Celebrate Your Profession

Change. As our profession - AOTA turns 100 years old this year. We must ask ourselves, Who are we (OT)? What do we do? Where do we do it? When do we do it? And ultimately, Why do we do it? These are questions that some of us OTs and OTAs have been answering for a long, long time, BUT, oh, what a future! OT and OTA Students are investing in a career that creates real outcomes for people of all ages and circumstances in all life phases.

Within the Occupational Therapy Centennial Vision, there are eight relevant elements to a shared vision to which we ask:

1. Well-prepared, diverse workforce
   - What is your expertise?
   - Moreover, Who are YOU?

2. Clear, compelling public image
   - How do you do OT?

3. Customers demand occupational therapy
   - Who benefits?

4. Evidence-based decision-making
   - Why do you do what you do?

5. Science-fostered innovation in occupational therapy practice
   - Who supports you?

AOTA’s Vision 2025 maintains the continuity of the Centennial Vision while positioning us to meet the challenges of the changing health care system.”

Guideposts help further define and communicate the Vision’s core tenets to key stakeholders, including OTs, OTAs, educators, students, consumers, policymakers, and the public:

- **Leaders:**
  Occupational therapy is influential in changing policies, environments, and complex systems.

  “Because Vision 2025 builds on the successes of the Centennial Vision, we have the aligned capacity to achieve the outcomes articulated in the vision while expanding our reach to people, populations, and communities,” said AOTA President Ginny Stoffel, PhD, OT, BCMH, FAOTA. ([http://www.aota.org/AboutAOTA/vision2025.aspx](http://www.aota.org/AboutAOTA/vision2025.aspx))

Additionally, AJOT announced its contribution to celebrating OT’s centennial year with journals focusing on 6 Centennial topics beginning with the history of OT and general topics to include people with cancer, youth to adult transition, community health and wellness, OT practice in mental health, and, finally, OT internationally (AJOT, Jan./Feb. 2017 Vol. 71/No.1).

Examining our practice in the age of change is vital to our continued growth. Are you ready for the next 100 years? Join us at AOTA and GOTA conferences. Let us do this together!
Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

GOTA CONFERENCE 2017

October 6-7, 2017
Medical Center of Central Georgia
Call for papers April 1, 2017 - June 8, 2017

Continue to check the GOTA website for more updates on sponsorship opportunities, paper and poster submissions, and registration.

This is a great opportunity to earn CEUs, network with fellow classmates, practitioners, and make new contacts in your professional organization and across the state. A call for papers will soon be sent out. If you are interested in volunteering we welcome you to join us in preparing for conference.
We plan to provide a wide variety of content, labs and hands on interactive education.

AOTA annual conference is right around the corner. This year AOTA is turning 100! Be sure to register now and join us in Philadelphia.

Georgia Hand and Upper Extremity Special Interest Group Summer Conference
April 28-29, 2017
at the Georgia Coastal Center, Savannah, GA

Register & Additional Content: www.ghuesig.com
Email questions to: officers@ghuesig.com
Thank you to all who were able to come and support GOTA at Legislative Day

On Wednesday, January 25 GOTA members and our lobbyist, Tom Bauer, conducted 2017 Legislative Day activities to acknowledge support for occupational therapy in from Georgia legislators. The event took place at the Coverdell Building located across the street from the Capitol and within the Capitol from approximately 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. The GOTA team consisted of M. Irma Alvarado, President, Kay Nelson, OT Trialliance Representative, Angelika Brocklehurst, OT, PAG Chair, Jennifer Allison, North Region chair, Kate McWilliams, Metro Atlanta chair, Chair, Kelly Rodriguez, COTA, and Mariana Byrne, OTS from the Brenau University Gainesville Day Program. Augusta University 2nd year OT students under the direction of Dr. Pamalyn Kearney sent emails to 26 Georgia Senators (13) and Representatives (13) using content similar to what was used for the in-person meetings at the capitol.

This year’s Legislative Day event was productive, despite having a smaller group than usual due to colds and some of our colleagues’ travel distance from the Capitol. Tom Bauer filled us in on trending legislative issues and introduced the group to Senator Virginia Seay, District 34 Clayton, visited for coffee, donuts, a lively chat with our group.

Additionally, our merry group banded together to convey GOTA’s message of thanks to our legislator supporters by fanning out to seek out legislator supporters (or would be supporters!). One of the best insights of chatting with them was finding that our legislators have close connections with people with whom we work and serve. For example, Sen. Virginia Seay, Clayton, Rep. Ron Stevens, Savannah, Rep. ‘Bubber’ Epps, Macon, and Rep. Lee Hawkins, Gainesville, have family members whose professions include speech therapist/business owner, physical therapist, and special educator! So, get out there, meet your legislators and see you at 2018 Legislative Day!
NEW WEBSITE

The communications committee is working towards making important information more accessible on the GOTA website. Members can now access the GOTA bylaws and meeting minutes, by visiting "Membership Resources" under the "Resources" tab. Additionally, copies of the GOTA newsletters can be found by visiting the "News" tab.

If you haven’t had a chance to visit your GOTA website, go now to www.gaota.com to see all that we’ve done. We think you’ll like what you see. If you haven’t already renewed your membership, do so now. As always, thank you for your loyal support of GOTA. Together, we strengthen our profession in Georgia.

POLITICAL ACTION GROUP

The Political Action Group is a group that was formed to raise money that can be donated to the political campaigns of people who support the interests of occupational therapists in the state of Georgia. Each year at the annual conference, the PAG holds a silent auction during the networking event to help raise funds for the group. Although the event brings some money to the PAG, we rely on other donations throughout the year to maintain a budget that allows us to make an impactful donation to all those political candidates that have been such a support to Occupational Therapy. This includes the many legislators that proposed and supported our first rate increase from Medicaid in decades. Each member has the opportunity to donate to the PAG during their annual membership renewal as well as any time throughout the year. In addition to financial donations, members can support the PAG by being in contact with their local legislators, educating them on OT and by attending the annual Legislative Day at the Capitol organized by Bethany Bearden.

GOTA PURPOSE

GOTA exists to serve as a resource for members, consumers, practitioners and policy makers related to the practice of occupational therapy in the State of Georgia.

GOTA MISSION

Advocating for the health of the public
Aligning practitioners, consumers and other stakeholders
Advancing the practice of occupational therapy

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Executive Board

2017 GOTA EXECUTIVE BOARD

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M. Irma Alvarado, PhD, OTR/L

Vice President* & Bylaws Committee Chair
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Tonya Curles, B.S, COTA

Nominations & Recognitions Chair
Suzanne Masino, OTR/L

Continuing Education Approval Chair
Tamara Mills, PhD, OTR/L, ATP

GOTA Listserv
Helene Smith-Gabai, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR

Research
Teal Benevides, PhD, MS, OTR/L

GA Licensure Board Liaison
Paulette Bell, MA, OTR/L

* indicates a voting member

2017 Executive Board Meetings:

- April 27th | 7:00-8:30PM | Virtual Call
- July 29th | 10:00-2:00PM | On Ground
- Oct 6th | 2:00-3:00PM | Conference

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ATLANTA REGION

UPCOMING EVENTS:

GOTA Spring Event
Wednesday, March 8th, 2017
6:30-8:00PM

Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI)
Address: 739 West Peachtree St NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Come join us to learn more about the CVI, take a tour of the facility, and hear information on interventions for treating low vision/vision impairment. Light refreshments will be available as well as CEU credit.

RSVP by March 3rd to kate.mcwilliams1@gmail.com

ListServ

Since the inception of the GOTA ListServ in 2003 it has been operating through Yahoo Groups. Although the ListServ has been successful, it has had some quirks and with the recent hacking of Yahoo it appears it is time to make a change. The ListServ will now be run through our GOTA website. All GOTA members will be re-invited to join the ListServ. Directions for using E-list (our ListServ) can be found on the GOTA home page under the GOTA Connect Tab.

Once invited to the listserv you can simply opt out by scrolling to the bottom of a ListServ email and clicking “unsubscribe”

Look for the first ListServ email to come in March.

We will start with one ListServ stream, with potential to develop regional and specific topic streams.

If you have any questions or are interested in moderating a special topics stream please contact Helene at hsgabai@gmail.com or Tiffany at info@gaota.com.
Did you know that you may nominate your fellow GOTA members (and supporters of GOTA) for various awards throughout the year? The process is quick and easy and we accept nominations throughout the year. Honor your colleagues and your students by clicking on the links below:

**Outstanding OT Practitioner**
*OT/OTA, Outstanding Clinician*
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9LNGFY](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9LNGFY)

**Barbara E. Grant Award**
*OT/OTA who has made contributions in terms of advocacy for OT in the State of Georgia*
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9NNKRT](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9NNKRT)

**Outstanding OT student**
*Student enrolled in an OT or OTA program in the State of Georgia*
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X78MBVG](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X78MBVG)

**Outstanding Supporter of OT**
*Non-OT who supports OT in Georgia*
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XLC9XZ3](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XLC9XZ3)

**Linda Stephens Scholarship**
*OTA/OT student enrolled in OT program in Georgia based on essay and recommendations*
[http://www.gaota.com/recognitions-awards](http://www.gaota.com/recognitions-awards)

For questions or more information contact Suzanne Masino
suzanne@staffinginnovationsinc.com 678.736.9848
or Tiffany Wilson
info@gaota.com 770.435.5910
The start of the spring semester at Augusta University’s Occupational Therapy program has included many memorable events. January was the last month of classwork for the Class of 2017 before they headed to their Level II fieldworks. As a celebration to recognize all the accomplishments of the Class of 2017, the Class of 2018 planned a second year send off. Becca Marrick and MaryKate Standard (Class of 2018) successfully lead their classmates in the creation of individualized gifts for all the members of the Class of 2017.

On January 27th, the second year students participated in a research symposium, presenting their capstone projects. The presentations were witnessed and thoroughly enjoyed by first year OT students, faculty, and students from other programs in the health-sciences building.

Another exciting update involves the work of faculty member Sharon Cosper, MHS OTR/L and her research group: Cassie Kornstadt, Lindsey Rosenberg, Jennie Lee, Meredith Griffin, Amanda Rogers, and Page Barnes. In collaboration with the Augusta University Department of Instructional Design and Development, they recently designed an app called “OT at Home.” The app can be used to provide occupational therapists easy-to-access, creative projects to address cognitive, motor, and social skills. This simple tool can be used by the occupational therapist to increase collaboration and overall communication with the caregivers of the children they work with, creating a bridge between
the clinic and home environments by providing an accessible resource of activities for caregivers to use at home, under the direction of their child's therapist. The app is available for download in the app store for both iPad and iPhone devices.

As we write this, a group of 1st year students are preparing for their Level I fieldwork placement at Mustard Seeds Communities in Jamaica. The trip is February 11th-18th, but the preparations for the trip have spanned over the last few months. We as a program are always extremely excited for our time in Jamaica and we’re very appreciative of the lasting impact the trip has had on us as students, faculty and innovative therapists.

As a program, we are also extremely excited to announce the group from the Class of 2017 who will be presenting at this year’s AOTA conference. The group includes Hannah Stern, Alexandra Newman, Courtney Potter, Emily Prickett, and Kelsey Reeves, mentored by Dr. Pam Kearney. This short course presentation is titled, *Quality in Healthcare: Fostering Inclusive Environments LGBTQ Community.*

This group of students has worked extremely hard over the past year to further develop the role of occupational therapy in the Equality Clinic of Augusta.

Finally, we are busy preparing for the AOTA Annual Conference in Philadelphia this spring. Augusta University faculty and students are involved in thirteen presentations this year, including two institutes, two short courses, and nine poster presentations. We hope to see many of you there!
Students in the Class of 2017 Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Chattahoochee Technical College (CTC) collaborated with Cobb County Senior Services in Marietta in preparing for and hosting an Assistive Technology Open House on February 14th. OTA students assisted with guiding participants through the newly established Assistive Technology (AT) Lab during the event, and educated them on the use of various assistive technology devices/equipment, from low tech devices such as sock aids and reachers, bathroom equipment such as tub transfer benches and elevated toilet seats, to higher tech devices such as the Amazon Echo and Dot for basic home automation. Students also created videos and printed brochures for the event consisting of information related to the various categories of devices.

Along with providing tours through the AT Lab, OTA students provided grip and pinch strength assessments, as well as simple fall risk assessments for interested participants using the Functional Reach Test. The Open House was well-attended and very successful in providing information about assistive technologies to the public, and a great experience for the OTA students! The AT Lab at Cobb Senior Services will also be open to the public in the future by appointment.
This week I welcomed to my practice two MOT students for their first Level 1 Fieldwork placements. They are a part of GSU’s first cohort of OT/M students who started the program in Spring of 2017. Twenty-one students were accepted from more than 100 applicants. The second cohort of approximately 30 students will begin Fall 2017.

Over 500 applications have already been initiated in OTCAS! With the OT profession continuing to grow, we are fortunate to now have an additional school offering an entry level MOT program. Look for this first cohort to graduate in Fall 2018. We wish the students and the professors at GSU all the best.

GOTA would like to congratulate Atlanta based, Children’s Special Services, LLC on being awarded Best Pediatric Therapy Service 2017- Georgia & Award for Excellence in Pre-School Screening Services-Georgia.

Social Care Awards recognize individuals, teams and companies for their high level of care, compassion, and courage within the industry.

The Social Care Awards are hosted by Global Health & Pharma (GHP). GHP rewards those within the field of social care who exhibit outstanding care. Those awarded are celebrated for their selfless and generous donation of time and effort.

For a full list of award recipients please visit http://www.ghp-magazine.com/2017-social-care-awards
Refugee resettlement in the USA has made the news in the last couple of weeks. Clarkston, GA is one of many refugee resettlement cities, with non-profit organizations in place to assist with the resettlement process and also adjustment to life in the USA. Approximately one year ago I decided I wanted to give back to my local community in some way, and identified this population as one that could benefit from services with an occupational therapy perspective.

Refugees enter the USA after a 2-year vetting process. They are given work-status, and after one year, can apply for permanent residence (green card) status. On entry to the USA, the majority of refugees have very few possessions and money. Non-profit organizations contract to receive federal aid to provide low-income housing, food and other basic necessities for 3 months.

At least one family member receives a job and school-age children are enrolled in school. In Clarkston, the majority of refugee workers start out in chicken processing plants. Many organizations offer English classes. Other services include assistance and access to healthcare and social supports. After 3 months, government assistance stops unless extension is granted for up to 8 months.

This is a very steep acculturation process. Refugees have high levels of stress: toxic stress accumulated from the horrors and tragedies of fleeing their country, during migration, and finally settlement in a country with a new language, society, culture. In addition to this adjustment, they find themselves as low-income residents in often unsafe neighborhoods. When one considers the Person-Environment-Occupation model, there are countless factors that impact wellbeing and participation in their new society.

Many non-profit organizations in and around Clarkston support refugees, resulting in high rates of economic self-sufficiency within 6 months of entering the country. But, studies show that economic self-sufficiency does not equate to acculturation and social wellbeing. The Friends of Refugees (https://friendsofrefugees.com/) is an organization that steps in to provide services where federal aid ends. They currently operate 7 programs in Clarkston: Internet Café for assistance with job search, resume writing and job applications, Family Literacy for mothers of young children, which includes an early childhood and preschool program, after school tutoring for middle and high school students and summer camps, doula and maternity support services for new mothers-to-be, community garden, sewing group, and a training program for small business start-ups.
I began volunteering in the Family Literacy Program. This is a program that offers English Language classes to mothers of small children. It was found that, mothers would not have the opportunity to learn English until their youngest child entered school. This meant that some mothers were in the country five or more years, and still could not speak or understand enough English to be independent in their community. In this program, children aged 0-5 attend early childhood and preschool classes while the mothers attend school from 9-12:30. In order to serve as many families as possible, the program is run in 2 sessions twice per week. At this time 100 mothers and approximately 150 children are served, but the waiting list is at least as long again.

I present 30-minute sensorimotor and fine motor groups to each classroom once per week. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to provide OT services in a community-based setting and for the program to receive recommendations for optimum development in social interaction, motor development and emotional regulation. I am able to provide an extra perspective before referral with children who struggle to adjust to the classroom setting. This past Fall one child was referred to Babies Can’t Wait and two to Child Find for further screening, but the vast majority of children thrive in the routine-based school program, where opportunities to learn and interact abound. Being in the classes on a weekly basis allows the teachers, assistants and volunteers to see how one can use activities to promote language development, social interaction and development of skills needed for school readiness. Many of us are asking ourselves how we can make a difference during this time of upheaval. As OT practitioners we are no strangers to occupational justice, engagement and participation. Look around your community through that OT lens and you will see the many opportunities to influence changes within your own local community. My personal desire is to expand the role of occupational therapy to this population with high adjustment needs, through a community-based approach. I never expected that my giving back, would in turn, give so much back to me.