

From the Director

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



► We are pleased to bring you the 2015 Chatham University occupational therapy newsletter highlighting events and accomplishments of our students and faculty over the past year. In fall 2015 we welcomed 40 new MOT students and 41 second year students completed their coursework this month and are heading to Level II fieldwork in January 2016. The post professional OTD curriculum was revised and we enrolled 60 new OTD/

OTD Bridge students, studying online and implementing capstone projects from a variety of geographic locations including Germany and Ecuador.

2016 is a big year for us, as we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the post professional OTD program and 20th anniversary of the MOT program! Our alumni celebration will occur on Saturday, June 25 on the Chatham University campus with food, dancing, and a continuing education event! Details to follow....

This issue contains articles written primarily by our MOT students and OTD students, highlighting their engagement in a variety of service, scholarly and leadership activities over the past year. Read on to learn more about these as well as other highlights of 2015!

Newly designed OTD Curriculum

Ingrid Provident, Ed.D, OTD FAOTA, OTD program coordinator

► Chatham University's OTD Program curriculum has undergone a redesign in an effort to integrate student and faculty feedback. In recent years, it has become apparent that students require additional structure and support to successfully navigate the IRB review and would like to meet their cohort members earlier in the program. In an effort to support student success and make these changes, the OTD faculty met and considered many options before making the curriculum changes which went into effect in the fall term of 2015.

The major changes are apparent in the sequence of courses and a few course redesigns. In the new

sequence, the students take the OTD 760 Leadership course in the first term, which culminates in their first onsite visit. This sequence change has been consciously designed to coincide with the Capstone presentations of the graduating class thereby providing a natural teaching experience. The first term students will become the audience for the students who are presenting the outcomes of their completed projects. This will provide a degree of "demystification" of what happens at the end of the program and what students should expect when they arrive back on campus at the end of their fourth term to present their capstone projects. This also

sets up a peer learning opportunity where students can ask questions of the graduating students as to how they navigated the OTD program and the lessons learned in handling the demands of being an online graduate student.

Another significant change is the creation of a one credit proposal design course which will be offered in the third term and has been crafted to support the student through the IRB submission and revision process. As a faculty we are hopeful the supports that will be overtly put in place will allow the students to understand the human subject IRB process better and keep students on track in

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND AWARDS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Colaianne, D. J., **Provident, I.**, DiBartola, L. M., & Wheeler, S. (2015). A phenomenology of occupation-based hand therapy. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 62(3), 177-186. doi:10.1111/1440-1630.12192

Mattila, A. (2015). Interprofessional education. In *Teaching in higher education: Becoming college faculty* (pp. 68-73). Moon Twp, PA: RMU Press.

Mattila, A. (2015). Blended learning in the college classroom. In *Teaching in higher education: Becoming college faculty* (pp. 114-120). Moon Twp, PA: RMU Press.

Provident, I., Salls, J., Dolhi, C., Schreiber, J., Mattila, A., & Eckel, E. (2015). Design of an online curriculum promoting transformative learning in post professional doctoral students. *Online Learning: Official Journal of The Online Learning Consortium*, 19(3).

Sterrett, S. E., Hawkins, S. R., Hertweck, M., **Schreiber, J.** (2015). Developing communities of interprofessional practice: Using a communities of practice framework for interprofessional education. *Nurse Educator*, 40(1), E1-E4.

International Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Salls, J. & Keane, E. (2015, October). *Globally connected: Creating interprofessional opportunities for students in Ecuador*. Professional presentation at the Latin American Congress of Occupational Therapy (CLATO), San Jose, Costa Rica.

National Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Mattila, A. (2015, October). *The occupational therapy doctorate degree: How do we connect the needs of the profession to the millennial generation?* Poster presented at the 2015 AOTA/OTCAS Education Summit, Denver, CO.

Novalis, S. D. & Provident I. (2015, October). *Evaluative methodology utilized with alumni of an online post-professional OTD program*. Poster presented at the 2015 AOTA/OTCAS Education Summit, Denver, CO.

Benevides, T., Lorch, A., Mollo, K., Gorenberg, M., & **Lape, J.** (2015, April). *(SIS) EDSIS Annual Program: Capturing outcomes—Strategies for everyday practice in academic and clinical environments*. Professional presentation at the 95th Annual American Occupational Therapy Conference, Nashville, TN.

Dolhi, C., & Chisholm, D. (2015, April). *Investing in your professional development: Creating a plan for success*. Professional presentation at the 95th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Nashville, TN.

Palmer, E., Baist, H. & **Provident I.** (2015, April). *Globally connected workforce: A step toward the centennial vision: Connecting the United States and Kenya*. Professional presentation at the 95th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Nashville TN.

Salls, J. (2015, April). *Using Voice Thread to enhance student learning*. Professional presentation at the 95th Annual American Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Nashville, TN.

Schreiber, J. (2015, April). *Development of second semester master of occupational therapy students' critical thinking: A pilot study*. Professional presentation at the 95th Annual American Occupational Therapy Conference, Nashville, TN.

State Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Dolhi, C., Golden, K., & Muhlenhaupt, M. (2015, October). *POTA legislative update: The year in review and next steps*. Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

Harvey, L., Blessinger, M., McDaniel, D., Sherman, E., **Provident, I.** (2015, October). *Classroom peer support: What is OT's role?* Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

Lape, J., Ionadi, C., Lukose, A., Mitchell, D., & Yoneda, J. (2015, October). *Interdisciplinary collaboration and Kawa: Effect on client care*. Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

Novalis, S.D. (2015, October). *Clinician to academician: Identifying strategies for success*. Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

Salls, J. (2015, October). *Support groups for caregivers: Voices from Ecuador*. Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

OTD Curriculum *continued from page 1*

the timing of generating and submitting quality well written proposals. The content of the new course OTD 761 will also teach students about submitting their work for publication in peer reviewed journals or for state and/or national

presentations. The newly designed sequence of courses is presented below. We look forward to seeing how these changes support the successes of our current and future students.

First Term <i>Fall and Spring</i>	Second Term <i>Spring and Summer</i>	Third Term <i>Summer and Fall</i>	Final Term <i>Fall and Spring</i>
OTD 742 Advanced Practice Concepts and Skills (7 weeks)		OTD 752 Education Theory and Technology (7 weeks)	OTD 740 Occupational Science (7 weeks)
OTD 741 Evidence Based Practice (14 weeks)	OTD 751 Capstone Project Design (14 weeks)	OTD 761 Proposal Development (1 credit) (14 weeks)	OTD 772 Capstone Implementation and Evaluation (5 credits) (14 weeks includes 2-day onsite for capstone presentation)
OTD 760 Leadership and Professionalism (7 weeks includes 3-day onsite)	OTD 766 Methods of Evaluation (7 weeks)	OTD 750 OT as an Entrepreneur (7 weeks)	



MOT students at Providence Point, Pittsburgh PA

Falls Prevention

Kayla Pelczar, OTS; Kristen Schrecongost, OTS; & Allison Moore, OTS

► In September, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) designates a day for Falls Prevention. In honor of this day, on September 16, 2015, Chatham University MOT students provided educational presentations to two retirement facilities in the Pittsburgh area.

As people age, their reflexes start to slow down and reaction time decreases. These factors can make it difficult to maintain balance during postural displacements. As a result, a person is at a higher risk of injury when falling. However, frequent exercise can lead to improved postural reflexes, balance and mobility. In order to decrease their risk for falling, several steps can

be taken. Older individuals should continue to remain active in meaningful activities to maintain and/or improve muscular strength and balance. There are several factors that can increase an individual's risk of falling including physical (i.e. impaired balance, decreased vision), environmental (i.e. throw rugs, pets), and behavioral (i.e. rushing around, standing on unstable surfaces). Occupational therapists can address these factors with older adults to help them become more confident and alleviate their fears of falling.

A group of students from the MOT program presented at Bethel Retirement Center in Bethel Park, PA. The

continued on page 5

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Chatham Students Take on Ecuador

Kristen Krayer, OTS & Ashley LaBella, OTS

► Six Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students and six Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students were selected to travel to Ibarra, Ecuador in August 2015 for a service learning experience. Dr. Ingrid Provident, an OT professor, Dr. Susan Perry, a DPT professor, and Elaine Keane, a practicing occupational therapist, supervised the students at various sites. Elaine Keane is an OT and the owner of CRECER, a non-profit organization that provides free occupational therapy services to individuals of any age with diverse diagnoses in Ibarra, Ecuador. Occupational balance was achieved through equal amounts of work and play.

The students worked collaboratively to provide co-treatment services at three different sites: CRECER, a nursing home, and a day program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Students were separated into three groups. Each group consisted of two MOT students and two DPT students. Within these groups, they pre-planned all of their sessions. Students were able to work together through discussion, trial and error, and experience to efficiently provide successful interprofessional, client-centered treatment sessions and overcome the language barrier. The students worked with consumers by providing activities that promote gross motor, fine motor, balance, endurance, and positive social interaction. Along with providing services to consumers, the students presented in-services to home care service providers about low vision and joint protection for individuals with osteoarthritis, suggesting interventions and information for client education.

These presentations were very interactive and allowed the students to apply what they have learned in the classroom.

Aside from delivering OT and PT services, the students also participated in culturally fun and educational outings. The students visited multiple cities, explored the architecture, food, and relationships among the people. They also had the opportunity to visit the equator, an orchid garden, a chocolate factory, various shops, zip-line in the Andes Mountains, participate in a salsa dance lesson, and raft in the river.

Students gained a lot of confidence in their clinical reasoning skills through this experience. When asked why they were providing certain treatments, the students found that they were able to explain how it pertained to the consumers' goals. This allowed the students to recognize their skills and knowledge base when creating intervention plans. With the limited number of supplies available to incorporate into treatment, the students used creativity in their treatment sessions. These experiences in Ecuador pushed the students to the limit in the area of flexibility, a true reflection of the OT profession.



AOTA's National School Backpack Awareness Day

Shawna Buerk, OTS; Megan Grove, OTS; Diana Lansinger, OTS; & Alexa Stouffer, OTS

► The American Occupational Therapy Association's celebration of National School Backpack Awareness Day took place on September 16, 2015. Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students traveled to The Ellis School and St. Bonaventure Catholic Grade School to educate students on how to properly pack one's backpack in addition to the proper body mechanics through the use of creative skits, activities, songs, and games. This experience was a great opportunity for Chatham students to demonstrate their leadership skills through creating an entertaining and educational event for participants.



The Chatham students at both sites started the day off with creative activities, including a brief skit to demonstrate the right and wrong ways of wearing a backpack as well as singing the Taylor Swift hit, "Shake It Off" with modified lyrics about backpack awareness.

At both St. Bonaventure and The Ellis School, students were split into groups to participate in varying interactive stations to learn the key points of National Backpack

Awareness Day. The groups focused on the proper way to pack and wear a backpack, teaching students to pack heavier items in the back and lighter items in

the front. They also learned the importance of wearing both shoulder straps to evenly distribute the weight throughout their back. Other stations included an educational video as well as a coloring activity to allow the students to decorate their own backpack tag with important reminders about backpack safety written on them. Each student weighed themselves with and without their backpacks to identify how much their backpack weighed as well as guessing the weight of a pre-packed backpack. If a student's backpack weighed greater than 10% of their total body weight, the students were given suggestions on how to reduce the overall weight.

The MOT students at St. Bonaventure wrapped up the day by announcing the winners of the backpack guessing game and dancing to a remake of the song "Watch Me (Whip/Nae Nae)" by Silento. Students at The Ellis School were encouraged to sing the Taylor Swift song one more time after filling out a survey about the activities presented. Backpack Awareness Day was a great success among students at St. Bonaventure and the Ellis School. The Chatham MOT students were thankful to have the opportunity to educate students on backpack safety through fun and interactive skits, activities, songs and games. To learn more about AOTA's National School Backpack Awareness Day, visit www.aota.org.



Falls Prevention *continued from page 3*

students provided a brief introductory presentation to the residents to give background on the topic of falls and the various risk factors. To allow the residents to gain a better understanding of the three risk factors and how to react if a fall does occur, the residents were split into groups and cycled through four stations. This provided the residents with an opportunity to gain knowledge and ask questions within a small group atmosphere. The enrichment coordinator from the retirement center provided the students with positive feedback from the residents

regarding the presentation. They reported that they enjoyed the event and that it was a nice reminder of how to prevent falls or react if a fall does occur.

Another group of students presented at Providence Point, a retirement community in Pittsburgh, PA. The students used an interactive approach to engage the residents to understand factors that can increase risk of falls through a "before and after" skit. The residents identified unsafe situations and listed possible solutions for a fall to be avoided. It is also important to know what to do in

case a fall does occur and the residents displayed an interest in learning techniques of how to get up from a fall. The students demonstrated a safe way to get up and other strategies to call for help.

Overall, Falls Prevention Day was successful for all residents who participated and the Chatham students who organized the events. The students truly enjoyed the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills with at-risk individuals in helping them identify and reduce their likelihood of falling.

Chatham Students Gain Insight at the Mindful Project

Cheri Ionadi, OTS; Tyler Sell, OTS; Emmy Lutz, OTS & Danielle McDaniel, OTS



This piece titled “Art for Naught, Forget Me Not” was created by Rose Clancy in 2015. This depicts the struggles of a child growing up with a parent who has been diagnosed with a mental illness and the stigma that is often attached to these individuals.

► During “Mental Health and Occupational Performance”, a course in the fall 2015 term, the Chatham Master of Occupational Therapy Class of 2016 was given the opportunity to visit Contemporary Craft in Pittsburgh’s historic Strip District to experience the Mindful Project exhibit and actively participate in a hands-on activity related to mental health. The course is taught by Amy Mattila MBA, MS, OTR/L, and covers various mental health illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression; students learn about diagnostic criteria, evaluation, interventions, and group treatment from an occupational therapy perspective.

The Mindful Project features a display of more than 30 pieces of artwork and offers various innovative community engagement opportunities, as well as a diverse series of programs and events to give visitors of all ages an opportunity to connect with and gain a deeper understanding of mental health. The exhibit showcases creative responses to mental illness, exploring the effect mental illness has on society in addition to exploring the role of art in self-expression and promoting health and wellness. Artists featured in the exhibit consist of individuals diagnosed with a mental illness or artists who have been affected by having someone close to

them diagnosed with a mental illness. Mindful pieces have been created with traditional craft materials, some combined with painting, sculpture, conceptual, and installation art.

Chatham students engaged in open discussion about the artwork with the Contemporary Craft staff; conversations were facilitated to share opinions about emotional reaction to the art as well as the artist’s intentions for the pieces. Students learned about transitional items from a particular work in the exhibit and created their very own transitional piece in the art studio. One Chatham student commented, “It was beneficial to actually experience how self-expression and creating a piece of art yourself can be so therapeutic and can speak to not only you, but also everyone who sees your artwork.” These transitional pieces could be a potential treatment activity for individuals, allowing them to express themselves and use mindful practices to cope with symptoms and difficult experiences related to dealing with a mental health diagnosis.

Being able to understand and empathize with clients who have lived with or been directly affected by mental illness is an invaluable skill that occupational therapists need. Experiences and knowledge gained from the Mindful Project has equipped Chatham students with the skill of mindfulness and the ability to be more understanding of clients with and without mental illness.



Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy students creating their own pottery pieces in the workshop at Contemporary Craft

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Sensory Friendly Experience

Hannah Huffman, OTS; Liz Medwick, OTS; Lindsay Spitznogle Morris, OTS; Jenna Yoneda, OTS



► This summer, Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students were given the unique opportunity to participate in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's first ever sensory-friendly performance, entitled "Celebrate Pittsburgh." The sensory-friendly components of the program were led by Dr. Roger Ideishi, OTR/L, associate professor at Temple University. Dr. Ideishi consults with many organizations around the nation to provide inclusive experiences which welcome people of all ages and abilities. Utilizing his professional background in occupational therapy, he has worked to design sensory-friendly programming that aims to meet the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, sensory processing disorders, and other impairments. The focus of providing a sensory-friendly context is to afford these individuals and their families the opportunity to participate in musical performances, plays, and museum exhibits while providing an environment that is accommodating to their needs. Many family members of children with sensory needs often report feeling isolated from traditional performances. This inclusive experience provides a chance for individuals of all ages and abilities to enjoy cultural arts performances as a family.

Sensory-friendly performances are created by making alterations to the environment and may include adaptations such as lighting adjustments, seating accommodations, and elimination of sudden sounds and other startling effects. Designated areas prepared for various sensory needs may be provided and can include activities focused on quiet time, space for children to get moving before the performance, and opportunities to meet the performers and explore music from the show. Forms of assistive technology may be offered to patrons, and the use of electronic devices is permitted. Prior to the performance, a small training session for staff and performers may take place. Most importantly within these performances, a shift in social etiquette occurs; children and families are encouraged to express themselves as they enjoy the show.

Working with Dr. Ideishi and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the MOT students developed a kinesthetic program which included a variety of opportunities for movement. Activities incorporated the music of the performance and provided a space for children and their families to explore, relax, and prepare their minds and bodies for the show. Bubbles and ribbon wands were provided, and encouraged the children to dance along to the show's musical selections. The kinesthetic program ended with a short yoga exercise, which incorporated poses based upon orchestral instruments. Many of the children who participated displayed a variety of sensory needs; some children exhibited over-responsiveness to sensory input, while others appeared under-responsive or sensory-seeking. Each child was able to engage in his or her own way and obtain the sensory input necessary for their enjoyment of the performance.

The participating Chatham MOT students reported feeling that this experience provided an invaluable impact, offering a clearer understanding of occupational therapy's role in non-traditional settings.

Faculty Accomplishments

continued from page 2

Smith, S., Tweed, A., Turner, E., Vu, C., **Mattila, A.** (2015, October). *Integrating Twitter in the classroom: #Studentengagement*. Professional presentation at the 38th Annual Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Conference, Scranton, PA.

Invited presentations

Novalis, S. (2015). *Practical ways to make gardening easier and safer*. Invited presentation at Penn Hills Lawn and Garden, Penn Hills, PA.

Novalis, S. (2015). *Strategies for making gardening easier and safer*. Invited presentation at AMP Up (Pittsburgh Amputee Support Group), UMPC Mercy South Side Outpatient Center, Pittsburgh, PA.

Provident, I. & Novalis, S. (2015). *Mindfulness in the daily practice of occupational therapy*. Invited presentation at TEIS, Forest Hills, PA.

Salls, J. (2015). *The Sensory Profile: What's new?* Invited presentation at Associated Occupational Therapy, Inc., Pittsburgh, PA.

Stand Up for Stand Down: Pittsburgh

By: Megan Blessinger, OTS; Lauren Harvey, OTS; & Epiphany Stephens, OTS

► On September 26, 2015, Professor Amy Mattila and 22 Chatham University MOT students volunteered at the annual “Stand Up for Stand Down: Pittsburgh” event. The daylong event was held at Stage AE and hosted by the Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania. The main mission was to reduce the impact of homelessness on local Veterans by providing essential services and goods.

Professor Mattila is a U.S. Army Veteran and regularly intertwines her military experience with curriculum material. She states, “I am very passionate about Veteran support, and try to impart some of that interest throughout various opportunities during the year.” She continued to say, “This year, I was approached by the Veteran’s Leadership Program, to see if our students had any interest in volunteering for the annual Veteran’s Stand Down event. I was hopeful that we would get a few individuals who would be willing to give up a Saturday for a good cause.”

The name of the event, “Stand Up for Stand Down” was adopted from the safe haven term “stand down” used during war. Soldiers retreated to stand down areas, where they were provided hot meals, showers/baths and the opportunity to rest. They were also able to socialize and enjoy the company of other soldiers. The “Stand Down Pittsburgh” event follows a similar concept with the goal of providing needed services for homeless Veterans in a safe place while providing the opportunity to socialize with other Veterans.

Throughout the day, over 550 Veterans and their families were able to benefit from the donated goods and services provided by the Pittsburgh

community. In order to prevent Veterans traveling all over the city, this event centralized the services in a resource-fair type atmosphere, with everything provided in one location. Thanks to donations from 67 agencies, the Veterans were able to access a multitude of services and items, completely free of charge. Services included: breakfast, lunch, food pantry items, clothing, haircuts, hot showers, personal care items, legal assistance, eye care, dental care, general health care services, Veteran’s benefits, and a variety of resources for housing, counseling, and vocational services for employment and education.

Chatham students arrived bright and early to help set-up the event. Food and other donated items needed to be unloaded from trucks, and set-up around the Stage AE campus. As the set-up continued, the line of Veterans waiting to get in grew longer and longer. Visually seeing the number of homeless Veterans who showed up for the event was extremely impactful, and somewhat disheartening. Once the set-up was complete, Chatham students went to their assigned positions to help with the specific services offered. Students helped serve breakfast and coffee, while others helped distribute clothing and non-perishable food

items from the food pantry. Chatham students also provided babysitting services to allow the Veteran parent(s) to attend the event.

A common theme of empathy among the students often emerged during face-to-face interactions with the Veterans. Some of these individuals served more than 40 years ago in Vietnam, and others just recently returned from Iraq. It was difficult to fully realize the impact homelessness has had on these Service members. Despite the realization that these individuals are homeless or facing homelessness, the Chatham students were grateful for the opportunity to give thanks and volunteer at a positive and patriotic service event.

[continued on page 9](#)



Poverty Simulation

Paige Ehart, OTS; Becky Rowe, OTS; Brilee Thompson, OTS; Ashley Tweed, OTS

► On July 28, 2015, members of the Chatham community participated in a poverty simulation that was held in the Welker Room on Chatham University's main campus. Through a simulated experience, attendees were given the opportunity to learn what it is like to live below the poverty line. The simulation lasted two hours and was followed by an hour of group discussion and reflection on the experience from the participants.

In the beginning of the session, each person was assigned a predetermined character by the simulation volunteers. Once the participants were given their characters, they were asked to find the other members of their family, if any. A packet of directions and necessary materials were given to them in order to navigate throughout the experience. During the simulation, participants were expected to complete a variety of real-life tasks including: attending work, dropping any children off at school or day care, grocery shopping, paying rent, paying utilities, going to the bank, and retrieving transportation passes.

Simulation families began to realize the barriers during the experience and struggled to complete

these tasks within the set time. Some of these barriers included limited funds, illnesses or other diagnoses, prejudices, and a lack of transportation passes. As a consequence for failing to complete life simulated tasks, family members had the risk of being sent to jail, kicked out of their home, having their utilities shut off, or experiencing starvation. Keeping in mind the best interests of their family, many participants would partake in illegal acts such as stealing and selling drugs in order to prevent these occurrences. The experiences that the participants endured are common challenges that individuals who live below the poverty line often face. Many families live paycheck to paycheck, which is something the attendees realized as a result of the experience. After the simulation was completed, participants engaged in a group discussion where they were asked to share their feelings and initial perceptions related to poverty. Participants from various demographic backgrounds and disciplines were able to connect and empathize with the struggles that impoverished people experience daily.

One of occupational therapy's primary goals is to improve the quality of life, which can be achieved

with this population through skilled intervention within the cycle of poverty. Thirteen MOT students were present for the simulation to gain a better perspective in preparation for their final Level I fieldwork within the community. This fieldwork intentionally places students in settings where there is currently no occupational therapist. In many of the fieldwork settings where the second year MOT students are placed, there are individuals who are either homeless or at-risk for homelessness. The students who took advantage of this opportunity felt they were able to empathize and connect with their community fieldwork clientele more effectively. A second-year Chatham MOT student, Jenna Yoneda, expressed her thoughts following the simulation to her fellow classmates: "By participating in this poverty simulation, I can't say that I know exactly what an individual goes through; however, I can say that I have a better understanding and awareness from this experience."

The professors and students of the Chatham MOT program hope to continue to provide this simulation experience for years to come.

Stand Down *continued from previous page*

The "Stand Down" event strongly relates to our course OTH 605 Mental Health & Occupational Performance. Many of these Veterans face the struggles of mental illnesses including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a variety of others. The event provided us with a hands-on experience to witness the effects of mental health diagnoses on an individual's occupational performance. Being immersed in the community and conversing

with these Veterans also gave the students a better perspective of their needs and how occupational therapy fits with this population. Professor Mattila summarized the day by saying, "The event was an invaluable learning experience, and I was so proud to share my past career with my current one. I saw the generosity and kindness of my students change these Veterans, even just for one day, one smile at a time."

POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Visiting Chatham for the First Time

Viviana Rabii

I began planning my trip to visit Chatham shortly after the start of the spring term. This was an exciting time as I was going to have the opportunity to finally meet my “cyber texting buddies,” as I used to call some of the cohort members who have become my friends during the past school year. I was also somewhat anxious about meeting other members of the cohort with whom I had interacted with on Moodle but had not formed a friendship with. I was blessed to have the opportunity to travel from Ft. Lauderdale with two students who also live in the Miami area and with whom I have established a good relationship with prior to the trip.

The night before the first meeting at Chatham, there were mixed emotions of nervousness and excitement. I was able to calm down only after having met my “cyber texting buddies.” We were surprised of how different our perceptions were of each other. It was a great first night. We talked about how spending the first night away from family was a flash back from our college days. As a matter of fact, we even stayed up until two in the morning just talking and getting to know each other more.

The following morning was magical. My “cyber texting buddies,” my Miami friends, and I headed out to Chatham to meet the rest of the people from our cohort, the other cohort members and our professors. We sat at the front table and started trying to put a name to a face based on their profile pictures. I recognized most of the people as soon as I saw them; however, there was one cohort member that I could not identify. He was very young, funny, and kind. It turned out that he was a cohort member who I thought was not very friendly based on the way he portrayed himself on the forums and because of this I hardly interacted with him in the forums. It is so interesting how our perceptions of individuals can change based on our encounters with them. My cohort and I were so eager to get to know our professors, especially Dr. Lape. She was the professor of one of the most challenges classes we took during the program and she was our IRB advisor.

It was fascinating to see how the two cohorts in the room initially sat in two different sides of the room, but as the day went by we all came together as one big group. We made plans to go out and visit some local places around Chatham after class. Most of the members of the two cohorts met at Hofbräuhaus Pittsburgh for dinner. We had a great time. It seemed like we had known each other for a long time. The following days of our visit were great and with time people who did not know each other became friends.

We had fun during our leadership class. All the groups worked extremely well and the dynamic of the class allowed us to grow as leaders and professionals. I loved the fact that people from both cohorts were mixed during the activities, which allowed for interactions with different individuals. I also loved the fact that the professors were extremely helpful during our trip. They answered our questions and reassured us that if we needed help they were there to help us conquer our OTD dream! Visiting Chatham was a great professional and personal experience. I got to meet very interesting people who opened my eyes to infinite professional possibilities after graduation. It was an experience that I will always remember and cherish.



POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The bakery, internet, and the capstone a world away: OTD experience in Germany

Janet C. Bucey, OTR/L

► I walked into a chain bakery named Shaeffers, one of hundreds across Germany, and waited in the small line to order my coffee. I'd had a full week to practice the German phrasing: "Ein Café, entkoffeniert, mit Milsch, bitte." The word for decaffeinated still tripped me up and would for months, but I wasn't at Schaeffers to practice my German. I was there for the Wifi. My husband and I had just moved to Halle an der Saale, and I'd recently made the decision to go ahead with my OTD degree despite the boundless changes swirling around us in the wake of a two year commitment with his company's German branch. And our new place didn't have Internet yet, so here I stood, the American lady who daily brings her laptop and orders a decaffeinated coffee, sometimes eggs, and does homework assignments from across the world.

I overcame more obstacles than just a temporary missing internet connection. The issues ranged from logistical to interpersonal: I had to make sure my



textbooks would ship internationally and sometimes needed to stay awake until the middle of the night to communicate with my cohort. I sometimes felt isolated and as if I couldn't relate to some of the people in my classes. I wanted to be working in Germany, but I was restricted from practicing occupational therapy without an official German accreditation, which requires an advanced grasp of the language. But those barriers pushed me, too. Eventually, with encouragement and support from Chatham's program, especially the Entrepreneurship and leadership classes, I connected to local German occupational and speech therapists by visiting a clinic in Berlin, attending the annual German OT association meetings, and consulting at the Leipzig International School. A few months ago, I participated in the Inklusive – Therapeut Zertifikat course, presenting my personal experiences to a room full of occupational therapists preparing to be pioneers of school-based therapy services here in this country. Working on my degree from Germany

has put an entirely different angle on my work and profession, giving me perspective which would be otherwise tough to come by. And as it turns out, being unable to practice in Germany meant I was also able to devote a full-time effort to the program.

By far, the most interesting but rewarding challenge I've faced while working on my degree from Germany has been the Capstone Project. I needed to reach internationally for a viable setting; I created a peer mentorship program for occupational therapists in my field currently working in Pittsburgh. From Germany, I hosted discussion sessions and video chats with my project participants. We were frequently in contact, despite the distance, and it was such a success with the therapists that I'm planning to continue my capstone project in the coming years. And if all goes well, in December I'll fly to Pittsburgh for a graduation with the cohort I've been talking to for over a year, but have only met once. It's been an interesting and inspiring ride, completing the Chatham OTD program from Germany. I wouldn't change a thing.

Capitol Hill Day

Kylie Hakes, OTS; Caitlyn Bendig, OTS; Crystal Vu, OTS; Emma Turner, OTS

► Advocacy is an important part of the occupational therapy profession for students in the classroom and practitioners in the field. Not only do we need to advocate for our clients, their families, and the organizations we work for, but we also need to advocate for our profession as a whole. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) calls on all occupational therapy practitioners, and occupational therapy students to gather annually in the nation's capitol for the OT Capitol Hill Day. This day is organized specifically for occupational therapy advocates to make their presence known to their respective political officials. On September 28, 2015, 18 students from Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy program and Program Director Dr. Joyce Salls attended AOTA's Capitol Hill Day in Washington D.C. Over 650 practitioners and students from across the United States came to speak with members of Congress to discuss current issues related to occupational therapy. Two main issues were addressed: the Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Act and enhancing rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Act (H.R. 1761) will make occupational therapists eligible to participate in the National Health Services Corps (NHSC) Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs as behavioral and mental health professionals. Currently, the NHSC does not recognize occupational therapists as members of the mental health team; including OT practitioners

in this field of practice would allow for greater access to the benefits of OT services for people with behavioral and mental health conditions. AOTA fully supports the passing of this legislation because it would allow individuals coping with mental illness and behavioral disorders to have better access to occupational therapy services to maximize their occupational performance and quality of life. The second issue addressed at OT Capitol Hill Day was Enhancing the Stature and Visibility Medical Rehabilitation Research at the NIH Act. This act (S.800, H.R. 1631), if passed, would enhance rehabilitation science research without increasing spending or taking away support from other NIH areas of concern. This act is important to occupational therapy because increasing rehabilitation research is key in promoting independence of clients in their homes and the community, which could in turn reduce hospital readmissions and prevent further medical issues and costs. The greatest benefit of this act would be



reducing healthcare costs while also improving the quality of care for all individuals receiving rehabilitation.

Capitol Hill Day was a great opportunity for occupational therapy practitioners and students to advocate for their profession in hopes of changing and influencing the future outcomes for the field of practice. A prime example of the effectiveness of our efforts is shared by Hannah Huffman, a 2nd year student in the MOT program at Chatham University. She and another OT student from Le Moyne College met with Legislative Fellow, T.J. Lowdermilk, who works under Congressman Matt Cartwright. After their visit to Capitol Hill, the students received a follow up email from Mr. Lowdermilk: "Congressman Cartwright decided to cosponsor HR 1761. Please extend my thanks to the young ladies who came to our office yesterday."

CONFERENCES

POTA Conference 2015

Hillary Branum-Tamski, OTS; Aryeh Schwartz, OTS; Elizabeth Sherman, OTS



► As part of the Evidence-Based Practice series in Chatham's MOT curriculum, all students are required to submit a proposal with their evidence-based research group to the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association's annual conference. Nine groups from Chatham's MOT program were accepted to present at the 2015 POTA Conference on October 23-24 in Scranton, PA. Over the course of the weekend, seven groups participated in poster presentations and three groups facilitated formal presentation sessions. Additionally, students

had the opportunity to attend different educational sessions and network with professional occupational therapists in the state of PA.

The evidence-based poster presentation topics presented by Chatham MOT students included:

- 1. Benefits of Life Skills Training for Homeless Youth**
Kristen Krayer, Chanel Moore, Tyler Sell, Alexa Stouffer
- 2. Teaching Methodologies of Therapeutic Use of Self**
Shawna Buerk, Jenna Dunlay, Elizabeth Medwick, Lindsay Spitznogle
- 3. Occupational Therapists' Role in Transition Services in Secondary Education**
Hillary Branum-Tamski, Kylie Hakes, Hannah Huffman, Aryeh Schwartz
- 4. Lack of "Sheep" in the ICU**
Ashleigh Bourkan, Emily Grob, Ashley Labela, Kayla Pelczar
- 5. The Role of Employment in Survivors of Domestic Violence**
Emmy Lutz, Rebecca Rowe, Kristen Schrecongost, Amanda Trudeau
- 6. Debriefing: Getting to the Bare Necessities of Learning**
Caitlyn Bendig, Megan Fratangelo, Megan Grove, Hilary Rohrabough, Brittany Thompson
- 7. Fostering Peer Support Through Occupational Therapy Participation**
Megan Blessinger, Lauren Harvey, Danielle McDaniel, Elizabeth Sherman

The evidence-based presentation topics from Chatham MOT students included:

- 1. Interprofessional Collaboration and the Kawa Model: Effect on Quality of Care**
Cheri Ionadi, Ashley Lukose, Diana Mitchell, Jenna Yoneda

2. Classroom Peer Support: What is OT's Role?

Megan Blessinger, Lauren Harvey, Danielle McDaniel, Elizabeth Sherman

3. Integrating Twitter in the Classroom #StudentEngagement

Shelby Smith, Emma Turner, Crystal Vu, Ashley Tweed

Presentations from Chatham MOT faculty members included:

1. Support Groups for Caregivers: Voices from Ecuador

Joyce Salls, OTD, OTR/L

2. Evolving Expectations: Teaching Students HOW to Critically Think

Jodi Schreiber, OTD, OTR/L

3. Clinician to Academician: Identifying Strategies for Success

Sharon Novalis, Ph.D, OTR/L

This year's keynote speaker was LTC Douglas A. Etter of the Lebanon Valley VA Hospital. LTC Etter's presentation was titled "Into the Mouth of the Wolf: Tales of Courage from One Who Was Afraid." During the presentation, LTC Etter discussed military life, his experience in the combat zone, and the dangers and fears involved with this culture. He also discussed personal experiences of one of his favorite hobbies, high altitude mountaineering. LTC Etter compared these experiences and common themes such as fear and danger, choice and consequence, and growth of paralysis. Through his shared eye-opening experiences, LTC Etter shared with the audience ways for people to live with more resilience and resolve.

Overall, the POTA conference in Scranton was an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their work, learn more about the profession, and network with fellow students and practitioners. Chatham MOT students are grateful for the opportunity and the support from the MOT faculty to attend and present at the POTA Conference.



What is SOTA?

Ashleigh Buorkan, OTS; Diana Mitchell, OTS; Shelby Smith, OTS

► Every year, as a new class enters Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program, the second-year students introduce the class to the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). SOTA forms when entering classes elect individuals to fulfill officer positions, committees are formed, and monthly meetings are held to share information and news to the class as a whole. SOTA is beneficial for each class to have because it facilitates teamwork and communication and guides class programming activities. Through SOTA, each class is able to work more efficiently and be more productive with their time.



The officer positions found in Chatham's MOT SOTA are: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, graduate student assembly (GSA) representative, American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) representative, and a Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) representative. The president facilitates

the monthly SOTA meetings, creates the meeting agenda, serves as a class representative at functions, and supports officers/ committees. The vice president presides over and facilitates the SOTA meetings in absence of the president, assists the president when needed, and serves a dual role as the GSA representative, which communicates any questions or concerns of MOT students to the GSA. The secretary creates the class contact list & phone tree, types up the meeting minutes, writes the class thank you notes, and assists the president when needed. The treasurer collects class dues, keeps track of the class funds, and is the chairperson

for the fundraising committee. The AOTA representative attends the national conference and reports back to the class and helps organize the plans for the Capitol Hill Day event. The POTA representative attends District II POTA meetings and reports back to the class, announces

POTA updates, and attends the state conference. All of the officer positions work individually as well as a team to make sure the class is heading in the right direction to be able to accomplish our class goals.

The committees found in Chatham's MOT SOTA are fundraising, public relations, pre-OT club, community service, and orientation/graduation

committee. The fundraising committee holds fundraisers throughout the year in order to cover expenses for the AOTA and POTA representatives to attend conferences, along with other class expenses. Throughout the year, this committee has held fundraisers at local restaurants along with a successful Yankee Candle fundraiser. The public relations committee markets the OT program by utilizing an on-campus billboard, educating students on campus during OT Month in April, and creating apparel with the Chatham OT logo which helps create awareness about the OT program.

The Pre-OT club is geared towards the undergraduate students who are interested in OT and/or the graduate OT program at Chatham. During the past year, the public relations committee has helped the Pre-OT club gather new members, and they now plan to hold meetings and club events. The community service committee organizes volunteer events around the greater Pittsburgh area. Chartiers is an after-school program for adults with intellectual disabilities, where the OT students volunteer on a regular basis planning parties and group activities. Students have volunteered at other service events as well such as: Stand Down (service fair for homeless Veterans), the Sarcoma Walk, and adaptive kayaking for the Children's Institute. The community service committee also gathered supplies to create care packages for the local homeless population. The last committee is the orientation and graduation committee. This committee helps plan and assist with Chatham OT open houses and orientation for new Chatham OT students, and graduation festivities for students graduating the Chatham MOT program.

Eden Hall Campus

Jenna Dunlay, OTS; Megan Fratangelo, OTS; & Chanel Moore, OTS

► In the early development of the occupational therapy profession, there was a focus on restoring function and preparing an injured worker for gainful employment. This has set occupational therapy apart from other practice areas since the beginning. Occupational therapy practitioners are able to provide ergonomic consultation to restore function, and prevent injuries from occurring. With a distinctive background, occupational therapists are also able to evaluate the physical environment, allowing for a unique perspective through a holistic approach. Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy program provides great opportunities for students to expand current knowledge and practice occupational therapy skills in various settings throughout Pittsburgh. Exploring Chatham's recently developed campus, Eden Hall, was a great opportunity for the occupational therapy students to implement skills of ergonomic consultation.

Chatham's Eden Hall Campus spans across 388-acres of land. It is the home of Chatham's Falk School of Sustainability and provides great learning opportunities for students, because the campus is a farm. The academic programs offered at Eden Hall Campus consist the Bachelor of Sustainability, Master of Arts in Food Studies, Master of Sustainability, and a dual Master of Business Administration/Master of Sustainability. All of Eden Hall's efforts focus on attaining social, economic, and environmental impacts on our ecological system. Eden Hall's goal is to be self-sustaining in every way.

At Eden Hall, students of Chatham's Master of Occupational Therapy program were graciously given a tour of the campus, in order to gain a better understanding of the manual labor that goes into making the campus beautiful. Being that Eden Hall residents and employees are passionate about becoming self-sustaining, staff and students perform a variety of tasks on a day-to-day basis. Tasks can include anything, from teaching in the classroom to weeding, harvesting, or planting depending on the weather. Some of the tasks performed by staff members can be very strenuous on the body. Therefore, Chatham's Master of Occupational Therapy students had the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions while watching staff members work on the farm to prevent workers from putting more strain on their bodies.

The students specifically observed the Assistant Farm Manager and his role at the Eden Hall campus. Several factors of his career were recorded including: job duties, frequency of performance, percentage of time the task is performed,



activity demands & the client factors involved. The occupational therapy students observed the farmer's body mechanics as he performed his daily tasks. Meanwhile, material handling, positioning during tasks, machinery and tools and environmental factors were noted. Cognitive skills needed to complete these tasks and the stressors of this type of career were taken into consideration during observation. Physical problems, such as frequent headaches, aches & pains, and eyestrain were also recorded.

Based on the information provided from the farmer, the occupational therapy students established recommendations to support the worker and the environment. Potential pieces of equipment and environmental modifications were also suggested to increase productivity, safety, and efficiency when completing tasks. Chatham's occupational therapy students found this to be a great overall learning experience!

SOTA continued from previous page

Overall, the Class of 2016 has had a successful SOTA year. As winter is approaching, this class will be dispersing to their Fieldwork II sites throughout the country. Although the class will be in many different areas, several SOTA events will occur. In April, various Evidence Based Practice groups will attend the AOTA conference to present their work. In May, the class will walk at their graduation ceremony. The Fieldwork II site experiences will be complete in June and then the class of 2016 students will be eligible to sit for their national exams. It is evident SOTA has helped the class of 2016 be more efficient and has provided opportunities to help with personal and professional growth.

Rebuilding Together

Emily Grob, OTS; Ashley Lukose, OTS

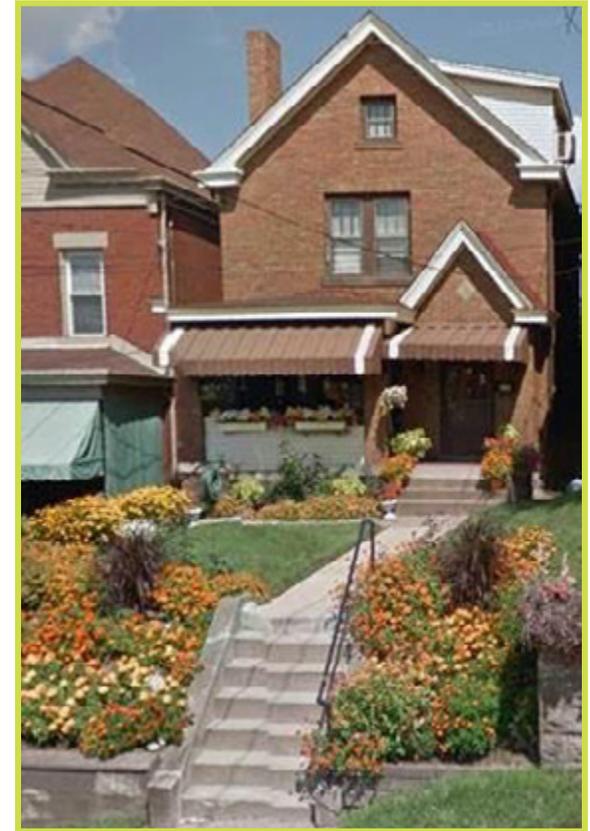
► During the past year, Chatham MOT students had the opportunity to participate in home assessments for Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh. This organization, co-founded by Morgan Freeman, helps older adults in the community remain in their homes as they age by making home modifications and repairs. As part of this endeavor, volunteers are needed to perform home assessments and assist with recommendations. Occupational therapists have a unique skill set in providing volunteer services for home assessments.

In May, two occupational therapy (OT) students joined Professor Amy Mattila on a home assessment visit for an elderly man who was referred to the program. He had lived in this home for most of his life, as it was where he and his wife had raised their children. However, due to his chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) he began having difficulties living alone. He was very welcoming and expressed his appreciation for the home assessment. As the OT students and Professor Mattila viewed each area of the house, they noted potential barriers affecting his safety and independence. They found that the bathroom was very difficult to navigate and the towel rod on the shower door showed evidence of being used as a grab bar. There were throw rugs in several rooms that presented a tripping hazard, along with cluttered areas in almost every room. The homeowner had to descend steep stairs to access the basement, with no handrail on the stairs and no light switch at the bottom. The setup of the kitchen required the homeowner to reach overhead

to obtain frequently used items. This repetitive overhead reaching could inhibit ideal breathing patterns and provoke symptoms of COPD. There were other safety concerns noted, such as the need to replace fire extinguishers and the need for emergency numbers to be listed near the front door.

After discussion with the homeowner, he agreed with the concerns raised, and appeared to be willing to make any changes that would allow him to remain in his home safely and independently. He did not have the funds to make many of the changes himself and was anxious to find out which of the recommendations Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh would be able to implement. Professor Mattila was able to offer information and advice regarding assistance that he might be able to receive for adaptive equipment through the Veteran's Administration. He had been under the impression that he did not qualify, due to the short duration of his active duty status. However, he was provided with information that he could pursue further to learn whether any new regulations would make him eligible for assistance.

At the completion of the home assessment, each student filled out their OT home safety survey with the recommendations for home modification. The items emphasized included: improvements in lighting levels, adding light switches, organizing items to reduce the number of times the homeowner must ascend/descend the stairs, removal of throw rugs, reorganization of kitchen cupboards, taping



down loose edges of carpet, installation of handrails on the basement stairs, and installation of grab bars and a raised toilet seat in the bathroom.

Four months later Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh announced that they would be doing repairs to this veteran's home on September 11, 2015. Rebuilding Together staff and volunteers embarked on home modifications based on the OT home assessment. Cosmetic changes were also made outside the veteran's home, including planting flowers, landscaping, and cleaning up the block. Following a class on environmental modifications, Chatham MOT students were offered a unique opportunity to apply what they learned and work with their community to help keep this veteran in his home.

University Day: Bucket and Blossom

Hilary Rohrabough, OTS; Amanda Trudeau, OTS

► On May 1, 2015, three Chatham Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students, one Chatham MOT professor, and one Chatham MOT staff member worked on maintaining the occupational balance in their lives by taking some time to enjoy the warm, spring air while helping to create a more beautiful campus. The day featured the combination of Bucket & Blossoms, a Chatham favorite that involves planting flowers to beautify the campus, with a newer tradition, University Day. This day is meant to celebrate Chatham gaining university status, which occurred in the year 2007. This was a wonderful opportunity for fellow students, alumni, faculty, and staff to celebrate University Day through socializing and working together to make Chatham an even more beautiful place to be.

The day started in the morning with everyone splitting off into groups in order to tackle multiple areas on campus. Participants were asked to utilize

their “green thumbs” as they performed tasks such as weeding, mulching, digging holes, and planting flowers and trees.

The day ended with a campus-wide barbecue, the May Pole Dance, and other featured entertainment. The Maypole Dance involves students dancing to festive music around the pole while holding ribbons until the ribbons are wrapped around the pole completely.

Participating in this event gave Chatham MOT students and faculty the opportunity to describe occupational therapy to others participating in this event. Gardening can be a meaningful, occupation-based activity and can be adapted based on one’s disability. For example, if someone has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the occupational therapist can adapt the activity by having the individual sit on a bench or chair to complete the activity.



Dr. Novalis, Amanda Trudeau, Hilary Rohrabough, Elizabeth Sherman, Debbie Juran

“I always enjoy the comradery of the faculty, staff, and students coming together for this tradition at Chatham.”

— **DEBBIE JURAN, MOT PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

“I was impressed by the number of students, staff and faculty present to support the event. It felt good to work alongside of others who care about the environment and the appearance of the community. It was a beautiful and inspiring day. And it was FUN!!”

— **SHARON NOVALIS, PHD, OTR/L**

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