

# O.T. Link



## Moose calls:

*Celebrating the career  
of Jeanenne Dallas*



## Task-specific training

Jackie Johnson, MSOT/S '21, works with a patient who has left-sided weakness after a stroke. The patient practices cutting with his left hand as a part of task-specific training. Task-specific training involves the repeated, challenging practice of goal-oriented activities.

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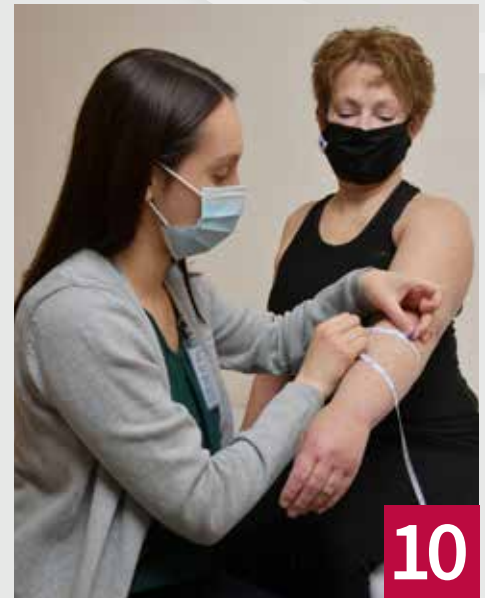
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 **Washington University in St. Louis**  
 SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
 Occupational Therapy

# From the Director



The spring 2021 semester began on Jan. 11, and we continue to teach under a hybrid model to comply with social distancing and other safety measures set forth by the university. Our students started receiving the COVID-19 vaccine in January as health-care workers who see patients during fieldwork and clinical experiences. This issue of O.T. Link captures our efforts to continue our research, education and clinical missions to advance human health and wellbeing by maximizing people's participation in meaningful activity amid the pandemic's many challenges.

Our cover story celebrates the career of the one and only Jeanenne Dallas, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA (page 4), who retired as faculty on Dec. 31. Jeanenne has served many roles in the Program during the past 24 years, from lecturer and mental health occupational therapist to faculty member and academic fieldwork coordinator. As an MSOT '13 alumna, Jeanenne was also my fieldwork coordinator. I know firsthand just how much she enjoyed working with students and how vested she was in making sure we all passed fieldwork successfully. She has been honored with many awards during her career, including being named to the American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA's) Roster of Fellows in 2016, but she treasures the 145 rubber moose and the messages from you she received in 2018. I am sure you will enjoy reading about the many twists and turns her career took before she joined us in 1996, and the impact she has had on our Program since then. I am thrilled she has agreed to stay on as our alumni ambassador so we can continue to enjoy her wit and enthusiasm for years to come.

Our early career scientists like Benjamin Philip, PhD, are bridging the gap between neuroscience and occupational therapy (page 8). Dr. Philip was recently awarded a five-year, \$2.1 million National Institutes of Health R01 research grant to study why some individuals with a peripheral nerve injury in their dominant hand are unable to compensate for that loss by effectively using their non-dominant hand. He is also investigating whether imagined movement may spark a re-wiring and re-organization of brain signals that could enhance movement and adaptability as well as developing a new iPad app that will measure and quantify handwriting in children. We are fortunate to have Dr. Philip mentoring our MSOT, OTD and PhD students who are interested in learning more about how neuroscience serves as a foundation for therapeutic interventions.

OT Services, our clinical arm, continues to develop new and innovative service lines to improve the health and wellbeing of people with chronic conditions. Sarah Mecadon, MOT, OTR/L, CLT, is treating patients with lymphedema (page 10) through a new collaboration with Justin Sacks, MD, MBA, chief of the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine. Dr. Sacks is in the process of establishing a Center of Excellence for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Lymphatic Diseases here at the medical school. No other hospital in the St. Louis area is offering this type of program, and we are proud to provide lymphedema therapy to the community in this capacity.

The Program will be participating in AOTA's Inspire, the virtual event that is replacing the annual in-person conference and expo (page 15). We will have a virtual booth on April 6-9 with a variety of live discussions each day focused on different aspects of our program and profession. Plans are also underway for a virtual alumni reception hosted by Jeanenne on April 21. We will be sending out more information via email and posting updates on the virtual activities on our website at [ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21](https://ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21) and social media channels. We hope you can "stop by" and visit with us during Inspire.

Regards,

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

**Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L**

*Associate Dean and Director of Occupational Therapy*

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### Baum to receive 2020 Distinguished Service Award

M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, will be honored with the 2020 Distinguished Service Award from the Washington University Medical Center Alumni Association. The award is given for a particularly laudable career accomplishment with substantial contribution and/or service to Washington University Medical Center. Baum is being recognized for her 43 years of service to Washington University and her 31-year tenure as Elias Michael Executive Director of the Program in Occupational Therapy. She was nominated by her successor, Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L. The award was to be presented in spring 2020, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, the ceremony has been postponed until a time it is safe to present this high honor to Baum in person.

### Bricker receives 2020 MOTA Outstanding Educator Award

Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L, received the 2020 Missouri Occupational Therapy Association's Outstanding Educator Award. The award recognizes the administrator, supervisor or educator



Jessie Bricker

who promotes professionalism, civic engagement, occupation-based care, volunteerism, mentoring the future generation of occupational therapy practitioners and serves as a positive role model for staff and/or students. Bricker was nominated for this award for her work in developing the Community Wellness Fieldwork, a non-traditional fieldwork option for students whose original fieldwork placement has been canceled or deferred during the ongoing pandemic.

### Tyminski to receive 2021 Ethic of Service Award

Quinn Tyminski, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH, will receive Washington University's Gerry and Bob Virgil Ethic of Service Award on April 21. The award is given annually to a select group of Washington University community members who exemplify a character of service and engagement with the St. Louis region. Tyminski is being recognized for her community involvement and dedication to social justice.



Quinn Tyminski

### Chang selected co-editor-in-chief of journal

Chih-Hung Chang, PhD, was selected as the new co-editor-in-chief of the Journal of Patient-Reported Outcomes (JPRO). Chang has served as an associate editor of JPRO since March 2018 and has previously served as an associate editor of Quality of Life Research.



Chih-Hung Chang

### Perlmutter renews specialty certification

Monica Perlmutter, OTD, OTR/L, SCLV, FAOTA, renewed her American Occupational Therapy Association Specialty Certification on Low Vision. The certification formally recognizes Perlmutter for engaging in a voluntary process of ongoing professional development and for translating that development into improved outcomes for clients. Her certification is active until 2026.



Monica Perlmutter

### Want more Program news?

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



# Moose calls:

## Celebrating the career of Jeanenne Dallas

By Michele Berhorst

CREATIVE VISIONS PHOTOGRAPHY



Alumna Kim Lorenz, MSOT '07, CPP, owner of Creative Visions Photography, captured Jeanenne Dallas, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA, "teaching" her moose herd in 2018.

**A**mid the COVID-19 pandemic, a milestone quietly occurred on Dec. 31, 2020: Jeanenne Dallas, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA, retired from the Program in Occupational Therapy after 24 years of service. There is an irony in Dallas, affectionately known as JD, having such a non-eventful retirement.

Anyone who knows Dallas knows how much she loves a good party, event or even national conference. Her natural ability to connect and stay in contact with students, alumni, colleagues and friends was never more evident than when Dallas became the recipient of 145 rubber moose that arrived in waves by mail, courier and in-person deliveries to her throughout 2018. Each uniquely decorated moose carried a special message from a former student or colleague expressing gratitude or sharing a memory. “The Moosening” may have started out as a joke, but it ended up becoming the perfect tribute to an educator and therapist who has always followed her heart and not necessarily the rules.

### A change of plans

Dallas was born in 1955 in Memphis, hometown of her parents, Jack and Julia Dallas. She was christened “Margaret Jeanenne” because her mother thought “Jeanenne Margaret” did not sound right, but has always gone by Jeanenne. The following year, her father decided to move the family to Little Rock, Ark., to open The Embers, a steak and seafood restaurant. Her mom worked the books and took care of Dallas and her siblings – John, Janie and Jim – while her father ran the restaurant 364 days of the year. “My dad closed the restaurant only on Christmas Day. He was there all the time,” Dallas recalls. “I knew early on the restaurant business was not for me. In high school, I became interested in health

care, but not as a nurse or doctor. Physical therapy (PT) caught my attention, and I even did some candy striping at a local hospital to learn more.”

With her degree decided, Dallas enrolled in the University of Central Arkansas, the college that offered the state’s only PT program. Her circle of friends quickly became fellow students preparing to enter various health-care fields, including occupational therapy (OT). After spending time with OT students and faculty, Dallas learned that mental health was becoming more prevalent in the field. “It was the 70s, and inpatient facilities were the norm at state hospitals. Every major medical center had a facility. Because of my grades, I didn’t get into PT school so, with the encouragement of friends and OT faculty, I applied to OT school and got in,” she says. “I was one of nine students. And when you’re one of nine, you’re noticed. When we wanted to skip class, we all had to skip class. I may have instigated that one or two times.”

To graduate, Dallas had to complete three fieldwork assignments. The first was in inpatient psychiatry at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, the second in physical medicine at St. John’s Mercy in St. Louis and the third in inpatient psychiatry at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic at the University of Pittsburgh. “I knew I wasn’t going to go back to Arkansas, and I really liked St. Louis. I already knew the Sisters of Mercy from grade school. When I did

my fieldwork at St. John’s Mercy Medical Center, I lived in their motherhouse in Frontenac for the three months of fieldwork,” Dallas says. “In October of 1978, I got my first OT job at St. John’s in mental health and married my first husband, Steve Blaha, who was an accountant, in 1980. Within the first year of our marriage, he was transferred to Oklahoma City for work, so we moved. I found a job at another Sisters of Mercy hospital there. It only lasted a year because his job fizzled out, I wasn’t happy and we both missed St. Louis.”

### Moving up and moving on

After moving back to St. Louis, Dallas held several mental health OT positions in various hospitals and within the Barnes Hospital system throughout the mid-80s and 90s. Her daughter, Jennifer, was born in 1984, and her son, Joey, came along a few years later in 1988. Dallas’s job tenures tended to be short so she could take a year off here and there to raise her kids. “I was lucky to find jobs in mental health. I always say I got paid well to talk to people all day long – and everyone knows I love talking!” Dallas says. “I was able to establish a rapport with the most challenging patients, and I really enjoyed working with them.”

From 1991 to 1996, Dallas was the activity therapy supervisor of psychiatric services at Barnes Hospital. She divorced Blaha in 1992 and earned her master’s



Left photo: Fieldwork coordinators (left to right) Donna Whitehouse, MHA, OTR; Beth Daniels, MSOT; Vicki Kaskutas, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA; and Dallas in 2008. Right photo: Dallas in 2011.

in health services management from Webster University in 1993. She also legally changed her name in 1998 to Jeanenne Margaret and reclaimed her maiden name of Dallas. Barnes Hospital and Jewish Hospital were in the midst of a merger, and Dallas saw changes happening in health care and at the hospital. “The lengths of hospital stays were getting shorter and budgets were being crunched. Soon, the top-level management jobs were being eliminated, and it was only a matter of time before the middle-level management jobs like mine would be next. I didn’t know what to do, but I started looking around for other opportunities,” Dallas recalls. “I got lucky because in 1996, Susy Stark approached me with a proposition.”

### The master scheduler

Program in Occupational Therapy faculty member Susy Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, wanted Dallas to help teach her “groups class” by giving a weekly lecture to students before they would go out in small groups into the community. “I had never taught before, but all you needed at the time was a master’s degree. It didn’t take me long to realize I enjoyed teaching,” Dallas says. “Eventually, a mental health occupational therapist position opened up in the Program’s Community Practice. One of the hardest things I’ve ever done was telling my Barnes supervisor, Bette Leventhal, that I was leaving, because I really loved my job. I always say getting a divorce was an easier decision than that was!”

Her new roles were as instructor and clinical specialist, her time split 50/50 between the two. At the time, Community Practice had mental health, pediatric and

older adult contracts with various agencies around town. “My first mental health contract was at Shalom House Transitional Housing. Susy had written a grant to start a transition program for women living at the shelter to move to permanent housing. Many of the students were hired as part-time workers, and I fell in love with working in the community. I also found out why many of my Barnes inpatient clients kept coming back. Their lives in the community were chaotic. It was an eye-opening experience,” Dallas shares. “After a faculty member left, I started teaching more of the mental health curriculum. I became a master scheduler to balance my time between teaching, community work and being a single mom.”

The late 1990s and early 2000s brought more changes to Dallas’s professional career and private life. She moved from Shalom House to Community Alternatives in 1998 to fill a new grant-funded position on their Assertive Community Treatment Team. “I was the OT case manager and loved every minute of it. I also had fieldwork level I and II students there year round. Many of them went on to become mental health occupational therapists or they came away with an understanding of what community OT was,” Dallas says. She also found love again with her soulmate, Whitt Lynn, whom she married on February 2, 2002 at 2:02 p.m.

### “The very best position”

“I loved working at Community Alternatives and was happy with how things were going, but then Carolyn approached me in 2007 with an idea,” Dallas says.

The Program’s executive director, M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR, FAOTA,

had a proposal for Dallas. “At the time, Vicki Kaskutas’s two-year arrangement as academic fieldwork coordinator was coming to an end. Carolyn offered me the job, but it meant adding a third task in addition to my teaching and community roles,” Dallas says. “My skills as a master scheduler were put to the test, and after juggling the three positions, I realized something had to give. After a brief discussion in 2008, Carolyn let me drop the community work and do the fieldwork full-time along with teaching the mental health courses. I hated leaving the agency, but I needed to for my own mental health wellness. It was also time for them to hire their own occupational therapist.”

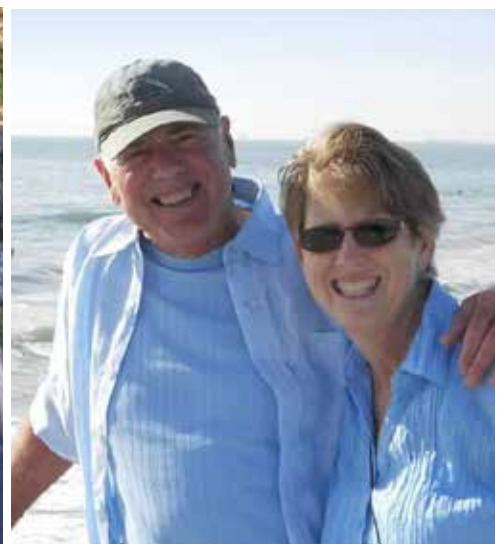
Dallas described her new role as academic fieldwork coordinator as “the very best position” of her career. “It gave me the opportunity to get to know the students in a different way. I always say I traded a ‘diagnosed’ group for an ‘undiagnosed’ group,” Dallas says. “My experiences raising two teenagers and working in mental health OT prepared me well for the job. I helped students work through their stress and anxieties during fieldwork and sometimes with just life in general! The students who pushed the limits found out quickly there wasn’t too much they could put over on me. I may have dished out a lot of ‘tough love,’ but I always had my students’ backs.”

The position also gave Dallas the opportunity to expand her social network even further by connecting with fieldwork educators from more than 500 sites all over the country. On the national level, she served on the American Occupational Therapy Association’s (AOTA’s) Special Interest Section on Mental Health, their

Left photo: Dallas with her children, Joey and Jennifer Blaha, in 2009.



Right photo: Dallas and Whitt Lynn in New Zealand in 2011.







Left photo: Dallas collects drink tickets at the 2014 AOTA Annual Conference & Expo with Chelsea Berthold, MSOT '13.



Right photo: 2016 AOTA Roster of Fellow Inductees (left to right) Monica Perlmutter, OTD, OTR/L, SCLV, FAOTA; Steve Taff, PhD, OTR/L, FNAP, FAOTA; and Dallas.

annual Fieldwork Status Report Ad Hoc Committee and the Academic Fieldwork and Capstone Coordinators Academic Leadership Council. Locally, she served on the Gateway Occupational Therapy Council for Fieldwork Coordinators, held several officer positions for the Missouri Occupational Therapy Association and served on many other mental health or fieldwork committees and boards.

Dallas's appearances at AOTA's Annual Expo & Conference quickly became legendary. She loved visiting with alumni and colleagues at the Program's booth on opening night and collecting drink tickets at the alumni reception. In 2015, she had to cancel her conference trip when Lynn went into the hospital. He had been diagnosed two years before with multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer that affects plasma cells. "I didn't make conference that year, but my friend, Wendy Starnes, checked me in and got my nametag expecting me to come late. When it was evident that I wasn't going to make it, she took it everywhere she went and suddenly it became 'Flat JD.' Others joined Wendy in taking pictures with Flat JD all over conference," Dallas recalls. When it made it to the Program's booth to work her shift, Vicki Kaskutas took it around and to the business meeting, upon Dallas's insistence, and also to the alumni reception to get drink tickets. "Flat JD closed down the reception. Whitt and I had so much fun watching Flat JD at conference through photos and FaceTime. It helped keep our spirits up during his hospitalization stay."

Lynn sadly passed away on March 16, 2016 and was unable to see Dallas be inducted into AOTA's Roster of Fellows

at conference that year. Her friend and outgoing AOTA President Virginia "Ginny" Stoffel, PhD, whispered to Dallas while she was handing her the award on stage, "Whitt's watching you."

### Retirement, but not really

In 2018, Dallas decided it was finally time to retire. She took a phased retirement option available to Washington University faculty by working part-time for her final two years. It gave her time to pass her academic fieldwork coordinator baton to alumna Jessie Bricker, OTD, OTR/L. The Class of 2018 elected Dallas to be the faculty speaker at Commencement. In her speech, Dallas reminded her students one final time that "leggings are not pants" before lifting her regalia to reveal leggings underneath. It was a classic Dallas moment and a fond memory cherished by the Program. When asked what she would like to be remembered for, Dallas replies, "First, I hope I AM remembered! I want people to remember how much I loved being at WashU OT, that I was a team player, a student advocate and a bit of a 'hard nose' despite being a softy deep down about the things I cared about most."

Anyone who has been at the Program in Occupational Therapy for any length of time knows that retirement often means a faculty member is only retiring from their academic appointment. Dallas is no exception; she has gladly taken the role of alumni ambassador moving forward. Expect to see Dallas at the annual alumni reception, conferences and other events in the coming years. Friend her on Facebook so you'll know when her many travels bring her to your city. And she will happily accept another rubber moose at any time.

## JD-isms

### "Anyone hear the moose calling?"

Dallas's love of moose started during her one-year stint in Oklahoma and has nothing to do with the animal. "I've always been a beer drinker, and beer to me was Budweiser. However, in Oklahoma, they had three-two beer – very watered down and regulated. The only way you could get better beer was through imports, and the only other beer I knew about Moosehead. I worked with a young crowd of OTs, PTs and techs, and we had a single therapy room. When it was time for happy hour, we'd tug on our ear and ask, 'Anyone hear the moose calling?' Even the patients were in on it. After that, people started giving me all things moose," Dallas shares.

### "No marriage or babies on fieldwork!"

Another role Dallas unofficially took on was that of wedding planner and/or birth planner. "I tried to encourage students NOT to get married or have a baby during fieldwork. Both events just put additional stress on them and on me! One year, I swear the students conspired against me because six of them got pregnant, including one dad having his third child! That really put my fieldwork planning to the test! We all made it through in one piece," Dallas recalls fondly.

### "Leggings are not pants."

Every student in Dallas's professional behaviors class knows this is her mantra. Truth be told, she does not really hate leggings in general. Dallas explains: "It was just a funny thing that came out of my fieldwork attire recommendations and my way of imparting wisdom that leggings shouldn't be worn in a professional setting. I rarely had to worry about a student's attire on fieldwork, but when I found out that their attire was not appropriate for the site, I made sure the student knew I wasn't happy!"



# The Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Laboratory

By Stephanie Stemmler

Bridging the gap between neuroscience and occupational therapy

Benjamin Philip, PhD, adjusts the video camera on an MRI-compatible tablet that can measure hand function during a brain scan.

PHOTOS BY MICHELE BERORST

**A**s a brain imaging study gets underway, Benjamin Philip, PhD, watches a person in an MRI machine begin to draw on a computer tablet with their non-dominant hand.

The exercise may appear to be a simple task, but the movement is actually quite complex, sparking a series of electrical connections deep within the brain that direct the hand to move.

“I’m searching for the specific brain mechanisms that allow a person to compensate for the loss of the dominant hand and effectively use their non-dominant hand to perform tasks,” Philip says. “In other words, I’m looking for both the origin and path of electrical circuits in the brain governing hand movement.”

Philip is trying to solve a major problem: Why is it that some individuals with a

peripheral nerve injury in their dominant hand are unable to compensate for that loss by effectively using their non-dominant hand? The question is at the heart of a five-year, \$2.1 million National Institutes of Health R01 research grant awarded to Philip in 2020. The answer could potentially impact the rehabilitative care of more than 60,000 people diagnosed with peripheral nerve injuries in the United States.

“Is it habit?” asks Philip. “Or is it a brain connection? I think it’s going to be both.”

More than 90 percent of the world’s population is right-handed. Philip, a “lefty,” says left-handed people have learned to accommodate in this lopsided world by either using specially designed gadgets for left-handed use or by adapting to right-handed tools. “I write with my left hand, but learned to use right-handed

scissors, for example. And I have a knife in my kitchen that I still sometimes mistakenly cut on the blunt side because it’s visually symmetrical unless you look at its left side, which you can only see if you’re holding it in your right hand.”

Handedness, the preference of using one hand over the other, doesn’t typically switch by choice, although a small percentage of people can be ambidextrous. And while it’s interesting to examine handedness choices for various activities in the general population, the issue becomes paramount in individuals who are upper extremity amputees or who have been diagnosed with peripheral nerve disease that prevents the use of their dominant hand.

“They can learn how to use a non-dominant hand, but it’s quite hard over the long term,” says Philip. “What

I'm trying to do is identify the specific location in the brain that controls handedness and the electric circuitry where the signal travels from the brain to the arms and hands. By pinpointing this, we can use neuromodulation in addition to neurorehabilitation therapies to re-train individuals to effectively use a non-dominant hand."

Philip's research bridges the gap between neuroscience and occupational therapy and began after he earned his bachelor's degree in cognitive science at Vassar College in New York. As he pursued his doctoral degree in neuroscience at Brown University, he worked with John Donoghue, PhD, a pioneering translational researcher whose team created the BrainGate brain-computer interface, designed to restore movement in people with paralysis. Philip studied the process by which the brain specifically controls hand and arm movement by implanting electrode arrays into the motor cortex of non-human primates. Within a year, as a post-doctoral fellow in the laboratory of Scott Frey, PhD, he translated his focus into human research efforts. In 2016, he became director of the Neuroscience and Rehabilitation Laboratory within the Program of Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine.

"I've always been interested in how the mind works and what makes it work the way that it does," he says simply. "In the context of hand movements, despite the very best surgery and even nerve

transplants or transfers, about one-third of the patients never regain their hand function to the degree that they desire. It's those individuals that I'm trying to help."

A major advantage for Philip is that he sits in an academic environment at Washington University that abounds with internationally renowned collaborators in neuroscience, plastic and reconstructive surgery, psychology, biostatistics and neuro-imaging. Washington University also has an internationally recognized center for nerve transplants and nerve transfers. And adjacent to the campus is the Cortex Innovation Community, a business and technology innovation hub.

### Imagined movement

Working with physician-scientists across Washington University, including Susan Mackinnon, MD, who performed the world's first nerve transplant, Philip is also investigating whether patients purposely closing their eyes and thinking through a movement step by step will lead to faster and better rehabilitative outcomes for patients who don't fully recover from surgical "re-wiring" alone. This process, called imagined movement, may spark a re-wiring and re-organization of brain signals that could enhance actual movement and adaptability. The research is funded by the American Society of Neurorehabilitation.

Working on a third but parallel project, Philip has added the word "inventor" to his resume. With research colleagues, he is developing a new iPad app that will

measure and quantify handwriting in children. It is hoped that the app will lead to early identification of a child who may develop a writing disorder. Colleagues in Cortex are working on the business platform to bring the app to commercial use within three to five years.

At its heart, the app is a drawing game with a purpose. "It's based on similar tools that we are using in the R01 study, but we've tooled it to work in a school environment on a readily available iPad using an Apple Pencil," Philip says. Initial development of the app was funded by a Phase I Small Business Technology Transfer grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Child Health & Human Development.

In the future, Philip plans to expand his neuromodulation studies in peripheral nerve injury patients to include individuals recovering from stroke. "In both cases, we don't know if the struggle to use a non-dominant hand is related to damage to the brain or to handedness," he says.

He also oversees seminars and mentors MSOT, OTD and PhD students in the Program who are interested in learning more about how neuroscience serves as a foundation for therapeutic interventions. Says Philip, "I want to learn things that allow us to better understand what new therapies are possible and how we can improve what occupational therapists can do for their clients."



Left photo: The tablet uses bluescreen technology to show the participant their drawing.



Middle photo: Philip controls the drawing software with the help of Nathan Baune, PhD.



Right photo: The Block Building Task measures when people choose to use their left or right hand.

# Treating lymphedema

By Michele Berhorst

New service line gives patients control over their lymphedema



Sarah Mecadon, MOT, OTR/L, CLT (right), uses circumferential measures to help track progression of patient Veronica's lymphedema by providing objective data about limb size.

Approximately 20% of breast cancer survivors\* will develop lymphedema in their upper extremities following surgery and/or radiation treatments. The condition occurs when there is inadequate lymph fluid drainage from the body, which builds up under the skin and causes swelling. Lymphedema can also bring many physical and psychosocial effects that limit or even prevent activities of daily living. "Individuals with lymphedema can face a lifetime of pain,

decreased range of motion, stress and sleep disturbance from the swelling. It also can affect their relationships, participation and sense of self-worth," says Sarah Mecadon, MOT, OTR/L, CLT, who treats lymphedema patients as part of a new service line offered through the Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center. "There is no cure for lymphedema, and sometimes it's hard for patients to hear they will never be back to 100 percent. However, we can significantly improve their prognosis by teaching them how to manage the

condition, improve their quality of life and help them to have a more positive attitude about themselves."

The service line began last year with the arrival of Justin Sacks, MD, MBA, chief of the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine. Sacks specializes in reconstructive surgery following post-traumatic injury and oncology surgery, including breast reconstruction and lymphedema surgery. "Once Dr. Sacks heard about our breast cancer

rehabilitative services, he reached out to us about having a certified lymphedema therapist (CLT) on staff so we can treat patients all in one place,” says Mecadon. “While multiple disciplines can become CLTs, occupational therapists look at how lymphedema affects the various aspects of someone’s daily life beyond just the physical challenges.”

It took about a month for Mecadon to complete the CLT training. She also received training to use the newly acquired SOZO® machine, a noninvasive bioimpedance spectroscopy device that helps assess secondary lymphedema and provide a snapshot of fluid status and tissue composition in less than 30 seconds. “The SOZO provides baseline measurements pre-surgery and detects the fluid changes post-surgery while it’s still in a reversible stage. It detects the fluid increase well before I would see a change in arm circumference using a manual tape measure,” Mecadon explains. “If the levels increase to a certain amount, it triggers us to begin treatment with massage, manual lymph draining and bandaging to bring the patient back down or close to their baseline. It also helps patients feel better when they see the numbers decreasing. They know the treatment is working.”

Mecadon typically sees patients four to five days a week when they start lymphedema therapy, based on their diagnosis and presentation. After a couple weeks, the therapy can be reduced to two to three times a week until enough limb reduction is achieved so that the patient can be fitted for compression garments. “Unfortunately, insurance doesn’t cover the cost of compression garments, which need to be replaced every six months. Individuals with lymphedema may need to wear them for the rest of their lives,” Mecadon explains. “They can also be self-conscious about wearing compression garments in public. The good news is now the garments come in a variety of colors, patterns and styles so they are less noticeable. Plus, having those options helps normalize lymphedema and improve a person’s confidence when they are out and about.”

Helping people change their perspective about living with lymphedema is one of the reasons Mecadon was drawn to this line of care. “It’s rewarding to give a patient that sense of control back. So much of the primary focus of their healing journey is on the cancer and the treatments that secondary conditions like

lymphedema are just accepted as a side effect of cancer care.”

Recently, Mecadon treated a patient with severe, stage 2 lymphedema resulting from cancer treatments years ago that put him into remission. “He had never even heard of lymphedema therapy when he was referred to our clinic. With conservative management, we saw a significant reduction in his lymphedema. So much so, I was able to transition him to a home program where he uses a pump and compression to self-manage his lymphedema,” Mecadon shares. “Now, he is doing better and is happy with his arm size. It’s been a life-changing experience because his mobility is not as restricted.”

Sacks is currently in the process of establishing a Center of Excellence for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Lymphatic Diseases (LD) at Washington University. The center would provide not only comprehensive, multi-disciplinary clinical services to families, but also education, advocacy and research opportunities to the LD community.

“Our Center of Excellence at Barnes-Jewish Hospital at the Washington University Medical Center will treat the full spectrum of LD. We will use multi-modal approaches to treat lymphedema with medical therapy, physical rehabilitation and new innovative surgical therapies such as lymphovenous bypass, lymph node transplant and reductive procedures. This will benefit not only patients in St. Louis, but those in the state of Missouri and in the greater Midwest. We are very excited to be collaborating with the Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center,” Sacks says.

Mecadon and colleagues are reaching out to other oncologists, radiation oncologists and departments in the WashU Physicians network to build their referral network



**Top:** The SOZO machine allows for early detection of lymphedema by providing a snapshot of fluid status and tissue composition in just 30 seconds.

**Bottom:** Manual lymph drainage is a light massage that is used to promote movement of lymph fluid out of the affected extremity.

so that more patients can receive preventative care for lymphedema.

“While we currently offer lymphedema therapy at both of our locations, we want to expand services to include SOZO-guided treatment at our Chesterfield location in the next few years and hopefully certify more therapists to treat lymphedema,” Mecadon says. “No other hospital in St. Louis is offering this type of program, so it’s exciting to be on the cutting edge of something that can help improve lives, self-image and prevent further comorbidities.”

Learn more about the Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center and our Lymphedema Services at [otservices.wustl.edu/milliken](https://otservices.wustl.edu/milliken)

## Pearson joins faculty, to receive AOTA award

**O**n Feb. 15, the Program in Occupational Therapy welcomed Adam Cisroe Pearson, OTD, OTR/L, to its faculty as a part-time instructor in occupational therapy (PDA). Pearson earned his clinical doctoral degree from the Program in 2011, and he worked as a clinical specialist and lecturer from 2012-2014 in its Community Practice.

Raised in a family of educators, Pearson grew up in Normandy, Mo., near Ferguson, where the 2014 uprising after the murder of Mike Brown led him to clarify his occupational therapy lens towards broader principles of housing equity and parity. Already engaged in providing occupational therapy services to unhoused individuals at a then-drop-in day shelter called The Bridge, Pearson was hired in 2014 to direct the development of Garfield Place Apartments, a permanent supportive housing program at Peter & Paul Community Services (PPCS). Recognizing the need to learn more about the intersection of housing, disability and policy, he then left to work as the strategy and development manager at the Centene Center for Health Transformation at Washington University's Social Policy Institute in 2018. In this role, he managed the Center's national research portfolio, facilitated collaboration between the Center and Centene's National Disability Advisory Council, and assisted on several market-driven studies and initiatives centered on social determinants of health. He returned to PPCS in 2019 to become the chief operating officer, where he presently oversees their seven programs and programmatic staff, strategic planning initiatives and facilities.

Pearson will receive the 2021 Emerging and Innovative Practice Award from the American Occupational Therapy Association this spring. The award recognizes and honors colleagues who have developed innovative and/or non-traditional occupational therapy practices for underserved populations or utilized the expertise of occupational therapy in new/visionary ways to achieve significant client outcomes to keep the profession relevant and responsive to the changes occurring in health care.



Adam Cisroe Pearson

## In memoriam

**Mary Will McKenzie, MEd, BSOT '59, FAOTA, OTR**, died December 11, 2020. She was 84.

McKenzie was born in Raymond, Miss., in 1936. She earned a Bachelor of Science in occupational therapy from Washington University in 1959. Her 40 years as an occupational therapist afforded her the opportunity to work in various facilities, states and countries. She worked at Rancho Los Amigos Hospital in Downey, Calif., specializing in the treatment of spinal cord injury and arthritis with pioneer rehabilitation doctors and allied health professionals. She also worked as an occupational therapist in Bad Ragaz, Switzerland and in Sweden.

She returned to Mississippi in 1974 and helped develop the new Mississippi Methodist Rehabilitation Center's occupational therapy department in Jackson, Miss. McKenzie earned a master's degree in classroom and clinical teaching from the University of Kentucky. She taught in the occupational therapy school at Louisiana State University and Texas Woman's University. She wrote a curriculum for the orthotics and prosthetics program at the University of Texas and



Mary Will McKenzie

developed rehabilitation instructional videos for allied health professionals at the Dallas Rehabilitation Foundation.

McKenzie coauthored articles and a book on rehabilitation topics and helped found the Mississippi Occupational Therapy Association in the 1970s. She was the first Mississippi representative to the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Representative Assembly, 1976-1979. In 1982, the AOTA named her a fellow for her outstanding service and contributions to the occupational therapy profession. McKenzie was also very active in the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM). In 1990, she was awarded the ACRM Distinguished Member Award for her service and contributions. She retired to Cape Canaveral, Fla., in 2010, and then to a rural settlement south of Lake Nona in Orlando. She most recently lived in a Winter Park, Fla., retirement community and participated in many activities there until her death.

At her request, donations may be made in memoriam to: American Occupational Therapy Foundation (scholarship fund), 12300 Twinbrook Pkwy., Suite 520, Rockville, MD 20852.

# Faculty position

The Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine is currently seeking candidates for an investigator-track research faculty position to begin in the 2021-2022 academic year or before.

Located in the heart of the Midwest, the Program creates an inclusive environment that engages learners through respect for diverse perspectives, experiences and abilities to enhance professional education into a transformative learning climate. Successful candidates will be expected to commit to the development of a multicultural and multiracial environment within the Program and the University. We seek greater diversity among our faculty to create an academic community that is rich with cultural, racial, social and intellectual diversity.

## Faculty, Investigator Track Research

This is a tenure-track, 12-month faculty position at the assistant, associate or full professor level in the Program's Research Division. We seek innovative researchers who can contribute to the discovery, dissemination and implementation of evidence in the broad field of rehabilitation and participation science.

The purpose of the current search is to review potential candidates with long-term planning of our faculty needs in mind. Successful candidates will be expected to establish robust, extramurally funded research and educational programs that engage the broad range of research and clinical programs at Washington University School of Medicine and Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Qualified candidates must have a PhD or equivalent degree and postdoctoral training or two years minimum of relevant research experience. We will consider potential candidates at any stage of their academic training. Occupational therapy licensure is preferred, but not required.

Qualified candidates must apply at <https://facultyopportunities.wustl.edu/Posting/Detail/1010528>

### Questions? Contact the search chair:

Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L  
lconnor@wustl.edu

*Washington University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, genetic information, disability, or protected veteran status.*



The Program in Occupational Therapy invites you to connect with us at AOTA'S INSPIRE Virtual Conference & Expo! **Stop by our virtual booth April 6-9 to**

- **Visit** with friends and colleagues
- **Learn** about what's new at WashU OT
- **Participate** in live discussions each day

And join us for our Virtual Alumni Reception hosted by Jeanenne Dallas, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA! Enjoy virtual drinks, a trivia game and breakout rooms by class or decade. Drop in even if you can't stay the whole time!

**Wednesday, April 21**  
**7:00 to 8:30 p.m. CST**  
via Zoom

Please **RSVP** for the reception using the QR code to the right or at [ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21](https://ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21) by April 15

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**AOTA INSPIRE  
APRIL 2021  
LIVE ONLINE  
ON DEMAND**



## Student awards and honors

Post-professional doctoral student **Pooja Jethani, MOT, OTR/L**, received the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine's Neurodegenerative Diseases Networking Group 2020 Early Career Poster Award. Her poster was titled "Cognitive Self-efficacy in Parkinson's Disease." She was awarded the certificate virtually on Oct. 23. Her poster was also selected for the Early Career Scientist Theater at the American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference & Expo 2020, which was held virtually in March.



Pooja Jethani

**Rose Greenblatt, OTD/S '21**, completed an independent study working with the governor's office and serving on the New Jersey COVID-19 Disability Action Committee. The committee published a report that helps advocate for the needs of people with disabilities during the pandemic. Greenblatt served as the project's administrator and facilitator. The report was distributed to New Jersey legislators and media outlets. Learn more about Greenblatt on page 15.



Rose Greenblatt

PhD student **Yejin Lee, MSOT**, received the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine Measurement Networking Group's Measurement in Action Poster Award for 2020. Her poster was titled "Understanding Momentary Relationships of Somatic and Mood Symptoms with Social Interactions among Persons with Stroke." She was awarded the certificate virtually on Oct. 23.



Yejin Lee

**Courtney Weber, OTD '20**, received the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine's Poster 2nd Place Award for 2020. Her poster was titled "Physical Activity and Participation of People Aging with Long Term Physical Disability." She was awarded the certificate virtually on Oct. 23.



Courtney Weber

### Baune, Wagner become eighth and ninth PhD graduates

On Dec. 17, Nathan Baune, PhD, successfully presented his dissertation titled "Visual and non-visual control of movement: The role of proprioception in upper limb function after stroke." The following week on Dec. 22, Rachael Wagner, PhD, successfully presented her dissertation titled "Refining the characterization of causation in early childhood neuropsychiatric conditions: Nature, nurture and time." Baune was mentored by Benjamin Philip, PhD, and Wagner was mentored by John Constantino, MD. Both presentations were conducted virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions.



Baune's Dissertation Committee included (top row, left to right) Jonathan Tiu, MD; Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L; Alex Wong, PhD, DPhil, BSOT; (middle row, left to right) Benjamin Philip, PhD; Leeanne Carey, PhD, FAOTA, FOTARA; and Dan Moran, PhD.



Wagner's Dissertation Committee included (top row, left to right) John Constantino, MD; Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L; Chris Gunter, PhD; (middle row, left to right) Nico Dosenbach, MD, PhD; Allison King, MD, PhD; and Ryan Bogdan, PhD.



# Future leader

## Rose Greenblatt, OTD/S '21

**Hometown:** Voorhees, NJ

**Undergraduate degree:** BS in exercise science and sports studies from Rutgers University

**Leadership:** NJ COVID-19 Disability Action Committee Administrator/Facilitator. Former executive board member of the Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity, Washington University Chapter (WU-COTAD) and former Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association (WUSOTA) Cultural Committee Co-Chair. Also served as a Holocaust Memorial Lecture Committee Graduate Professional Council Representative.

### What are your meaningful occupations?

My meaningful occupations include spending time outdoors, tending to my plants, cooking, baking and observing Jewish holidays. I also enjoy watching TV shows, listening to music and podcasts, and reading local news. In general, I enjoy supporting public amenities such as parks and libraries, as well as local businesses such as shops and restaurants. I also find a lot of meaning in self-care activities such as personal hygiene and grooming and household maintenance.

### What is your definition of occupational therapy?

I define occupational therapy (OT) as a health-care practice that helps clients do what they want to do. We accomplish this through our unique understanding of how internal and external factors influence engagement. One of my favorite things about OT is that we view persons, groups and populations as clients. This allows us to expand the impact of our interventions and help more people by making structural changes within organizations and societies.

### Why did you choose the OTD degree?

I chose the OTD degree because I wanted the opportunity to examine the components of occupational performance and participation more closely. I also knew prior to entering graduate school that I wanted to pursue emerging practice areas within the field, and I believe the additional experience and mentorship provided by the degree will support me in achieving this goal.

### What are your career goals?

I hope to develop a meaningful practice within my community that serves my neighbors. I'm very passionate about community participation and supporting local businesses. As a result, I would love to create programs that promote equity, reduce occupational deprivation, and encourage accessible participation in local government and the economy. I would also like to create programs that support survivors and reduce the prevalence of sexual violence.

### What WashU experience so far stands out to you?

I am extremely grateful for the quality mentorship and guidance I received while pursuing different professional and extracurricular experiences while at WashU OT. I quickly realized that if I started naming names, most of the faculty and staff would be listed. However, I am especially grateful for having had the opportunity to work with Dr. Stacy Smallfield in the Innovations in Education laboratory. Dr. Smallfield's support and honest feedback have been instrumental in shaping me into the young professional I am today. It has been inspiring to learn from such a competent, motivated and effective leader.



SARAH FOLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

# Student experiences



Training in the use of a mechanical patient lift



Learning to use sock aids and other adaptive equipment for dressing tasks

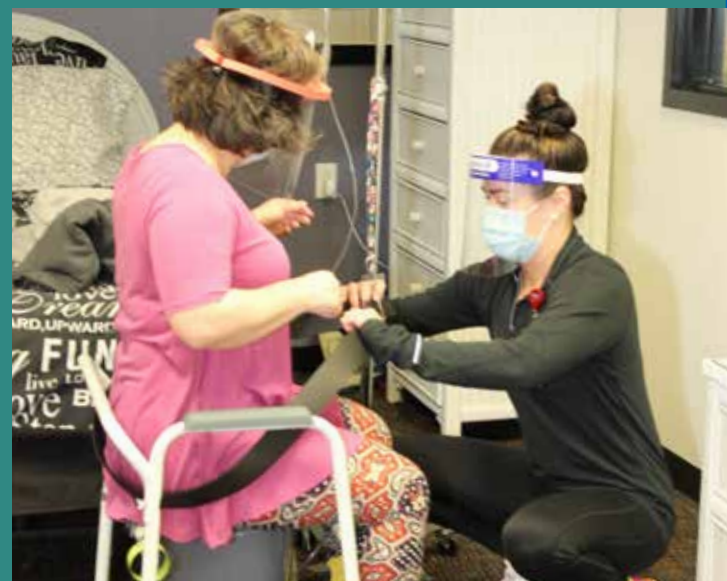


Functional mobility training to and from hospital beds

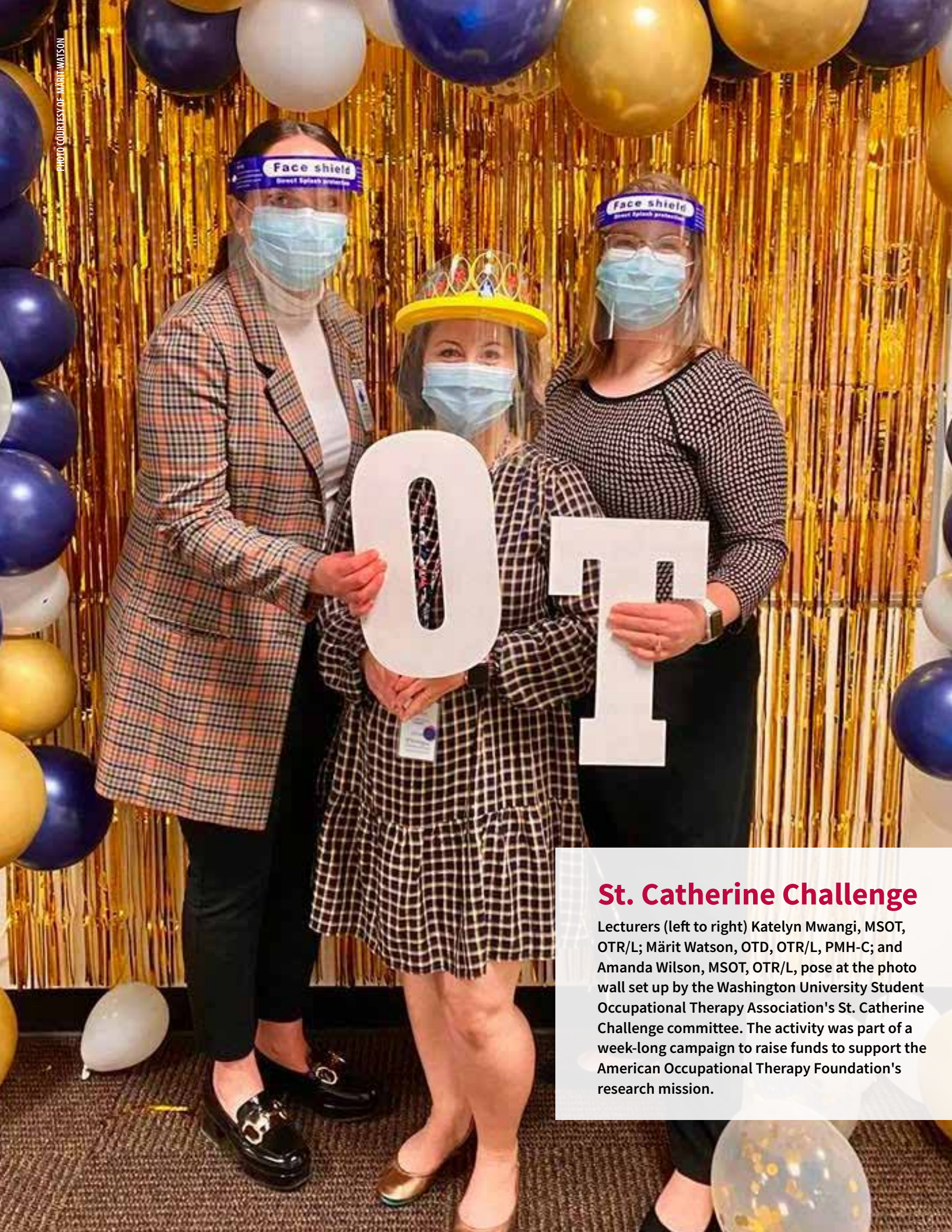
The evaluation and intervention: adults and older adults II course explores the person, environment, and occupation factors that influence occupational performance of adults and older adults. Students evaluate these factors, interpret findings and design components of intervention plans using applicable theories, models, frames of reference and best evidence. In-person learning activities held Jan. 26 through Feb. 9 included functional mobility, working with hospital beds, personal protective equipment and simulated activities of daily living.



Functional mobility training with wheelchairs



Preparing for functional mobility



## St. Catherine Challenge

Lecturers (left to right) Katelyn Mwangi, MSOT, OTR/L; Märít Watson, OTD, OTR/L, PMH-C; and Amanda Wilson, MSOT, OTR/L, pose at the photo wall set up by the Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association's St. Catherine Challenge committee. The activity was part of a week-long campaign to raise funds to support the American Occupational Therapy Foundation's research mission.

Washington University School of Medicine  
Program in Occupational Therapy  
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Occupational Therapy



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Because of #COVID19, face masks are now part of our daily routine. But for individuals with hearing aids or vision loss, wearing a mask comes with complexities. Learn what considerations practitioners can take to address these problems in #OTPractice. <http://ow.ly/y1Wo50COyBh>  
– @AOTAInc • Dec 18, 2020

## Upcoming events



**April 6-9, 2021**

**AOTA Inspire 2021**

Visit us as our virtual booth during kick-off week!

Information to come at [ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21](http://ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21)

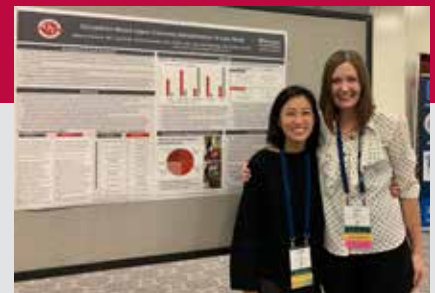


**April 21, 2021**

**Virtual Alumni Reception**

Join us for our annual alumni reception hosted by Jeanenne Dallas via Zoom!

Information to come at [ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21](http://ot.wustl.edu/AOTA21)



**April 30, 2021**

**Virtual OT Scholarship Day**

Graduating students share their work through both oral and poster presentations.

PDU's available. Register at [ot.wustl.edu](http://ot.wustl.edu)

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](http://www.acoteonline.org).