

TUFTS BSOT Notes



PROMOTING POSSIBILITY

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BSOT Alumni Excel in Variety of Fields

by Bob Bochnak

ALYSON PITMAN GILES, BSOT '77, president and CEO, leaves her Catholic Medical Center (CMC) office and proceeds down the hall. Giles is going on her administrative rounds. "I frequently dress in scrubs and observe open heart surgery, general surgery, and cath labs," Giles (formerly Alyson C. Rock) says. "Or I just talk to employees to learn what's on their minds." Giles has instituted several community health and wellness classes and is spearheading the New Hampshire center's \$19-million building expansion project. "After I graduated, I worked as an occupational therapist in a psychiatric unit," Giles says. "I later took on a management role in a nursing home, and from this experience it became very clear to me that management was my strongest skill."

Giles is just one of many BSOT alumni excelling in fields that include health care, nonprofit management, writing, and product development.

This doesn't mean that graduates like Alyson Pitman Giles have left occupational therapy behind. To the contrary, occupational therapy continues to play a prominent role in the lives of these graduates. For Lynn Moore, BSOT '75, an epidemiologist and associate professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, occupational therapy is crucial to her research, which covers everything from obesity and diabetes in children and adults to nutrition and the etiology of birth defects. "Occupational therapy taught me to think holistically about health and human development throughout the lifespan," she says. "In addition to the usefulness of the conceptual foundations of occupational therapy to my scientific thinking, there are many specific things such as functional assessment methodology or theories of behavioral change that I use daily in my work."

BSOT alumni are also working as occupational therapists and going beyond direct-care roles. Diane Walker, BSOT '96, is an example of this evolving occupational therapist. A public school occupational therapist, sensory integration specialist, and owner of a

private practice, Walker has established herself as a writer, which has given her a chance to share the benefits of occupational therapy with a diverse audience of practitioners and parents. Additionally, Walker has taken a lead role in shaping public policy around occupational therapy. She is a member-at-large of the Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy's (MAOT) executive board and has been an active speaker on behalf of the profession. "I also lead the MAOT School System Special Interest Group, hosted by BSOT faculty member Sharon Ray," she said, "and we are writing state guidelines for occupational therapy in schools."



Alyson Pitman Giles listens to staff concerns.

Dr. Helen Cohen, BSOT '76, associate professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, is also balancing direct service with other interests. When she isn't working with clients, Cohen is teaching and conducting research on vestibular compensation and rehabilitation through the Baylor Center for Balance Disorders, where she serves as associate director. "Occupational therapists can do anything," says Cohen. "The ability to do activity analysis, to relate to a wide variety of problems, and to make ourselves comfortable in a wide range of environments with many different populations is an advantage that allows occupational therapists to work in a lot of different areas. I know of several occupational therapists who do not do clinical practice, but are in basic neuroscience research."

Regardless of where they work, these occupational therapists can help promote the profession. "I think that they can be very vocal advocates," says Joseph Isaacs, executive director of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). "They can promote occupational therapy knowledge, availability, and coverage in their worlds, which may be a corporate, consultant or coaching setting. Whatever the setting, those who have experienced training in occupational therapy can espouse its virtues and raise general awareness of its unique contributions to health, well-being, and quality of life." ■

Jeannie Dapice and her dog, Curtis



STUDENT PROFILE:

Jennie Dapice, Occupational Therapy Student

by Bob Bochnak

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY graduate student Jennie Dapice walked into a Seattle, Washington, animal shelter as a volunteer in 1999. She walked out with a new friend and a greater understanding of occupational therapy. “I volunteered for three years at the Seattle Animal Shelter and ended up with a dog named Curtis,” she says. “He expressed his love for people in such a serene way that I thought I should share him. He was part of a pet therapy program we started at the shelter. This experience helped me learn about occupational therapy and that animals and occupational therapy can go together.”

Dapice, who was team leader of the Seattle Animal Shelter’s Pet Therapy Program, recalls the case of one resident in particular, a woman with a severe muscular condition. Confined to a wheelchair, she could barely raise her head and could only see out of the corner of her eyes. But when Dapice approached her with a dog, the woman noticed the animal and lifted her head for the first time in months. Dapice and her team tried other therapeutic approaches. For example, they let the woman brush and pet the

animal to improve her range of motion.

The dogs helped the residents from a social perspective too, giving them an opportunity to connect with both animals and humans—something that many didn’t have or were exposed to infre-

“This made me realize how many people are affected by animals,” Dapice says.

“It’s not just the animal... it’s also the interaction of the volunteers coming and talking to people.”

quently. “This work made me realize how many people are affected by animals,” Dapice says. “It’s not just the animal. It’s also the social interaction of the volunteers coming in and talking to people. There was a woman who was nonverbal, according to one of the people working at the home. She spent time with us and our dogs, and eventually got to talking about the dog she had owned. So, that was pretty motivating.”

Dapice returned to Boston to pursue a master’s at BSOT in May 2002 and is currently volunteering for Canine Compan-

ions for Independence (CCI), a nonprofit organization that provides highly trained assistance dogs to disabled individuals. CCI also offers occupational therapists and other rehabilitation professionals the opportunity to use the dogs in their own client work as well.* As a volunteer, Dapice helps train the dogs and represents CCI at events like the Tufts Animal Expo and the Bay Colony Dog Show. “Above all else, I became involved with CCI because of their work with animals and occupational therapy,” says Dapice. “But I also enjoy promoting CCI and getting the word out about the organization. There are a lot of interested people from different backgrounds and the more we reach the better.”

Dapice, who earned a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Tufts in 1998, has been interested in animals since she was a child. Growing up, she spent countless hours around horses, dogs, and barn cats. She hopes that animals will be a part of her future, especially on a professional level. “I hope that my future occupational therapy career involves the use of a dog from CCI,” says Dapice. “Clearly not all clients will be interested in this type of therapy, but many will. It would be unethical not to pursue the idea of animals in therapy, and I believe many people would lose out if it doesn’t become more readily available. The research is lagging behind the ‘anecdotal evidence’ that animals make people

more healthy and responsive to treatment, but it will catch up if I have anything to do with it.”

Based on what we’ve seen so far, Jennie Dapice just might. ■

**To learn more about Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) and how you can use one of their highly trained dogs in your practice or client work, call 1-800-572-BARK (1-800-572-2275) or go to www.caninecompanions.org.*

From Patient to Occupational Therapist

by Ilana Greenberg, M.S., BSOT '02

MY FIRST EXPOSURE TO occupational therapy was not as a therapist but as a patient. I had planned to pursue a career in natural resources, after earning an undergraduate degree. All that changed when I was in a near-fatal car accident the fall after my college graduation. I sustained a traumatic brain injury, two collapsed lungs, torn carotid arteries, and a fistula behind my left eye. I spent the rest of the year recovering from my injuries and receiving occupational therapy services for my badly broken arm.

As I was recovering, I realized that I could not work in a field that didn't involve people. I felt the need to stay in the medical field and help others as I had been helped. Occupational therapy was my choice because it seemed like the most creative of all rehabilitation services. I entered the world of occupational therapy with my very narrow view of what the field encompassed, thinking on the first day of school, "There is psychology involved in this?" and "What is an ADL?"

During the summer session of 2001, I took a class titled "The Natural World." It embodies a combination of my passions: nature and therapy. While researching my final project for the class, I learned of the T.H.E. (Tewksbury Hospital Equestrian) Farm, a new therapeutic horse barn on the Tewksbury State Hospital campus. I visited the facility before the horses were even there.

After receiving a master's degree from BSOT in the spring of 2002 (and after spending a couple of months bicycling from Canada to Mexico), I came back to Boston to look for work. In order to pursue my nontraditional avenues, I decided to get a part-time "real job" and "play" with the rest of my

week. I contacted the T.H.E. Farm and was welcomed with open arms. I became a NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) registered therapeutic horseback riding instructor and started giving lessons to individuals with disabilities. Although the farm is on the hospital campus, it is a separate entity. I am currently leading two hospital programs at the T.H.E. Farm. The members of the self-titled Giddy-up Farm Group have varying degrees of performance skills and mental functions which has resulted in their spending most of their lives in the hospital. To offer the residents a chance to be in a novel environment, around nonjudgmental, big, fuzzy, warm creatures, and to give them an opportunity to give something back to the community is amazingly therapeutic. The second group comes from the Huntington's disease unit. The clients work together to accomplish tasks in the barn, from sweeping the aisle to mucking out a stall. As an occupational therapist, I am also starting the pilot hippotherapy program at the farm. Hippotherapy uses the horse as the modality for therapy. The goals of hippotherapy are functional, versus therapeutic riding, wherein the goals are more equestrian-centered.

Before starting a hippotherapy program, I thought I should gain more experience in an established program. I called Liz Baker, a physical therapist in Massachusetts who is one of the foremost therapists in the field of hippotherapy. I asked to do a mentorship with her, which turned into job number



Ilana Greenberg

two at Greenlock Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc., in Rehoboth.

My third job, or "real job," is in early intervention at Boston Regional Child Development Center-Mattapan, working with infants and children (ages 0 to 3 years). After working in acute care for three months and discovering that it wasn't for me, I gave early intervention a chance and fell in love with the field. I work with a variety of children and families in communities around Boston.

I have been fortunate in finding three jobs I feel passionate about. Each job is unique. Each day, I learn and develop my skills as an occupational therapist. I hope to continue with this nice balance of "occupations" and see where it leads me. ■

Occupational therapist Ilana Greenberg can be reached at ilanagreenberg@hotmail.com.

BSOT's 85th Anniversary



We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to those who contributed to our 85th anniversary Tufts-BSOT Alumni Giving fund. For those still interested, please contact Judy Farrington at 617-627-5929 or judith.farrington@tufts.edu.



Over 125 faculty, former faculty, students, BSOT alumni, and affiliates gathered on October 2, 2003, to celebrate BSOT's 85th anniversary. Dr. Sharan Schwartzberg, professor and chair, welcomed the group and shared current trends in occupational therapy and the mission and goals of the BSOT. Featured speaker Dr. Paul Leavis enlightened the audience with his presentation titled "Physical Activity and Aging: Effects on Health and Disease." Those present enjoyed seeing old friends, networking, and making new acquaintances. Shown above (clockwise in photos): Current students Nicole Levesque and Jennie Dapice (BSOT '04) converse with BSOT alumnae Jessica Normand (BSOT '01) and Marion Crampton (BSOT '37). BSOT alumna Roselyn Listernik (T' 54) and husband, Dr. Stanley E. Listernick, B.S., M.Ed., D.M.D., (triple Jumbo—T'50, '51, and '55), enjoy the festivities. Tufts University Vice President of University Relations Mary Jeka, Dr. Sharan Schwartzberg, and BSOT alumna Marion Crampton in a lively discussion. A captivated crowd enjoys the humor and wisdom of Dr. Leavis's words. Associate Professor Emeritus Helen Smith with current MAOT president and BSOT alumna Mary Malone (BSOT '93).

BSOT Gatherings



BSOT faculty, students, and alumnae gather at the BSOT Alumni Reception held during the AOTA Conference in Washington, D.C. June 6-9, 2003.



BSOT Class of '52 gathering in Washington, D.C., June 2003. Shown in photo are: Lee Weber Cox, Grace Heckel Lebow, Suzanne Stone Johnson, Bonnie Bird Scheig, Muriel Maxwell, and Virginia Auty Medved-Cook.

BSOT Alumni in the News



CHARLOTTE BRASIC ROYEEN, PH.D., OTR, FAOTA

Charlotte Brasic Royeen was awarded the Eleanor Clarke Slagle's Lectureship, presented at the AOTA's 83rd Annual Conference and Expo in Washington, D.C. on "Chaotic Occupational Therapy: A 'Telling'," discussing the art and science of occupational therapy. Effective July 1, she became dean of the Margaret and Edward Doisey School of Allied Health Professions, St. Louis University, Missouri.

AOTA, The American Occupational Therapy Association, Volume 8, Issue 10, June 2, 2003



WENDY WOOD, PH.D., OTR/L, FAOTA

Wendy Wood presented the plenary session addressing what constitutes the mind, heart and soul of professionalism in occupational therapy at AOTA's Annual Conference and Expo in Washington, D.C. Wendy Wood is Associate Professor in the Division of Occupational Science and Program in Occupational Therapy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

AOTA, The American Occupational Therapy Association, 2003



HELEN COHEN, ED.D., OTR, FAOTA

Associate professor at the Bobby R. Alford Department of Otorhinolaryngology and Communicative Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, Helen Cohen was admitted as a Member of the Academy of Research of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation in June 2003 in recognition of her scholarly research in vestibular rehabilitation. The Academy of Research recognizes individuals who have made exemplary and distinguished contributions relating to the science of occupational therapy. Dr. Cohen conducts research on vestibular rehabilitation designed to decrease vertigo and balance problems and to improve functional independence in patients. This work includes studies of improved ways to teach people to generalize what they are learning about their motor skills when they are subjected to conditions of altered sensory experience, whether due to sensory loss or changes in the external environment. ■

These alumni updates are just a sampling of what BSOT has on their Web site at <http://ase.tufts.edu/bsot/news/news.asp>. We encourage BSOT alumni to visit our alumni link and to check out the numerous alumni services available. Let us know what you have been doing personally and professionally either via the Tufts online community or via the BSOT Forum link off BSOT's main Web site!

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

BSOT in its 85th Anniversary Year

BSOT is expanding its horizons. Our graduates are stretching their educational preparation to roles beyond traditional practice. While building a strong foundation for the future, we ensure the vitality of the profession and other venues of practice and research. As you can see from the stories included in this edition, the BSOT education is serving our graduates well.

The curriculum and scholarship at BSOT continues to attract a strong student body and faculty. We welcome Dr. Gary Bedell as our newest full-time faculty member. He brings specialized knowledge in outcomes measurement. He has done outcomes research on functional activity and social participation of children and youth with acquired brain injuries as well as health management and work transition for people with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, after a long process of self-study, the BSOT program now carries six themes across the curriculum. They are:

- Clinical Reasoning
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Multicultural Perspectives
- Person-Environment-Occupation Linkages
- Ethics
- Collaborative Practice with Clients, Families, Caretakers, Technical, and Other Related Personnel

Thank you all for contributing to the success of BSOT. We look forward to the next decade of occupational therapy preparation through BSOT. Whether directly involved in occupational therapy or not, our community continues to serve as a professional and personal support network.

If you are interested in writing an article for our alumni page or being involved in other alumni relations efforts, please contact us at 617-627-5960 or e-mail mary.barnes@tufts.edu.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to hearing from you. ■



Sharan Schwartzberg, Ed. D., OTR, FAOTA professor and chair, Boston School of Occupational Therapy

MARK MORELLI

Stay connected! We are seeking class stewards, individuals who are interested in acting as a liaison between their graduating class and the BSOT. If you are interested, please contact Mary Alicia Barnes at 617-627-5960 or mary.barnes@tufts.edu.

Marathon Women

Tufts BSOT students volunteered at the Boston Marathon in April 2003. Student Jennie Dapice ran the marathon as part of President Bacow's Tufts team.



Top row (left to right): Elizabeth Adcock, BSOT '03, Megan McMahon, BSOT '03, Amy Horin, BSOT '03, Lisa Anderson, BSOT '04, Melissa Redl, BSOT '04, Kristy Jennings, BSOT '05, Kori Selvaggi, BSOT '05, Michelle Casey-BSOT '04

Bottom row (left to right): Jaime Alterman, BSOT '03, Gabby Gaudreau, BSOT '04, Jenn Medieros, BSOT '04, Nicole Levesque, BSOT '04, Kylie Noyes, BSOT '04, Mary McCafferty, BSOT '04, Jennie Kay, BSOT '05.

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BSOT Notes is the alumni newsletter for the Boston School of Occupational Therapy.

We'd like to hear from you.

If there are comments you would like to make, issues you would like to see covered, an article you would like to contribute, or if there is a fellow alumnus/a you would like to see interviewed for a future article, please contact us at the address above or e-mail mary.barnes@tufts.edu.

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