



Jan Hollenbeck Builds Website—and Community—for School-Based Occupational Therapists

As many occupational therapists know, school-based practice is very different from clinical practice. Occupational therapists in schools must adhere to strict federal and state special education mandates and provide services related to a child's *in-school* performance; issues that do not affect the child while he or she is in school are outside the purview of the school-based practitioner.

Yet, although the school setting is one of the largest practice areas for occupational therapists in the United States, there is a dearth of specific resources available for these practitioners. That's why current Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) student Jan Hollenbeck, MS, OTR/L ('84), has made it her mission to design a website specifically for school-based therapists. "There is not a lot of information out there about the issues these practitioners face, yet there is a huge need," Hollenbeck says.

She should know. For more than 15 years, Hollenbeck has worked in the Medford (Mass.) Public Schools, first as a therapist and now as the district's coordinator of related services, managing all occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision, and assistive technology programs. According to Hollenbeck, school-based practitioners face many challenges. They must acquire a unique and changing set of skills, including understanding their state's guidelines as well as federal mandates. In addition, school-based therapists can feel isolated because they often work as solo practitioners in school settings, rather than with other occupational therapy colleagues as is often the case in hospi-



SCOTT BREWITT

tal or clinical practices. They also may feel inadequately prepared to enter school-based practice based on entry-level education alone. In Hollenbeck's experience, colleagues have consistently reported that they have difficulty finding information about the specific issues they face as school-based practitioners. As a result, "occupational therapy practice in schools is often not in line with current educational policy and published views of best practice," Hollenbeck says.

She first decided to tackle this problem in 2001, when she joined the Massachusetts Association for Occupational Therapy (MAOT) School Special Interest Group Task Force to help clarify the role of occupational therapy in Massachusetts' public schools (see *BSOT Notes*, Winter '06). At the request of school-based practitioners yearning for resources, Hollenbeck—along with Tufts professor Sharon Ray and colleagues and Tufts alumnae June Bunch ('65) and Diane Blengs (Walker) ('96)—developed *Guide-*

lines for Provision of Occupational Therapy Services in Massachusetts Public Schools to explain federal and state legislation, outline scope of practice, and provide examples and resources.

Since the *Guidelines*' publication in 2005, Hollenbeck and her colleagues have become the "go to" resource for issues pertaining to school-based occupational therapy practice within Massachusetts. The team has presented at MAOT conferences, offered workshops, and lectured about school-based practice throughout the state. They also formed PASS, Partnership for Advancement of School Service-providers, which offers professional development and consultation for individuals, groups, and school systems. Last summer, Hollenbeck, Ray, and Bunch developed and led a summer institute called *Current Issues in School-based Occupational Therapy*—the first of its kind ever to be funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education. According to Hollenbeck, the institute drew over 200 applications for 30 slots and received extremely positive reviews from participants. This feedback confirmed for her a need she has recognized for years. "The guidelines we developed are a step in the right direction but they only go so far. Virtually every school practitioner I have spoken to—*anywhere*—has expressed a desire for comprehensive, school-based resources," she says.

For Hollenbeck, an accessible, informative website was the perfect way to fill this void. It was also a perfect project for her doctoral candidacy at Tufts. "When I **Hollenbeck** continued on page 8

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am honored to be writing my first message to you as chair of the Department of Occupational Therapy at Tufts. Following in the footsteps of Sharan Schwartzberg, who served with distinction for 21 years, I know I have big shoes to fill, but I look forward to leading the department while building upon its tradition of excellence in teaching and scholarship.

One of the primary strengths of the discipline of occupational therapy is a century-long history predicated on the value of the arts and sciences for understanding and enhancing healthy and satisfying daily living. As occupational therapists, we have learned from experience and research that health is greater than an individual's bodily structure and function, is inseparable from the experience of well-being, and can be fostered through healthful patterns of daily living that are supported in one's home and community. In our working to connect mind to body, action to environment, and individual to community, occupational science and occupational therapy stand at the intersection of biology, psychology, and anthropology. As part of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Occupational Therapy is ideally positioned to educate individuals who can actively participate in and advance an interdisciplinary and collaborative paradigm of health and healthcare.



ROSE LINCOLN

Our strategic planning focuses on this paradigm by supporting the Department's participation in interdisciplinary teaching and research initiatives. With the Health Quality of Life Laboratory as a resource, we are building an infrastructure to support an interdisciplinary approach to health and wellness. As our new dean Lynne Pepall, PhD, states on p. 5, the Tufts Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is clear about the Department of Occupational Therapy's interconnectedness to Tufts, the civic nature of our service, and our value not just to the university, but to our profession and society.

As a top-ranked graduate program, the Department of Occupational Therapy continues to offer our students an abundance of resources for learning, practice, and research. We encourage our students to reason and approach practice in context and to creatively work in collaboration with clients and communities to better all our lives. I am pleased to report that the Department of Occupational Therapy has had a 100% pass rate for our 2007 first time takers on the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) examination.

Our faculty continues to be recognized as excellent teachers as well as eminent scholars and researchers. Our faculty and staff are experienced and pride themselves on being accessible, supportive, and attentive to our students. I look forward to working with them as we take the Department of Occupational Therapy in new directions.

I also value our alumni and partners in fieldwork and research. Your strong ties to Tufts reinforce our department's honored reputation and I look forward to getting to know more of you in my role as chair. I welcome your ideas about the department and hope you will come visit us. With your input, we can continue to advance the important work of occupational therapy.

Sincerely,

Linda Tickle-Degnen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Professor and Chair

ALUMNI CORNER

Alexis Henry Helps People Get Back To Work

For Alexis Henry, ScD, OTR/L ('80), breaking down barriers is a lifelong mission. As the co-principal investigator on the Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure and Comprehensive Employment Opportunities Grant (MI-CEO), Henry, along with other MI-CEO team members at the University of Massachusetts' Worcester and Boston campuses and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services, works to promote competitive employment opportunities for people with all kinds of disabilities, including physical, psychological, and developmental. According to Henry, people with disabilities are less likely to work, but not—as many people assume—solely because of health or other debilitating factors. In fact, “these individuals face many barriers related to lack of education, poverty, poor transportation options, and disincentives at the state and federal levels,” she says.

For example, once working-age people with disabilities become eligible for disability benefits, such as Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Medicare and Medicaid, there are few incentives for them to get off benefits and go back to work. Under the 1999 federal *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act* (TWWIIA), however, the government is trying to maximize employment opportunities for these individuals. The MI-CEO grant (a federal grant funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) creates a partnership among Medicaid, state

“Our activities are aimed at removing barriers so that people with disabilities can go back to work and keep working.”

—Alexis Henry



vocational rehabilitation agencies, and other organizations, including consumer advocacy groups, policy makers, employers, health care providers, and employment service providers, to remove barriers and create work incentives for people with disabilities.

Henry and the MI-CEO team in Massachusetts are focusing on improving infrastructure—analyzing policies and making recommendations that will promote employment. Currently, Henry oversees many different initiatives, from reviewing the policies of Mass Health (Massachusetts' Medicaid program) to providing policy-makers with accurate information about the state's disabled population. "All of our activities are aimed at removing barriers so that people with disabilities can go back to work and keep working," Henry says. "Employment helps these individuals stay healthier and become more active, contributing members of society."

For Henry, who is also a research assistant professor of psychiatry at the Center for Health Policy and Research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, a background in occupational therapy has provided a "fabulous foundation" for her work on the MI-CEO grant. "At the core of occupational therapy is the interaction of the person *with* the environment. In my work, I focus on the *system*—on understanding and changing environmental factors to facilitate, rather than create barriers to, employment for people with disabilities," she says.

Tufts' Active Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) Club Builds Awareness and Provides Community Service

It has been a busy year already for the Tufts chapter of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)—and it's only February! In the fall, SOTA participated in a variety of activities that built occupational therapy awareness and provided community service—two key goals of the 2007 student membership.

On September 30th, SOTA hosted an information table at Tufts Community Day, a university-wide event that draws hundreds of families from the Medford-Somerville area. Students from the Department of Occupational Therapy helped children make "stress balls" out of balloons filled with rice, flour, or both, giving the children a choice of texture. In keeping with AOTA's backpack awareness campaign to help children learn to properly pack and wear their backpacks, SOTA also raffled off a backpack.

According to Deborah Semler, SOTA's community service co-chair, the Department's participation in Community Day is "important for getting the word out about occupational therapy. Kids asked a lot of questions about what therapists do and got excellent exposure to our profession."

SOTA also made a strong showing at the *Autism Speaks* walk at Suffolk Downs racetrack on October 14. *Team BSOTS*, made up of Department of Occupational Therapy students, family, and friends, enjoyed the walk around the track on a gorgeous fall day, and raised \$1,500 for

autism research. Says Pamela Woolfrey, community service co-chair, "the event was a great community-building experience and a great way to raise funds for a worthy cause."

Five SOTA students were involved in professional development as well. Jane Crimmins, Lynda Fong, Janet Pleitner, Julia Thompson, and Megan Yeh worked with Professor Janet Curran-Brooks to develop a poster presentation for the Massachusetts Association of Occupational Therapy's (MAOT) annual conference on October 19. Based on the students' work in a clinical research class at Tufts, the presentation compared the strengths of lateral pinch vs. three-jaw chuck pinch. According to outgoing SOTA President Jane Crimmins, the team "really took the research project beyond the limits of the class and it was very exciting to be accepted to present at MAOT."

Crimmins is also excited about SOTA's transition in leadership. The new SOTA officers took over at the beginning of spring semester, with first-year student Melinda Morgrage as president. According to Crimmins, SOTA builds a strong sense of community among Department of Occupational Therapy students and gives its student leadership "invaluable experience in working with and leading others," she says. "I really enjoyed being the president of SOTA and am looking forward to seeing the personality of the new class emerge."



SOTA students enjoy the Autism Speaks walk with family and friends.

Catching up with...

Mary Beth Kadlec, ScD, OTR/L (Lecturer; part-time)

Mary Beth Kadlec, ScD, brings more than 25 years of experience in pediatric occupational therapy to her role as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Occupational Therapy. She holds a BS and MS in occupational therapy and a ScD in therapeutic studies from Boston University. As a clinician, she has worked in schools, hospitals, and early intervention programs and has served as a teaching fellow at Boston University's Department of Occupational Therapy. Her research interests include understanding the aspects of caregiver-child interactions that support children's participation in their families, schools, and communities, with a focus on children born with very low birth weight and those diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Kadlec is currently managing a five-year longitudinal study with toddlers with ASD and their families. Based at the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology at Boston University's School of Medicine, the research is examining how the patterns of development and symptoms of ASD change over time, as well as how having a child with ASD impacts the family. "So far, we have found that while toddlers with ASD might make huge language gains over the course of the first year in the study, they are not making as much progress with daily living skills," Kadlec explains. "This might be an ideal opportunity for occupational therapy intervention."

Kadlec enjoys bringing her research and clinical experience into her classrooms at Tufts. This past fall, she taught *Occupation and Adaptation in the Child and Adolescent*, and in the spring, she is teaching *Early Intervention: An Ecological Approach*. Of her Tufts students she says, "They are very committed and bright. I appreciate their varied backgrounds and how they blend their past experiences with what they are learning about in occupational therapy."



ALLISON TARIN

Regina Ferraro Doherty, OTD, OTR/L (Lecturer; full-time)

A recent graduate of Tufts' Doctorate in Occupational Therapy program, **Regina F. Doherty, OTD, OTR/L**, is a "double jumbo." She earned her MS in Occupational Therapy from Tufts in 1992, and her OTD in 2006; her BS from Springfield College is in Rehabilitation Services. For 15 years, Doherty held an occupational therapy leadership position at Massachusetts General Hospital, where she evaluated and treated patients, provided consultative services, led professional development programs, and trained occupational therapy students. She also served as an assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies at the MGH Institute of Health Professions.

Doherty's scholarship is in ethical reasoning. She is the author of numerous publications and serves as a consultant in the areas of acute care occupational therapy practice and ethics.

Doherty brings a breadth of clinical experience, advanced knowledge of occupational therapy, and an interdisciplinary focus to her teaching at Tufts. A full-time lecturer in the areas of clinical reasoning, health conditions, occupation and adaptation, and cognitive and perceptual dysfunction, Doherty uses an experiential approach in her classes to help students understand the importance of clinical reasoning in occupational therapy practice. "I want them to learn to reason—to ask the right questions in order to provide the best care," she says.

Doherty most enjoys the interdisciplinary nature of her field. "Occupational therapists bring a unique perspective to client care because we look at function in a broad way. We put together all of the physical, mental, contextual, and environmental factors for clients in order to help them translate the impact of their condition on their daily life activities and roles," she says.



ROSE LINCOLN

Lynne Pepall, PhD, Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

As Tufts' new Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, **Lynne Pepall, PhD**, hopes to celebrate the amazing accomplishments of Tufts' graduate population. "Graduate students play a critical role at Tufts and that is especially true in the Department of Occupational Therapy," she says.

Pepall points to the Department as an ideal example of an exceptional graduate program "nestled within the arts and sciences community" of a major university. "Occupational therapy is so interdisciplinary, drawing on ideas from engineering, psychology, and other fields. Tufts is distinctive in that it gives students opportunities to intersect with all of these other disciplines," Pepall says.

Tufts' focus on public citizenship is also a key strength for the Department. "Occupational therapy is a living example of civic engagement. At Tufts, students see first-hand the power of their commitment to helping others—and I think this reinforces their professional aspirations," she says.

Pepall knows a great deal about Tufts students. She joined Tufts as an assistant professor of economics in 1987 and was promoted to full professor in 2003. She served as chair of the department from 2005-2006 and became dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 2006. Pepall has published widely in economics journals and is the co-author of a leading textbook in the field of industrial organization. She holds a BA in mathematics and economics from the University of Toronto and a PhD in economics from the University of Cambridge.

As dean, Pepall hopes to enhance the visibility of Tufts' exceptional graduate programs by building connections with Tufts' alumni, deepening research, and increasing the diversity

"Occupational therapy is a living example of civic engagement. At Tufts, students see first-hand the power of their commitment to helping others."

—Lynne Pepall

JOANIE TOBIN



of the student population. The Department of Occupational Therapy, she says, is an ideal forum through which to achieve these goals. "With society's changing demographics—namely aging baby boomers who want to stay healthy and independent—occupational therapy is a very exciting field. Tufts can have a role in defining how this profession will look in the 21st century," she says.

Jean Lyons Martens, MS, OTR/L (Lecturer; part-time)

Jean Lyons Martens, MS, OTR/L has had a long history at Tufts. For more than a decade, she has supervised Tufts students in their Level I and II fieldwork and has given guest lectures in pediatrics, early intervention, and physical disabilities. She is currently teaching *Kinesiology*.

Martens holds a BS in occupational therapy from Eastern Michigan University and an MS in occupational therapy from Boston University. Since 1996, she has worked in private practice, school-based practice, and with adult and pediatric patients with spinal cord injuries, head injuries, and physical disabilities. "I love the challenge of variety in my clinical work in both age range and in solutions to problems," she says.

Martens also loves teaching. She has taught a variety of courses in the Occupational Therapy Department at Worcester State College and has acted as a consultant and trainer in the Arlington Public Schools. Currently, she is developing a course about autism for parents, teachers' aides, and education students to be offered through Middlesex Community College in Bedford, Massachusetts. She looks forward to additional teaching opportunities at Tufts after the "great experience" she has had in her first semester.

ROSE LINCOLN



News and Announcements

BOOK ABOUT DYSLEXIA RECEIVES ADVANCE PRAISE

Alumna Mary Jean Hughes, EdD ('86) has just written a book titled *The Wolf Who Cried Boy* about her son Kyle's battle with dyslexia. A heart-warming story about a mother's struggles to get her son the services he needed, the memoir presents a candid and shocking look at our educational system and guides parents in how to advocate for their dyslexic children. Published in December, 2007, *The Wolf Who Cried Boy* has already received high praise from special education professionals and was recently written up in the *Boston Globe*. Hughes read from her book as part of an authors' series at Tufts' Tisch Library on January 30th, 2008. Hughes was the founding chairperson of the Occupational Therapy Program at Salem State College and is now the director of occupational therapy at the Massachusetts Hospital School.

TWO NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS EXPAND PRACTITIONER SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The Department of Occupational Therapy has recently launched two exciting certificate programs: the *Certificate of Advanced Study in Pain Topics* and the *Certificate in School-Based Practice*.

The Pain Certificate is offered in conjunction with the Master of Science in Pain Research, Education and Policy at the Tufts University School of Medicine Public Health and Professional Degree Programs. The first and only interdisciplinary post-graduate pain management program in the country, the Pain program is dedicated to giving professionals a sophisticated understanding of the many manifestations of pain.

Because pain is a psychosocial, as well as physiological phenomenon, it is critically important for occupational therapy practitioners and students to learn about the physical, social, psychological, and economic issues that influence pain management. Certificate program students in the occupational therapy track join physicians, nurses, health educators, researchers, and

other health professionals enrolled in the Pain Certificate program and/or Master of Science in Pain Research, Education and Policy and thereby develop a broad, interdisciplinary perspective on pain.

The *Certificate in School-Based Practice* helps occupational therapists become advanced practitioners in school-based practice. Based on the premise that school-based occupational therapists face different challenges and have different concerns than those in private clinical practice, this certificate gives graduates the skills to influence school-based services and to provide educationally relevant services consistent with special education law. Appropriate for fieldwork educators, clinical specialists, administrators, and supervisors, the certificate helps occupational therapists implement best practice and expand their careers within the area of community- and school-based programs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please join us for our Alumni and Affiliates Reception, Saturday, April 12, 2008, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m., Hyatt Regency, Regency D., Long Beach, California.

Please visit us at our Alumni Weekend Open House at the Tufts Department of Occupational Therapy on Saturday, May 17, 2008, 3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m., featuring arts and artists from Walnut Street Center, Somerville, Massachusetts.

For more information or to RSVP for these events, please contact Mary Barnes at mary.barnes@tufts.edu.

GARY BEDELL, PHD, OTR PRESENTS PSYCHOMETRIC RESEARCH

ALLISON TARIN



Tufts faculty member Gary Bedell, PhD, OTR, presented his poster, “The Child & Adolescent Scale of Participation (CASP): Further psychometric testing,” at Tufts’ *Research Day on Translational Research: Applying Discovery* in November at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging and recently at the “New Frontiers in Pediatric Brain Injury Conference” in San Diego.

Bedell’s poster presented his research on psychometric properties of the Child and Adolescent Scale of Participation (CASP: parent-report version), which was designed to assess the type and extent of children’s participation in home, school, and community activities. Similar to findings in Bedell’s initial psychometric research, this study provided additional evidence of internal consistency and structure, construct validity, and the type and extent of participation restrictions experienced by children with disabilities. The growing evidence that children with disabilities are often restricted in their participation, and that child, family, and environmental factors play a role, strongly suggests that greater efforts are needed to promote children’s meaningful participation at the home, school, and in the community.

FACULTY AND ALUMNI PRESENT AT THE MAOT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tufts made a strong showing at the annual Massachusetts Association of Occupational Therapy (MAOT) Conference in October. Deborah Yarrett Slater, MS, OT/L, FAOTA, co-led a workshop on occupational therapy leadership, and Regina Doherty, OTD, OTR/L, presented on ethics education and entry-level occupational therapy curricula. Other faculty presenters included: Sharan Schwartzberg, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA, and Mary Alicia Barnes, OTR/L on group dynamics; and Mary Evenson, MPH, OTR/L, on occupational therapy doctoral programs.

Tufts was also well-represented at the poster presentations. Faculty member Janet Curran Brooks, EdD, OTR/L, along with students Jane Crimmins, Lynda Fong, Janet Pleitner, Julia Thompson, and Megan Yeh offered their research: *Is lateral pinch really stronger?* (see story, p. 3). Doctoral

candidate Jan Hollenback, MS, OTR/L, presented PublicSchoolOT.com, her website for school-based occupational therapists (see story, p. 1) while Fan-Pei Kung, MS, OTR/L, presented her poster *Supporting Students with Handwriting Difficulties in Taiwan*.

Department of Occupational Therapy alumni at the conference included Harpreet Kaur, MS, OT (’07) on low vision occupational therapy for adults with macular degeneration; Naomi Moran, OTR/L (’75) presenting on effective habits for leadership in occupational therapy students; Michael Roberts, MS, OTR/L (’94) presenting on “informal in-services”; Patricia Kennedy, OTD, OTR/L (’07) on school readiness among recent immigrant children who speak limited English; and Peggy Gardiner, MS, OTR/L (’97) on integrating yoga into occupational therapy practice.



From left to right: Lynda Fong, Julia Thompson, Janet Pleitner, Jane Crimmins, Janet Curran Brooks.

Stay connected! Join the Tufts-BSOT listserv! By sending your e-mail address to Mary Barnes at mary.barnes@tufts.edu or by calling 617-627-5960, you can find out what's happening at Tufts-BSOT, what your fellow graduates are up to, what events are planned, and much more.

Hollenbeck *continued from page 1*

first mentioned the idea to Sharon (Ray), she said, "You have to enroll in the OTD program and make this your leadership project," Hollenbeck recalls. "OTD at Tufts is all about developing leaders in the field of occupational therapy; the website fits in well with that mission."

Due to launch in February, 2008 under the URL www.publicschoolot.com, the site will include a resource section on laws and regulations governing school practice; a "how to" section with strategies, tools, and best practices; and an interactive community for questions and support. Hollenbeck plans to add an online learning component in the future.

"I want to build this site not just as a resource, but as a community."

—Jan Hollenbeck

She hopes the site will provide wide-ranging local and national information and answer the many questions school-based practitioners have. "The beauty of the web," she says, "is that, unlike printed materials, the information can continually be updated and expanded. I want to provide practical, hands-on information and a place where practitioners can go to ask questions, get support and advice, and run ideas past one another."

She also hopes to create a dynamic web community that will alleviate some of the isolation school-based practitioners face and help them feel competent and confident in their professional lives. "My goal is to connect school-based occupational therapists with information and with each other. I want to build this site not just as a resource, but as a community," she says.

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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 BSOTNotes@tufts.edu.

This issue is dedicated to Don Smith, our sales representative at Journeyman Press. Don passed away on January 27, 2008.



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