

From the Director



► 2019 has been a year of innovation and change! Our OT program received Candidacy Status from ACOTE to transition to the entry level doctorate, and we admitted our first doctoral cohort of 40 students in August. Our last MOT cohort is heading out to fieldwork and will graduate in June. We welcomed our newest faculty member, Dr. Tina Lekas and our new program assistant, Sonita Bell and fieldwork

program assistant, Kim Kivlan. And after 25 years at Chatham University, it is with mixed emotions that I share my retirement from Chatham University in July of 2020. I am thrilled to announce that the very capable Dr. Shari Novalis will be the new program director of the occupational therapy programs upon my retirement.

I have been so very blessed to be part of this dynamic team of dedicated occupational therapy faculty for 25 years (that's a quarter of a century!), and truly inspired by all the students who I have been fortunate to teach and continue to engage with as colleagues and friends. My time at Chatham has been a wonderful journey, from trips to Haiti and Ecuador, to baby labs, onsite post professional student presentations, Capitol Hill days, and cohort celebration events. I am grateful to all of you!

I also want to thank the Class of 2018 for creating the Joyce Salls Occupational Therapy Student Award and to all who have contributed to the fund. It was a very proud moment to award our first recipient, Carla Monzo MOT, last spring. We will be awarding \$5,000 this fall, and with your help, we hope to award again next year.

If you have news to share, please send them my way, or post them on our Chatham University Alumni Facebook page. We love to hear from you!

Best Wishes,

Joyce Salls, OTD, OTR/L

From the Dean



► Chatham University, founded in 1869, has proudly been celebrating its **150th anniversary** this year. To honor this milestone, Chatham has been engaging in a year-long celebration that has highlighted the school's pioneering contributions to the past, present, and future of sustainability and health, women's leadership and gender

equity, and transformative opportunities in liberal arts education, in Pittsburgh and beyond. View the documentary "150 Years at Chatham," a story of our trials, triumphs, and traditions at **150.chatham.edu**.

I would like to update you on recent events within the School of Health Sciences. The nursing program successfully completed their re-accreditation with a 10-year certification, while the physical therapy and counseling psychology programs have completed their self-studies for the re-accreditation process. Our inaugural Master of Science in Athletic Training program, along with the occupational therapy program, are working on their accreditation self-studies. In addition, we have completed year two (of four) of our federal HSRA grant that focuses on Integrative care and we have finishing our final year of the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment grant (SBIRT).

Finally, I would like to thank all of you and the faculty who contributed to the Joyce Salls Occupational Therapy Student Award last year. Your generosity in supporting the next generation of OT's is tremendous and I hope we can count on you again this year.

Warm regards,

Dr. Patricia Downey

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publications

Salls J, Provident I, Dolhi C. (2019). Impact of international immersion experiences in occupational therapy education: A retrospective survey. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 17(4). <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/ijahsp/vol17/iss4/11/>

Calabrese, J., **Lape, J. E., & Delbert, T.** (2019). Use of online educational modules to improve occupational therapy students' knowledge and perceptions of their emotional intelligence skills: An evidence-based pilot study. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 3(3). <https://doi.org/10.26681/jote.2019.030312>

Delbert, T. & Schrader, T. (2019). Conflict management in occupational therapy education: Process drama as a teaching strategy. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 3(2), 2-14. doi:10.26681/jote.2019.030209

Schudder, A., **Bucey, J.**, Loughran, M., Korach, N., Strong, G., Anderson, J., ... O'Keefe, L. (n.d.). Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Expansion of Training to Non-Physician Healthcare Graduate Students: Counseling Psychology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant Studies. *Substance Abuse*. Accepted for publication November 12, 2019

Lee, A., & **Lape, J.E.** (2019). A cognitive, self-monitoring intervention for handwriting with second-grade students. *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early*

Intervention. <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/WR4BRX4PSAFXCXS66GCYE/full?target=10.1080/19411243.2019.1672604>

Ober, J.L., & **Lape, J.E.** (2019). Cultivating acute care team collaboration using the Kawa model. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 17(3), Article 9. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/ijahsp/vol17/iss3/9/>

Schackow, L., & Lape, J.E. (2019). Mild brain injury education: Preparing the caregiver. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 26(3), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.12968/ijtr.2018.0040>

Eberth, S. D., **Provident, I.**, & Chase, C. (2019). Hybrid Learning to Develop Safe Patient Handling Judgement in Occupational Therapy Students. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 3 (3). <https://doi.org/10.26681/jote.2019.030306>

Prusnek, L, Griffiths, T. & **Provident, I.** (2019) Implementing the Comfortable Cafeteria Program to foster Social Participation of Students with and without hearing impairments: A look at the Outcomes. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Schools and Early Intervention* DOI: 10.1080/19411243.2019.1592055

Koenig, Virginia & **Provident, I.** (2019). Workshop series for occupational therapists using the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit and other supported tools. *Health Education Journal*. Vol. 78(4) 451 –463 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0017896918820067>

Presentations (peer-reviewed)

Schreiber, J., Delbert, T., Huth, L. (2019). *Peer instruction as a teaching tool to facilitate student critical thinking: Use of debriefing and reflection after acute care patient simulations*. AOTA Education Summit, Las Vegas, NV.

Schreiber, J. & Prenni, L. (2019). Virtual Dementia Tour: A window into their world. Poster presentation at American Occupational Therapy Association Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Schreiber, J. (speaker). (2019, February 7). Episode 21 - Maximizing leadership through participation in AOTA's representative assembly & special interest sections [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <https://www.talkshoe.com/episode/6043973>.

Delbert, T. & Schrader, T. (2019). *Conflict management in occupational therapy education: Process drama as a teaching strategy*. AOTA Education Summit, Las Vegas, NV.

Delbert, T. & Schrader, T. (2019). *Teaching conflict management through process drama techniques*. International Society for Exploring Teaching and Learning Conference on Innovative Higher Education Pedagogy, Charlotte, NC.

Salls, J., Provident, I., & Dolhi, C. (2019, April 4). *Globally Connected: Impact of International Service Learning on Cultural Perspectives of OT Students and Practitioners*. Presented at American Occupational Therapy Conference National Conference, New Orleans, LA.

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Faculty Accomplishments *continued from previous page*

Bucey, J., & Provident, I. (2019, April).

Occupational Therapists Role in Identifying and Assisting Clients and Substance Use Disorders. Presented at the American Occupational Therapy Annual Conference 2019, New Orleans, LA.

Berringer, A., Ellis, M., Hilliard, C., Jones, M., O'Brien, S., & **Stepansky, K.** (2019, October 19). *Stepping outside: Sensory gardens and dementia.* Poster session presented at the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Conference, King of Prussia, PA.

Stepansky, K. (2019, October 19). *Caregiver AID: Assess, integrate, and deliver.* Poster session presented at the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Conference, King of Prussia, PA.

Stepansky, K., Rodak, C., Sethi, A., Toto, P., & Bleakley, S. (2019, April 4). *Caring for Our Caregivers: Caregiver preparedness training within inpatient brain injury rehabilitation.* Short course presented at the American Occupational Therapy Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Newbury, R., & **Lape, J.** (2019, April 6). *Use of the Kawa model for aging in place interventions with older adults.* Professional Presentation, American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Provident, I., & Lape, J. (2019, April 5). *Capstone projects aligned with the Quadruple Aim of Healthcare and promoting the distinct value of OT services.* Professional Presentation, American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Lape, J. (2019, March 11). *Opening the lines of communication with YouTube Capture.* Professional Presentation, Pittsburgh Regional Faculty Symposium, Pittsburgh, PA.

Provident, I., Spadaro, K. & Schulte, P. Koru Mindfulness- Reflections of faculty: Roundtable Presentation. Contemplative Practices for Higher Education, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. March 2019

Invited

Stepansky, K., Rodak, C., & Bleakley, S. (2019, April 9). *Evidence-based approaches in action: Caregiver training within inpatient brain injury rehabilitation.* Invited presenter at Council on Brain Injury Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.

Lape, J. (2019, September 10). *Application of the Kawa Model in geriatrics,* Continuing Education Live Webinar, OccupationalTherapy.com.

Lape, J. (2019, June 28). *Teambuilding for practitioners and leaders,* Continuing Education Live Webinar, OccupationalTherapy.com.

Lape, J. (2019, May 6). *Occupational science in the community: Use of telehealth to mitigate occupational injustices,* Guest Lecture, The University of Newcastle, Australia.

Lape, J. (2019, February 20). *Innovations in geriatric care: Multisensory environments: A non-pharmacological intervention for managing behaviors in clients with dementia,* Continuing Education Live Webinar, OccupationalTherapy.com.

Lekas, T. (2019). *Topics in Rehab Sciences. Innovations in Cerebrovascular Science Conference.* Baptist Health Neurological Institute. Atlantic Beach, FL.



First Joyce Salls OT Student Award Recipient

► We are proud to announce the first recipient of the Joyce Salls Occupational Therapy Student Award, Carla Monzo, MOT, OTR/L. Carla is a 2019 graduate of the Master of Occupational Therapy program. Carla shared the following response with us:

“This award has meant so much to me, for several reasons. First, I am so honored to be given the award in Dr. Salls’ name — she has been such a wonderful and important mentor for me. But also, the monetary prize came at a pivotal time in my life. I had worked part-time throughout grad school, which helped to cover my living expenses. However, my dad got sick during my last two semesters, and ended up undergoing a liver transplant. I needed to take some time away from my job to help care for him, and the monetary prize allowed me to continue my studies without increasing my debt load. Scholarships like this one make becoming an OT more achievable, especially for students with less financial means.”

FACULTY AND STAFF

Welcome...



► We are pleased to welcome **Dr. Tina Lekas** to our Chatham University OT team! Dr. Lekas moved from Florida to Pittsburgh with her husband, twin daughters, and three dogs to join our group in July 2019. She received both her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from the Sage Colleges, and her Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from the University of Utah.

Education has been an important aspect of her career, serving as an allied-health continuing education provider and teaching in graduate OT/PT programs. Her clinical background spans a variety of hospital to community-based settings, practicing in eight different states. Dr. Lekas has held the position as lead therapist, Education Coordinator, and Clinical Specialist at several teaching hospitals and specialty institutes implementing Standards of Care in Pre-Hab/ Habilitation, ICU Early Mobility, TBI/Concussion Programs, Return to Work, Oncology, NICU and neurosciences. Dr. Lekas believes the new generation of OTs will propel public health and sustainability to improve quality of life in the face of a changing environment. This fall she taught Models of Practice, sections of OT Assessment and Intervention Skills, served as faculty mentor for four community fieldwork groups, and redesigned our OT apartment to better reflect the OT Practice Framework.

In her spare time, she enjoys tinkering with garden landscaping, home improvements, adventures with food, likes a good escape room, and appreciates good humor (even the Dad jokes).



► In March 2019, we welcomed **Sonita Bell** to our team as our new occupational therapy program assistant! In addition to being the OT program assistant, Sonita is enrolled in the business administration program (Business & Entrepreneurship) at Chatham University.

She is also CEO of Sonita's Designs LLC where she serves as Lead Wardrobe Stylist. Sonita enjoys volunteering at various organizations. She currently serves as a Client Suiting Consultant for Dress for Success Pittsburgh and Events Coordinator at The Lord's Church (TLC). Sonita's Designs LLC has been nominated for various awards, which include Stylist of the Year by *Style Week Pittsburgh* in 2016 and Boutique of the Year in 2017. In addition, Sonita's Designs LLC won Boutique Owner of the Year by Style & Glam LLC in 2018 & 2019.

► We are delighted to welcome **Kim Kivlan** to Chatham University as our new fieldwork program assistant! Kim is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh where she received her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy (2000). Kim has provided occupational therapy services for adults in inpatient rehabilitation, acute care settings, and home health. For the past ten years, she has focused her occupational therapy career towards treating adults and pediatrics in outpatient orthopedic hand therapy and custom splinting. Kim is married and has three amazing daughters. She enjoys traveling and spending time with her family.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Katie McKeon Landsiedel, MOT '12, OTD, OTR/L



▶ Katie Landsiedel is a 2012 graduate of the Chatham Master of Occupational Therapy program. Following graduation, Katie began working in pediatrics, providing occupational therapy services in Cyber Schools, early intervention, and school-based settings. Her drive to provide the best and most effective services for her clients led her to seek out continuing education and ultimately

to complete her doctorate in occupational therapy from Misericordia University in 2018. Katie brings to her school district cutting edge evidence based interventions, and is currently engaged in two research projects. One of her projects, focused the effectiveness of an OT School Store to develop pre-vocational skills for middle school students with disabilities has been presented at both state and national OT conferences. Her second project, to be presented at the next AOTA conference, is examining the effectiveness of video modeling and scenario-based learning on increasing interpersonal skills in high school and post graduate transitional students with disabilities.

“My experience in the MOT Program at Chatham set the foundation for me to become a dedicated and motivated Occupational Therapist. Under the guidance of Professors such as Joyce Salls, Cathy Dolhi, Jodi Schreiber, and Emily Eckel, I further developed my passion to make a difference in the lives of others and learned the importance of engaging other Occupational Therapists to “think outside the box”. The numerous hands-on learning experiences and community outreach opportunities I had as a student were engaging and meaningful, and truly depicted what the profession of occupational therapy was all about and what it stands for.”

In addition to her clinical and scholarly achievements (five peer reviewed presentations), Katie is a role model for leadership in the OT profession. She currently serves as the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) District III Executive Officer, and was recently honored with the POTA President's Award for her service. We are proud to call her an alumna of the Master of Occupational Therapy program!

Lyndsay Laxton, MOT '13, OTR/L

▶ Lyndsay Laxton is a 2013 graduate of the Chatham Master of Occupational Therapy program. Following graduation, Lyndsay began working as an occupational therapist on the neurological specialties unit, medical progressive care unit, and medical intensive care units at the University of Colorado Hospital in Denver, CO. She has been employed as a senior occupational therapy at the University of Colorado Hospital since November of 2016 working primarily on the surgical-trauma intensive care unit. Lyndsay's research and practice interests involve the role of occupational therapy in critical care rehabilitation, delirium prevention and management, utilization of the ICU Diary, and prevention of post-intensive care syndrome, through research and quality improvement initiatives. Lyndsay's peer wrote to Chatham's OT program to emphasize the incredible impact that Lyndsay has had on their occupational therapy department and the advocacy skills she demonstrates on a daily basis.

“Lyndsay Laxton has become quite involved in advocating for OT's role in delirium management in the ICU environment through a presentation at the recent AOTA Specialty Conference on Adult Rehab out in Los Angeles and an online webinar for Occupationaltherapy.com both earlier this month, as well as upcoming webinars for the Canadian OT Association and AOTA in early 2019 and a poster presentation at the AOTA annual conference in New Orleans in April”. - Katherine Freeman

In addition to her clinical and scholarly achievements (two published research articles, and nine peer reviewed presentations), Lyndsay is a role model for leadership in the OT profession for best practice hospital-based care. She won the service award from the Patient and Family Advisory Council at the University of Colorado for “Utilization of the ICU Diary with the Medical ICU”. Lyndsay states that her Chatham family instilled the leadership traits of advocacy, evidence-based practice, and willingness to think outside of the box. Lyndsay was motivated to create continuing education when she couldn't find topics that she was interested in pursuing when looking at CEU workshops. She knew she needed to advocate for occupational therapists in ICU specialty practices to ensure that OT maintains their role in this complex care department. Lyndsay also stated that she always felt like she could turn to her faculty mentors at Chatham to provide guidance during school and through her specialty practice. We are proud to call her an alumna of the Master of Occupational Therapy program!

MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Buckets, Blossoms, and Biomechanics

Lindsey Eckstein, OTS; Mary Claire Hood, OTS; Carrie Kaufmann, OTS; Dustin Pringle, OTS

► On May 3, 2019, Chatham University hosted its annual Bucket and Blossom Day event. Students and faculty came out to celebrate this annual tradition, despite a rainy forecast, to lend a helping hand with the shared goals of beautifying Chatham's Shadyside Campus and working together as a community. Volunteers weeded flower beds, cleaned up debris, planted new additions to the arboretum, and shared lunch together at the end of the day. Forty of Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy students were among the volunteers who attended this event to give back to the campus community and analyze topics covered through their Biomechanics course.

Students observed their own body mechanics, as well as those of other volunteers while gardening together. The rainy weather did not deter morale as one student commented "I never thought that I would enjoy performing yard work in the rain, but this was an absolute blast! I loved not only being

able to give back to Chatham with everything it has given me but also being able to educate my peers on proper body mechanics use while advocating for the OT profession at the same time." The event provided students the opportunity to work collaboratively with others towards a common goal, which is an essential skill for all healthcare professionals. Students also learned through firsthand experience which body positions may lead to negative health outcomes in clients who garden and do yard work regularly as a meaningful part of their routine. Occupational therapists can help prevent and manage back and joint pain during gardening activities and recommend using equipment like kneelers, wheelbarrows, and tools with curved handles. Occupational therapy can adapt gardening to keep clients involved in what they love throughout the lifespan.

Through experiential learning such as Bucket and Blossom Day, students are able to take



classroom concepts and apply that knowledge to future clients and themselves. The volunteer experience required skills necessary for future practice: using task analysis, working as a team, and applying occupational therapy concepts while volunteering at this annual event. Volunteering was enjoyable for all those involved—connecting occupational therapy students with the greater Chatham community through beautifying works and biomechanics.



MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Safety for Seniors

Samantha Ballengee, OTS; Caitlin Hilliard, OTS; Rebecca Mouton, OTS; Reese Ward, OTS

► Chatham University's 40 Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students volunteered for Safety for Seniors in their Environmental Interventions course. This course educates the MOT students on the role occupational therapists can play in adapting one's environment to promote independence and engagement in meaningful activities, while decreasing the likelihood of falls. According to Stevens & Lee (2018), home modifications made with the assistance of an occupational therapist (OT) may prevent the most medically treated falls and alleviate the most direct medical costs associated with a fall in an individual 65 and older living in the community. Safety for Seniors is a non-profit program free to all Allegheny County seniors, age 60 years and older, aimed at reducing the risk of falls and fires in the homes of residents. MOT students were trained by a Safety for Seniors staff member to check for potential hazards in the home, as well as provide them with resources and education to increase their safety.

Chatham MOT students went in small groups to various seniors' homes in Allegheny County. Upon arrival, the seniors asked the students for a safety password to ensure that both parties were comfortable with the entry of the students into the home. The students then opened up conversation by giving the seniors bags of items which included safety resources such as a fire alarm, emergency contact magnet, flashlight, batteries, etc. After gaining permission from the residents, the students used a checklist to go room by room around the

house to see if there were any potential safety hazards or areas that could potentially pose an increased risk of falling. For example, when entering the bathroom, the students noted if there were unsecured throw rugs or the need for grab bars. When looking in the kitchen, the students observed for adequate lighting or potential stove top fire hazards.

After the completion of the checklist, the students sat down with the resident and went through the students' recommendations for increasing safety in their home. The residents were thankful for the suggestions and began brainstorming solutions to the proposed hazards. If there is a recommendation for grab bars, Safety for Seniors will donate up to two grab bars to be professionally installed in the home. When wrapping up the visit, most students stayed longer as the residents enjoyed having company.

Through Chatham's MOT program, students are afforded many opportunities to become involved in their communities- Safety for Seniors being just one example. This experience provides the occupational therapy students the opportunity to demonstrate their unique ability to evaluate a residential environment to promote safety for seniors living at home.

References

Stevens, J. A., & Lee, R. (2018). The potential to reduce falls and avert costs by clinically managing fall risk. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 55(3), 290-297. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2018.04.035

Improving Access at Eden Hall Campus

Jeff Brunner, OTS; Joni Gavel, OTS;
Lindsay Hayman, OTS; Carlie Klanica, OTS

► Over this past summer, Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students from Dr. Janet Bucey's Environmental Interventions course were invited to Chatham's Eden Hall Campus to act as consultants on special projects related to making the community more accessible. Operating in teams of four, students met with Eden Hall community specialists to learn about specific area needs. Areas reviewed included the following: a winterized high tunnel; the work and pick space; the chicken coops; the K-12 programs; a proposed multigenerational living-learning community; the storage barn and campground sites; the orchard; the Elsalma field; and the sensory garden. A collaborative dialogue ensued between the experts and MOT students; this exchange initiated the work that created recommendations for population-based environmental interventions to facilitate inclusion and participation.

In one exchange, farm manager Tony Miga, MAFS '14 shared that the Elsalma field would benefit from the addition of shaded areas for rest and an efficient watering system. Further, Mr. Miga asserted that more engagement from the Chatham community and more integration with other parts of the campus would be beneficial for the orchard. Another expert, Mara Reuben, expressed that individuals with varying interests and needs would be making use of the multigenerational

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Eden Hall, *continued from previous page*

living-learning community. These conversations also focused on ways to create and apply changes that follow universal design. This framework considers how objects and environments can be utilized by all regardless of an individual's level of function (Bucey, 2019). In total, meetings focused on established and envisioned areas of Eden Hall and accommodations that could be made to increase area and program accessibility for diverse populations while remaining true to the campus' commitment to sustainability. Over the subsequent weeks, students investigated the feasibility of suggested accommodations, along with the associated costs. All groups then returned to Eden Hall to share their findings with specialists and guests in a formal presentation.

Specific to the Elsama field, MOT students proposed environmental modifications to promote energy conservation by installing an onsite water tank for hydration and adding black umbrellas to the patio. They also suggested adding a ramp and railing to the patio area to allow for increased participation. At the orchard, students recommended hosting events that would appeal to people of all ages and mobility levels to increase traffic and inclusion. Further, students suggested the addition of benches and picnic tables to permit universal resting spots for those visiting the orchard. Within the proposed multigenerational living-space, students believed that the seating and work areas should be adjustable to encourage proper body mechanics for individuals of various builds and abilities. They also advised the use of Smart Home technology with voice commands to control lighting, appliances, and media. If implemented, these elements would



The Orchard at Eden Hall Campus. Photo by Joni Gavel

increase an individual's participation level and overall occupational performance.

In sum, this opportunity provided MOT students with the enriching experience of acting as consultants. Through a site visit, meeting with specialists, and collaborative research, the Class of 2020 was able to apply knowledge learned in the classroom and refine their clinical reasoning skills within the community. The skills acquired in the exercise can be transferred to the students' future

roles as clinicians, researchers, and entrepreneurs. Altogether, the suggested environmental interventions were intentional and inclusive and if executed as solutions, they would impact all of those who engage within the Eden Hall Campus.

References

Bucey, J. (2019). UD & home modifications 2019. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <https://moodle.chatham.edu/course/view.php?id=17>

MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

STAR Simulation and the MOT Experience

Ashley Klimczyk, OTS; Shea O'Brien, OTS; Andrea Sciulli, OTS; Angelica Yobbi, OTS

► Throughout Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) Program, students are provided with the opportunity to engage in a variety of interactive experiences to further develop their learning and clinical skills. This year, students participated in simulated clinical scenarios through a program called "STAR". The STAR Center at West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh stands for Simulation, Teaching, and Academic Research. This unique simulation offers hands-on learning experiences with state-of-the-art equipment for students and practitioners at a variety of training levels. This simulation is offered to teach skills that are needed in health care including communication techniques, teamwork skills, transfer skills, procedural skills, and more. The STAR simulation utilizes an intensive care unit (ICU) mock setting with high functioning, full-size mannequins. The realistic nature of the mannequins allows students to practice skills such as taking blood pressures, monitoring vital signs, transferring, and conducting full treatment sessions. Through a one-way mirror, instructors can observe and administer feedback as the students are involved in treatment sessions. This simulation aids in critical thinking and problem-solving for students while mimicking a very real health-care setting (Star Center, 2019).

Although occupational therapists are highly skilled professionals within acute care settings, many students did not have previous exposure to this setting or population. Chatham University's MOT students were enthusiastic about having the opportunity to participate in this educational and hands-on experience twice throughout their curriculum. Each simulation was a different clinical scenario and learning experience. For this experience, students were assigned to groups of four. During simulations, two students played the roles of the occupational therapists that directly interacted with the patient and any family members present, while the other two students acted as peer observers



in order to provide feedback on the simulation to their classmates. Students then switched roles when they came back for the second simulation.

Upon arrival, nerves escalated as students were eager but anxious to engage in this simulation. To begin, the group of students were given approximately 20 minutes to perform a chart review. The chart review painted a picture of the patient's past medical history, diagnosis, and current situation. After the chart review, the students entered the room with the patient mannequin, and the intervention session began. The two students assigned as the occupational therapists had approximately 20 minutes to use the information from the chart review along with their clinical expertise to conduct a treatment session. The occupational therapists needed to problem solve, use teamwork, critical thinking skills, and their clinical skills to provide the best quality of care for their patient.

Students reported that the STAR simulation increased their confidence level with the acute care population and allowed them to further develop their clinical skills in a safe, realistic environment with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. The peer feedback enhanced all students' learning by allowing them to learn from a different perspective regarding successes and possible improvements. It also gave the instructors an understanding of how students learn best and what they observe during a treatment session. The STAR simulation greatly added to the in-class curriculum and provided Chatham MOT students with the confidence and experience necessary before entering level II fieldwork.

References

Star Center. (2019). *Allegheny Health Network*. Retrieved from <https://www.ahn.org/education/star-center>

MOT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

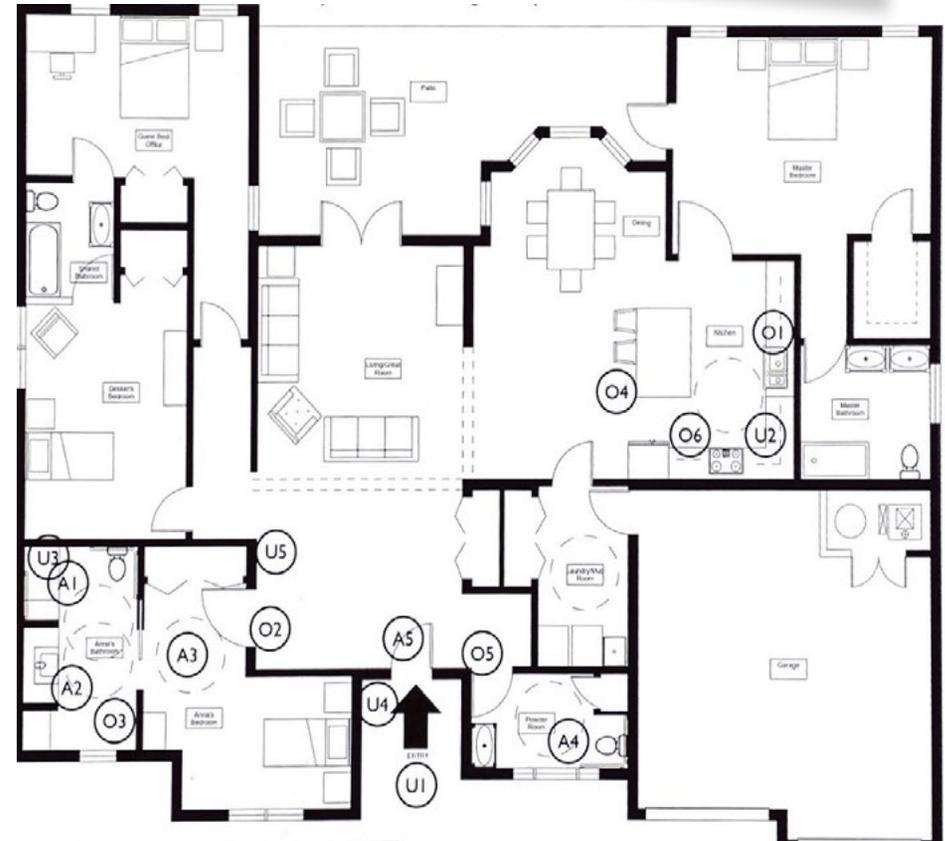
OT & Interior Architecture Collaboration: Designing for Independence

Ainsley Berringer, OTS; Leah Boyle, OTS; Kristen Laird, OTS

► During the spring term of 2019, Chatham University participated in an interprofessional collaboration between the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) Class of 2020 and interior architecture (IAR) students. The purpose of this assignment was to allow the MOT students to practice their consultation skills that will be needed as future occupation therapy practitioners, while also learning from the interior architecture students. Groups were given a case study involving a child with the diagnosis of Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) to design an accessible home for the child and their family. OI, also known as brittle bone disease, is a group of genetic disorders that can cause bones to break easily. Due to mobility limitations associated with OI, many individuals may utilize a wheelchair or other assistive device. It is important to have a home set up that is conducive to the independence and wellbeing of the child as they grow. The OT knowledge of diagnoses and environmental modifications combined with the IAR knowledge of specifications and design created a great working team.

This project was incorporated into the MOT students' OTH 622 Occupational Performance in Children and Adolescents coursework. Over a series of three meetings, MOT students worked collaboratively with the IAR students on the assigned project to share information about the diagnosis and suggestions on environmental modifications that would increase occupational performance in the home. Many environmental modifications were discussed, such as doorway width, flooring materials, countertop heights, and bathroom set up. IAR students proposed their initial architectural ideas and received feedback from the MOT students on the accessibility of the design for the child with OI and their family.

Through consulting with the IAR students, the MOT students were provided with the opportunity to practice their skills of advocating for the needs of their clients. The consultation allowed the IAR students to get a background on the diagnosis while also considering what designs would make the house most accessible for the entire family. This collaboration was a great learning experience as it provided an opportunity for both groups to showcase their unique skills.



Furnished Plan Designed by interior architecture student Brianna Soucier

2019 POTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In it to Win it

Meghan Albin, OTS; Ali Wilson, OTS

► The Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association (POTA) annual conference was a two-day event filled with enriching information provided by students, educators and clinicians. This year, Chatham occupational therapy students participated as attendees, speakers, and volunteers at the conference in King of Prussia, PA. Over three didactic semesters, students developed an evidence-based project and had the option to submit a proposal to present their project at the annual conference. Through these semesters, students critically appraised present literature, created and administered surveys, and analyzed



their data to construct conclusions. They also developed skills in leadership and professionalism that allowed them to be confident presenters. This past year, four groups submitted and were accepted to present at the conference, where they were given the opportunity to share their findings with occupational therapy practitioners. Below describes each group's evidence-based project and their contributors:

1. Bridging the Gap: Combating Evidence Based Practice Deficits
Meghan Albin, OTS; Carlie Klanica, OTS; Dustin Pringle, OTS; Paige Whitney, OTS; Alexandra Wilson, OTS; Sharon Novalis, PhD, OTR/L
2. Overcoming Obstacles: Healthcare Students with Disabilities on Fieldwork
Danielle Clune, OTS; Lindsey Eckstein, OTS; Abigail Valenta, OTS; Theresa Delbert, MS, OTR/L
3. Stepping Outside: Sensory Gardens and Dementia
Ainsley Berringer, OTS; Shea O'Brien, OTS; Megan Ellis, OTS; Caitlin Hilliard, OTS; Megan Jones, OTS; Kasey Stepansky, CCSd, OTR/L, C/NDT, CBIS
4. Conquering Chronic Pain: An OT's Role
Samantha Ballengee, OTS; Emma GiaQuinta, OTS; Emily Harried, OTS; Kristen Laird, OTS; Janet Bucey, OTD, OTR/L

Following poster presentations, the Chatham students had the opportunity to attend education sessions. During these sessions they learned about emerging areas of practice within occupational therapy (OT), evidence-based interventions and created connections with current clinicians. Students took particular interest in sessions surrounding the topics of interoception, sexuality, and disaster relief. Students experienced the exhibit hall where they viewed other poster presentations and conversed with exhibitors and sponsors. In addition to the engaging presentations, the conference presented a plenary by Dr. Alyson Stover on the opioid epidemic. Dr. Stover's moving lecture explained the impact the opioid epidemic has on all individuals. She also explained



occupational therapy's unique role in helping individuals beat this epidemic through meaningful occupations.

On the second day, four of the attending Chatham students chose to volunteer their time as part of the People Power Crew. The POTA conference cannot run smoothly without the help of the student volunteers. These volunteers are highly valued by the leaders of POTA and helped manage event sessions, social media and raffle sales. Being a part of People Power enhanced the students' appreciation of the event by observing the ongoing effort that goes into a successful conference. These students were also able to further network with those in leadership roles within POTA. Proctoring education sessions was the main role of these students. This role requires students to sit in on a poster session, provide speakers with assistance, and serve as a timekeeper. While this may not seem like an exciting job, it is beneficial to the students, as they are given an opportunity to learn while volunteering. They also may attend sessions that they would not have thought to otherwise. One Chatham student who was volunteering, proctored the session titled *Soldering Safely without a Short Circuit or Silver: A Hands-On Interactive Learn to Solder Workshop*. This session allowed her to develop a skill in soldering that she can use to rewire toys and devices to increase their accessibility with switches. All of the students who chose to participate as People Power Crew, would recommend that future Chatham students take advantage of this opportunity.

ADVOCACY

Stepping into Action: AOTA 2019 Capitol Hill Day

Emma GiaQuinta, OTS; Dedrick Truong, OTS; Abigail Valenta, OTS

► In September of 2019, students from Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) Class of 2020 headed east to Washington, D.C. for the annual American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Capitol Hill Day. Hundreds of AOTA members including occupational therapy (OT) professors, students, and practitioners united in D.C. to meet with congressional members to advocate for three pertinent acts (described below) that impact OT practice.

The Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act

Currently, under Medicare Regulations, occupational therapists (OTs) cannot open home health therapy cases. This inability to open cases poses a burden on not only other team members – physical therapists (PT), speech-language pathologists (SLP), nurses – due to scheduling conflicts, but also to patients as it can create delays in treatment initiation. This act has bipartisan support and would allow OTs to open home health cases in rehabilitation-only cases and limited to instances in which skilled nursing is not identified by the ordering physician.

The Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act

The passage of this bipartisan bill would provide underrepresented healthcare (OT, PT, SLP, and audiology) students with incentives and opportunities to enter higher education by providing stipends, tutoring, mentoring, and scholarships. Efforts to diversify these healthcare professions would help enhance service accessibility, patient satisfaction, and educational experiences for these students.

The Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act

The number of healthcare professionals available to serve those who are struggling with mental health is significantly low compared to the prevalence of mental illness among the population. There is evidence that the supply of personnel in mental health fields will be short of the projected demand in 2025. The Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act would help to mitigate this difference. It would provide increased access to mental health services by providing incentives for OT practitioners to work within the

mental health sector by providing loan forgiveness for those practicing in underserved areas.

This year, seven states were represented



MOT students Dedrick Truong, Dani Clune, and Leah Boyle with Congressman Mike Doyle

from the 16 Chatham students who attended including Pennsylvania, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Alabama, North Carolina, and Wisconsin. Dedrick Truong, who attended Hill Day, detailed the memorable experience in meeting with Congressional Members and their staffers on the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act. As a person of color, Dedrick was able to reflect on the potential impact of the bill and how it would positively affect the health of underrepresented racial and ethnic communities around the country. Leah Boyle, who also attended Hill Day, shared her experience in stating, "Congressman Doyle (PA) personally related to the loan repayment bill regarding how expensive it was for him to put his children through



Chatham MOT students and Program Director Dr. Joyce Salls at AOTA Capitol Hill Day.

continued on next page

Capitol Hill Day *continued from previous page*

higher education and how impactful it would be to have a bill like this one to help future health care professionals.”

Classmates who were unable to attend Capitol Hill Day remained steadfast in contributing to the advocacy efforts by reaching out to their local state representatives and senators addressing these bills as well. Tori Santillano, a student who wrote to her hometown officials, stated, “It was empowering because even though I wasn’t there, I was able to have an impact and I was



Students, joined by Program Director Dr. Joyce Salls, gather and prepare to speak with local congressional members.

surprised that one of my senators even e-mailed me back. It made me feel heard, especially when Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA) reiterated my points and seemed truly supportive of the matter.”

Thanks to the advocacy efforts of Chatham’s MOT students and others who contributed to AOTA 2019 Capitol Hill Day, the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act was unanimously passed in the House of Representatives in November 2019 as an amendment

to H.R. 2781 - Educating Medical Professionals and Optimizing Workforce Efficiency and Readiness for Health Act of 2019. This bill is now one step closer to becoming law, with significant implications for diversity among the allied health workforce, occupational therapy, and bridging social health disparities within this nation.

Chatham’s MOT Class of 2020 continued their support and advocacy efforts after Capitol Hill Day by planning and executing a kickball fundraising event led by MOT Student Emma GiaQuinta to support the American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee (AOTPAC). AOTPAC is a nonprofit and nonpartisan committee of members who volunteer to further the field of OT by providing time, resources, and funding for legislative efforts that protect and promote OT as a profession. The kickball event raised over \$200, which was donated directly to AOTPAC.

Through these efforts, the Chatham OT Class of 2020 shows leadership and commitment to the continued growth of the profession from a national standpoint.

Developing Leaders within the Entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

Theresa Delbert, M.S., OTR/L

► The Entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program has a vision to develop students as leaders in healthcare, and a mission to prepare students to be reflective, skilled, ethical occupational therapy practitioners and future leaders. Within the program, leadership does not simply refer to management or positional hierarchy; rather it refers to one’s ability to influence others. Authentic Leadership Theory was chosen to ground the program’s leadership development for students. In practice, the application of authentic leadership theory results in a leader who engages in positive self-development so that their personality and core values align with their behaviors and they are act in accordance with their true self (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

In order to meet the vision and mission of developing future leaders, leadership outcomes framed for personal and professional growth have been included in each OT course in the entry-level OTD program. Students will engage in leadership activities and assignments each term related to each of the four components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing. In addition, faculty serve to support student’s professional leadership understanding and growth and will assist students with identifying available leadership opportunities throughout the curriculum. The Entry-level OTD program recognizes that learning skills in the leadership domain is a lifelong endeavor and therefore, mastery is not the goal, but rather we intend to foster as much growth as possible in each leadership component as it relates to a student’s personal and professional authenticity and identity.



Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide Prevention

Erin Clark, OTS; Tori Santillano, OTS; Kendra Snyder, OTS; Koreena Thompson, OTS

► The third annual Chatham University Out of the Darkness campus walk, sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), took place on April 13, 2019. Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy Class of 2020 hosted this event with support and contributions from faculty, staff, and students from various programs within the University. The occupational therapy program has been the forerunner in hosting this event at Chatham due to the large role occupational therapy plays in mental health. This year it was a beautiful, sunny day where participants showed their support in the fight against suicide by raising awareness and changing the conversation around mental illness. The event was open to all, with participants including students, alumni, faculty, family, friends, and community members. It was nice to see many familiar faces return this year and show support for the community. There were 21 teams composed of over 240 walkers. Since 2017, the event has raised a total of \$49,858 on behalf of the AFSP. This year the event raised over \$13,000 in donations. These funds will be put towards advocacy for public

policy changes, educational programs, research efforts related to suicide awareness and prevention, and support for survivors of suicide loss.

Along with the 5k walk, stations and activities were set up beforehand to encourage participation, sharing, and to create an overall high morale for walkers and supporters. Some of these activities included prayer flags, buttons to remember those who lost their lives to suicide, colored bead selections to indicate personal connections to mental health, and informational tables ran by Chatham's MOT class of 2020. OT students were able to practice pertinent healthcare skills by being directly involved in promoting and advocating for mental health. Other roles of the Class of 2020 included decorating the event, reading a poem before the event, and providing water and morale throughout the 5k walk. Upon reflection of the event and reading the poem, Samantha Ballengee stated "For me, being a part of the Out of the Darkness walk was extremely empowering and uplifting. Chatham and AFSP together created a safe space that allowed me, my peers and



professors, and my family and friends the opportunity to reflect but also leave with hope for the future."

Chatham's Counseling Services provided an informational table in conjunction with the Resolve Crisis Services to support all on this emotional day. In addition to these tables and activities, Chatham's music department showcased live music throughout the event. Chatham's MFA in Creative Writing program also hosted a creative writing competition in memory of MFACW graduate, Stuart H. Hunt. The first, second, and third place winners recited their poetry immediately following the walk. The event concluded with a ceremonial tree planting to symbolize hope.

These efforts are a continuation of Chatham's MOT class of 2018 who established this tradition to bring awareness to suicide prevention and promote occupational therapy in mental health. We look forward to the fourth year of the Chatham University Out of the Darkness Walk which is scheduled for April 19, 2020. Registration and donations for this event can be accessed at chatham.edu/events.



Walk participants helping to plant the ceremonial tree. ▲

◀ Dr. Novalis, Dr. Salls, and the MOT Class of 2020 celebrating a successful event!

Chatham Takes On Ecuador

Dani Clune, OTS; Laura Connor, OTS; Megan Jones, OTS; Theresa Saracco, OTS

► Chatham University's Master of Occupational Therapy (OT) students and Doctor of Physical Therapy (PT) students had the privilege of traveling to Ecuador this past August on a mission trip. Prior to the trip to Ecuador, the students enrolled in a Global Health Perspectives elective course during their summer semester in preparation for the mission trip. The course was taught by OT faculty Dr. Joyce Salls and Professor Jane Tolley, and PT faculty Dr. Jason Woollard. These faculty members accompanied the students and provided leadership support on the trip. The trip was ten days and the students traveled to various cities throughout the country, including Quito, Mindo, and Ibarra. The students provided services in a variety of settings, including a community center, a remote physical therapy clinic, an outpatient clinic, and a nursing home. The students were presented with situations that challenged their flexibility and their ability

to implement knowledge and skills in relation to occupational therapy. This trip provided the students with the opportunity to collaborate as a team utilizing an interdisciplinary approach between the OT and PT professions in order to improve the lives of the clients.

Exploring Ecuador

The students immersed themselves in the Ecuadorian culture by exploring the beautiful country and visiting the cities of Quito, Mindo, and Ibarra. While exploring, the students participated in a wide variety of excursions, adventures, and tours. They explored historic churches in Quito, took a boat ride around Lake Cuicocha, and visited the Mirador Yahuarcocha lake overlook. They also participated in salsa dancing lessons, visited the Equator, attended a Chocolate factory tour, hiked, ziplined, white-water rafted, and explored a butterfly house in Mindo! All



of these incredible experiences allowed the students to gain new perspectives on life while obtaining knowledge of the Ecuadorian culture.

Distintos Somos Todos

Distintos is a community center for teens and young adults located in Ibarra, Ecuador. The clients at this center had a variety of diagnoses, including cerebral palsy and intellectual disability. The students provided group therapy treatments to address fine and gross motor skills. The week the Chatham students visited happened to be during the Ecuadorian Independence Day. To celebrate, activities were tailored toward this holiday as the clients made flags, paper fireworks, and bracelets. They also participated in games such as musical chairs, hot potato, bowling, and ring toss. All activities were able to be adapted for various ability levels. Everyone was grateful for the experience as the students were able to trial their intervention plans and the clients had a delightful time.

Angochagua

Angochagua is a physical therapy clinic serving six different indigenous communities. The students' experience at this site was unique, as they were the first group to visit this specific site as occupational therapy advocates. The students had the opportunity to complete over thirty screenings



POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Post-Professional OTD Experience: Exploring and Implementing the Kawa Model

Jayme Ober & Rebecca Newbury

► With 15 years of clinical practice, regular continuing education, and supervision of multiple fieldwork students, one would think she is up to date with the occupational therapy profession. Well, think again! Upon entering the post-professional OTD program, we were surprised to learn that there was a conceptual model of practice that we'd never heard of.

The *Kawa* (River) model, based on Japanese philosophy and concepts, reflects the journey of life through use of a river metaphor to conceptualize one's life and well-being as influenced by interrelated features. The water represents the person's life flow and self; river walls and bottom represent environmental factors and supports; rocks symbolize life's concerns or challenges; driftwood shows personal factors, strengths or weaknesses. The model's use of metaphors creates an avenue for open discussion, which can improve client-therapist communication and collaboration. We gained an appreciation for the simplicity of the model and its utility to gain a deeper understanding of clients' unique perspectives, and we further explored and utilized this culturally neutral model while implementing our capstone projects in very different but effective ways.

One project utilized the model as a therapeutic tool to improve acute care rehab team collaboration. The team members each drew individual model diagrams, using the model's



features to express their internal perspectives, which may have been previously misunderstood by other members. Then the entire team worked collectively to create a large river model diagram to openly discuss and visualize the team's strengths, concerns, supports, and goals to improve the team's "flow." Using the model in this way facilitated collaboration among the entire team.

The other project used the Kawa model to guide an educational program which aimed to assist older adults to identify their supports and barriers to aging in place, and improve psychological well-being related to this area. The Kawa model was used individually with each client as an assessment

to elicit clients' perspectives, concerns, and understanding of what they already had in place and what they would need to successfully age in place. Educational materials and instruction were then provided based on each client's identified barriers. Therapist and client then collaboratively created an individualized "to-do" list of tasks and preparations to promote safe aging in place within each client's unique environment. The Kawa was employed again post-intervention to re-assess clients' perspectives. This revealed changes in clients' perspectives based on the intervention; e.g., easing of concerns, removal of barriers, and improved overall life flow. The use of this model led to rich discussion, creative problem-solving, highly client-centered interventions, and strong rapport between client and therapist.

It was surprising that our projects were so heavily influenced by a model that we did not even know existed prior to the post-professional OTD experience. The post-professional OTD program instilled the incredible value of staying current with relevant literature and attending professional conferences to maintain the healthy flow of our journey for best practice. As one of Dr. Lape's inspiring shared quotes says, "success is a journey, not a destination." Trusting the process of this program allowed us to push out of our comfort zone and realize our professional growth is limitless.

POST PROFESSIONAL OTD STUDENT EXPERIENCE

A Review of Chatham's Post-Professional OTD Experience

Anne Lee

► My OTD journey at Chatham University was an incredible experience for me, personally and professionally. I feel that my mind has been educated and my heart as well. What an honor it was to be able to implement my project at an elementary school with the dear children of military soldiers. My capstone project was conducted in a second-grade, military-connected elementary school to investigate the effect of a whole-class handwriting program employing a cognitive approach combined with self-monitoring on handwriting legibility and students' perceptions of self-monitoring strategies. Because my project took place at a Department of Defense school, I was required to go through two review boards, Department of Defense and Chatham University. The review board with the Department of Defense took four months to get approval. The process was time-consuming and difficult, but I would most certainly do it all over again to help the children I care for so deeply. I felt honored to be in a cohort of such amazing, smart, kind, funny, warm-hearted OTs, and for amazing professors that made us think harder and dig deeper for the answers. I sure do march to a different beat, and I love the new me!

I graduated with my BS in OT in 1986. I always knew I would go back to school to further my education; however, being an Army wife, a mom to three wonderful daughters, having a husband who was often deployed or away, and moving every few years, meant that I had to be patient. So, patient I was; and in 2013, I finally returned to school to get a

MA in Counseling. I surprised myself at how much I loved the learning and applying my new knowledge and skills to my school setting. I wanted more when I graduated, and it did not take long for me to see that my next step was pursuing an OTD. I am glad that I received my MA in Counseling, but it made me see that my deep passion is in occupational therapy; it always has been and always will be. I looked into many post-professional OTD programs and discovered quickly that Chatham University was the perfect fit for me.

This journey was not possible just relying on myself. I was extremely blessed to have such a big team! My biggest thank you goes to my husband who so graciously took over all of the cooking, shopping, and laundry—all done without a conversation about it—he just knew! A day never went by that I did not appreciate all he did for me. A big surprise and special gift for me was the bond that I formed with my cohort sisters. When I think of my project, I think of each and every one of them as they all helped me with so many aspects. A big, big thank you to all of my professors for all of the time and effort they took with each one of us. It was obvious from the start that all of the professors were invested in us, wanting us to succeed. Their passion for occupational therapy and for excellence was contagious.

I truly appreciate, and I am very thankful for all of the struggles I endured through this challenging but very rewarding journey. Without the struggles, I would not have stumbled across my strengths. I am

amazed at all of the doors that have opened for me since graduating. The administration at my school supported me with all aspects of my capstone project and has since approved the implementation of the handwriting program used in my capstone at the school where I am employed. I began providing telepractice services to students at a Department of Defense School in Cuba. Through telepractice, I am now using an approach similar to that used in my capstone project. I am working remotely with the students and collaborating closely with the teacher in implementing a handwriting program. I was very appreciative to be sent to Cuba to implement the handwriting program and work closely with the elementary school teachers. I have also been asked to be a guest speaker in other university occupational therapy programs. The biggest surprises that have come to me after graduation are that a journal article I wrote about my capstone project has been published in the *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention* (link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/WR4BRX4PSAFCXS66GCYE/full?target=10.1080/19411243.2019.1672604>), and I will be presenting a poster about my capstone project at the AOTA conference in spring 2020.

All of my successes reflect positively on Chatham University and the post-professional OTD program, always holding students to high expectations and standards. Thank you Chatham University for an amazing journey and for teaching me so much about myself!

Post Professional OTD Capstone Projects

May 2018 to November 2019

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Ecuador *continued from page 15*

with individuals from the indigenous communities. Due to the site being a physical therapy clinic, the occupational therapy students were provided with an amazing opportunity to advocate for occupational therapy and the services that they had to offer. After completing the screenings, the students documented findings and recommendations, and these notes were later provided to the therapists who would implement treatment in the future. Weeks after the trip, the students were thrilled to discover that their recommendations had been successfully implemented. The students' ability to advocate for occupational therapy and utilize clinical skills helped this indigenous community receive the services they need.

CRECER

CRECER is a free outpatient clinic run by occupational therapist, Dr. Elaine Keane, as well as a variety of occupational therapy students who are completing their fieldwork in Ibarra, Ecuador. Pediatric clients are mainly treated here, but they accept individuals of any age. Not everyone comes to CRECER with a formal diagnosis, but those that do typically have Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or Cerebral Palsy. At CRECER, students had the opportunity

to observe sessions with clients and then implement individualized functional activities, which challenged the client's physical and cognitive abilities.

Asilo

Asilo is a nursing home in Ibarra that houses approximately 20 older adults with whom the students interacted. The individuals at the nursing home loved participating in activities the students implemented, which included dancing, bowling, painting, making jewelry, and singing the national anthem, along with other fun activities. They were enthusiastic and appreciative of the activities, presence, and energy of the students.

During this time in Ecuador, the students were able to immerse themselves in the culture while impacting the lives of others with their occupational therapy and physical therapy services. The trip gave rise to many experiences where students were able to provide therapeutic interventions for clients to increase independence and engage in meaningful activities. The students engaged in some incredible experiences that were challenging and allowed them to grow as professionals.

Lettuce Serve Pittsburgh: Bringing Produce to the Table

Hailey Clouse, OTS; Emily Harried, OTS; Emily Mueller, OTS; Paige Whitney, OTS

► Lettuce, carrots, kale, and tomatoes are just a few of the food items donated every weekend to those in need throughout Pittsburgh's community. This past summer, Chatham University's occupational and physical therapy students



volunteered with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (GPCFB) to participate in their Produce to People (P2P) event. This opportunity was made possible by the community service committee, a part

of Chatham University's Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). This committee coordinates volunteer initiatives in partnership with various organizations within the city and dedicates their time to make an impact in our community.

In 1980, the steel industry quickly began to decline, resulting in a significant increase in unemployment rates and many families struggled to feed themselves. The GPCFB was established in Pittsburgh's Hill District to assist in feeding people in need and increasing accessibility in our community to eliminate hunger (Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 2018). They are committed to promoting nutrition quality, food safety, sustainability, diversity, equality and inclusion. The GPCFB strongly relies on volunteer help to keep the program running smoothly.

About 74% of those served by the Food Bank purchase unhealthy food options due to its inexpensive cost (Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 2018). The P2P program, sponsored by the GPCFB, helps to increase nutrient-dense foods in people's diets by distributing produce to individuals and families across southwestern Pennsylvania. About 7,500 households receive 35-50 pounds of produce at 18 different distribution events each month. At each event, approximately 11 items are given, including various fresh vegetables, fruits, meats, and herbs. Members register for the event at their chosen distribution center in various locations in the city. Upon arrival, members answer a questionnaire and are presented a ticket for food. From there, the individuals line up with their bags or buggies to receive food from various volunteer-run stations (Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 2018).

Chatham occupational and physical therapy students assisted with the P2P food distribution event through a variety of roles. Students welcomed the members to the event, guided them



through the registration paperwork, provided recipes, and informed the members about the food being distributed that day. Students also unloaded boxes from the food delivery truck to organize the food and help set up for the day, while others interacted with the members and helped fill their bags with fresh produce. However, one of the most important roles all of the students took responsibility for was to personally interact with each member, discussing what recipes they could make, the sunny weather, their children, and much more. Chatham students focused on the needs of the members by making connections and providing assistance as needed.

Occupational therapy is a profession which emphasizes community engagement, health management and maintenance, nutritious meal preparation, preventative health interventions, and social interaction. As reflected in P2P's mission and the food distribution event, students promoted each of these aspects, making it the perfect opportunity for service engagement. If you are local to the Greater Pittsburgh Region and are interested in supporting the GPCFB, please visit their website (www.pittsburghfoodbank.org) to review upcoming volunteer opportunities.

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A View Into Dementia Via the Virtual Dementia Tour

Megan Ellis, OTS; Jill Flenner, OTS; Kylie Ranck, OTS; Morgan Stoyko, OTS



► About **46.8 million** people in the world have dementia. This number is expected to increase to **74.7 million** by 2030 and to **131.5 million** by 2050 (Auer et al., 2018). Dementia is a diagnosis that negatively impacts an individual's memory, language, problem-solving, and other cognitive skills that affect the ability to perform

everyday activities. Dementia is an umbrella term that includes Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy Body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia. Occupational therapists who work with older adults typically see dementia as a prominent diagnosis and can implement interventions that target the previously mentioned deficits. Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students at Chatham University have been educated about dementia in order to provide the most appropriate interventions for future clients. To learn more about how dementia affects an individual's daily life, all students in the MOT Class of 2020 participated in the Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT) during the summer 2019 term. This evidence-based simulation allowed students to experience just how difficult it is for individuals with dementia to listen to instructions, complete simple tasks, find items, and navigate their environment. Many students had strong reactions to the experience and became easily frustrated, overwhelmed, and/or anxious during the simulation. The VDT concluded with a peer debriefing discussion, during which all students mentioned their appreciation of the experience as future occupational therapy practitioners.

Students were asked to write a reflection after the experience, in which one student wrote, "It made me feel like an alien in the most real sense. I had no idea what was going on." Another wrote, "I now understand from experience the visual, auditory, and sensory deficits those with dementia may experience and how those deficits negatively impact their life." Although the tour only lasted for eight minutes, it provided students with a small glimpse into the unfortunate reality of this disease. This experience was valuable to students in the MOT program because by experiencing what it is like to have the disease, students

will be able to provide better quality care to future clients, their families, and their caregivers.

MOT students recommend that anyone who has a loved one diagnosed with dementia or is interested in working with individuals with dementia experience the VDT so that they may develop a better understanding of what it is like for someone to go through life with this condition. By giving participants a better understanding of the struggles that accompany a dementia diagnosis, this experience may impact the way individuals interact with those affected.

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Stay connected

Please keep the OT program updated with your achievements! E-mail the OT program assistant, Sonita Bell, at s.bell.2@chatham.edu with any updates, including e-mail address, address, news, publications, accomplishments etc. You can also keep in touch through Facebook.

 Chatham University Occupational Therapy Program

Stay connected and get involved with the Office of Alumni Relations! We offer numerous volunteer and networking opportunities as well as alumni receptions at professional conferences and exclusive events at local Pittsburgh attractions. Interested? Please send us an e-mail at alumni@chatham.edu or visit us at chatham.edu/alumni. Stay connected with the Alumni Association via Facebook.