



# nOTes

*From the Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science*

## Message from the Department Chairperson, Dr. Maggie Reitz



*Above: Dr. Janet DeLany*

**Also in this issue...**

- **SOTA hosts Chik-Fil-A Night WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7th in Parkville!**
- **Students represent TU at this year's Student Conclave and Capitol Hill Day**
- **The Department will be welcoming it's newest faculty member in January**
- **What is the future of OT in health care? Dr. Kyler provides her experiences and insights**

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As we near the end of another semester, faculty and staff reflect on the many occasions that give us reason to celebrate. Throughout this semester, faculty members worked diligently to complete and submit the departmental self-review for ACOTE by the end of November. This group of dedicated faculty, under the leadership of Dr. DeLany, are to be congratulated on producing the 1,200 page document. The OT & OS department is not alone in recognizing Dr. DeLany's many talents and we are pleased to announce her promotion by the University to Dean of the Graduate School. Dr. DeLany has been instrumental in the Department's success for a number of years, and while she will be missed, we wish her well as she transitions to

her new position beginning in January 2012. As we bid farewell to Dr. DeLany, we take a moment to celebrate her promotion and we will continue to consider her part of our OT & OS community. We look forward to working with her in this new leadership position as we continue to improve and develop our occupational therapy programs. This winter, the Department welcomes its newest faculty member, Dr. Mary Kay Wolfe, who will be joining the department in January. Dr. Wolfe is relocating from California and has a diverse background in OT mental health services. She will be teaching mental health-related courses in the Spring plus (see p. 3). We welcome this excellent addition

to our faculty. I am pleased to acknowledge the many ways students explored and created opportunities to learn and grow outside of the classroom this past semester, some of which are highlighted in this issue. Additionally, I am happy to report that faculty members have continued to make significant contributions to the field of occupational therapy as evidenced by numerous publications and presentations (see p. 4). It is clear that the past few months have been busy ones! I hope everyone takes time to relax, rejuvenate, and enjoy time with friends and family over the break. Have a happy and healthy holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

## Students earn Living and Learning credits in a variety of ways

Participation in the Living and Learning to the Fullest program continued to grow throughout the Fall semester, with students finding a variety of opportunities to earn credit hours. On November 30, students earned one credit hour for attending the first lecture in a series of SOTA sponsored lunchtime lectures. Dr. Applebaum, a neuro-optometrist who practices in the Baltimore-Washington area, lectured on the role of OT in vision therapy. Students who attend future lectures will earn at least one credit hour as well. Off-campus opportunities to earn credit hours were well attended despite having to travel some distance. In September, more than a dozen Towson University

students travelled to Washington, D.C. to advocate for the OT profession (see p. 2). Participation in Capitol Hill Day earned students a range of credit hours, depending on length and number of legislative appointments attended. In November, another group of students traveled to Rhode Island to participate in AOTA's annual Student Conclave, earning upwards of 11 credit hours for their participation in group lectures and discussions (see p. 2). Students who participated in a variety of geriatric workshops throughout the state of Maryland were also able to earn credit hours. Credit-earning opportunities close to Towson, such as volunteering at this year's annual MOTA con-

ference in Pikesville, MD, were also available. On campus, volunteers earned credits by running the food drive and yard sale. Karissa Pavelka calculated 24 hours of earned credits for overseeing the food drive and yard sale table during her breaks between classes. "Volunteering was a great opportunity to help SOTA, earn credits, and most importantly help those in need this holiday season," says Pavelka. For more ways to earn credit hours during the spring semester, look for emails or announcements on the Living and Learning board, or email Lydia BonGiorni at lbongi1@students.towson.edu.

## Towson University well represented at Student Conclave 2011 by Andrew Myers



The 2011 AOTA Student Conclave was such an energizing experience! With over 500 occupational therapy students from all over the state converging on one spot, Providence Rhode Island had no idea what hit it. We had the opportunity to speak with many of the leaders in our field, including practitioners and members of the AOTA leadership. Throughout the two-day event, the venue lobby was filled with employers eagerly speaking with students about professional employment and giving

away prizes. Students had the opportunity to attend various sessions regarding NBCOT exam preparation, emerging practice areas, fieldwork advice, and general information regarding our future roles as occupational therapists. There's something about being in the presence of so many other students and leaders who share the same passion for occupational therapy. I definitely recommend students go next year to find out what that "something" is all about for themselves.

*Left: Towson students posing with AOTA President, Florence Clark*

## SOTA news by Emily Shelley

SOTA members have been busy this semester! SOTA held another successful clipboard sale for students in September. In October, groups of students participated in two fundraisers, the Race for the Cure and Autism Speaks walks. Through their dedication and efforts, the participants were able to raise a lot of money for these great causes while representing the Towson OT community! SOTA members also participated in "Blankets for Warriors" in October, providing homemade blankets for patients at Mercy Medical Center. There was great response for the combined food drive and yard sale in

November. Donations for the food sale will be donated to Towson's "Stuff the Bus" drive this month. The yard sale, which was supplied by donations from OT & OS faculty and staff, was a new event that generated funds for future SOTA events. Other opportunities to give include donations for the Cherry Hill PALS Program and CD/toy drive for St. Vincent's Villa, a Residential Treatment Center that provides therapeutic services for children with behavioral and emotional challenges. Thank you to everyone for giving so generously! On Wednesday, December 7th SOTA is

sponsoring a Chik-Fil-A-Night in Parkville off East Joppa Road. Show up between 5-8pm, mention Towson SOTA when you order, and SOTA will receive part of the proceeds. Be sure to check your emails for a flier to print out for the event and don't forget to bring your friends! Finally, we were pleased by the great turn out for our first lunchtime lecture on vision and OT, presented by Dr. Stan Appelbaum. Keep an eye on your email for future lunchtime lecture topics and presenters. Good luck on your finals and see you next year!

## Students make their mark on Capitol Hill

On September 19th, students from Towson University gathered on Capitol Hill to join over 400 other students, practitioners, and AOTA members to rally for support of occupational therapy services. Participants gathered early morning in the Capitol Hill auditorium to hear speeches from AOTA lobbyist Ralph Kohl and AOTA president, Dr. Florence Clark. Following the morning speeches, groups of students and practitioners then walked through Capitol Hill, visiting their respective Senate and House representatives. Students from a number of different states including Pennsylvania, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Illinois, joined the effort. In her speech, Dr. Clark emphasized the importance of occupa-

tional therapy practitioners advocating for their profession as well as their clients, and expressed her appreciation for this year's unprecedented turn-out. During the day, Towson students met with aides from the offices of Sen. Cardin, Rep. Mikulski, Rep. Cummings, Rep. Sarbanes, Rep. Bartlett, and Rep. Ruppertsberger. A group of students had the chance to speak with Rep. Dutch Ruppertsberger directly, who spoke of his continued admiration and support of occupational therapy services. That evening, Rep. Ruppertsberger wrote about the encounter in his daily online blog. Melissa Kellner, a second year Master student, states, "This experience was definitely eye-opening and I'm so glad I went. I was nervous at first to meet with the



*Above: Students pose with Rep. Ruppertsberger. Photo courtesy of the Office of Dutch Ruppertsberger.*

representatives, but it ended up being fun. I hope I can attend next year and think that the Department should continue to emphasize how important this event is for students."

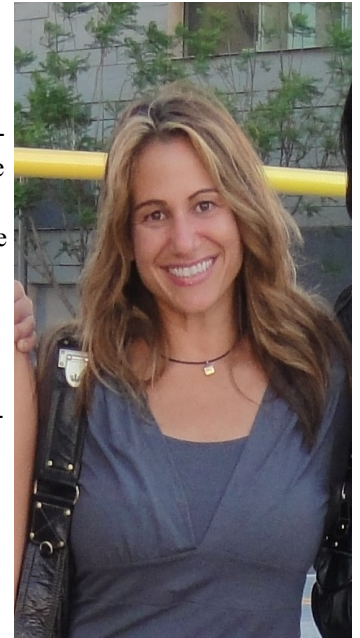
## Dr. Mary Kay Wolfe to join the OT faculty

In January, the Occupational Therapy Department will welcome its newest faculty member, Dr. Mary Kay Wolfe. Dr. Wolfe is a graduate of the University of Southern California. Early in her career, Dr. Wolfe worked as a clinical instructor at USC and practiced occupational therapy at the university's Pain Management Program and Disabled Students Program. Dr. Wolfe reports that it was during these early years of her practice where she was taught the importance of creating and developing community-based programs that would

benefit from OT services. While she has many areas of interest, Dr. Wolfe's primary interest is in mental health. Prior to accepting her new position at Towson, Dr. Wolfe worked as the Director of Rehabilitation at a community-based psychiatric hospital. As Director, she continued to grow and develop the rehabilitation department, as well as the fieldwork program for occupational therapy students. Dr. Wolfe says she enjoys teaching mental health courses largely because "students have had limited experience with this population and they seem to be quite curious about what the

OT role looks like." Dr. Wolfe is excited to join the Towson community, especially about the University's "Thinking Outside" initiatives. As an advocate of community programs, Dr. Wolfe hopes to contribute to the University's involvement in the surrounding communities. "There are countless opportunities for occupational therapists to be of service to their community," she says, "and I hope to be able to help foster those opportunities for the OT students."

*Right: Dr. Mary Kay Wolfe*



## OT and the direction of health care: An interview with Dr. Penny Kyler



Dr. Penny Kyler earned her Master's and Doctorate degrees from Towson University. During the 1980s, Dr. Kyler was a member of the Towson faculty. Recently, Dr. Kyler received honors from Virginia Commonwealth University as well as the prestigious 2011 Ruth Brunyate Wiemer award from the Maryland Occupational Therapy Association. She is currently a public health analyst for the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Service Administra-

tion (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB).

### *As a professional, what is your area of focus?*

My doctoral research was focused on family oriented care. I work in maternal and child health. Within my world of work, I am overseeing the federal home visiting program that is evidenced based.

### *What does the home visiting program entail?*

Through a provision authorizing the creation of the Affordable Care Act MIECHV program, the Act responds to the diverse needs of children and families in communities at risk and provides an unprecedented opportunity for collaboration and partnership at the federal, state, and community levels to improve health and development outcomes for at-risk children through evidence-based home visiting programs. The funds are intended to assure effective coordination and delivery

of critical health, development, early learning, child abuse and neglect prevention, and family support services to these children and families through home visiting programs. This new program plays a crucial role in the national effort to build high-quality, comprehensive state-wide early childhood systems for pregnant women, parents and caregivers, and children.

### *How has your academic life impacted your professional career?*

I oversee a grant program that provides money to states for implementation. I have to use all that I learned in research, statistics, group process, etc. to effectively do my work.

### *How important is OT to the future of health care?*

Occupational therapy is important to the future of health and health care because we see the future and prepare individuals across all ages to fully participate in life. We are missing an

important place for intervention. I truly think therapists working in public health are critical to the future. When you think about our future, I see us working on the community level. We have traditionally been trained to work at the individual level, yet so many things are happening at the community level.

### *What advice would you give to OT students?*

Students need to think about where they are and dream about where they want to be. Be open to new things, read newspapers, novels, biographies. Never stop exploring your interests because it is true that when you become an occupational therapist, you join a profession and this profession is changing peoples' lives. Health and health care are fast moving targets, and ongoing preparation is essential.

Article submissions for the upcoming 2012 Newsletter should be submitted to lbongi1@students.towson.edu by February 1, 2012. Articles should be 100-200 words in length. One picture may be included along with a completed photo release form that can be obtained from the OT & OS office, ES 245. Hard copy photo release forms should be returned to Ms. Shaulis. Photos must be submitted electronically. Accepted articles may be edited to fit newsletter content and space requirements.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Mission of the Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science is to promote research, education, and services that address occupational engagement as well as social and occupational justice that supports health and well-being of persons, organizations, and populations. The educational initiatives aim to teach occupational therapy and occupational science students and professionals to be occupation-centered in the provision of empathic, ethical, and competent occupational therapy or related services and research while fostering leadership and advocacy skills.*

*Additional educational efforts address the academic and broader community's awareness of the healthful benefits of occupation and occupational therapy. The research and scholarly activities of the department intend to contribute to the development of theory and the profession's body of knowledge. Finally, the service agenda of faculty, staff, and students of the department is to provide services and resources to the university, health care system, occupational therapy profession, and society.*

Articles for this edition of the newsletter were compiled by Lydia BonGiorni, OTS Newsletter Editor. Contributions were also made by Drs. Reitz, Kyler, and Wolfe.

## Paw Prints: Faculty, Students, & Alum Leave Their Mark

*The Department of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science is pleased to announce the following in regard to our very talented students, faculty, and staff.*

**Dr. Beth Merryman**, in conjunction with other Towson faculty members, was awarded grant monies in support of the “Partnering in Academic and Life Success” (PALS) Program in the Cherry Hill neighborhood in Baltimore. The award will allow Dr. Merryman and others to continue to develop the program for research and outreach purposes.

**Dr. Lisa Crabtree** was featured in the October 31st edition of OT Practice. She was interviewed about her invitation to the Whitehouse and her advocacy for the reauthorization of the Combating Autism Act.

In November, **Dr. Wendy Stav** was featured in an article in Men’s Health magazine regarding pain issues while driving. In

the article, titled “Pain-Proof Your Commute,” Dr. Stav provides advice on how to optimize comfort during lengthy drives.

*Students and faculty delivered numerous posters and presentations at this year’s Maryland Occupational Therapy Association’s 31st Annual Conference, November 18-19th in Pikesville. The following faculty are acknowledged for their contributions:*

**Janet V. DeLany & Lisa Crabtree**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, co-presented “It’s More Than Sensory Needs: The Chasm Between Entitlement and Eligibility for Transitioning youth on the Spectrum.”

**Dr. Crabtree** also co-presented a poster, “The Impact of the Center for Adults with Autism Programs on the Knowledge and Attitudes of Towson University Students in Regards to

Adults on the Autism Spectrum: a Mixed Methods Study.”

**Dr. DeLany** also co-presented a poster, “Community Living and Mental Illness: A Study of Occupational Engagement.”

**Sonia Lawson**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, co-presented “Stroke Caregiver Training in the U.S.: A Nationwide Multidisciplinary Study.”

**Lynne Murphy, Jerry Bentley, & Barbara Demchick** Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, co-presented “Cultural Considerations During Fieldwork Education.”

**Barbara Demchick** also co-presented a poster, “The Impact of Collaborative Services on Pragmatic Language, Social Participation, and Engagement of Preschoolers.”

**Lori Patria**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, had a poster presentation

entitled “From Classroom to Functional Application: Fabrication of Adaptive Equipment by OTA Students.”

**Marlene Riley & Mary Beth Merryman**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, co-presented “Uncover the World of Alternative funding to offer Occupational Therapy Services in the Community.”

**Dr. Merryman** also co-presented a poster “Community Living and mental Illness: A Study of Occupational Engagement.”

**S. Maggie Reitz**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, presented “Ethical Decision Making in Occupational Therapy Practice” co-developed with **Janie B. Scott**.

**W. Stav**, Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science, presented “Community Mobility Across the Lifespan: Where it fits into Practice”