

 Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

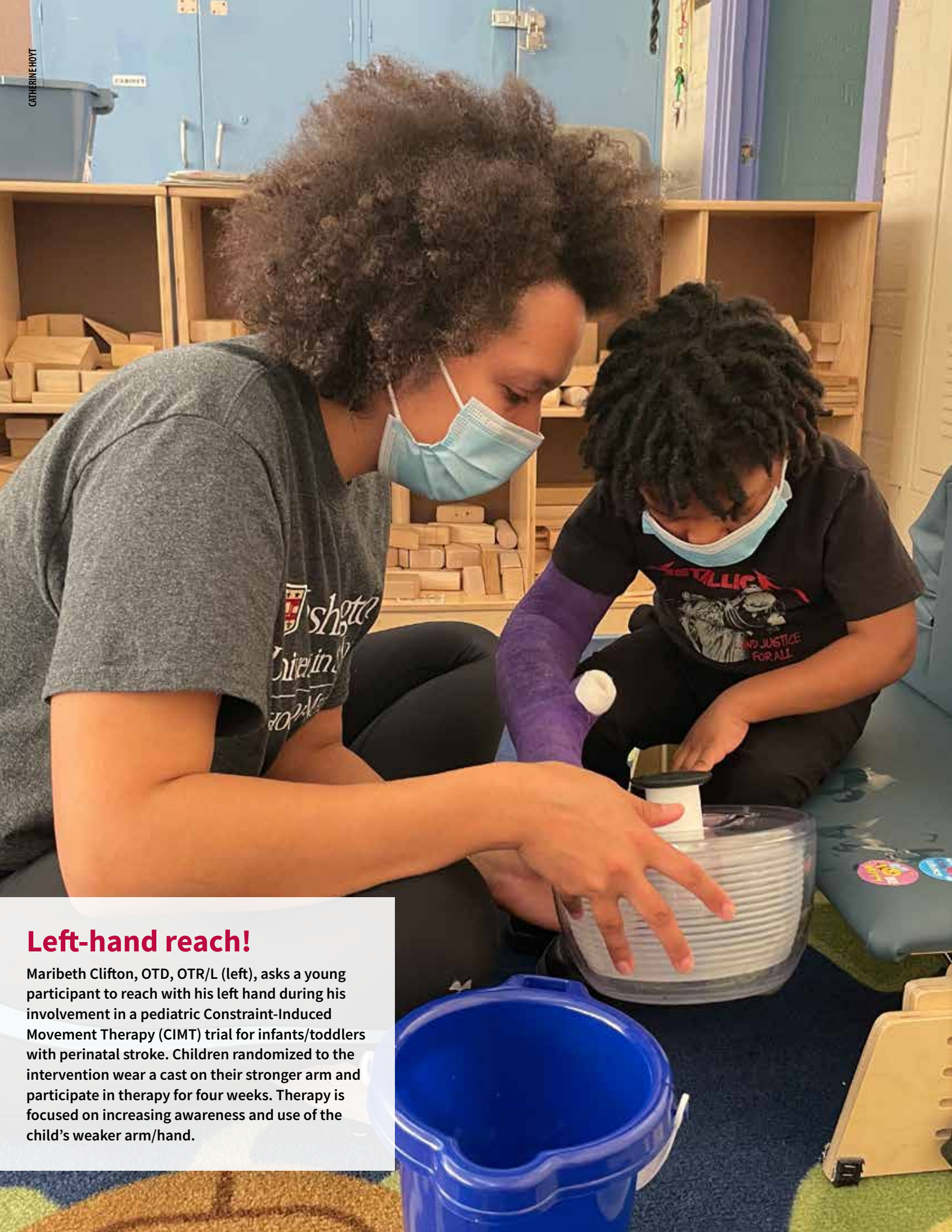
Occupational Therapy

Spring 2022

O.T. Link

Moving to Washington





Left-hand reach!

Maribeth Clifton, OTD, OTR/L (left), asks a young participant to reach with his left hand during his involvement in a pediatric Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT) trial for infants/toddlers with perinatal stroke. Children randomized to the intervention wear a cast on their stronger arm and participate in therapy for four weeks. Therapy is focused on increasing awareness and use of the child's weaker arm/hand.

O.T. Link Contents

Also in this issue

- 2 From the Director
- 3 Program news
- 12 In memoriam
- 14 Alumni event
- 15 Future leader
- 16 Student happenings

4 Moving to Washington
 After four years of research, strategizing and planning, Ryan Risley, MPM, helps bring OT Services to Franklin County

8 Medication management
 Researcher Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L, develops new interventions in medication management

10 A lasting impact
 A tribute to the life and career of Binyam Nardos, PhD



4



8



10

Official publication of the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine

ot.wustl.edu

Associate Dean and Director of Occupational Therapy, Elias Michael
Professor of Occupational Therapy and Professor of Neurology
 Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L

Managing Editor and Designer
 Michele Berhorst

Contributors
 Michele Berhorst
 Megen Devine, MA
 Damien Fair, PhD
 Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP
 Ryan Risley, MPM
 Stephanie Stemmler

Photography
 Michele Berhorst
 Avery Collier, OTD/S '24
 Damien Fair, PhD
 Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTD, OTR/L
 Mario Ortega, PhD
 Washington University Student
 Occupational Therapy Association

-  facebook.com/ot.wustl
-  twitter.com/WUSTLOT
-  instagram.com/WUSTLOT
-  linkd.in/140ro2T
-  bit.ly/WUSTLOT-YouTube

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

From the Director



The spring 2022 semester began on Jan. 10 with in-person instruction that complied with social distancing and other safety measures set forth by the university. As the Omicron wave diminishes and cases decrease locally and nationally, COVID-19 restrictions are slowly being lifted in our community. I am optimistic that we will be able to hold our annual OT Scholarship Day and Commencement events (back cover) in person in limited capacity. The end of the semester is a time for celebrating our students' many accomplishments and those of the Program's community as we work together in our mission to advance human health and well-being by maximizing people's participation in meaningful activity.

Our cover story focuses on the recent expansion of our clinical arm, OT Services, in Washington, Mo., located approximately 50 miles west of downtown St. Louis (page 4). The clinic's opening is the culmination of five years of research, strategizing and planning for Ryan Risley, MPM, manager of practice development, and Pat Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, director of the Division of Clinical Operations. The 2,500-square-foot space will allow our therapists to provide general and specialty care to the residents of Franklin County and the surrounding areas. Washington has experienced a period of tremendous growth in recent years, and its downtown area is seated at the intersection of two major highways to make it easily accessible. I look forward to seeing not only our clinical practice expand, but also our relationships with existing community partners and new ones as we partner to provide health services and solutions to the people in rural Missouri.

Researcher Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L (page 8), is also working toward providing solutions to a major health problem – medication adherence. She is the recipient of a two-year, R03 grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to serve as principal investigator for a study examining medication adherence in stroke survivors. Called the Medication Adherence after STroke (MAST) project, the goal is to better understand stroke survivors' issues around medication adherence, with the long-term goal of improving both medication management and, ultimately, adherence. I am thrilled to have her on our faculty and as a mentor to our PhD and OTD students. This is an area where occupational therapists can improve health outcomes for people with chronic disabilities.

The Program was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our colleague and friend Binyam Nardos, PhD, on Jan. 29 (page 10). He had joined our faculty this past summer, but his connection with Washington University goes back almost 20 years. He worked for several years in my lab imaging the human brain to study the mechanisms of language recovery in people with stroke and aphasia. That sparked his own interest in brain function and led to Binyam earning his PhD in neuroscience in 2015. After completing his postdoc at Oregon Health Sciences University in 2021, he returned to Washington University to serve on our faculty and help move our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts forward. He was committed fully to inclusion and mentoring students from underrepresented populations. Although brief, we will feel the lasting impact of his time with us for years to come.

Due to the university's COVID-19 policies surrounding events, we were unable to hold our annual Alumni Reception at AOTA's Inspire Conference in San Antonio this month. I am excited to invite you to a live, virtual event on April 6 via Zoom on building the future of occupational therapy here at the Program. Please join me, fellow alumni, current students and friends to celebrate the impact of scholarships and learn about exciting Program updates, including a preview of our new, innovative educational space – the Center for Community Living. Please RSVP to the event by visiting alumni.wustl.edu/OT22 or using the QR code on page 14.

Wishing you a wonderful spring season of health, happiness and new beginnings!

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

Elias Michael Professor of Occupational Therapy and Professor of Neurology

lconnor@wustl.edu

Promotions

At the Washington University in St. Louis Board of Trustees December meeting, **Erin Foster, PhD, OTR/L, OTD**, was promoted with tenure, effective Jan. 1, 2022, to associate professor



Erin Foster

of occupational therapy, neurology and psychiatry. Foster's research involves everyday cognitive functioning and its relevance to occupational performance, participation and well-being among individuals with chronic neurological conditions. She focuses on the development of more effective and comprehensive rehabilitation programs for individuals with neurological disorders and cognitive dysfunction.

At the Washington University in St. Louis Executive Faculty meeting Oct. 6, the following faculty were promoted in the Program in Occupational Therapy, effective Jan. 1, 2022.

Christine Berg, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy and neurology. Berg's clinical research interests include participation in youth with chronic



Christine Berg

conditions transitioning to adult roles (employment, higher education), building staff capacity to work with infants and toddlers in early childhood centers, and topics of toxic stress and trauma-informed practice.

Kelly Harris, PhD, CCC-SLP, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and surgery (public health sciences). Harris' research examines the interdependence



Kelly Harris

of chronic disease, child development, and educational outcomes for youth in urban and suburban contexts and the use of dissemination and implementation science to improve health and educational equity.

Susy Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, was promoted to professor of occupational therapy, neurology and social work. Stark's clinical translational research seeks to develop and test the efficacy and effectiveness of compensatory interventions aimed at improving an older adult's ability to age at home safely, elucidate their mechanism of action and implement programs to improve health outcomes.



Susy Stark

Quinn Tyminski, OTD, OTR/L, BCMH, was promoted to assistant professor of occupational therapy and psychiatry. Tyminski's clinical interests include improving occupational participation and quality of life for populations experiencing marginalization through providing occupation-based services targeted at improving life skills and community re-integration.



Quinn Tyminski

L'Hotta awarded Kielhofner Scholarship

PhD student Allison L'Hotta, OTD, OTR/L, was selected as a 2022 recipient of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation's Dr. Gary Kielhofner Doctoral Research Scholarship in support of her project, "Cancer Survivors' Participation in Meaningful Life Activities, A Mixed Methods Approach." L'Hotta will receive a one-time award of \$5,000 to support her project.



Allison L'Hotta

Grajo to join faculty

On July 1, the Program in Occupational Therapy will welcome **Lenin Grajo, PhD, EdM, OTR/L**, associate professor of occupational therapy and psychiatry (PEFA), to its faculty. He will serve as the associate director of the Program, associate director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the director of the Division of Professional Education.



Lenin Grajo

Grajo is a national leader, educator, researcher and pediatric occupational therapist. He has received outstanding educator awards from the University of the Philippines, Saint Louis University and the Missouri Occupational Therapy Association. His practice and scholarship interests include the scholarship of teaching and learning (outcomes of teaching innovations, effectiveness of international collaborations in occupational therapy curricula); effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions to support children and adults with reading and learning difficulties; development of occupation and participation measures of children's literacy; and reconceptualization of the construct and theory of occupational adaptation. He is a champion of integrating anti-racist and inclusive pedagogy in medical and occupational therapy education, and through his service work with the American Occupational Therapy Association, he led a national mentorship program for occupational therapy educators.

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.



Ryan Risley, MPM (left), reviews construction plans with general contractor Wade Guffey (right).



Moving to Washington

After four years of research, strategizing and planning, Ryan Risley, MPM, helps bring OT Services to Franklin County

By Michele Berhorst

Ryan Risley, MPM, meets with contractors just weeks before OT Services' new clinic in Washington, Mo., is set to open. The 2,500-square-foot space is located approximately 50 miles west of downtown St. Louis in Franklin County. It is the culmination of four years of research, strategizing and planning for Risley, the manager of practice development for the Program in Occupational Therapy's clinical operations.

OT Services therapists will provide general and specialty patient care in the clinic and in home, school, workplace and community settings in Washington and the surrounding area. Risley has not only a professional, but also a personal, stake in the clinic's future success: Washington is his hometown, and he is fully invested in the health and well-being of his community.

Expansion planning

Risley recalls discussing expanding OT Services' footprint in his first interview with Pat Nellis, OTD, OTR/L, the director of the Division of Clinical Operations, more than four years ago. "Right off the bat, we discussed what the one-, three- and five-year plan should be for clinical services. One of the five-year goals was to be experiencing growth at a level where we could branch out to another satellite clinic," Risley says. "Pat is a big proponent of rural communities having access to health-care services, so I conducted competitive market analyses of surrounding counties north, west and south of metro St. Louis."

Risley dove into key data-points such as population growth, demographic data, chronic disease prevalence, insurance provider options and payment mechanisms. There also had to be future marketing opportunities and economic development in the area. "We wanted

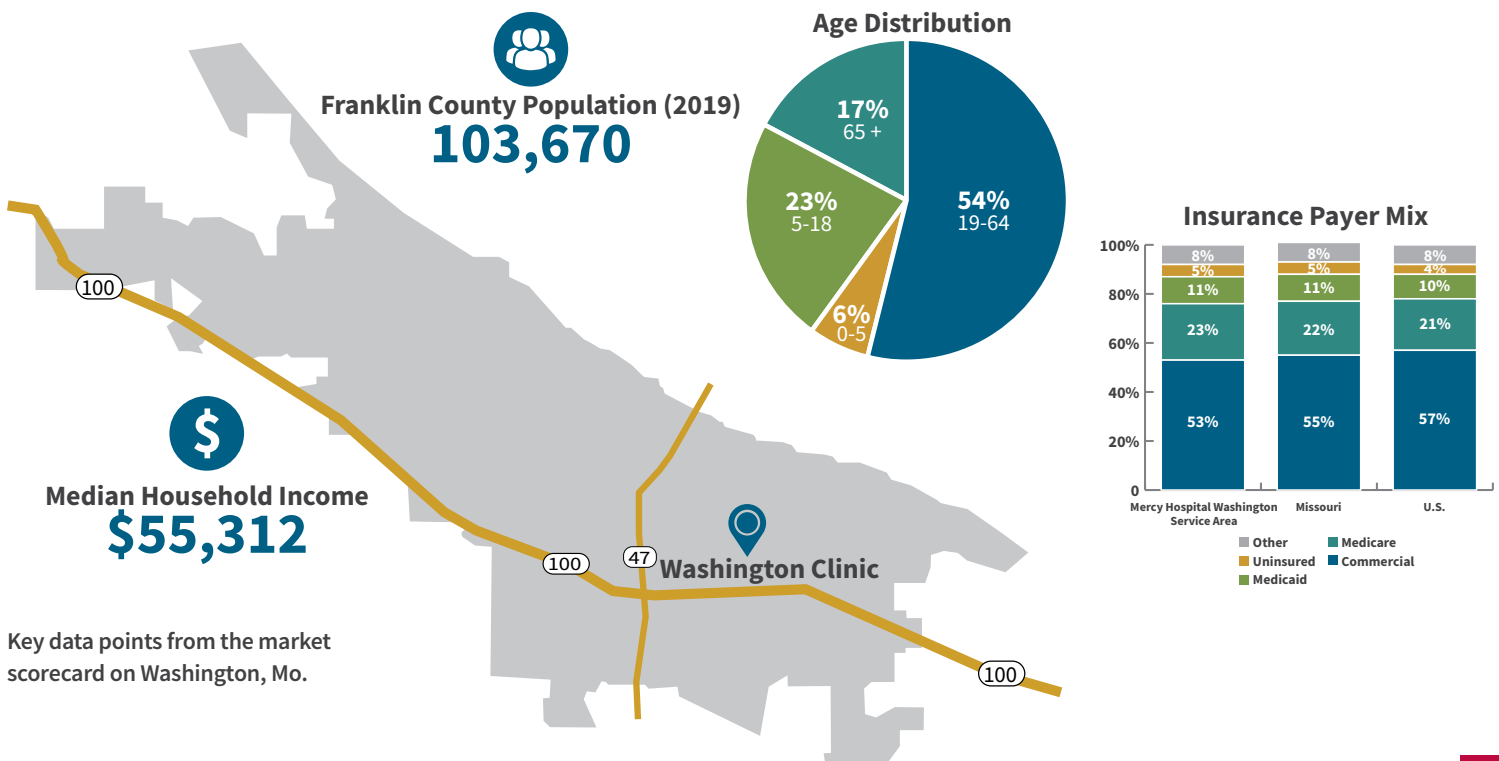
to offer that access to health care, but it had to be a solid investment as well. I put together market scorecards for each area to present to Program leadership and discuss which location made the most sense for us. Washington checked all the boxes, even though it is in a competitor's area. However, they don't offer the same services that we do," Risley says. "That being said, we knew we could leverage our existing brand and bring our personalized, one-on-one approach to the area and beyond."

"Washington University has such a reputation for excellence, and our occupational therapy services are vastly different than what anyone else offers," adds Nellis. "We're committed to making sure those living outside our urban reach have access to what we have to offer. Rural Missouri deserves the best, too."

A hometown perspective

Risley was 4 years old when his family moved to Washington after his father was relocated there for his job and has lived there ever since. He has seen the area go through a period of tremendous growth in recent years.

"In high school, I remember the downtown area being somewhat stagnant. Downtown Washington, Inc., a coalition formed in 1989, had a vision for the town to serve as a center of commerce in Franklin County. Farmland at the main





The 2,500-square-foot space will feature a reception area, individual treatment rooms and a sensory wall for pediatric clients.

intersection of highways 100 and 44 was sold, and businesses started moving in. Fast-forward to today, and nothing is for sale. Downtown is booming with commerce, so finding clinic space was a challenge,” Risley recalls.

After traveling extensively over the county, Risley eventually found a space for lease in a former sporting goods store situated in a complex adjacent to a Walmart Superstore and next door to a Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic Office with a flat parking lot and spots right by the entrance. In November 2020, he and Nellis presented the pro-forma report to Program leadership and to the Faculty Practice Plan (FPP).

“The original space was 5,000 square feet, but we only needed half of that. We set up meetings with FPP and worked with the Dean’s office to negotiate the lease. Then we started working with the architects and a design group to build out the space. We wanted an open floor plan and treatment space in addition to private rooms for one-on-one and telehealth services. Accessibility was a priority; we want to accommodate all clients, including those with mobility issues. They can park right in front of our clinic and enter without any obstacles,” he says.

Forging partnerships

While finding the right clinic space was certainly a priority, so was forging partnerships with local community providers and organizations to promote the clinic and its services.

“I met with the Franklin County Health Department, the Franklin County Community Resource Board, assisted living facilities and area physicians to

name a few,” Risley says. “Another health-care system has been firmly planted in the area for decades, but my approach has always been to offer our services as another option for providers and patients. Therapy, especially at the beginning, can require two or three appointments a week. We may be able to see the patient sooner, or the clinic might be easier to access. We’re here to serve the community in whatever way we can.”

Risley anticipates that the expertise of Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center therapists will serve the needs of people who have experienced a work injury or the effects of aging. “Washington and the surrounding area are home to many manufacturing and agricultural industries. I’ve met with several workers’ comp physicians who see patients with hand, shoulder and upper extremity injuries or who experience ‘wear and tear’ on hands or joints from repetitive tasks. Hand function also decreases with age due to rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis and even Parkinson’s disease. Our therapists provide services to address and support all of these conditions.”

The move to Washington is also an opportunity to expand existing community partnerships. Pediatric therapist Karen Balk, MOT, OTR/L, will provide services to families with school-aged children, and Katie Bogan, OTD, OTR/L, will be able to use the clinic as a base for early intervention services through the state’s First Steps program for children from birth to 3 years of age who have disabilities or developmental delays. Aging Ahead, which supports older adults and their caregivers, provides programming in senior centers throughout the area. “We are already

connected with Aging Ahead in the St. Louis region, and they are interested in working with us in Franklin County,” says Risley, who attends the agency’s monthly meetings. “The Four Rivers YMCA will be hosting their annual adult literacy event; we plan to be a part of it.”

Open for business

The Washington clinic officially opens its doors on April 4. Several existing patients who drove to other locations for care are now able to schedule their visits closer to home. Therapists Stacy Baker, MS, OTR/L, CHT, and Jill Jonas, MSOT, OTR/L, who also live in the area, are looking forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new patients.

“Patients I’m currently treating at our Milliken Hand Rehabilitation Center Chesterfield location are eager to come see me at our new Washington clinic because it is closer to their homes, and they appreciate that,” Baker says.

Risley is already planning to bring the latest service line to the Washington clinic. “We now have therapists providing support, recovery and rehab services for COVID ‘long haulers’ that address lasting effects such as fatigue, brain fog and task management. Jamie Archer, MOT, OTR/L, and Debbie Turley, OTR/L, are already seeing clients in St. Louis; I imagine those services will be needed in Washington as well,” Risley says. “I’ve long referred to occupational therapists as ‘the engineers of the health-care field.’ They provide solutions so people can manage their health and get back to the activities they want and need to do. I’m proud to bring our therapists to the Washington community.”

Emily Jung, senior project manager of capital projects (left), discusses the flooring installation with Risley (right).





Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L (right), reviews a research participant's medications and supplements.

Managing medications

Researcher Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L, develops new interventions in medication management

By Stephanie Stemmler

Jaclyn Schwartz, PhD, OTR/L, a 2010 graduate of the Program in Occupational Therapy, was working in her first job after earning her master's degree when she noticed a common recurrence in patients with cardiac conditions.

"I was rotating in acute care services at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, and I noticed that there was big problem with medication adherence, which brought many patients back into the hospital," she recalls. "Medication instructions were explained in detail at discharge, but adherence at home was a completely different issue."

Medication adherence is a huge health problem. Studies have found that half of all older adults fail to take their

medications as prescribed.¹ It becomes a critical health issue if a patient is discharged with impairments, such as with the effects from a stroke, because they may not be able — or understand how and when — to take medications at home.

"With long-term medications for chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, 80 percent of the medication must be taken each month to obtain a real benefit," says Schwartz. "That means missing six pills of a daily medication over 30 days is a big deal."

Compound that with cases where patients take multiple medications daily, and you rapidly realize why poor medication adherence is estimated to cause 125,000 avoidable deaths and between \$100-300

billion annually in preventable health-care costs.³

Schwartz, who earned her doctorate from the University of Wisconsin after leaving St. Louis, moved to Miami, Fla., in 2015 to serve as an assistant professor at Florida International University. There, she not only focused on minority health and health disparities, she also delved further into the problem of medication adherence.

“This is where occupational therapists can add value on the frontlines of care,” she says. “We can actively monitor adherence and address barriers to taking medications.”

Schwartz is the recipient of a two-year, R03 grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to serve as principal investigator for a study examining medication adherence in stroke survivors. Called the Medication Adherence after STroke (MAST) project, the goal is to better understand stroke survivors’ issues around medication adherence, with the long-term goal of improving both medication management and, ultimately, adherence.

“As many as half of all stroke survivors fail to take their medications as prescribed, resulting in unnecessary hospitalizations, morbidity and mortality,”⁴ says Schwartz. “This is often because they not only have to manage a complicated medication regimen, they also must overcome both motor and cognitive impairments associated with stroke, and these impairments compromise activities of daily living.”

Physicians, pharmacists and nurses are the initial point for patient information, which Schwartz says can be characterized as directive. “The patient is sitting and listening while someone goes over all of the medications and how to take them. Occupational therapists are in a leading role to continue asking the patient, ‘Did you understand the instructions? Can you do this at home? What is difficult in handling the medications at home?’”

Her research has a two-pronged approach focusing on both behavior modification and simplified technology. With behavior modification, she first investigated factors that impact the ability of a patient to

take medications. Then she developed a behavioral intervention process, which she’s calls iMeds, to see if a battery of tailored behavior change approaches could enhance medication adherence. Pilot studies completed while Schwartz was in Milwaukee and Florida proved it was a missing intervention.

Then she listened to what her study participants requested. “People really want simple fixes that can easily be integrated into their daily lives,” she explains.

She created 3D-printed, customizable pillboxes designed to easily identify how and when to take medications. In two separate small studies, she combined iMeds and the pillboxes to see if both would improve adherence. “What we found is that pillboxes are a low-cost, scalable intervention that can be used to globally impact the public health crisis of medication adherence,” she notes.

Schwartz has now brought her research back to Washington University School of Medicine, where she plans to expand her studies through use of the Stroke Registry overseen by Washington University and the Barnes-Jewish Stroke and Cerebrovascular Center. The registry currently has information on more than 30,000 stroke survivors.

Within the Program in Occupational Therapy, she serves as an assistant



Top photo: Katherine Aylmer, OTD, OTR/L (right), takes the participant's blood pressure for the study as Schwartz (middle) looks on. Bottom photo: Schwartz demonstrates how to fill a customized, 3D-printed pillbox.

professor, with plans to mentor students by this fall. Her lab includes occupational therapist researcher Katherine Aylmer, OTD, OTR/L, as well as Sami Tayeb, MA, a clinical research coordinator.

“There are not a lot of people looking at medication adherence in the rehabilitation setting,” Schwartz notes. “But for people with chronic disabilities such as traumatic brain injury and stroke, we as occupational therapists have a prime opportunity to effect positive change and address what is truly a public health crisis with medication adherence.”

1. World Health Organization. Adherence to Long-Term Therapies: Evidence for Action. World Health Organization; 2003.
2. Wirbka L, Haefeli WE, Meid AD. Estimated Thresholds of Minimum Necessary Adherence for Effective Treatment with Direct Oral Anticoagulants: A Retrospective Cohort Study in Health Insurance Claims Data. Patient Prefer Adherence. 2021;15:2209-2220. doi:10.2147/PPA.S324315
3. Benjamin RM. Medication adherence: helping patients take their medicines as directed. Public Health Rep. 2012;127(1):2-3.
4. Zhang J, Gong Y, Zhao Y, Jiang N, Wang J, Yin X. Post-stroke Medication Adherence and Persistence Rates: A Meta-analysis of Observational Studies. J Neurol. 2021;268(6):2090-2098. doi:10.1007/s00415-019-09660-y



A lasting impact

A tribute to the life and career of Binyam Nardos, PhD

By Michele Berhorst

On Jan. 29, the Program in Occupational Therapy unexpectedly lost our dear colleague and friend, Binyam Nardos, PhD, 39. Nardos had joined the faculty as an instructor in occupational therapy and neurology just six months prior, but had already made an impact with the students he taught and mentored. Becoming an instructor in the Program was especially meaningful for Nardos, whose lifelong love of education and learning started at a young age.

Nardos was born in 1982 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the second-youngest of six children. His father, Nardos Abebe, was a professor who instructed other educators in teaching pedagogy. One of those educators was his mother, Zewditu Kebede. “When I was five, I had a very inquisitive mind and wanted to know how things worked. I had a million questions,” Nardos said in a 2021 video. He even followed his older sister, Rahel, to her first day of school. When the teacher told him there were no seats left in the classroom, Nardos replied, “That’s fine because I can help you teach!”

As he grew up, following Rahel to school became a familiar pattern. Nardos attended the same international high school as she did in Addis Ababa. She received a scholarship to attend Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa., and he followed her there a few years later on his own scholarship. After Nardos earned his bachelor’s degree in economics in 2004, he wasn’t sure what he wanted to do next. Rahel, who had graduated from Yale School of Medicine, was completing her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. She encouraged her brother to use his minor in computer science to apply for a research technician job in the lab of neurologist Maurizio Corbetta, MD. Nardos got the job, moved to St. Louis and started working for researcher Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L. She was imaging the human brain to study the mechanisms of language recovery in people with stroke and aphasia.

“Binyam was such a night owl. It was not uncommon for him to be starting work just when the rest of us were leaving for

the day,” recalls Connor. “That schedule was perfect for Binyam, who was also notorious for being late. Not on purpose, he would just get intensely caught up in whatever he was doing at the moment and lose track of time.”

Working with the scans so closely eventually sparked Nardos’ own interest in brain function. After a couple years, Connor and others in the lab encouraged Nardos to apply for the neuroscience PhD program. Not only was he accepted into the program, but Nardos was a Chancellor’s Graduate Fellow and was honored as a Cognitive, Computational and Systems Neuroscience Fellow through the McDonnell Center for Systems Neuroscience. He also became known for picking an argument and standing his ground. Mario Ortega, PhD, remembers fondly how Nardos would stay in the East Building late into the night arguing neuroscience with fellow student Tim Laumann, PhD, and neuroscientist Avi Snyder, MD, PhD. “Binyam was not afraid to speak his mind. He did not shy away from conflict or differing opinions. It was a hallmark of his character,” Ortega says. “He had a genuine interest and respect for what your position was even if he didn’t agree with it.”

Despite his busy academic and work schedule, Nardos made strong ties to the Ethiopian community in St. Louis. He co-founded a book drive with Rahel and her husband, Damien Fair, PhD, that resulted in \$2,000 and 2,000 medical books being sent to the medical school libraries at Addis Ababa University, the main teaching hospital in his home country’s capital city.

“After Rahel and I left WashU in 2008, Binyam continued the book drive on his own. This was no small feat by far,” says Fair. “It’s not just about gathering books – it takes a big effort to get people to donate current medical books. Binyam went to bookstores, talked to departments and tapped any resource he could to find books. The fact he was able to do it by himself was amazing and a testament to his character.”

Nardos earned his PhD in neuroscience in 2015 under the mentorship of Bradley L. Schlaggar, MD, PhD, studying how the human brain learns and remembers the meanings of words. He then completed his postdoctoral training at Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU) in Portland, Ore., where he was mentored by Fair and Mary Heinricher, PhD, from 2015 to 2021. Nardos was awarded the OHSU Fellowship for Diversity & Inclusion in Research, reflecting work he had done with a science-focused youth-outreach

program. Schlaggar, now the president and CEO of Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, Md., felt being a part of Nardos’ life over the years was truly a gift.

“I had the pleasure of serving as his doctoral thesis mentor, remaining as a career mentor, and, most importantly, being his friend. Binyam had a wonderful and rare combination of qualities – not only was he extremely intelligent, brimming with creative solutions and novel ideas, he was also a deep thinker who listened actively and carefully to the ideas of others,” Schlaggar shares. “He cared immensely about understanding the perspectives of others. He was also a warm, funny, gentle, kind, very humble and memorably generous person, with an ethos that called him to think about, and to work on, ideas and issues that affected others, especially those from groups underrepresented in science and medicine.”

It was mentoring students from underrepresented populations with the goal of advancing their careers in science, technology, engineering, math and medicine fields that meant the most to Nardos. Colleague Catherine Hoyt, PhD, OTD, OTR/L, remembers the excitement she felt learning Nardos would be returning to Washington University and knowing what he could uniquely bring to the Program, its students and the occupational therapy profession.

“About a year ago, Binyam told me he wanted to teach. When the opportunity came for him to join our faculty last summer, I was so excited for him and for the Program,” Hoyt says. “His interest in teaching and helping learners enjoy and embrace new ideas was such an integral part of who he was. He was dedicated to inclusion and helping all students appreciate neuroscience and research. Binyam helped the Washington University Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity Chapter to identify and develop their goals. He was also developing research methods to track how different teaching methods may impact students, particularly those who may feel excluded.”

In fall 2021, Nardos began teaching the Elements of Research Design course to first-year students. Although it was not the most exciting subject to teach, he approached it with such energy and

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIO ORTEGA



Binyam Nardos (right) with fellow WashU students Alejandro Akrouh (left) and Ronny Dosenbach (middle) in 2014.

humor that he immediately connected with students. Nathan Hopkins, MSOT/S ’24, describes what he thinks set Nardos apart and endeared him so quickly to his students.

“Teaching was like a craft for Binyam that he was constantly working to perfect. One day after class, I found him on the fourth floor of Becker Library alone. I asked what he was doing, and as he looked up at me, I noticed he was reading the class-required textbook. He simply smiled and said, ‘I’m just trying to get better like you guys are.’ It was then that I knew how lucky we were to have a professor who had that level of dedication toward his students,” Hopkins remembers. “Many of us had traveled a great distance to attend Washington University to achieve our professional goals and take a risk on ourselves. He was a faculty member who made you feel like you’d made the right choice. Words can’t even begin to describe how much Binyam cared for his students or the grief that many of us felt when we learned the news of his passing. We had only known him for a few months, but his impact will last a lifetime. Someday, we will look back on our time at Washington University and remember how nervous we were to attend or how frightening it was to leave home. We will also remember how all of that changed the day we met Binyam Nardos. He was a professor, a mentor, and above all, a friend.”

That sentiment is echoed by Connor, associate dean for occupational therapy:

“Binyam was kind and caring, with a sharp intellect and wit. He put everyone who interacted with him at ease. He exuded warmth and had genuine interest in people and how to make the world a better place. We will sincerely miss him.”

In memoriam

Laurie Marie DeLaney, age 41, of Moberly, Mo., passed away peacefully on Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021, at her home with family by her side.

She was born Feb. 8, 1980, in Columbia, Mo., to Laura "Kay"

(McCreery) (DeLaney) Snodgrass and Charles "Dave" DeLaney.

DeLaney graduated from Moberly High School in 1998, and earned her Bachelor of Science in biology from Culver Stockton College in 2001 and her Master of Science in occupational therapy from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., in 2003.

She was a member of Central Christian Church of Moberly. She was also a member of Chi Omega sorority and most recently Altrusa International of Moberly. She was a co-chair of the Moberly Altrusa Literacy Committee and started Laurie's Little Library. She also volunteered with the St. Louis Rugby Spartans and in 2009 for the D. C. Capitol Punishers. DeLaney was a supporter of the Alzheimer's Association, Greater Missouri Chapter, and, in honor of her grandmother, she established Team Me-Maw.

DeLaney's desire for helping others overflowed into all aspects of her life, especially her profession. She was the senior staff occupational therapist in rehabilitation at the Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Research Center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Md. In 2008, she returned to Missouri and worked as an occupational therapist at The Neighborhoods in Columbia, Mo. With a desire to further her education, she went back to Washington University in St. Louis in 2014 and earned her doctorate in occupational therapy in 2017. She then worked as a program coordinator and occupational therapist for Innovative Health and Wellness until February 2021, when she was unable to work due to her illness. DeLaney was highly devoted to her work, and anyone who knew her knew she loved being able to help anyone and everyone that she could. She will be greatly missed by many.

Loved ones preceding DeLaney in death include her maternal grandparents, Betty



Laurie DeLaney

(Riley) McCreery and Ralph McCreery; paternal grandparents, Margaret (Baker) DeLaney and Edgar DeLaney; uncle, Steve Embree; cousins, Rob Milby and Robyn (Milby) Grooms and fur baby, Bronx.

Survivors include her mother, Kay (Dennis) Snodgrass of Moberly, Mo.; father, Dave (Donna) DeLaney of Jefferson City, Mo.; sister, Lindsey DeLaney of Columbia, Mo.; half-sister, Kerrie DeLaney of Jefferson City, Mo.; step siblings, Will (Amy) Snodgrass of Ft. Collins, Colo., Krystal Barnard of Columbia, Mo., Kenny (Kristin) Hite of Massachusetts, Katie (Kyle) Shofler of Centerville, Mo., and Kevin Hite of Jefferson City, Mo., aunts, uncles, numerous nieces and nephews, and other extended family and fur baby, Brooklyn.

Memorial contributions in DeLaney's honor are suggested to Mid-America Camps, 1330 West Lockwood Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63122 (please reference NEOLA "Northeast Ozark Lake Area" on the memo line) or to the Alzheimer's Association, 2609 E. Broadway #119, Columbia, MO 65201 (please reference Team Me-Maw of the Columbia, Mo., Alzheimer's Walk on the memo line).

Martha (Buschart) Dilthey of Indianapolis, age 92, passed away on Nov. 15, 2021. She was born in 1929 in St. Louis, Mo., to Charles and Emma (Van)

Buschart. She was the youngest of three girls. She began her university studies at Monmouth College and then transferred to Washington University in St. Louis Mo., and earned her bachelor's degree in occupational therapy in 1952. She began her career as the first occupational therapist at Shriners Children's Hospital in St. Louis, Mo. She worked in a variety of settings throughout her career.

Martha and Earl Dilthey were married for 59 years before his passing in 2012. They raised four children: David Dilthey (deceased), Mary Dilthey-Griggs (Rick Griggs), Diane Brandt (William Brandt) and Barbara Dilthey. In addition to her children, she will be greatly missed by

her grandchildren: Sara Brandt, Kelsey Brandt, Hannah Carlson (Ken Carlson), Joshua Griggs and Madelyn Geisse.

Dilthey loved her family fiercely and treasured lifelong friendships from elementary school, high school, occupational therapy training and those made in retirement. Her thirst for learning, artistic talents and dedication to others supported a professional career that spanned more than 40 years. Although she grew up in a metropolitan area, she cherished childhood memories of the "cabin" and a love of nature. She filled her leisure time with travel, attending musicals and concerts, doing crossword puzzles, knitting, reading, attending her grandchildren's activities, birding, gardening and church services.

The family would like to thank all of the health-care professionals who provided attentive, compassionate care to Dilthey.

The family is planning a private service at Washington Park North Cemetery in Indianapolis, Ind., at a later time.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Smile Train (<https://www.smiletrain.org>), Wheeler Mission (<https://wheelermission.org>) or Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana (<https://www.gleaners.org>).



Martha Dilthey



You can make a memorial gift to the Occupational Therapy Annual Fund by scanning the QR code below.

If you would like to establish a named scholarship, please contact Theresa Klein in University Advancement at 314-935-2875 or theresa.klein@wustl.edu.



Laurie DeLaney: A reflection

Kerri Morgan, PhD, OTR/L, ATP, assistant professor of occupational therapy and neurology, reflects on the life of her friend, colleague and fellow alumna, Laurie DeLaney, OTD, OTR/L.

Laurie entered our master's degree program in 2001. At the time, I was working in (the late) Dr. David Gray's lab. As a student, she worked in his lab as well as Dr. Susy Stark's lab, and this is how I got to know her. Laurie had a great interest in disability, assistive technology and the environment. At the time, I was playing wheelchair rugby for the St. Louis Rugby Rams, and she got involved with the team. This is where I got to know her even better. During her time as a student, she was highly sought after for babysitting by faculty and staff; she was known for her kind nature, great sense of humor and being a bit quirky with her love of television shows, Broadway and music.

After graduation, Laurie took the advice of Dr. Gray, who had previously worked at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Washington, D.C., to explore employment possibilities at NIH. Laurie became a senior staff occupational therapist in rehabilitation at the Mark O. Hatfield Clinical Research Center at NIH. She was involved in research and patient care for persons with rare and complex health needs. I traveled to D.C. periodically during this time for work and would visit with her. She connected with the wheelchair rugby team – the D.C. Capitol Punishers – and brought her knowledge of wheelchair rugby to this new team that was just starting. Eventually, Laurie left D.C. for new opportunities in Colorado and moved around a bit after that. This time included teaching for an occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program. Laurie was motivated to bring assistive technology (AT) into the curriculum she was developing. We would have frequent conversations about what OTAs need to know about disability and AT.

Professionally, Laurie began to feel like there were other things she could be doing in her career. She knew how important evidence-based practice was to our profession. She would talk to me about my academic journey and decision to pursue my PhD. Those conversations led Laurie back to the Program in Occupational Therapy for her post-professional

doctoral degree in 2017. Her clinical interests expanded to include disability and aging, Alzheimer's disease, and dementia. After graduation, she moved back to her hometown of Moberly, Mo., to be close to family and her community due to her illness. She worked as the program coordinator and occupational therapist at Innovative Health and Wellness.

Through her time volunteering for wheelchair rugby, Laurie really became a huge proponent of adaptive sports and athletes of all abilities. As I transitioned from the wheelchair rugby sport to track and field, Laurie was right there supporting me. I was traveling a lot around the country during that time, and we would meet up whenever possible. She was invested in my journey as an athlete, sending me supportive texts and emails every step of the way. After seeing me compete in the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, Laurie wanted to be there for the London games in 2012. She joined my family and friends to celebrate my two bronze medal wins in the 100-meter and 200-meter races.

On a personal note, Laurie loved family. She was actively involved in the lives of her nieces and nephews. If you were her friend, you were her family. When my twin boys were born, she made each of them a beautiful handmade quilt. Laurie always showed up right when you needed her. Her laugh was infectious and unforgettable. She loved giving back to her community. One of her last projects was Laurie's Little Library, a community program for children K-5 to access books in her hometown. That legacy lives on; Laurie would want us to think about what we can do for others to honor her memory. She definitely made the world a better place and will be deeply missed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KERRI MORGAN



MICHELE BERHORST



Top photo: Kerri Morgan (center) with Laurie DeLaney (bottom left) at the London Paralympics in 2012 celebrating Morgan's medal wins with family, friends and coaches.

Bottom photo: DeLaney (left) and her mentor, Susy Stark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA (middle), conduct an assessment with an older adult in 2016.



BUILDING THE FUTURE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Join us live via Zoom
Wednesday, April 6 at 6:00 pm CST

Join alumni, students and friends to celebrate the impact of scholarships, plus learn about exciting Program updates – including a preview of our new, innovative educational space, the Center for Community Living.

Please RSVP for the event by visiting alumni.wustl.edu/OT22 or by scanning the QR code by March 25



Hosted by
Lisa Tabor Connor, PhD, MSOT, OTR/L



Future leader

Haley Kaplan, OTD/S '24

Hometown: Denver, CO

Undergraduate degree: BA in Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience from the University of Michigan

Leadership: WU-COTAD Community Outreach Co-Chair; Inaugural Graduate Fellow at Washington University Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity; Graduate Research Assistant

What are your meaningful occupations?

Occupations that bring meaning, joy and energy to my day-to-day life include spending time with my friends and family, exercising, cooking, making playlists and Pinterest boards, volunteering, traveling and learning.

What is your definition of occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy (OT) is a uniquely valuable health profession. We understand, educate and advocate that daily engagement in meaningful occupations is a human right. Led by knowledge from evidence, research, theory and clinical reasoning, we utilize our OT lens to view the factors and contexts that contribute to overall health, quality of life and well-being for a diverse range of clientele. We are only able to realize the transformative power of occupation when we practice in combination with empathy and client-centeredness. The crux of the uniqueness of OT is that, at our core, when collaborating with our clients, we search for what matters to them rather than what is the matter with them.

Why did you choose the OTD degree?

I decided to pursue the OTD degree because of the additional coursework on leadership, research and advocacy skills and the community engagement opportunities to apply those skills. Through my OTD mentorship with Dr. Connor and fellowship with the WashU Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity, I will have the opportunities to develop the skills and practice to be a reflective changemaker in OT.

What are your career goals?

I want to dedicate my career to focusing on occupational injustice and systemic issues in policy. I aim to start as a registered and licensed occupational therapist in an innovative, cutting-edge neurorehabilitation clinic. Long term, I strive to one day hold a position within the American Occupational Therapy Association Federal Affairs Team. By purposefully beginning in a clinic, I will do my best to understand the everyday challenges people are facing from the people themselves, while showing every day that I care by advocating with and for them.

What WashU experience so far stands out to you?

My experiences with WU-COTAD have been a meaningful way for me to live out my values. During our annual sticker sale, we raised \$765 for Saint Louis Crisis Nursery. It was impactful to organize a visit to a nursery and give a virtual presentation. Learning from WU-COTAD leaders on how to conduct a needs assessment with a strengths-based approach allowed us to collaborate inclusively and begin to build community trust.

Anything else you'd like us to know?

Thank you to my family, friends and the OT Program faculty. Last, I want to acknowledge each person in my cohort. I'm grateful to be here with and supporting you all. You are all shaping me into the best occupational therapist I can be. I'm eager to see the joy, excellence and resilience that I know everyone will bring to OT.



@WUSOTASTL on Instagram



The Social Committee planned a trip to a pumpkin patch on Oct. 30.



WUSOTA members volunteered at Girls on the Run on Nov. 16.



True holiday spirit showed up in Ugly Sweaters Day on Dec. 7.

The mission of the Washington University Student Occupational Therapy Association (WUSOTA) is to promote the field of occupational therapy through service. Each month, the organization explores various areas of occupational therapy practice and provides volunteer services to many parts of the community. It also provides social activities for students to get to know each other and people in the St. Louis community. Follow them on Instagram at @wusotastl.



WUSOTA's Community Service Committee ran a period supply drive for the St. Louis Alliance on Nov. 3.



Students attended Paint Your Stress Away, an evening of crafts, on Nov. 18.



Under construction

Construction began on the Center of Community Living in January 2022. The state-of-the-art facility will provide innovative, active learning opportunities that maximize student clinical competency, advance educator growth and promote community health.

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

Breaking Boundaries in a Male-Dominated Sport: SLU #OccupationalTherapist Named to USA Wheelchair Rugby Team- Congrats and Good luck! An OT pattern: our Paralympian Board Member Kerri Morgan was the first woman to represent in 2009
– @AOTFoundation • Feb 4, 2022

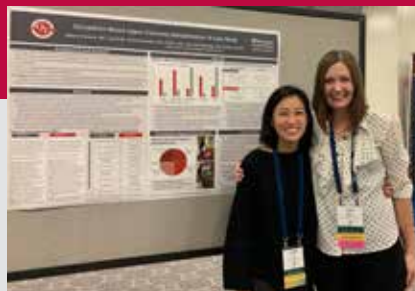
Upcoming events



April 6, 2022

Building the Future of Occupational Therapy

Join alumni, students and friends to celebrate the impact of scholarships, plus learn about exciting Program updates (see page 14).



April 29, 2022

OT Scholarship Day

Graduating students share their work through both oral and poster presentations. Visit ot.wustl.edu for the latest updates.



May 20, 2022

Commencement

Our 2022 Commencement Ceremony will be held in Graham Chapel at 1:00 p.m. CST on May 20, 2022.

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.