

A Message from the President

This is an exciting time for all of us as Occupational Therapists as we head towards our Centennial year, 2017. We are better aligned with the AOTA Centennial Vision, we have become a more progressive organization and we can foresee many new and exciting opportunities for our profession here in Georgia on the horizon.

Our strategic plan has served us well this past year, helping us streamline our efforts, form specific committees that relate to our goals, choose leadership, and set timelines so that we can plan other initiatives. We have amended our by-laws to allow us to be more fluid in what we can offer our members and we have restructured our Board to be more efficient. We have also been recognized by AOTA as a leader in state's efforts to support the AOTA Centennial Vision.

There are many people who have helped get us to this point and we will need many more volunteers to take us where we want to go. The GOTA Board is committed to creating volunteer opportunities that are task and time specific so that many more of you may be able to volunteer to help as your time permits. We have successfully appointed leadership to three of our Strategic Committees and we continue to search for someone to lead efforts in regards to Communications and to chair our Continuing Education efforts.

One of the most important goals that we must achieve is to identify leadership potential in our members and to give those individuals time to demonstrate their skills in order to build a leadership legacy. As I write this, I am thinking about the reality that this is my final year as your President, as my term ends on December 31, 2008. Even though my term will be complete, I promise to always stay involved with GOTA and to offer my full support.

This year, we hope to demonstrate much more progress. We will be working on our goals to increase GOTA Membership so that we can advocate well for ourselves at the state legislative level. We will continue to build research partnerships for clinicians to advance the use of evidence based practice in our state and we will be planning local and reasonable continuing education seminars as our members define their needs. We will continue to collaborate with other therapy organizations to address scope of practice and public policy issues at both the state and national level. At this time, we know that the Athletic Trainers are opening their practice act and we are working to position ourselves with the assistance of our own Legislative Consultant, Tom Bauer and AOTA. We continue to be aware of Medicaid issues and are working hard to advocate for both the children of Georgia and their right to quality Occupational Therapy services.

We have moved from district organization to regional organization which we hope will help us be more productive in meeting the needs of our members. Due to decreased district participation, we saw a need to globalize the regions of our state and to subdivide duties as volunteers were available to take on projects and tasks. There are now 5 regions and each region has a leader who is a voting member of the board. We hope that through this type of organization, there will be more opportunities for members to get involved.

GOTA is committed to stepping up communications with all members on a regular basis so that you will always know what is happening with your organization. As members, "We" are GOTA and there is much going on behind the scenes that we want everyone to know about. Soon, you will begin receiving monthly e-mail information blasts that will bring you up to date on many topics including GOTA efforts, practice articles, legislative issue and requests, spotlight on an OT in your community, etc. These articles will link you back to the website for more information and for future reference. If you do not have access

to e-mail, you may request that information be printed and mailed (at a nominal charge to cover our expenses). We are eager to bring GOTA into the technology age as this new format will replace the quarterly newsletters that we have mailed out in the past.

GOTA has quarterly board meetings and all members are invited to attend. Check the website calendar of events and plan to attend one of our upcoming meetings!

I am very grateful to all of the people who have been so supportive of GOTA during my tenure as President and want to thank each and every one of you for being members. Together, we will be well prepared for the future of our profession.

Debi Hinerfeld, OTR/L
President, GOTA