

OT Department News

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Jefferson.edu/OT

Janice P. Burke Portrait Unveiled

A brilliant portrait of Janice P. Burke, former Dean of the Jefferson College of Health Professions and Chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy, was unveiled in late April. The portrait features Dr. Burke seated at her desk, surrounded by objects that hold special meaning to her - the self-portrait of her son Evan on the wall to her left, a special apple from her extensive apple collection, the red glass vase given to her by her faculty, and her favorite books. The Jefferson campus spreads out behind her in the background.

The artist, Alexandra Tyng, captures the essence of Janice in this work. Ms. Tyng has lived most of her life in the Philadelphia area, and has been awarded numerous honors. Be sure to visit the portrait when you are next on campus, where it now hangs on the 5th floor of the Hamilton Building.



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About this newsletter

The newsletter is produced by the Department of Occupational Therapy of Thomas Jefferson University and is distributed twice a year.

We look forward to using this channel to share information about our alumni, students and faculty, as well as news about our programs.

Please tell us what you have been up to! Have you been in the news? Started your own business? Published? Taken a leadership position? Something else of interest?

Please contact Caryn Johnson with your news at caryn.johnson@jefferson.edu

Student Highlight: Tanisha Monte

by Tanisha Monte

I completed a 3-month fieldwork rotation at CRECER (Centro de Rehabilitación, Educación, Capacitación, Estudios y Recursos) in northern Ecuador where I learned the importance of culture in occupational therapy practice. CRECER is a free outpatient clinic run by Elaine Keane, OTD, OTR/L, a therapist from Maryland. It is open to people of all ages and diagnoses, but primarily sees individuals under the age of ten with Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, Autism, and Brachial Plexus Injury.

It is the responsibility of OTs to prioritize clients' needs and focus on their stories. Working at CRECER taught me to embrace a different culture and apply OT in a very different setting from what I knew. Incorporating family, beliefs, values, and culturally sensitive evidenced-based practice became part of my daily routine.

One thing that stood out to me were cultural differences in our views of disability. In the US we focus on independence and individualism. However, families in Ecuador have a more collectivist view, where family and community take priority over individual needs. Helping clients with social participation, academics, and community mobility was more important than working on ADLs because the families of ADL clients wanted to support and provide this type of personal care for their loved one.

Therapy services at CRECER are strongly rooted in collaboration with other health care professionals. Each day I worked alongside physical therapists, psychologists, and rehab assistants. I appreciated the level of respect that the healthcare professionals had for each other and their ability to work well together as a team.



Tanisha Monte with a CRECER client

CRECER has provided me with an experience of a lifetime and a unique perspective that will contribute tremendously to my journey toward becoming a great OT. I thank my patients, their families, and the stakeholders at CRECER for collaborating with me and welcoming me into their culture. While students usually enjoy this type of international experience, some literature suggests that these placements provide more benefits to the students than to the stakeholders in the host country. In response, CRECER is completing a study that will identify client views on receiving therapy from international students, examine the effectiveness of the clinic, and look at strategies for improvement to ensure that clients are benefiting.



Student Highlight: Jonette Ishmael

The [Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity](#) (COTAD) is an organization that is focused on increasing diversity within the OT workforce. Jefferson's Student OT Association (SOTA) is on board with this goal, and to that end, has named Jonette Ishmael, EMOT'18, as the new Diversity and Inclusion Chair/COTAD liaison on the SOTA Advocacy and Awareness Committee.

Jonette's role involves interfacing between Jefferson's OT student body, faculty, alumni, and COTAD. She intends to promote discussions with her peers and faculty members about issues of diversity such as cultural competence, reflexivity, safety, humility and implicit bias.

Faculty Spotlight:

Catherine Verrier Piersol, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

In 2008, Dr. Catherine Verrier Piersol joined the Department of Occupational Therapy to develop Jefferson Elder Care with a mission to “improve the lives of older adults and caregivers through knowledge translation and best practices grounded in evidence and real-world experience.” Dr. Piersol believes the role of occupational therapy in dementia care is critical. She is leading Jefferson Elder Care to accomplish its mission through a combination of service delivery, training, and research.

Service Delivery

The *Home-based Dementia Service*, which is supported in part by the Pew Charitable Trust, is offered to underserved elders and their caregivers. The service integrates Skills₂Care[®], an evidence-based program, tested and translated to practice at Jefferson, which promotes caregiver skills and well-being and reduces behavioral symptoms and functional decline in the person with dementia.

Family Caregiver Workshops are offered at adult day centers and other community agencies through support from the Pew Fund, and the *Family Caregiver Workshop Series* are offered to families in the region thanks to a Hassel Foundation gift. These workshops teach strategies for managing behavioral symptoms, promoting home safety, and enhancing activity engagement.

Training

Jefferson Elder Care also promotes best practice through training programs for OTs and other health professionals. Skills₂Care[®] is a flagship program with certification training for occupational therapists offered four times a year at Jefferson and individually to agencies. OTs from across the country working in home health care agencies, area agencies on aging, assisted living, and other settings are delivering Skills₂Care[®] within their practices.

Research

Dr. Piersol collaborates with Dr. Laura Gitlin, Director of the Center for Innovative Care in Aging at Johns Hopkins University to evaluate and translate interventions targeting individuals with dementia and their caregivers. The result is their internationally recognized, co-developed, evidence-based intervention, the *New Ways for Better Days: Tailoring Activities for Persons with Dementia and Caregivers* program. Dr. Piersol and Dr. Gitlin have trained occupational therapists in Scotland and Hong Kong to use this program. The Hong Kong training was a knowledge translation project partnership between the Hospital Authority and Hong Kong University. Now OTs are delivering the *New Ways for Better Days* program throughout Hong Kong, across the entire hospital system, including in-patient and community settings.

“Learning about and experiencing the leadership role that occupational therapists play in dementia care within these countries is inspiring,” Dr. Piersol shares. “We can learn from our global colleagues to further establish occupational therapy practitioners as leaders in the care of people with dementia. Our distinct skill set which is grounded in a person-environment framework offers interventions that optimize performance and participation in the person with dementia and promote competence and well-being in the caregiver.”

Dr. Piersol and Lou Jensen, OTD, OTR/L, C/NDT, LSVT-BIG Certified, a colleague from Creighton University, co-authored the 2017 *Occupational Therapy Practice Guidelines for Adults with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Major Neurocognitive Disorders*, which includes systematic reviews and practical case studies designed to empower occupational therapy practitioners as leaders in best practice. Visit the [Jefferson Elder Care website](#) to learn more.



Dr. Gitlin and Dr. Piersol with OTs in Hong Kong.

OT Roots in Mental Health

Mental health challenges are just about everywhere you look. Spikes in heroin/opioid use, survivors of trauma-coupled with a mental health diagnosis, veterans needing support due to PTSD and ex-offenders working to reintegrate back into mainstream society. Many people are struggling due to ineffective treatment or unavailable services. Although occupational therapy was founded in mental health practice, the profession moved into different practice settings. Now AOTA has identified [Mental Health as a key practice area of the 21st Century](#). Jefferson's OT department is ahead of the curve, already preparing future OT practitioners to meet the occupational needs of all individuals, regardless of circumstance.

Since 2008, Dr. Tina DeAngelis and Dr. Kim Mollo have introduced students to candid, evidence-based material related to OT in mental and/or behavioral health settings. Topics include a critical review of DSM-V criteria and studying the impact that a serious mental illness may have on social participation. OT students learn how to apply models such as the Transtheoretical Model to guide treatment and intervention planning and to use cognitive behavioral strategies to address needs of people struggling with addiction. Significant education also centers on understanding the impact of stigma, while encouraging students to explore personal biases. A highlight of the curriculum, according to students, is the standardized patient encounter in which students implement an everyday task with a "client" with schizophrenia - actually an actor trained to appear actively psychotic or display the negative symptoms of the diagnosis. Following the session, the actors provide feedback on the interaction and therapeutic use of self.

To further complement this experience Dr. Lydia Navarro-Walker and Ms. Caryn Johnson, Jefferson's academic fieldwork coordinators, have organized community based level I fieldwork experiences where students run health and wellness-based programming in settings such as a group home for mothers with addiction and their children, a program for people who identify as transgender and have a history of addiction, a behavioral health center for ex-offenders with addiction, safe havens for people with a history of serious mental illness, and a program that helps veterans with PTSD get back on their feet. OT groups in these settings emphasize role development or resumption, time and money management, the development of coping skills, healthy eating and routines, and medication management. Experiences like these often spark a student's interest in this practice area.

In recent years some of our students have expressed interest working in mental/behavioral health after graduation. Jobs have not been plentiful in this area of practice, but these individuals persevered. Today the department is proud to note that Jefferson graduates have filled many of the newly posted OT positions in mental and/or behavioral health in the northeast. Their photos are included here. If you are a Jefferson OT alumnus working in a mental and/or behavioral health setting and we missed you, please share your story! Contact Tina.Deangelis@jefferson.edu.



Jefferson OT alumni who are working in the mental health field. From Left: Robert "Bobby" Walsh, Danielle Nowak, Erin Shervinskie, Anna Gardener, and Samantha "Sam" Susson.

Community Service SpOTlight

On February 11 & 27, students volunteered to help fix the library of Southwark Elementary School.

On March 16, SOTA Advocacy group held a movie night on the movie "13th". It highlighted OT's potential role in the prison system.

On March 28, students participated in the Love Run Half Marathon.

On March 31, students participated in the Relay for Life run to fight back against cancer.

On April 12, SOTA held its first OT Raffle Fundraiser Night. Students bought raffle tickets to win awesome prizes and enjoyed pizza and cookies.

Alumni Highlight: Bobby Walsh, MS, OTR/L

Bobby Walsh, MS'11, OTR/L, is the first occupational therapist to complete The Johns Hopkins Hospital Mental Health Occupational Therapy Residency program, accredited by the American Occupational Therapy Association. This program is designed to promote the advancement of knowledge and clinical expertise of an occupational therapist in the focused area of mental health. Bobby participated in this 12-month program from September 2015-2016.

The residency offers OTs an opportunity to increase their knowledge base and develop skills in clinical practice, clinical reasoning, and high-quality, evidence-based care. Bobby completed didactic educational experiences and integrated advanced clinical practice in general psychiatry, eating disorders, schizophrenia, child and adolescent psychiatry, motivated behaviors/substance use, geriatrics, chronic pain, and young adult/adult affective disorders. He advocated and performed outreach education to promote legislation that impacted the role of mental health OT and access to services at AOTA's Hill Day and Lobby Night through the Maryland Occupational Therapy Association.

As part of the residency, Bobby taught mental health practice concepts to OT students at Towson University and OT assistant students at Community College of Baltimore County. He also began a research study to determine if adults with mental health diagnoses who adhere to an occupationally balanced schedule experience increased overall quality of life. This is in response to a shift in mental health services toward a more holistic approach that takes quality of life into consideration, and also recognizes the need to establish effectiveness data for occupational services.

The residency also included two clinical courses: "Occupational Therapy in Mental Health: Considerations of Advanced Practice" and "Mental Health Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention with Children and Youth: A Guiding Framework for Occupational Therapy." These courses provided comprehensive information on advances and trends in mental health practice, including current theories, standards of practice, literature, and research as they apply to occupational therapy. Engaging in advanced learning opportunities, including residencies, helps practitioners with advanced skills and knowledge develop leadership roles in and outside of occupational therapy realms. Assuming positions of leadership and influence in policy-making, clinical services, and education is vital to the sustainability of occupational therapy practice in mental health.

CREATE Day Spring 2017

Collaborative Research and Evidence shared Among Therapists and Educators

CREATE Day is a presentation of graduating students' capstone research projects which consist of systematic reviews that answer clinical questions. Student Renee Tallman shares, "CREATE Day was a great conclusion to our program as it allowed me to share the current evidence on a topic that will be relevant in my future practice. I would like to come back to future CREATE Days to continue to grow as an evidence based practitioner." The BS/MS class of 2017 presented four systematic reviews at CREATE Day on May 2, 2017.

Sleep: Its Impact on Health

Ariana Amato, Amanda Broom, Karly Brown, Jenna Grady & Bryanna Resh

The results of their systematic review showed four effective interventions that occupational therapists could use to promote healthy sleep routines among typical adults including physical exercise, such as pilates, taijiquan, yoga, and qigong; auditory stimuli, such as classical and relaxing music; wellness programs; and lighting. The team found that physical exercise and auditory stimuli had the strongest evidence to support these interventions.

Improving Sexual Intimacy of Adults with Physical Disabilities

Danielle Greer, Lizzie Lafferty, Kerrie McCarty & Katie Storms

This group wanted to find out, within the scope of occupational therapy, whether training on adaptations and safety precautions improves participation in sexual intimacy for adults with physical disabilities. Through their systematic review, they found that interventions geared toward the psychological aspect of sexuality had strong evidence to support it. They also found that interventions geared towards the physical aspect of sexuality and towards the relational aspects of sexuality had moderate evidence to support that they could improve participation in sexual intimacy for this population.

What is CREATE Day?

CREATE Day is a regional continuing education event, open to current students, alumni and practitioners in the Philadelphia area. It is an opportunity for practitioners to stay up to day on current practice and gain insight on current research.

Attendees receive two hours of professional development units for the event. View the 2017 CREATE Day presentations [here](#).

Effects of Transition Services for Students with Cerebral Palsy on Employment

Jamie Hediger, Lauren Mikalauskas & Sarah Runion

This group wanted to understand which interventions within the scope of occupational therapy would assist in the transition from high school to long-term employment in individuals with cerebral palsy. Although the search did not yield information on interventions, they found evidence supporting the correlation between ongoing employment supports and positive employment outcomes.

Effects of Alternative Seating in the Classroom

Kassandra Beckage, Caitlin Hunter, Samantha Kampmeier, Elisabeth Richt & Renee Tallman

The group wanted to determine if alternative seating in the classroom improved overall classroom performance in children with attention difficulties. The search yielded evidence to support the use of the Disc'O'Sit and the stability ball to increase on-task behavior in children with attention difficulties, and showed that they may also improve in-seat behavior in these children.



OT & Design at Jefferson

Occupational therapists are usually creative thinkers, so collaboration with designers is a natural fit. Lately our students and faculty have been busy doing just that.

This spring, Jefferson and Philadelphia University offered a Healthcare + Industrial Design course for JeffDESIGN Sidney Kimmel Medical College Students, Jefferson OT students, and PhilaU industrial design students. Eleven teams identified ways to improve care using design thinking and Next-Gen technology with support from Comcast Collaboration Studio. Jeff BS/MS OT students Megan Vesey, Brenna Jacko, and Nuriya Neumann participated.

Kimberly Mollo, OTD, OTR/L is the keynote speaker at Jefferson's Faculty Days program on June 6. Her presentation is titled *Understanding the End-User: How Do We Improve Performance and Participation with Design?* Dr. Mollo notes that although hackathon events for interdisciplinary teams of medical professionals, designers, and engineers are becoming common to address healthcare problems, these collaborations often do not include an end user within the team. Her presentation explores the impact of end-user involvement in design by showing examples of successful end-user engagement, and offering ways for clinicians and educators to become more involved within design and healthcare.

Design & Ergonomics (Work + Industry), a new course offered in the fall, will examine the advantages to, design implications for, and impacts on users when ergonomics and human factors are incorporated throughout the design process. This multidisciplinary experience will include industrial design, architecture, and occupational therapy students. The course will be led by Mikael Avery, M.Arch, MS, OTR/L ('16 OT alumnus & PhilaU adjunct faculty) and includes input from Kimberly Mollo, OTD, OTR/L, and Stephen Kern, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.

Professional SpOTlights

Professor MJ Mulcahey, PhD, OTR/L, was honored by the American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA) with a named scholarship, the M.J. Mulcahey Young Investigator Outcomes Research Award, which will be given yearly in her name.

Jefferson faculty and students participated in nearly 100 posters, institutes and presentations at the 2017 Annual AOTA Conference in Philadelphia in March. Visit our [website](#) for a complete listing.

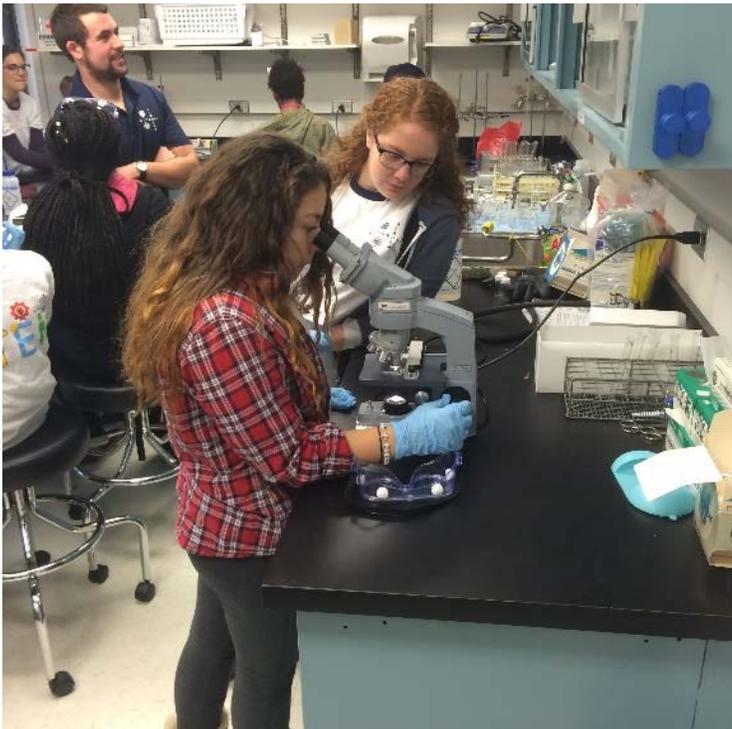
OT Students Mentor Middle Schoolers in Saturday Academy Pipeline program

OT students were key to the success of Jefferson's inaugural Saturday Academy program, aimed to introduce middle school students to careers in medicine, medical research and the health professions. The program ran for nine Saturdays throughout the academic year. Local middle school students from under-represented minority backgrounds participated in activities like basic science lectures on anatomy and physiology, biology, chemistry, and math/biostatistics. A laboratory component gave students a chance to practice lab skills and they also had experiential education opportunities focused on health related professions.

The Saturday Academy program depends on Jefferson student mentors to work with the middle schoolers. More than 20 OT students volunteered - more than any other academic discipline. Their role was to engage the middle schoolers and ensure that they understood what they were learning. The OT students also shared their own success strategies that the middle school participants could replicate, and told them about the OT profession and shared personal stories about why they became interested in healthcare.



Saturday Academy participants engage in activities with the Jefferson Concussion Center



Saturday Academy participants examine their cheek cells in the microscope

Pipeline Programs

The Saturday Academy program is just one of Jefferson's [Health Science Pipeline Programs](#) aimed at increasing the interest and pool of diverse and qualified health professionals through community outreach, workforce development, and the creation of strategic partnerships with emphasis on mentorship and recruitment of diverse populations.

Jefferson offers programs for middle schoolers, high schoolers and undergraduate students - all focused on preparing and inspiring students to pursue careers in medicine, medical research and the health professions.

Post-professional OTD Spotlight: Fatima Hendricks, OTD, MBA, MSc AIM, OTR/L

For her doctoral fellowship as a Post-Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (PP-OTD) student, Fatima Hendricks, OTD, MBA, MSc AIM, OTR/L, researched OT students' perceptions of authentic leadership through a camp that she developed and implemented in South Africa, where she lives.

Thirty-four students representing six out of the eight OT schools in South Africa participated in the pilot National Student Leadership camp. Supported and partly funded by the [Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa](#) (OTASA) and under the academic mentorship and supervision of Dr. Susan Toth-Cohen, Ms. Hendricks analyzed data on student perceptions of authentic leadership using pre- and post tests, session evaluations, and qualitative content analysis of student narratives.

She also conducted a webinar on leadership designed to unite students from the different universities under the banner of OTASA to strengthen their leadership knowledge and inspire participation in the national professional association. Dr. Helen Buchanan, president of OTASA, was the webinar's keynote speaker. She emphasized the organization's vision to "provide avenues for student involvement in meeting the occupational needs of all South Africans" and encouraged students to get ready for the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Congress in Cape Town in May 2018.

Dr. Hendricks completed her studies this spring and traveled to campus to attend the [JCHP Commencement](#) on May 22, 2017. As she continues her career, she hopes to inspire sound leadership and followership development. She credits the PPOTD program with stretching her perceptions of OT leadership to meet the needs of diverse communities and for inspiring her with confidence, insights into cultural competence and leadership tools.



Fatima Hendricks, OTD'17

Post-Professional OTD Program Turns 10 in September!

The post-professional doctorate in occupational therapy (PP-OTD) program will celebrate 10 years in September 2017.

As of May 2017, the PPOTD program has graduated 73 students from locations across the US to Capetown, South Africa. Alumni have published peer-reviewed articles in journals that include the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, and the *Journal of Neonatal Intensive Care Nursing*.

Alumni also have presented on numerous topics for AOTA and other national, state, and international conferences.

Our relationships with alumni continue after graduation, with quarterly PPOTD Updates from the field and collaboration with Jefferson faculty on various scholarly activities.

Interested in learning more about the PPOTD? Visit our [website](#) for information about the curriculum and admission process and our [Facebook page](#) to see current news about PPOTD activities and alumni.



Good-bye and good luck to the BS/MS graduating class of 2017.

*"Don't just get involved. Fight for your seat at the table.
Better yet, fight for a seat at the head of the table."*

-Barack Obama

Save the Date!

As an OT you know that continuing education is a key component to best practice. Connecting with peers is important too!

You are invited to attend these upcoming events on the Thomas Jefferson University campus:

August 17: CREATE Day

- Registration at 5:00 p.m.

To learn more or to register to attend, please contact caryn.johnson@jefferson.edu.

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