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Forty-two students from the MScOT Class of 2010 from the School of Rehabilitation of Queen's University competed in dragon boat races in both Kingston and Belleville placing in the top 10 at both festivals. Photos provided by Jay Cheng Photography

Raising awareness on land or on water

The MScOT Class of 2010 from the School of Rehabilitation of Queen's University embarked on an unprecedented initiative this past year to establish a student OT-led dragon boat team that competed in two dragon boat festivals.

Recognizing that annual dragon boat festivals are public venues that unite multicultural communities together, the students not only demonstrated their prowess of collaboration in an exciting sporting event, they also saw it as a strategic avenue to promote the field of occupational therapy. Named H2OTBoaty, a total of 42 student OTs participated in the Kingston and Belleville festivals.

For many students, this was their first experience with dragon boat racing. They placed within the top 10 in both festivals with a cheering section from the rest of the class and faculty members who travelled to the races and demonstrated their support on the sidelines.

Endorsed by the School of Rehabilitation, the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists (OSOT), and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT), the team took advantage of advocat-

ing for OT within a public festivity by incorporating the team name and emblazoning their jerseys with the initials "OT" – and most significantly, incorporating the design of the team crest with the symbol from CAOT's Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement (CMOP-E), a conceptual framework that guides how occupational therapists in Canada can enable (re)engagement in occupations of life in three domains: productivity, self-care, and leisure.

From posters to promotional videos, the spirited nature of H2OTBoaty not only raised awareness for OT, it raised self-awareness in the students' own collaborative abilities; it illustrated the beauty of advocacy efforts from the united MScOT class of Queen's University.

H2OTBoaty is not merely a representation of the dragon boat team, but a grand symbol of their efforts as ambassadors for the health care profession the students are studying. It is a product of class collaboration, the entity of OT advocacy at every opportunity – presented or created, and a vision of possibilities awakened, on land or on water. For more search "h2otboaty" on Google or YouTube.

Reminder: ACOTUP/ACPUE meeting dates

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) will be hosting the annual Leadership Forum May 26-29, 2010 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This year the theme is "Meaningful Occupation: Enabling an Ocean of Possibilities."

As part of the four-day leadership conference, ACOTUP/ACPUE will also be hosting its AGM, CUFE, curriculum, and edu-

cation and research committee meetings.

A consensus was reached at the November 20, 2009 Council meeting and the following dates were decided on: the education and research committees will meet Saturday, May 29, 2010 night from 5 to 7 p.m.; the curriculum committee and CUFE will meet on Sunday, May 30, 2010; and the Council will meet on Monday, May 31, 2010. For more information, contact us 613-432-9491.

ACOTUP

NEWSLETTER – Winter 2010

ACOTUP/ACPUE is a national organization that promotes and develops occupational therapy education and research with an understanding of issues in a global context.

Breaking the Silence

By Deb Stewart, associate professor & assistant dean, OT program, School of Rehabilitation Science & Lorie Shimmell, professional practice coordinator, MScOT program

Three graduating student occupational therapists, Saadia Amanulla, Sukaina Dada and Simonne Cumberbatch, conducted an evidence-based project which focused on the lived experiences of children with disabilities and their families in the Muslim community.

This work was presented at the 2009 McMaster MSc OT Student Symposium. The study, *Breaking the Silence*, presents a detailed exploration of seven families' experiences of being Muslim caregivers for children with a disability and accessing services in the Peel region of Ontario. The student investigators looked specifically at the various physical, cultural and psychological barriers and supports involved in the process of finding services for one's child.

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used for this work, and data collection included in-depth semi-structured interviews that were transcribed to form codes, categories and themes.

The data analysis process resulted in several themes emerging from the data, culminating in an understanding that the participant families experienced isolation due to both social and physical barriers which prevented their interaction and participation within both the Muslim community and the community at large.

Practical recommendations based on this work included strategies to increase awareness of disability within the Muslim community in order to better include members with disabilities.

Recommendations for health care professionals included practicing in a culturally sensitive manner and reaching out to families who are recent immigrants to Canada by providing information on the various services that exist. This work will also be presented at the 2010 CAOT Conference in May, 2010 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

For a more detailed overview of *Breaking the Silence*, please email sukaina.dada@gmail.com.



Dal OT students Suzanne MacArthur and Brittany Cameron with a Take PART athlete in Chester, NS.

Dalhousie students Take PART

Occupational Therapy students from Dalhousie University Suzanne MacArthur and Brittany Cameron recently participated in an Easter Seals program called Take PART that runs in Chester and Halifax. Take PART is a weekly adapted sports program for children and youth with physical disabilities from ages eight to 21.

The program provides recreation and sports opportunities across Nova Scotia with a focus on participation, teamwork and developing sport specific skills, like indoor rock climbing, sit skiing, swimming and paddling. Each nine week session gives the youth a taste of a number of different sports and games. Take PART athletes can also participate in Kids Quest activities throughout the year and can attend Adapted Recreation Sports Camps in the summer for youth interested in learning more advanced parasports. The camps run in similar fashion to other community day camps, with sessions on skills, scrimmages, and other fun activities that allow the youth to develop their interests and independence. For more information visit the website at www.easterseals.ns.ca

Saying goodbye at U of A

After 10 years as academic coordinator for clinical education at the University of Alberta, Susan Mulholland has moved west, taking on a new role as deputy registrar with the College of Occupational Therapists in Victoria, British Columbia.

"It is with very mixed feelings that I leave my Fieldwork family and move into this new chapter in my life," Mulholland wrote in one of her final emails to colleagues.

Stepping in as acting fieldwork coordinators until a permanent replacement can be found are Liz Taylor and Michele Derald.

If you are interested in this position you can obtain further information by visiting www.ot.ualberta.ca or by contacting Lili Liu at lili.liu@ualberta.ca.

What do you say, UBC?

The newest OS & OT cohort of students at the University of British Columbia were asked a simple sentence to finish. Their answers are both insightful and a reflection on just how much they have already learned.

“Over the previous four months I have...”

- **Sean**...learned to apply the CMO.
- **Allie**...learned that a lot of becoming an OT is in me already. There is a reason we are in this program, because we have what it takes to be OTs.
- **Erin**...learned that there are more acronyms in OT than in my high school year book.
- **Naomi**...learned the importance of collaboration and open communication, with clients, with other OTs and with intercollaborative teams. Health care is becoming integrated, and as a future occupational therapist
- **Laura**...learned that if I were a MOHO concept, I would be “occupational identity.” Occupational Therapy is who I am and who I wish to become.
- **Karson**...learned that I need to replace my OT lens with LASIK.
- **Leah**...learned that giving and receiving feedback is important to grow as an OT.
- **Thao**...learned that the need for OT is vast and does not stop at rehab settings.
- **Laura**...learned the value of occupational theory to frame thinking, interview clients and develop appropriate interventions.
- **Mandy**...come to understand how health care is multi-faceted and all levels of health care need to work through a holistic lens in order to achieve best practice.
- **Caitlyn**...learned the need to collaborate with all members of the health team, and most importantly, with the client themselves.
- **Jana**...learned that an MOT degree is really a degree of common sense—it’s just a bit more applied knowledge with some additional focus.
- **Kim**...learned the importance of communicating what the OT role is to other professionals, clients, and society at large.

McGill prof receives prestigious award

Bernadette Nedelec, PhD, BSc OT(c), erg., associate professor in McGill University’s School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, was awarded the prestigious Harvey Stuart Allen Distinguished Service Award by the American Burn Association at their 2009 annual meeting held in San Antonio, TX in March. The award is presented annually to an outstanding North American scientist for their contribution in the burn field.

Dr. Nedelec’s interest in burn survivor rehabilitation began early in her career after the inspired lectures of Pat McKee and during her first internship at the University of Alberta Hospital’s Burn Centre. Her interest in research was also cultivated by an influential mentor, Shrikant J. Chinchalkar, who instilled the belief that research was an integral part of an OT’s professional life, whether as a critical consumer of evidence or a creator of new knowledge.

After graduating with a BSc in OT, she spent many years practicing OT to broaden her skills, believing she would be a better burn therapist if she had more diverse experience. When the opportunity arose to return to the University of Alberta Hospital’s Burn Centre, she took on the challenge. She was fortunate to work with the new Burn Centre’s director, Dr. Edward E. Tredget who encouraged her to complete a graduate degree so she could “put some science into the witchcraft of rehabilitation.”

Her PhD training was focused on acquiring basic science knowledge and skills so that she could ask and answer questions about rehabilitation interventions at both a clinical and molecular level. The learning environment provided by her mentors, Drs. Aziz Ghahary, Paul Scott, and Edward Tredget, and the outstanding technical skills training she received from You Jun

Shen, provided her with a rich foundation. She completed her PhD in 1997. Later that year, she began her post-doctoral training at the University of Montreal where she had an opportunity to further refine her research skills under the tutelage of Drs. Dominique Garrel and Manon Choinière.

In 1999 Dr. Nedelec began her academic career at McGill University as an assistant professor in the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy. Her research continues to take a combined basic and clinical science approach to questions that focus on the pathophysiology of hypertrophic scar, objective measurement of this pathology, and investigations of the efficacy of treatments to prevent or treat it. Her clinical experience has forever embedded in her mind and soul the burden that burn survivors endure as a result of the sequelae associated with hypertrophic scar formation. The belief that we have a moral obligation to advance our understanding of scar formation and treatment, so that one day a means of preventing it can be found, has sustained her determination to pursue these questions.

She was promoted to Associate Professor at McGill University in 2008, a success supported by Dr. Léo LaSalle and the hard work and dedication of her research assistant Ana De Oliveira, Grazyna Rachelska, and Todd Schuermann and her many other students.

In addition, Dr. Nedelec is indebted to the Firefighters Foundations in Alberta and Québec and the provincial funding agencies, Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec and Réseau provincial de recherché en adaptation-réadaptation, for their past and current support. Dr. Nedelec currently has the good fortune of working with Dr. Alexis Armour, the director of the Montreal Burn Centre.



Join Occupational Therapists from across the globe at these upcoming events or explore their websites:

Toronto, Ontario
Accommodating Visual Impairment at School, Home and Work
March 5, 2010 | www.ot.utoronto.ca/news

Vancouver, B.C.
2nd Conference on Positive Aging: An Interdisciplinary Team Approach for Health Professionals
November 26-27, 2010 | www.interprofessional.ubc.ca

Nelson, New Zealand
New Zealand AOT Conference 2010
September 8-10, 2010 | www.nzaotevents.com

Making sure your voice is heard

Megram Consulting Services Ltd. is in the process of developing a communication plan for the association scheduled for completion in March.

With communication defined as including both the spoken and written messages an association conveys to its members and external stakeholders, the communication plan will be an organized outline of the types of communication that will take place and who is responsible for conducting or ensuring the accuracy of the messages delivered.

The plan will detail what ACOTUP/ACPUE wants to accomplish with its communications, who the target audience is, what are the best ways to communicate with the identified audience and how best to evaluate the progress of the communication program once implemented.

The first step in the process is the conduction of a communication audit. One aspect of this is a detailed survey that all ACOTUP/ACPUE members will be asked to complete online.

This survey will be sent to all members in January via email. Megram will be asking each member to participate as the information that will be gathered will be crucial to developing a communication plan that is the right fit for ACOTUP/ACPUE.

The new NFPS website

The latest in-fashion sneakers and knapsack, books, supplies and a clean slate – the advent of fall always marks the beginning of a new academic year for students across the country. For the National Fieldwork Placement Service, September was the best time to launch its fresh, new website ready for eager occupational therapy students to use.

Now that we are mid-way through the academic year, NFPS is looking for feedback on the usefulness of the information contained on the website.

The purpose of the site, located at www.nfps.ca, is to provide a one-stop-shop for information for Canadian and International students looking for out-of-catchment OT placements, as well as acting as a reference point for universities, site practice leaders and clinical placement preceptors.

Along with the new design, the website also features revised student application forms to clarify applicant’s preferences and previous placement experiences, clear regulation and policy guidelines and up-to-date university placement dates, along with frequently asked questions.

Plans are also underway to expand the new graphs and statistics section of the website to provide clear examples to

students of areas that NFPS is more, or less, likely to find placements and in what practice areas. For example, mental health placements for out-of-catchment students are always challenging to secure, as are placements in the GTA, particularly in the summer months – information important to students filling out an application.

As such, the statistics and graphs section of the website will enable students to make educated choices before investing in an out-of-catchment placement.

A members-only section of the website is also being developed for the new site to enable fieldwork coordinators to exchange information and provide details on more remote or rural placement opportunities that out-of-catchment students might not be aware were available.

Suggestions and ideas are always welcome, as NFPS strives to continually streamline and perfect its services.

You can contact NFPS at 1-866-294-5160 or email Anita Law at anita@nfps.ca with your suggestions.

We welcome photos of students on placement, anecdotes on experiences, testimonials or experiences and would love to hear what you think we could do to further expand the website – our service is your service.