



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

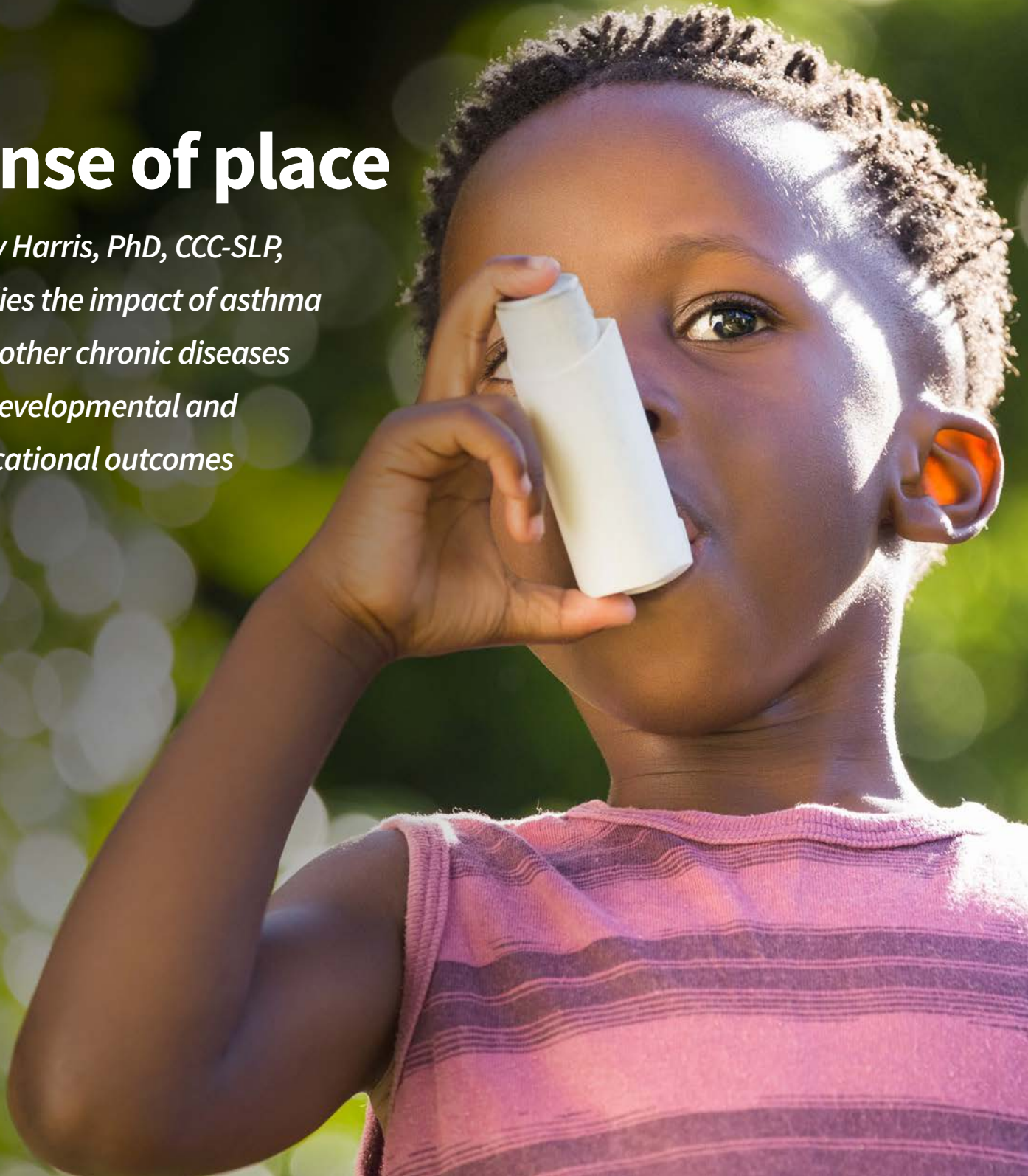
Occupational Therapy

Fall 2020

O.T. Link

A sense of place

*Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP,
studies the impact of asthma
and other chronic diseases
on developmental and
educational outcomes*





Thumbs up!

LifeBridge Partnership client Frank Tyler (left) gives Heather Ward, chief program officer (right), a thumbs up on learning the COVID-19 transportation safety protocols on the LifeBridge bus as Christopher Gonzales, OTD/S '20, looks on. Gonzales and other students developed a COVID-19 safety and awareness program so that LifeBridge could resume in-person programming once county restrictions were lifted.

O.T. Link Contents

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Occupational Therapy

From the Director



On August 19, the Program in Occupational Therapy welcomed its MSOT '22 and OTD '23 classes for orientation (page 16) with COVID-19 protocols in place. We are teaching under a hybrid model this semester to comply with social distancing and other safety measures set forth by the university. This issue of O.T. Link captures the many ways we are continuing our research, education and clinical missions amid the pandemic. Important work in our laboratories, classrooms, clinics and community is happening each and every day in the Program, and I am so proud to share just a few examples with you.

Our cover story is a profile of one of our newer faculty members, Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP (page 4). Dr. Harris studies the environment's influence on children's development and participation, particularly in children diagnosed with chronic diseases such as asthma and sickle cell disease. Recently, she was awarded two National Institutes of Health grants focused on evaluating the impact of these chronic diseases on developmental and educational outcomes. In September, Dr. Harris began recruiting participants and distributing surveys in multiple school districts around the St. Louis region for her studies. I am thrilled to have Dr. Harris on our faculty and as a mentor to our doctoral students.

Long-time faculty member Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (page 6), continues to find ways to engage our students with the community and collaborate with active and creative leaders like Rev. Dr. Paulette Sankofa, founder and CEO of the Peace Education Action Compassion and Empowerment Weaving Wholeness nonprofit. This past summer, Drs. Berg and Sankofa worked together to move the Sankofa Culture and Art Wellness Village Senior Summer Camp to an online-only format. This quick pivot provided more than 50 seniors sheltering in place with artistic and cultural activities delivered via Zoom. More importantly, it gave them an opportunity to socially engage with neighbors in their community during this challenging time.

OT Services, our clinical arm, is always looking for ways to fill service needs or gaps in our community as well. Their Baby Bridge program (page 10) is the only one of its kind in the St. Louis region. This community-based transition program led by clinicians Katie Bogan, OTD, OTR/L, and Sarah Cheatham Oberle, OTD, OTR/L, helps ensure that preterm babies continue to receive needed therapy services without interruption. Baby Bridge "bridges the gap" between discharge from the neonatal intensive care unit and when the babies are able to be seen by First Steps, Missouri's early intervention system that provides services and support to children aged 0-3 with disabilities or developmental delays.

In April 2020, we had to cancel our annual OT Scholarship Day event where we had planned to honor our 2020 Outstanding Alumni Awardees: Ashlea Cardin and Kristin Will. Please take a moment to read their profiles on page 13; we are looking forward to celebrating their accomplishments at our 2021 OT Scholarship Day event along with the accomplishments of our 2021 awardees. Nominations are now open until January 31, 2021, and you can learn more about eligibility criteria and how to nominate yourself or a fellow alum for this special honor on page 12.

We certainly could not continue to educate the future leaders, researchers, educators and practitioners of our profession without your ongoing support. Many of our alumni have been helping us with our admissions process this year by participating on Zoom panels and speaking with prospective students about our profession. If you would like to engage with the Program, please contact Jeanenne Dallas at dallasj@wustl.edu to learn more. We would love to hear from you!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa T. Connor".

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Elias Michael Executive Director, Program in Occupational Therapy

Professor of Occupational Therapy and Neurology

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Wanda Mahoney, PhD, OTR/L, was inducted as a fellow of Washington University School of Medicine's Academy of Educators on Sept. 24. The Academy is an institutional collaboration of educators who together foster a culture of educational excellence and an institutionally valued community of leaders in health science education. Members actively participate in Academy programs throughout the year and self-report on their engagement annually.

Chang joint appointed National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine research fellow

The Program in Occupational Therapy and the Institute for Informatics are pleased to announce that **Chih-Hung Chang, PhD**, professor of occupational therapy, medicine and orthopaedic surgery, was appointed to a two-year term starting June 1 as a joint appointed research fellow at the National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine (NRICM), Ministry of Health and Welfare in Taipei, Taiwan. NRICM is a research center responsible for research, experimental and development issues of Chinese medicine.

Chang's research focuses on the integration of proven methodologies (psychometrics) and evolving technologies (informatics) to advance clinical outcomes assessment and management. He will collaborate with NRICM Director Dr. Yi-Chang Su and his team to integrate



Chih-Hung Chang

measurements of body constitution using item response theory and computerized adaptive testing for symptom diagnosis and treatment planning. This is an important and significant step toward the modernization of Chinese medicine utilizing a psychometrics and informatics-integrated approach.

Chang earned his bachelor's degree in psychology from National Chengchi University in Taipei, Taiwan in 1987. He began graduate work at the University of Chicago in 1988 and earned his doctorate from the Committee on Research Methodology and Quantitative Psychology of the Department of Psychology in 1995. He has been on faculty at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine since 1999. Chang led the design and development of a clinical outcomes assessment and management system at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab (formerly the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago) for five years.

Berg named interim director

Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology, was named interim director of the Division of Professional Education. Berg joined the Program in Occupational Therapy in 1987.

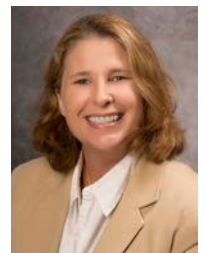


Christine Berg

Her expertise in curriculum design and implementation led to the development of new coursework that addresses occupational therapy's role in population health, health promotion and prevention.

Faculty appointments

Carla Walker, OTD, OTR/L, ATP, was appointed to instructor in occupational therapy and medicine on July 1. Walker's research interests include clinical outcomes in parenting



Carla Walker

self-management, spinal cord injury and disease (SCI/D), community mobility and accessible exercise. She serves as a research interventionist in wheelchair propulsion training for manual wheelchair users and collaborates with Paraquad on community-based programming. Walker also leads the student-run Collaborative Community Clinic, which serves persons with SCI/D who are un- or under-insured.

Want more Program news?

Stay up to date on the latest Program news by visiting our website at ot.wustl.edu or connecting with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.



A sense of place

By Stephanie Stemmler



Kimberly Wooden, school administrator (left), helps Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP (right), test the asthma survey before distributing to participants at Fairview Primary and Intermediate Schools in the Jennings School District.



With a master’s degree in speech-language pathology (SLP) from Northwestern University, Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP, was working in Chicago public schools when an experience with one particular student changed the trajectory of her career path.

“I was working with a student who was potentially going to fail sixth grade for a third time and was, therefore, unlikely to finish school,” recalled Harris. “But he was a smart kid and I spent a lot of extra time looking into this. He actually was doing 12th grade math, yet he was falling through the cracks. No one had taken the time to identify or understand his needs.”

What Harris soon realized was that the student was a true representation of the complexities of urban education. “In other words, we had to ask what impacted his ability to learn in the schools,” she said. “It’s not just intelligence. Ability to learn is embedded in our environments and experiences, where we live, and the resources available to us, including food, housing and health. It’s that social context that started to drive me towards education and health equity research.”

Harris soon moved back to her hometown of St. Louis, opening a private practice dedicated to speech-language therapy services, first regionally and then centered within the City of St. Louis. Again, she saw that home-based speech-language therapy services were impacted by other, more pressing needs in many of the families she served. She decided to pursue a doctoral degree in education from Washington

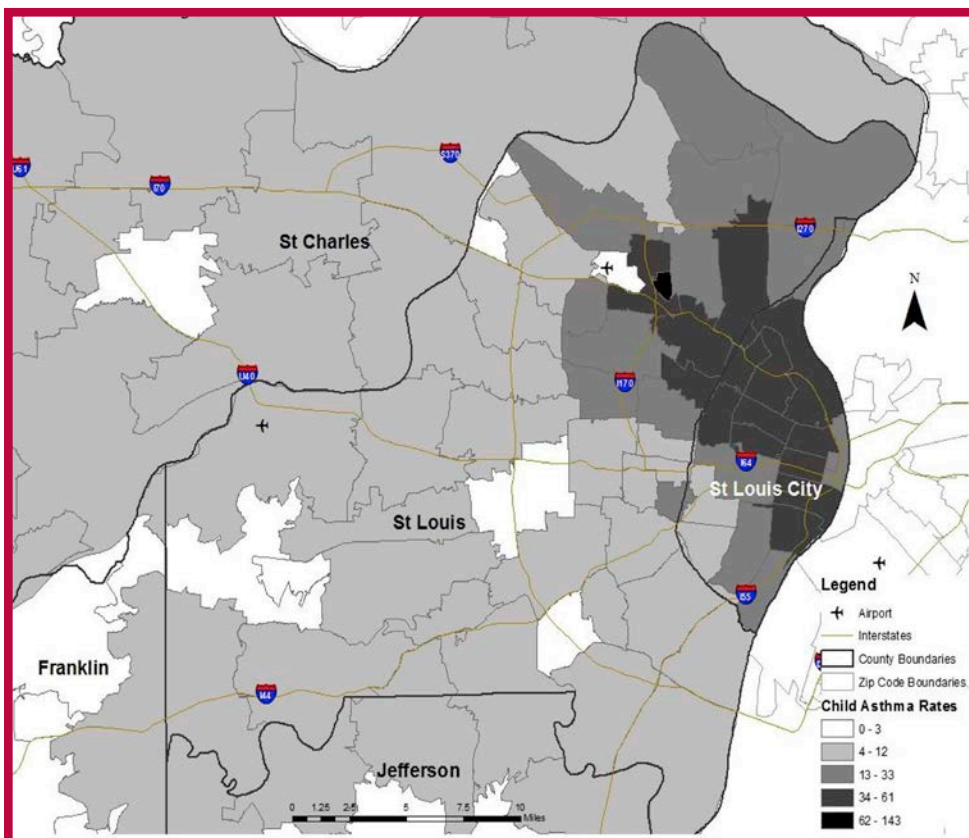
University with a goal to study and understand the social context of education and the correlation between educational outcomes, health disparities and chronic diseases.

From speech-language pathology to occupational therapy

As a postdoctoral fellow, she joined the Program in Occupational Therapy’s Child Health and Education Laboratory of Allison King, MD, PhD. Both are interested in the environment’s influence on children’s development and participation, particularly in children diagnosed with chronic diseases such as asthma and sickle cell disease.

“Asthma is the primary reason why children miss school across the country,” said Harris. “It is also an urban issue because there are multiple environmental issues that drive the incidences of asthma in the urban community.”

In 2019, Harris published a study in Social Science & Medicine that identified a five-zip code “hot spot” in North St. Louis with childhood asthma rates more than double state and national averages. By examining associated issues of environmental and



This figure from Harris' 2019 study demonstrates childhood asthma prevalence across the entire St. Louis Metropolitan Area (defined as St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County for these purposes). St. Louis City was the primary focus of this study, which identified a five-zip code “hot spot” of high asthma prevalence rates for youth in North City.

Left to right: Veronica Macklin, EdD, student services district administrator; Timira Minor, clinical research coordinator; Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP; and Jasmine Burris, MPH, director of school-based services and community partnerships for CareSTL. Macklin and Burris are helping Harris and Minor facilitate the asthma study in the Jennings School District.



systemic inequities, Harris highlighted the need to address chronic diseases not only medically, but also related to the environments in which children may live and go to school.

Harris, now on faculty as an instructor in the Program and serving as a mentor for doctoral students in the Rehabilitation and Participation Science (RAPS) program, leads a new research laboratory within the Program called the Chronic Disease, Development and Educational Outcomes Research Laboratory. Research in the lab highlights the need for all providers—occupational therapists included—to understand “space” in the context of health needs and resources as well as in educational resources.

“Space is often an element that we fail to include in our research,” Harris explained. “Place is more than a dot on a map; it is where we exist in that space, what is our proximity to health care, how far we have to walk or can we obtain access to transportation, and what is the availability of other resources within our environment.”

She is purposeful in moving her research “upstream” beyond the provision of services to examine why prevalence rates and health-care utilization is high in

some areas. She now is the recipient of two National Institutes of Health grants focused on evaluating the impact of asthma and other chronic diseases on developmental and educational outcomes. Just prior to restrictions put in place due to COVID-19, Harris and Jasmine Burris, MPH, director of school-based services and community partnerships for CareSTL Health, one of her community partners, pulled together a group of stakeholders in multiple school districts—parents, students, teachers, school-based nurses and community health organizations—to begin the process of assessing how asthma impacts children and how various school districts were collaborating with families and providers to help keep children with asthma healthy and in school. “We often assume that similar school districts have the same needs or characteristics; in fact, we found that goals and needs are different for each district despite their similarities or proximity to each other. We need to listen to these differences, learn how to identify and integrate needed resources, and then we need to share best practices with communities and school districts throughout the region and country.”

Rapid implementation is a huge part of Harris’s efforts. “The traditional timeline

for moving evidence-based interventions into practice is about 17 years,” she stressed. “That’s an entire school cycle for children. We can’t wait that long. I want to identify needs in schools and families, understand what works and doesn’t work, and put interventions in practice so that children can thrive.”

She added, “I have a clinical background as a speech-language pathologist. From an occupational therapy perspective, these social and environmental barriers are the same things that we all clinically see. Our life doesn’t fit into neat, little boxes and you can’t intervene in just one spot. You have to intervene in multiple spots to break cycles.”

“Place is more than a dot on a map; it is where we exist in that space, what is our proximity to health care, how far we have to walk or can we obtain access to transportation, and what is the availability of other resources within our environment.”

– Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP



Senior summer camp

By Michele Berhorst

*It was a novel project idea:
A summer camp for seniors 60+
years of age in the Old North
St. Louis community focused on
art and culture.*

That is what drew Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, associate professor of occupational therapy and neurology, into the project when Rev. Dr. Paulette Sankofa “pitched” her idea at a Pitch Partners meeting in early 2019. Sankofa is the founder and CEO of the Peace Education Action Compassion and Empowerment (PEACE) Weaving Wholeness nonprofit. These meetings, held by The Center for Community Health Partnership and Research at the Institute for Public Health and the Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences, give community members the opportunity to present

public health-related project ideas in order to identify potential partners and receive critical feedback. The presented projects are evaluated, and some are selected to receive seed funding. Berg and Sankofa were matched by this process to work together.

Berg has established partnerships with more than 100 St. Louis social service agencies to provide service learning experiences for students to help organizations with capacity-building by performing program evaluations, analyzing data outcomes, and collaborating with staff to develop and deliver programming. She partnered with Sankofa to write the grant, and the Sankofa Culture and Art Wellness Village Senior Summer Camp was funded.

“We both define health as engagement in activities that are meaningful, social, provide choice and control, and are based in the community to reflect the culture

of those who are engaging,” Berg says. “By providing an innovative and creative summer camp in a community that often experiences barriers to health care, we can foster health through meaningful participation.”

Research has shown that there are physical, mental and social benefits for older adults who participate in arts programs offered once a week (Noice et al., 2014; Ronzi et al., 2018; Dunphy et al., 2019; Yuen et al., 2011; Phinney et al., 2014). Two studies identified qualitative themes of cohesion, belonging, connectedness, enjoyment and self-confidence from arts participation (Phinney, 2014; Vogelpoel, 2014).

The senior camp was first held in two one-week sessions in July 2019. The 32 participants engaged in a diverse array of artistic and cultural activities such as quilt making, storytelling, Zumba, painting, African drumming, “bling your walking



PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERHORST

Left to right: Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, and Rev. Dr. Paulette Sankofa at the Doors of North St. Louis event on Oct. 10.

“Paulette Sankofa is such a creative, active and engaged community leader. She has made a tremendous impact in the lives of many people, including my own.”

—Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

stick,” head wraps and more Monday through Thursday. Campers visited Bentils Urban Farm and Art Gallery and the Scott Joplin Museum on “Fieldtrip Fridays.” Annie Wright, MSOT/S '20, and Makeda Jackson, OTD/S '21, assisted with camp registration and greeting campers.

“After the first couple of days, the campers said, ‘Now we know why our kids always came home from camp and all they wanted to do was go to sleep, because camp is exhausting!’” Berg recalls. “Many of the participants had never had that kind of experience before, so they were excited to meet new neighbors, make new friends and try new activities.”

Building on that momentum, PEACE Weaving Wholeness became part of the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Collaborative so it could provide year-round programming. Jackie Schechter, OTD/S '20, helped Sankofa with the “Jazzy Seniors” program, a 10-week socialization program, at Cochrane Youth and Family Center in fall 2019. More than 30 seniors participated in the program, which included bingo, prizes and food. Storytelling and quilting groups continued beyond the 2019 senior summer camp. Grants were submitted to support and expand the 2020 senior summer camp and build capacity for ongoing programming throughout the year.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020.

“Paulette immediately realized that if we were going to have a 2020 senior summer camp, it would all have to be virtual,” Berg recalls. “We were also well aware that our campers were the population most at-risk for COVID-19 and its complications. They were sheltering at home to protect their health and were now even more isolated than before. Paulette quickly pivoted and obtained funding for Chromebooks, Zoom training for instructors and participants, and activity materials.”

Clare Lassiter, OTD/S '22, and Brianna Barkocy, MSOT/S '22, worked with PEACE Weaving Wholeness staff weekly to register campers and distribute, administer and analyze the pre-camp data assessments on social isolation, positive attitude, general health and well-being, and community connections. The Chromebooks were distributed to more than 50 campers. Berg helped train

instructors and campers on how to use Zoom, and packets of materials for each class were dropped off on doorsteps in a van Sankofa purchased. A local artist decorated the van with colorful murals for easy identification. On July 20, the virtual summer camp began and was an overall success. “I took the woodworking class via Zoom so that I could experience what the seniors were doing. We were a great cohort,” Berg says. “After months and months of isolation, the campers were excited to have contact with others in their community again. The conversations were wonderful, and the seniors were very engaged. All of this was done through their Chromebooks.”

As the pandemic continues, so do the plans to continue building the arts and cultural community and help seniors cope with COVID-19 isolation. Sankofa brought together local artists, businesses and other supporters to paint 30 residential and storefront doors in a four-block area. The artists, many of them seniors who live in the neighborhood, transformed the doors into beautiful works of art with positive messages of peace, hope and well-being for the community. PEACE Weaving Wholeness held a walking tour on Oct. 10 to showcase “The Doors of North St. Louis” project. Berg and her students attended the outdoor, socially distanced event, which gave seniors a chance to engage with neighbors and friends in a safe space.

“Paulette Sankofa is such a creative, active and engaged community leader. She has made a tremendous impact in the lives of many people, including my own. It has been a humbling experience to collaborate with her,” Berg says.

Top (left to right): Clare Lassiter, OTD/S '22; Breanna Carter, OTD/S '21; Camila Lassister; and Makayla Todd, MSOT/S '21, staffed tables during the walking tour event.

Middle: A local artist decorated the PEACE Weaving Wholeness van for easy identification. It was used to deliver Chromebooks and materials to campers.

Bottom: Luisa Otero Prada (left) was the project coordinator for the Doors of North St. Louis.



Bridging the gap

By Michele Berhorst

PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERHORST



Katie Bogan, OTD, OTR/L, with a preterm baby in the NICU at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

A preterm birth is defined as a baby being born before 37 weeks of pregnancy are completed. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 of every 10 infants born in the United States in 2018 was preterm. Babies born too early (before 32 weeks) have higher rates of death and disability. Infants that survive can have issues with breathing, feeding, hearing and vision. They are also at higher risk for having developmental delays that can cause the child to lag all the way into adulthood.

Developed by Bobbi Pineda, PhD, OTR/L, Baby Bridge began as a collaboration between the Program in Occupational Therapy's research division, clinical practice and St. Louis Children's Hospital newborn intensive care unit (NICU). Today, it has evolved into a community-based transition program where Washington University Occupational Therapy, St. Louis Children's Hospital and First Steps work together to ensure that the baby continues to receive needed therapy services without interruption. Katie Bogan, OTD, OTR/L, and colleague Sarah Cheatham Oberle, OTD, OTR/L, currently comprise the Baby Bridge team. Both pediatric therapists specialize in early intervention and have experience working with NICU babies in acute care and home settings.

First Steps is Missouri's early intervention system that provides services and support to children aged 0–3 with disabilities or developmental delays. Bogan explains what can happen during the “gap” between a preterm baby being discharged from the hospital and receiving services from First Steps.

“Babies in the NICU receive therapy services every day. Parents are also supported during that time. When they take the baby home, they are on their own until First Steps can step in,” Bogan says. “There can be, on average, a 45-day delay between NICU discharge and First Steps. Baby Bridge ‘bridges’ that gap in services so that the child is followed up at home therapeutically during that time.”

“The developmental progression of these babies looks different than babies who are born at full term. Parents may not recognize the signs that their preterm baby needs support,” Oberle explains. “Just leaving the NICU environment and entering a home with external stimuli such as other kids, cigarette smoke or

loud noises can be stressful for a preterm baby, especially if they aren't managing their own internal stimuli, such as body temperature, hunger or sleepiness very well.”

“Something as simple as a yawn can be a sign the baby is under stress. While we are there to see the baby, a lot of what we do is parent education,” Bogan says. “Feeding is an area we tend to focus on with parents because preterm babies will only eat under very specific parameters. They have to be positioned a certain way, need a particular nipple size or volume of milk/formula. At home, multiple people may be feeding the baby and may not know what those parameters are. We coach parents on what to do and what to look for that might signal the baby is stressed. Ultimately, the parents need to do the task, whether it's feeding, bathing or tummy time. It doesn't matter if I can do it if they can't.”

Bogan and Oberle also see preterm and full-term infants who are withdrawing from drugs and experiencing neonatal abstinence syndrome. “Those babies will typically present differently; they can have a lot of sensitivities to their environment. They may not like the bath or being held or looking at mom's face. They might be crying a lot or eating all the time,” Oberle says. “We educate parents on what those withdrawal symptoms look like, what medications baby may be on to ease withdrawal and how to help baby desensitize to various stimuli. For example, I had a parent who was bathing her baby every day in his baby sling in a tub of water, and he did not like it one bit. We looked at ways of introducing him to bathing slowly in steps instead of all at once.”

Oberle is also concerned that families with a history of trauma don't get lost in the process. “Trauma can pass to a child even before they are born. It can be hard to get in touch and stay in contact with these families,” Oberle says. “It's important we make a connection with the parents in the first week after discharge and provide support to the family. Even if we are not dealing with the trauma itself, we are supporting the family as care providers.”

“Worst case scenario is we reach out to the parents, never make contact and the child isn't doing well. We never want to lose eyes on the family if possible,” Bogan adds.

That smooth transition to First Steps is key to ensuring families continue to receive early intervention services during a child's first three years. First Steps providers can help the baby acquire important developmental skills such as crawling, playing, talking and eating during their first three years.



They continue to provide support to parents as they learn to encourage and support their child's development within their daily activities.

The Baby Bridge program is the only one of its kind in the St. Louis region, and Bogan and Oberle feel privileged to be a part of it. “We are able help a parent be a parent. We may only see our families for 45 days, but that is a long time in the life of a preterm baby. It's special to be invited into a home and be able do something that will really help a child and their family,” Bogan says.

To learn more about this program, please visit otservices.wustl.edu.

2021 Outstanding Alumni Award nominations open

The Outstanding Alumni Award recognizes alumni of the Program of Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine for their individual achievements in or contributions to the field of occupational therapy in research, education, leadership, professional development, community participation and/or by supporting the Program.

Eligibility

- The nominee must be a graduate of the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine.
- Potential nominees who are associated with Washington University, its governing board, the State government, or State regulatory boards or agencies can be nominated only after they no longer hold their respective positions.
- Self-nominations will be considered.
- The award is to be presented only one time to an individual. Therefore, all previous recipients are ineligible for subsequent consideration.
- All nominees must be living at the time of nomination.
- Nominee must be able to attend OT Scholarship Day on April 21, 2021.

Selection Criteria

Qualified nominees for the **Outstanding Alumni Award** should possess the following attributes:

- **Professional Achievement:** Nominees have attained prominence in their occupational therapy career through research, education and/or clinical practice.
- **Community Participation:** Nominees have demonstrated a commitment and dedication to community participation in regards to accessibility, mobility, policy and/or advocacy.
- **Integrity and Character:** Nominees must have the highest standard of personal integrity and character.
- **Sustained Supporter:** Nominees must have supported the Program financially and/or through service.

Nomination Materials

Materials to submit with nomination include:

1. A biographical sketch, resume or CV summarizing the nominee's achievements.

If your nominee does not have this available, please include (i) a summary of positions and employment, leadership roles, accomplishments, previous awards and publications, and (ii) a short narrative about the person and their attributes that makes them eligible for the award (see Selection Criteria).
2. Additional supportive documents (i.e., at least one letter of recommendation from a colleague, patient/client, students and/or community member).

Nomination Process

Nominations will be accepted September 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021 and can be made online at ot.wustl.edu/OTalumniaward.

If the nominee is selected by the committee, he or she must be in attendance at OT Scholarship Day on April 21, 2021 in St. Louis, Mo., to accept the award.

If you have any questions about the nomination or selection process, please contact Michele Berhorst at (314) 286-1606 or berhorstm@wustl.edu.

In memoriam

Dianna Derigo, OTD '19, OTR/L, died June 3, 2020, following a courageous battle with cancer. She was 27.

Derigo was born in Buffalo, New York. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Niagara University in 2016 and a doctoral degree in occupational therapy from Washington University in 2019. She passed her national board exam and became a certified occupational therapist.

Derigo enjoyed hiking in the mountains, giving back to the community, volunteering at Circle K International and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie, Niagara and the Southern Tier. Her family would like everyone to remember her by her life philosophy, "Be the change you want to see in the world," her infectious smile, and her kind and compassionate soul.



Dianna Derigo

She is survived by her parents Derek (Kristina Smallidge) Derigo and Laura (Richard) Brandys; brothers John Derigo and Joshua Taggart; grandparents John and Gayle Derigo and the late Thomas and Therese Taggart; companion Javier Iglesias; aunts and uncles Anne Taggart, John Taggart, Rita Wojtkowski, Brian Taggart, and the late Mark Derigo; and many dear cousins, family and friends.

Derigo's family and friends have established a scholarship in her name to honor her life and passion for community practice, the children and youth population, and trauma-informed care. They want future students who embody Derigo's service and work ethic to follow their passions with reduced financial burden. If you would like to contribute to her scholarship, please contact Patrick Delhogue in University Advancement at 314-935-9680 or p.delhogue@wustl.edu.

2020 Outstanding Alumni Awardees

Ashlea Cardin, OTD, MSOT '99, OTR/L, BCP, CNT

Ashlea Cardin, Class of 1999, is an associate professor in occupational therapy at Missouri State University (MSU) in Springfield, Mo. She is recognized for her role as an educator, her clinical expertise in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and her passion for advocating and serving individuals experiencing occupational deprivation.



Ashlea Cardin

Cardin is a founding faculty member of the occupational therapy program at MSU, where she took a lead role in developing the program's mission and vision. She developed multiple courses and program processes including recruiting, admitting and advising students.

In addition to her academic career, Cardin maintains a clinical practice in the NICU. She actively publishes her research in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters to enrich the literature surrounding this vulnerable population. Cardin holds a Board Certification in Pediatrics from the American Occupational Therapy Association and a specialty certification from the Neonatal Therapy National Certification Board.

Cardin regularly spends time providing pro bono pediatric services to the Old Order Amish community in Seymour, Mo. By developing trusted relationships within this community, Cardin provides countless families and children with resources to help them achieve their full potential in their occupational roles. She also led a community effort in the last two years to provide more than 200 hand-woven sleeping mats to individuals experiencing homelessness.

For her commitment to education, clinical practice and community outreach, we are pleased to present the 2020 Outstanding Alumni Award to Ashlea Cardin.

Kristin Will, OTD '14, OTR/L

Kristin Will, Class of 2014, is an independent health-care consultant based in Uganda who specializes in disability programming and inclusion development. She was the director of medical professional and student rotations and the director of strategic partnership at the Musana Community Development Organization and the head of the rehabilitation department and disability programming at the Musana Community Health Center. She is being recognized for her passion, dedication and work to build sustainable programs and improve services for individuals in Iganga, Uganda.



Kristin Will

In 2014, Will completed her doctoral experience in Iganga, where she worked alongside social workers to identify and develop programs for vulnerable individuals with disabilities in the community and to build the capacity of the department to provide for people with disabilities. After seeing the great need for improved services in the region, Will made it her mission to bring occupational therapy to the Iganga community.

Will envisioned and established a rehabilitation department at the Musana Community Health Center. To accomplish this, she led fundraising efforts for the initial capital and operation costs, created assessment tools and documentation, recruited employees, and networked to establish a presence in the area. Today, the department has two full-time employees and sees an average of 90 patients per month. Will also created disability outreach programs that serve 140 children free of charge and works with local community groups to value and prioritize education and inclusion. Through her work, Will has directly impacted hundreds of lives through her dedication to the people of Iganga and the occupational therapy profession.

For her ability to develop and execute successful and sustainable programs and empower the Iganga community to create change, we are pleased to present the 2020 Outstanding Alumni Award to Kristin Will.



Get Involved with JD

Jeanenne "JD" Dallas, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA, will be retiring at the end of 2020. She has kept in touch with many alumni over the past 24 years, and she will be using her "social capital" to head up our alumni relations efforts. She recently sent out a survey to gauge interest in engaging with the Program.

Alumni can be involved by:

- Networking with prospective students including: helping with the admissions process by participating in Zoom panels to enlighten applicants to the profession
- Working with current students including: possible guest lectures, teaching assistance, fieldwork supervision and networking with new graduates moving into your community
- Staying connected with other alumni, including a Facebook page dedicated to alumni that she is coordinating and helping to find other alumni in your area to network with
- Professional development opportunities at the Program both virtually and in person (once those activities resume)

If you are interested in any of these efforts, please contact JD at dallasj@wustl.edu.

“Skills Camp” week

The Program in Occupational Therapy held a “Skills Camp” week (Sept. 28 to Oct. 2) for second-year students. The event provided in-person experiences for skills that were taught when classes moved to online delivery for the second half of the spring semester and the entire summer semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monday: Small groups of students were taught three types of client transfers and how to measure vital signs by faculty members.

Tuesday: Each student was “checked-out” by a faculty member while they performed these skills with a third-year student acting as the client.

Thursday: Students examined manuals for standardized pediatric assessments, practiced administering items from the assessment, and scored and interpreted results from the assessment.

Friday: Students selected and practiced utilizing assistive technology and practice skills related to positioning pediatric clients and supporting play and feeding interventions.

The event was well received by students, and faculty enjoyed the one-on-one student contact.



PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERHORST



Future leader

Mario Millsap, MSOT/S '20

Hometown: East St. Louis, IL

Undergraduate degree: BS in exercise science from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Leadership: Staff Director, Missouri Border Brawl/Xtreme Couture GI Foundation; Board Member and Instructor, The Excelsior Program; Fundraising Committee Chairperson (2019–2020), Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association; Student Representative, Missouri Black Occupational Therapy Caucus; Lead Organizer, Black Washington University Occupational Therapy Collective

What are your meaningful occupations?

I am a social introvert by nature and have always found comfort in facilitating joy and fellowship with people I love. I have also been involved in martial arts and sports my entire life, so I relish expressing myself through physical movement and expression. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu has been my favorite medium for this for quite some time. I appreciate the competition, dynamic problem-solving and emphasis on self-improvement. Most importantly, Jiu-Jitsu has taught me the importance of resilience and getting comfortable being uncomfortable.

What is your definition of occupational therapy?

I define occupational therapy as a means to enable participation and support overall well-being through a holistic, client-focused lens.

Why did you choose the MSOT degree?

As an older student, I chose the MSOT degree because of the shorter timeframe and it being the less expensive option. I did not have any research experience before coming to WashU, so I did not see the doctoral component particularly appealing due to no frame of reference. My only experiences at the time with the field came from working with clients, so that is where I concentrated my focus. After completing my own research project, I now have a greater understanding and appreciation for research.

What are your career goals?

A Ghanan phrase guides my path personally and professionally—Sankofa—which translates to “go back to the past and bring forward that which is useful.” I believe my life journey reflects the efforts of those who came before me and supported me. My ultimate goal is to honor and pay that energy forward to create a better future for Black people. Whether it comes through education, continued nonprofit work, or advocacy on occupational justice issues, I want to continue to utilize my experiences and perspectives to help make occupational therapy an equitable, inclusive, justice-based profession for everyone.

What WashU experience so far stands out to you?

My time at WashU has been transformative in many ways; it is challenging to choose one that stands out. I would have to say that my time in Dr. Quinn Tyminski’s Community Independence Occupational Therapy Clinic stood out the most. Not only did I love working with the population—individuals experiencing homelessness—but Dr. Tyminski fostered an ideal environment for my learning style and challenged my initially limited understanding of occupational therapy for the better. My time under her reinforced the immense value occupational therapy can provide to our communities when given the opportunity and inspired my advocacy journey to fight for what I believe our profession should be.



PHOTO BY ERICA L. JONES

Student Orientation 2020



Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L, welcomed the MSOT '22 and OTD '23 students at orientation on Aug. 19.

Our annual Student Orientation three-day event was held Aug. 19 to 21. COVID-19 protocols were in place so that our new classes could participate in the events in person and virtually.



The class was divided into three groups to maintain social distancing. Each day of orientation, one group attended in person while the other two groups participated virtually.



A picnic was held all three days of orientation for the group that was attending in person, with raffle prizes for attendees.



Faculty members attended the picnics as well as current students to welcome the new class to WashU OT.



Students received their OT pin from their advisor this year, then continued the tradition of sharing what it means to them for our social media channels.



Gross motor

Clare Lassiter, OTD/S '22 (left), and her 9-year-old daughter, Camila, demonstrate a few of the gross motor development positions they learned during a Zoom session for the Evaluation and Intervention: Children and Youth course.

Washington University School of Medicine
Program in Occupational Therapy
MSC 8505-66-1
4444 Forest Park Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63108-2212



Occupational Therapy



Tweets we love
@WUSTLOT

Worry and fear about the transmission of COVID-19 can lead to discrimination and stigma for children, adolescents, and their families. AOTA's guide to understanding health status discrimination, causes, and how to address it. ow.ly/zG2c50B901T – @AOTAInc • Aug 25, 2020

Upcoming events

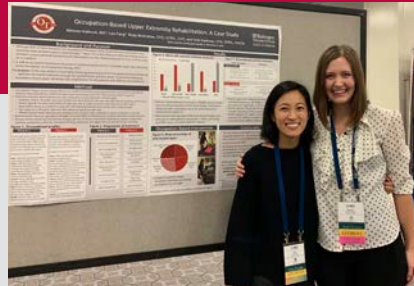


April 8-11, 2021

**AOTA Annual Conference
& Expo**

San Diego, CA
Location TBD

*You are invited to the Program in Occupational
Therapy Alumni Reception.*

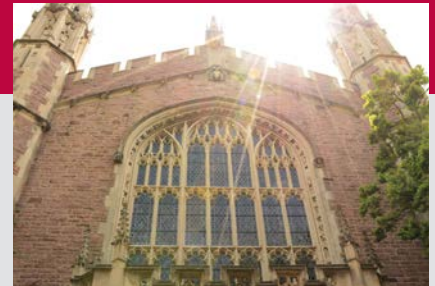


April 30, 2021

OT Scholarship Day

Eric P. Newman Educational
Center (EPNEC)
320 S. Euclid Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63110

*Registration information to come
at ot.wustl.edu*



May 21, 2021

Commencement

The Program in Occupational
Therapy Commencement Ceremony
will be held in Graham Chapel at
1:00 p.m. on May 21, 2021.

The Program in Occupational Therapy is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), located at 6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200, North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929. ACOTE's telephone number, c/o AOTA, is (301) 652-AOTA and its web address is www.acoteonline.org.