritenour, OTS; Luke Thompson, OTS

Every year, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) dedicates the month of September to raising awareness for falls prevention. In honor of falls prevention month, two groups of Chatham MOT students traveled to Providence Point in Pittsburgh, PA and Masonic Village in Sewickley, PA on September 24th to deliver educational and interactive presentations about how to effectively prevent falls among senior citizens. Participants in the presentation included well-elderly residents of these senior living facilities.

The students’ presentation entitled “Staying Active and Falls Free with Occupational Therapy” courtesy of AOTA’s website, taught the active seniors how to identify risk factors for falls and also highlighted occupational therapy’s role in preventing falls. The presentation also included pictures of rooms with fall hazards that the participants were shown and had to identify. They also provided suggestions on how to correct the potential hazards. At Providence Point, the presentation was followed by an interactive game of “No Falls Bingo.” The residents participated in the adapted version of Bingo, shouting “No fall!” The game was very popular among the residents and they all expressed appreciation for the presentation and the information that was provided to them. They were also very excited for the Bingo prizes that were offered!

After presenting to the residents at the Masonic Village in Sewickley, PA, the students engaged the participants in a jeopardy game involving fall prevention trivia. The questions involved information associated with falls such as common myths, risk factors and preventive suggestions to reduce the risk of a fall. Each resident was provided a night light to help them navigate their living space in the dark. At the end of the presentation, there was a reflection time allotted to permit the residents to share their personal experiences related to falls. During this time, they even provided their own insights and suggestions to further educate their peers. All of the participants were extremely grateful for the students’ presence and stated that they will share their newly gained information with their friends that were unable to be present. Overall, Falls Prevention Awareness Day was a great success among the residents of Masonic Village and Providence Point! The Chatham MOT students were thankful to have the opportunity to share their knowledge about the role of occupational therapy in reducing falls.

Community Fieldwork: Students Exploring Emerging Areas

Courtney Gampe, OTS, Florentina Gonzales, OTS, and Brooke Carrabba, OTS

Community fieldwork enables Chatham University students to acquire valuable skills while enhancing their understanding of community needs. This past year during community fieldwork, students worked in a variety of settings including homeless shelters, adult day services, community mental health centers, schools, vocational centers, and neighborhood centers. Populations served include adolescents to individuals over 90 years of age with a variety of psychosocial needs.

Community fieldwork provides students with a unique opportunity to be active members of the community. As future practitioners, we are presented with an opportunity to educate the community about occupational therapy and how the community agencies may benefit from our services. Occupational therapy students are witnesses to impressive staff dedication to those in need. At the same time, they are witnessing the struggles of stretching little money in order to offer much needed services.

As occupational therapy students, we conducted a needs assessment and SWOT analysis in a variety of community agencies through knowledge acquired from the Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy program. With the information gathered from surveys, interviews, and observation we developed and implemented programming to meet the needs of the population. As external consultants, we were able to provide a fresh look within the community agencies and implement a myriad of innovative programs.

Chatham University provides an experience for students that separates it from other university’s in that it requires a community fieldwork experience in addition to fieldwork in traditional settings. This unique fieldwork experience allows students to develop intervention skills that address the needs of groups or populations. Community fieldwork gives students the opportunity to fully develop and implement an occupational therapy program in an emerging area of practice which challenges their creativity and application of professional knowledge and skills. Furthermore, students learn how to advocate for themselves and occupational therapy which is essential for personal development and growth of the profession as a whole. By and large, the knowledge and experience gained through community fieldwork is extremely valuable!
Teamwork Abroad
Chelsea Kaminski, OTS; Kellie Kollat, OTS; Cindy Reen, OTS; & Paul Torres, OTS

This past August, occupational therapy professor Amy Mattila, physical therapy director Dr. Joe Schreiber, six MOT students, and six DPT students eagerly participated in Chatham University’s first interprofessional trip to Ibarra, Ecuador. The teachers and students had the opportunity to work with Elaine Keane, an occupational therapist who is also the owner of CRECER, a nonprofit organization that provides free occupational therapy services to any age population. Ms. Keane also provided students with the opportunity to volunteer at Asilo Leon Ruales (a nursing home), FUNHI (an adult outpatient facility), and an orphanage.

Ecuador was the first significant interprofessional experience for many of the OT and PT students. Assigned in groups of two OTs and two PTs, the students met each evening to plan interventions for the next day. They each learned the scope of practice and goals of the opposite profession. At the beginning of the trip, the interdisciplinary work was challenging for the students. However, by the end of the week, friendships were formed, the value of interdisciplinary work was found, and a new appreciation for each other’s profession had developed.

One of the lessons every student learned was the power of collaboration. There were many opportunities throughout the experience for the OTs to show the PTs what the profession did and vice versa. While in the many different settings, there were times when clients needed to be transferred in order to participate in the next activity. Both the OTs and PTs had to work together to help, not only for the comfort of the client, but also for safety. In many cases, the OT and PT could not have completed their intervention with the client without the help of the other. This was true in one case of a client in FUNHI who was diagnosed with spastic cerebral palsy. The PT was able to position the client on her knee to provide trunk support and stabilization. Once in an appropriate position, the OT was able to help the client create a birthday card for a friend in the facility. Without the help of the PT working on positioning, the activity would not have been possible, and without the work of the OT, working on trunk control would not have been meaningful to the client.

Another lesson the students gained from this experience was the vital role communication plays in an interdisciplinary experience. One example of this was when the PTs asked what craft the OTs would be doing with a client. One of the reasons behind it was fine motor control, static sitting balance, upper extremity ROM and communication. It was an opportunity to explain the clinical reasoning process behind each intervention in terminology understood by both professions. After offering an explanation, both the PTs and OTs gained respect for the other profession’s expertise and a comfort in asking about what could not be seen on the surface level of an intervention.

Another lesson the students learned through this experience was the importance of being flexible, both in resources and client motivation. The clinic’s materials are collected primarily through donations. As such, they work with what is currently available at the time. Being able to bring creativity out of less, and engaging the client in a meaningful manner is a valuable lesson in a clinical setting. For example, the OTs worked with a gentleman who had previously suffered a brain injury from his work as an electrician. He was the only current adult that attended the clinic on a regular basis, in a setting where the materials were mostly geared for children and adolescents. The OTs came up with an idea for an intervention using yarn strings to match...
Keeping Track of Your Backpack
Rebecca Brunner, OTS; Madison Thibault, OTS; Brittany Stout, OTS

Every year, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) celebrates National School Backpack Awareness Day. In celebration, on Wednesday, September 17, Chatham University’s Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) class of 2015 spent the morning educating local 4th grade students and encouraging proper body mechanics through a variety of games and skits. Some MOT students travelled to St. Bonaventure Catholic Grade School while the others walked down 5th Avenue to The Ellis School.

The MOT students who traveled to St. Bonaventure Catholic Grade School kicked off the day by performing a skit highlighting proper body mechanics and correct packing techniques by showing exactly what not to do. The children laughed as MOT student Sarah Minkoff walked in dragging her overly stuffed backpack around her ankle. Sarah then began to take out silly items from her backpack that not only elicited even more laughs but also reminded the students to only pack what is necessary for the school day. According to AOTA (2014), the proper weight of a backpack should be no more than 10% of your total body weight. The students were split into groups to attend two educational stations set-up by the MOT students. One group of students had an opportunity to get involved by weighing themselves and identifying how much their backpack should safely weigh. On the other side of the gym the second station involved students in a relay game focused on proper backpack packing skills. The groups then switched and in the end everyone won, thanks to Backpack Awareness Day!

Down the street from Chatham University, at The Ellis School, the children were wowed by a creative re-do of a SpongeBob Squarepants theme song – revamped to include key points of backpack awareness, such as wearing one strap does not make you look cool. According to AOTA (2014), wearing both shoulder straps distributes the weight evenly and can prevent injury associated with wearing a backpack. The MOT students engaged the students at The Ellis School using a variety of interactive stations. One station focused on the proper way to pack a backpack. Students were also able to make and design their own bookmarks to remember the special event at another station. These MOT students also used Backpack Awareness Day as an opportunity to collect canned goods. The cans were used to represent the weight students actually carry in their own backpack and were then donated to the Squirrel Hill Community Food Pantry.

Backpack Awareness Day was educational for everyone involved! The MOT students were able to have a great learning experience teaching the students while the children learned how to safely pack their backpacks by participating in a variety of exciting activities. Backpack Awareness Day is very important to occupational therapy; in 2007 there were over 2,000 backpack-related injuries in the United States (AOTA, 2014). Occupational therapy not only focuses on those who have already experienced injury or illness but also provides preventative care to help people stay healthy and prevent injury. For more information or to get involved with AOTA’s National School Backpack Awareness Day, visit www.aota.org.

Reference

Teamwork Abroad (cont.)
numbers between the above and below “electricity wires.” The PTs assisted with standing balance while he was reaching for the correct piece of yarn and bending to grab the corresponding piece. The client’s goal was to regain his memory and cognitive skills to return to work. The activity was not only geared towards both the OTs and PTs but it was also very client centered. The client enjoyed the activity because it brought him back to doing what he loved most as an electrician.

The Chatham MOT program plans to continue offering the Global Health Perspectives course in Ecuador to future MOT and DPT students. International fieldwork experiences support Chatham University’s mission “…to better prepare our students for our evolving world” (Chatham University, 2014). Additionally, this experience supports AOTA’s centennial vision of occupational therapy as, “…a profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society’s occupational needs” (AOTA, 2006).

References
AOTA Capitol Hill Day
Emily Bantz, OTS; Kelsey Stiltenpole, OTS; & Leisl White, OTS

As members of the occupational therapy profession, it is our duty to take the necessary steps to achieve the goals outlined in the Centennial Vision. On September 15, 2014, twenty-six students from Chatham University’s Master of Occupational Therapy program and Dr. Joyce Salls attended AOTA’s Hill Day on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The goal of Hill Day was to advocate for the profession of occupational therapy and its clients to improve the quality of services for those impacted by mental illness and those requiring outpatient occupational therapy services. Over 500 occupational therapy practitioners, occupational therapy assistants, and occupational therapy students from around the country came to have their voices heard.

Students met with their state representatives and senators and their staff members to discuss the importance of occupational therapy in aiding people to live life to the fullest. Specific bills students and practitioners discussed included the Excellence in Mental Health Act and the Medicare Access to Rehabilitation Services Act of 2013 (S 367/HR713). The latter bill focuses on a repeal of the Part B Outpatient Therapy Cap, which is currently set at $1920 per year for clients receiving outpatient occupational therapy services. This cap can significantly impact the recovery of clients with complicated diagnoses who require more thorough and intense, and ultimately more costly, therapy services.

The Excellence in Mental Health Act would include occupational therapists on the list of practitioners who may provide services to those with mental health concerns. This Act creates criteria for “Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics” and the services are focused on mental illnesses and substance abuse. The clinics do assessments, screenings, prevention, treatment, and wellness programs to benefit its clients. Eight states will be selected to be in this 2-year pilot program, with Pennsylvania being one of the chosen states. Grants are available for the programs during the pilot program.

Many students found AOTA’s Hill Day to be both exciting and empowering. “It was really great to see how approachable and interested the staff at the Capitol were in learning more about the OT profession, and how they can help us to help our clients,” Katlyn Long, 2nd year MOT student at Chatham said. Students met with staff, representatives, and senators in a variety of settings. These included hallways, auditoriums, and small personal offices.

As a result of Hill Day 2014, the House received 220 cosponsors to create a majority that would allow for a repeal of the therapy cap. Many other politicians called in to sign onto the Excellence in Mental Health letter as result of our day of advocacy, indicating support for occupational therapy services for those impacted by mental illness. This experience proved worthwhile and provides evidence that we need to advocate for our profession and for our clients to receive the funding and support necessary to provide the best possible care.

Volunteering Opportunities
Kim Cornelissen, OTS; & Anjelica Fortunato, OTS

Looking for a way to meet new people, make a difference in your community and increase career related skills? Why not volunteer? Volunteering is a great way to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of families and individuals from a variety of settings. It’s also an easy way to meet new people, form connections and build new relationships. Volunteering can aid in skill development and can add to your resume, which in turn can help you stand out among other applicants when looking for a job.

The students enrolled in the Chatham University MOT program take advantage of every volunteer opportunity they are offered and actively seek new opportunities. One of the many places where the MOT students enjoy volunteering each year is the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, PA. RMHC is a non-profit organization that supports families in a “home away from home” environment for those with seriously ill children receiving treatment at a hospital in the surrounding areas. This allows each family to concentrate on their family during a very difficult time. This organization needs and greatly values the support from the community. The students typically volunteer in the evening, making the families dinner. They prepare comforting meals such as grilled cheese

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with tomato soup and hot dogs with macaroni and cheese. With every dinner, the students try to provide healthy fruit and/or vegetables and a delicious dessert! After dinner, the students come prepared with crafts for any children wanting to participate. This experience allows families to ‘get away’ and forget about their troubles, even if it is just for a short amount of time.

Along with RMHC, the MOT students have volunteered at Chartiers Center located in Bridgeville, PA. The main focus of Chartiers Center is to enhance the quality of life for those with behavior or intellectual disabilities. Their programs aim to integrate those with physical and mental health disabilities into the community. To carry out their mission, Chartiers runs programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Each program consists of individualized plans to meet the specific needs of individuals to help each of them achieve their greatest level of independence. Chartiers also provides programming for those with co-occurring disorders (COD), such as optional treatment for alcohol and other drug related issues. Chatham volunteers work mostly with the IDD program. At the Bridgeville location, special events are hosted, such as ‘country night’ and Halloween parties. At these events, students are able to interact with the consumers; they talk with individuals and groups, teach them dances and participate in crafts.

Volunteer experiences are not only fun for the MOT students, but also aid in enhancing skills that are needed as they transition into their occupational therapy careers. Working with diverse populations in a variety of settings can offer the opportunity to practice communication skills with families and individuals that will ultimately impact communication with future clients and co-workers. These experiences also give students the opportunity to work together with other professionals, which increases teamwork skills and the ability to work better in interdisciplinary scenarios. Lastly, students can gain experience related to determining the needs of groups and individuals, and work to help or empower them to do activities that are meaningful.

The organizations and individuals that MOT students work with also benefit greatly from these experiences. The educational background of MOT students related to areas of occupation, mental health, health and wellness, productive aging, rehabilitation and much more support students in having a greater impact on the community members with whom they are working. For example, the MOT students were able to use their education on behavioral issues related to a variety of diagnoses for their experience at Chartiers to provide an experience that was fun, safe, and promoted independence for those who participated.

POTA Annual Conference
Lauren Chance OTS; Anthony Mead OTS; Angela Sammons OTS; and Abbie Vargo, OTS

A s part of Chatham’s MOT program, all students are required to submit their evidence-based practice group research project to Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association’s annual conference. This year, all 10 group submissions were accepted! On Friday, October 31 and Saturday, November 1, second-year students traveled to King of Prussia, PA to present their research projects. Throughout the weekend, nine groups presented their research posters and one group presented a formal 30-minute presentation. In addition to presenting, students had the opportunity to participate in various educational sessions and network with practicing occupational therapists throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The evidence-based practice research topics are emerging areas of interest in the field of occupational therapy and the topics are as follows:

1. Reducing Mental Health Stigma in Healthcare Students
   Sarah Minkoff, Kayla Pace, Nicole Parker, Luke Thompson

2. Caring for Caregivers: Support Groups for Parents of Children with Disabilities
   Lauren Chance, Katelyn Long, Cindy Reen, Lynette Ritenour

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This year’s keynote speaker was Dr. Lamb, the Vice President of the American Occupational Therapy Association. She discussed the importance of articulating and demonstrating the distinct value of occupational therapy. Students had the opportunity to learn from Dr. Lamb on multiple occasions throughout their academic career via Skype. Topics included the importance of advocating for occupational therapy and staying informed on legislative issues related to occupational therapy practice.

The 2014 POTA OT Student Award of Recognition was presented to Chatham University alumna, Hillary Balsega. Each year POTA presents this award to a student who has shown excellent leadership qualities, and exceptional academic and/or clinical performance in occupational therapy. Hillary was presented the OT Student Award of Recognition due to her significant contributions in her graduate research, clinical practice, and involvement in student OT organizations. Hillary, who is originally from Smithfield, PA, received her BA in Psychology from California University of Pennsylvania, and recently received her MOT from Chatham University this past summer. She currently has a full time OT position at HealthSouth Mountain View Rehabilitation Hospital in Morgantown, WV, and is excited to be out in the field. While a student at Chatham, Hillary completed her level II fieldwork experiences at UPMC Mercy in the brain injury unit, and also at St. Clair Hospital. She engaged in numerous volunteer opportunities through Chatham’s Student Occupational Therapy Association and POTA. Hillary also was the student representative for POTA, where she attended monthly meetings, and passed new and upcoming information to her classmates and professors. In addition, Hillary became involved in two different mentorship projects. One was with professor Amy Mattila and Dr. Lynne Huber, which involved planning and attending the POTA District II continuing education events (and other procedures within the state). The other involved Dr. Cathy Dolhi, where they developed different ways to help raise awareness and support for POTPAC. For all her accomplishments, Hillary was awarded Chatham University’s Leadership Award of 2014. “I feel that it is important for students to take advantage of opportunities that come their way. We need to challenge ourselves to step forward as emerging leaders in order to help OT flourish in the future,” said Balsega.

We congratulate Hillary for all that she has done, and encourage others to follow in her footsteps.
STAR Simulation
Janine Sisko, OTS; Emily Breiters, OTS; Kelsey Lyons, OTS

During the summer and fall terms at Chatham University, the second-year Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students participated in a contemporary and innovative way of learning at West Penn Allegheny Health System's STAR (Simulation, Training, and Academic Research) Center. The STAR Center offers a place for students, health care workers, emergency medical technicians, and researchers to practice medical techniques on computerized mannequins. This low-risk, controlled environment gives students hands-on experience that will help them increase competence with the skills they will eventually use in patient care. The 3G SimMan mannequins available are equipped to simulate experiences including cardiac arrest, respiratory distress, downgrade in medical status, and even giving birth! Pulse, blood pressure, heart rate, speaking, breathing, coughing, and wheezing are some of the many simulated capabilities of the mannequin. This facility is located locally within the West Penn Allegheny Nursing School in Bloomfield where various training rooms, mannequin simulators, and actual medical equipment give participants the most realistic experience possible.

This is the second year that MOT second-year students from Chatham have had the opportunity to participate in the simulations at STAR. Professors Jodi Schreiber and Amy Mattila paved the way to adopting this experience as a part of the MOT curriculum. Before receiving approval for students to utilize this program, both professors attended multiple training sessions on how to operate the mannequins and controls, and the rules and regulations of the STAR center. Professor Mattila reported that the training entailed an eight hour online course followed by a hands-on experience at the STAR site. She is passionate about this program as well as the current research on the effectiveness of debriefing after completing a task. Future plans include incorporating a documentation assignment that will allow the students to write goals for the client that they saw during the simulation.

In preparation for the simulation experiences, students reviewed current occupational therapy literature pertaining to care in the intensive care unit (ICU) and acute care. The students were divided into small groups of four. The first simulation that occurred in the summer semester provided students with the opportunity to work with a client with cardiopulmonary issues. The second simulation case study was with a man who was non-responsive and on a ventilator. These case studies coincided with the material that the students were currently learning in the classroom. They also served as a first time experience in the hospital setting for some students.

Both simulation experiences started with students meeting in the conference/debriefing room at the facility. A patient chart review was then performed to familiarize the students with medical history, primary and secondary diagnoses, precautions, physicians' orders, nursing notes, and more. Group members then discussed a potential plan of action for treating the patient. A one-way mirror served as a boundary between the professors and students in the mock ICU patient room. The first simulation experience, in the summer semester, was a patient diagnosed with cardiopulmonary problems. The objective was for students to familiarize themselves with the patient and perform both an initial evaluation and assessments that would be done for retrieving baseline data about the capabilities of the patient. After the 15 minute session, Professors Jodi Schreiber and Amy Mattila facilitated student reflection and provided valuable feedback on performance. The second session, in the fall semester, included a patient that was intubated and unresponsive, with a diagnosis of acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). The simulation differed from the first simulation in that out of the four students in each group, two served as the therapists while the other two actively observed and provided feedback. This was an evidence-based strategy implemented by the professors for increasing student learning.

After the debriefing periods of both of the simulation experiences, students were able to give feedback to the facility about the quality of the training rooms, and equipment. Collective feedback from the STAR Center simulation revealed that students really enjoyed the experience and saw the value in this method of learning. Student Nicole Parker commented, “STAR helped me to transition between classroom experience and fieldwork!” Additionally, students reported that they felt more competent in their skills after the second simulation experience. “STAR helped me to practice the techniques that I learned in school that will help me to apply them to the real world!” commented student Leisl White.

The professors of the Chatham MOT program plan to keep this simulation as a part of the curriculum for years to come as they feel that the novelty of this experience pushes students to problem solve and use critical thinking skills. This allows the MOT students to transfer skills they have learned in the classroom to practical use.
World OT Day: PromOTing Independence Through Occupation
Keri Biedka, OTS; Sarah DeLong, OTS; Sarah Minkoff, OTS

On October 27, 2014, Chatham MOT students celebrated World OT Day by holding an open house. Attendees learned about occupational therapy through ten interactive stations, which are described below.

Occupational ‘TECH’nique, So to Speak
At this station, attendees learned about various accessibility options for computers, iPads, and other technologies. Additionally, adaptive equipment was available, including various keyboards. Student Maddak inventions, such as the "Swaddle Bottle" and the "Get a Grip" were on display and their uses were demonstrated.

Engaging in Occupations with Changing Vision
Have you ever wondered what it feels like to have vision conditions such as macular degeneration and tunnel vision? This station allowed attendees to wear goggles simulating these and other vision conditions while completing everyday tasks including dressing. After participating, students suggested ways of modifying or changing tasks to make them easier for people with changing vision to see and participate.

Using Your Brain Before the Storm
Would you be prepared if there was a natural disaster? This station explored what it means to be prepared when disaster strikes. Participants took part in a natural disaster simulated experience to explore the challenges of preparing for a natural disaster with functional impairments, such as visual deficits, fine motor deficits, and auditory deficits. After the simulation the students made suggestions of how to prepare ahead of time so that even those with functional deficits are ready if they ever face a natural disaster.

How is Your Engine Running?
At the first sensory integration station, attendees were able to learn how to utilize calming and alerting stimuli to achieve an optimal level of sensory input throughout the day. Participants began by deciding "how their engine was running," according to the Alert Program meter. They were then able to experience how to involve all of their senses to either calm themselves down or alert themselves.

Sense the Suspense
At the second sensory integration station, attendees were able to participate in a number of tactile sensory activities with a Halloween theme. Students educated participants on tactile hypersensitivity, how this can affect a person’s everyday occupations, and how an occupational therapist can help people do the things they want and need to do. Students demonstrated the use of weighted vests and body socks to provide deep pressure to calm the nervous system before allowing attendees to participate in sensory bin activities. Finally, participants were able to create a spooky monster craft using sensory paint.

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The Seven Senses of Sleep
This station focused on explaining sleep hygiene and providing examples of how people can improve their quality of sleep. Participants were encouraged to think about their own bedtime routines and consider what may positively or negatively affect their sleep quality. The students provided ways to modify someone’s bedtime routine, such as reducing light exposure and using calming music, to improve overall sleep hygiene.

Guide to Your Life
What is guided imagery and how does it apply to my life? The goal of this station was to answer those questions and apply guided imagery to one area of the participants’ lives. Participants received education about guided imagery and then watched a short video discussing guided imagery. Participants then reflected on how they could use guided imagery in their own lives and for clinicians how they could integrate guided imagery into their clinical practice.

Don’t Mess With Stress
How do you manage your stress? This station focused on stress management strategies and how to integrate these techniques into your everyday life. The students provided education about stress management to participants and gave them an opportunity to think about what the stressors are in their lives and how they could apply these management strategies. Participants could participate in a short yoga session, which was one of the stress management techniques discussed at this station.

What’s In Your Pie?
This station focused on assisting attendees to be able to visually identify the physical and mental components of their day by creating a pie of life chart. After discovering what percentage of the day attendees participate in each of their daily activities, the students provided examples of ways to live a more occupationally balanced life. In keeping with the pie theme, participants were rewarded with a piece of pie!

Kawa: River of Life
Here, attendees were introduced to the Kawa model of occupational therapy. Each aspect of the river, rocks, driftwood, water, and river banks, were explained. Attendees were given examples of drawn rivers. Then, they were given the opportunity to identify barriers and strengths of their own lives through making their own river of life. This was done through using the Kawa App or by drawing their river on a template.
On July 12, five Chatham Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students and four Chatham MOT professors took part in the 4th annual Pittsburgh Cure Sarcoma 5K cancer run/walk. Chatham students and professors have been involved in this race all four years of its existence.

According to the Sarcoma Foundation of America, at any one time, an estimated 50,000 patients in the United States are battling sarcoma. Another 14,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. Nearly 6,000 individuals are likely to die from sarcoma annually. Sarcoma is a rare form of cancer that arises from connective tissue. This includes muscles, tendons, nerves, fat, bone, or cartilage. Sarcoma is more common in children than adults. In the early stages there may be no symptoms. In the later stages, a person might experience pain or soreness on the affected area. Other symptoms include swelling or a presence of a bump. The survival rate at five years is only 25%. It is important to be aware of these symptoms and report suspected areas to your primary care physician (curesarcoma.org, 2014).

Because of sarcomas rarity, government funding is extremely limited. This is why fundraisers are so important for research efforts. The only way to find a cure is to raise money and that is what this race is doing. The first year of the race, in 2011, there were 500-600 people who participated and raised around $50,000. In 2014, there were over 2,000 participants and raised a record high of $186,797. A portion of the Pittsburgh Cure Sarcoma race donations stay in Pittsburgh and go directly to local doctors and treatment research efforts.

Professor Cathy Dolhi got involved in the Sarcoma race when her sister-in-law and best friend, Barb was diagnosed with this rare cancer in January 2009 after finding a lump on her leg. After going through chemotherapy and multiple drug therapies, Barb passed away in March 2011 at the young age of 56, just two years after being diagnosed. At her last doctor’s appointment she made it a point to tell the oncologist, “I’m counting on you to find a cure for this” which resonated with Cathy and led her to the Sarcoma Race. Her family and others honor Barb and run/walk in her name with the team Barb’s Bunch. This year there were 61 members on her team and raised a total of $3,046.

The students who participated were able to promote occupational therapy through shirts they made and wore on race day. The shirts said “Chatham trOTers” on the front and “A doctor can save your life, but an OT can help you live it” on the back. Many people asked what OT was before, during, and after the race. Through explanations, individuals that didn’t know about OT were able to understand what it is and how it can help people live their lives.

The Pittsburgh Cure Sarcoma 5K cancer run/walk is held in July. Take part in the event and enjoy food, music, a t-shirt and great fun! Barb’s Bunch is always looking for individuals to join their team, and help find more effective treatment options for this terrible disease. To join the team or find more information follow the links below.

Sarcoma Foundation of America: http://www.curesarcoma.org/
Sarcoma 5k: http://www.pittsburghcuresarcoma.org/5k/home/default.asp?ievent=1098138

Reference