



Three of the 10 winning photo submissions from the University of Western Ontario team for the 2009 gOT Spirit Challenge held in October.

gOT Spirit goes to Western

The month of October usually evokes images of pumpkins, ghosts and ghoulies – but for occupational therapy students, October is the time for another kind of spirit to rise. The gOT Spirit challenge is held at universities across the country to raise awareness of the profession every October. Each university program works to creatively promote occupational therapy and submits 10 photos with a short written description that highlights their activities.

This past October, the University of Western Ontario's photo submission was chosen as number one, although arguably the entire OT profession won.

"Our OT student council is made up of 28 students, both first and second year and it was the council that took on the initiative to enter the competition," says Allison Hyde, council co-president. "Over the last year, our second year students have really come together as friends

and colleagues, and after a great orientation week with the first year students, it was even more confirmation that we could pull this challenge off."

Despite October being a busy month, with a full course load and many other ongoing university activities, Hyde says the gOT Spirit Challenge "brought out the passion for OT that the students at the university have."

Activities to raise awareness of occupational therapy held at Western included: mall walking, the start-up of a Twitter page, a radio interview, distribution of the book *OT and Me* to public libraries, a car wash, lunches held to raise spirit, and the gOT Spirit photo challenge.

"Everyone put in a great effort, whether it was taking photos right up to midterm, coming to school on their day off, or learning a computer program to edit and upload the photos," she says. "Everyone helped with something – brainstorming ideas, being 'models,'

taking photos, editing and writing the narration that went with the photos – the pictures submitted had student and faculty-wide participation."

The teamwork paid off, and Hyde says the entire experience was a reminder to all involved why they chose occupational therapy as a career.

"I am reminded daily that it is a profession you can take anywhere – it is very versatile. It is based on the foundation of client-centred care and has a holistic way of thinking. OT allows you to really focus in on the client, what their goals are, and to put aside the business that health care is becoming," she explains.

While Hyde will be graduating this June a succession plan is underway for gOT Spirit 2010 – so other schools be warned.

"The first year students have expressed an interest in not only participating but winning again next year," she says.

OT month at University of Alberta

University of Alberta OT student Pam Armstead led the creation of the "gOT Spirit Challenge," the national online network to challenge occupational therapy students across Canada to show their pride and to increase public awareness of the occupational therapy profession.

Of the 14 programs across Canada, students from seven programs submitted visually engaging entries that show our next generation of occupational therapists belong to a national community that is collegial and creative. Dr. Liz Taylor, president of CAOT judged the entries and selected the University of Western Ontario as the winner for 2009!

"The difficulty we had in judging was the diversity that you all provided – you are truly all ingenious with the ways you acknowledge and spread information about the profession. From educating within your institutions, to public service, to fundraising with eloquent purpose – to appearing on You tube, each program took the challenge on and made a difference to our profession and how it is understood within respective educational regions within Canada," said Dr. Taylor.

Visit <http://otschools.wetpaint.com/> to view the 2009 entries. We encourage students from all occupational therapy programs across Canada to participate in gOT Spirit Challenge 2010.

ACOTUP

NEWSLETTER – Spring 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.

New developments at McMaster University

Lori Letts, Assistant Dean, and Lorie Shimmell, Professional Practice Coordinator, MScOT Program, School of Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University

Our program is embracing some exciting developments in the clinical education area! There has been a launch of the clinical education web pages to join the overarching School of Rehabilitation Science web site. We can be found at: www.discovermactfieldwork.ca.

We are anticipating that this will become a resource for preceptors and students for both practical fieldwork purposes as well as a source of learning materials and communication.

The first OT clinical education newsletter was "published" earlier this month. The inaugural issue of *hOT off the press* was distributed electronically to all in catchment facilities and preceptors. If you would like to receive a copy of this, or future editions, please let us know at shimmelj@mcmaster.ca or otclned@mcmaster.ca.

After consultation and surveying with our preceptors, students and faculty, our OT Program has recently moved to the Competency Based Fieldwork Evaluation for Occupational Therapists (CBFE-OT) (Bossert et al, 2007). This is anticipated to be a positive change for time efficiency, reduction of preceptor requirement to use varied evaluation tools, while still preserving the individual learning objectives of students in tandem with those that mirror OT competencies.

DEVELOPING OURSELVES, DEVELOPING OUR FUTURE... TOGETHER WE ARE CLINICAL EDUCATION

Don't miss the opportunity to share your OT news!

The submission deadline for the Summer 2010 issue is July 5, 2010.



Beverlea Tallant (right) pictured here with her daughter.

Celebrating over 40 years of professional service

On November 12, 2009 McGill University and invited alumni gathered to celebrate the retirement of Beverlea Tallant, who has provided more than 40 years of service to the Occupational Therapy (OT) Program. To honor her many career accomplishments, briefly chronicled below, friends, family and former students contributed to the "Dr. Beverlea Tallant Psychiatric OT Research Award Fund" which will be established for a graduate student who is conducting research in psychiatric or psychosocial OT.

In 1961, Beverlea Tallant received a Diploma in Physical and Occupational Therapy from the University of Toronto. This event marked the beginning of a distinguished professional career as clinician, administrator, educator and researcher.

In 1969, Beverlea joined the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy at McGill University as a faculty lecturer and began her life in academia. Recognizing the need for advanced education, she completed a Bachelor of Science in OT (1976), a Master of Arts (Experimental Psychology) (1981) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology) (1994), while continuing to work at McGill.

Teaching about the role of OT in the assessment and treatment of psychiatric patients has been her primary passion. Inheriting a 26 hour lecture course, she quickly advanced the psychosocial component of the OT program to four three credit courses.

Beverlea also conducted research and made major contributions to the OT program, the school and the university. She served on, or chaired, virtually all standing and multiple Ad Hoc committees in the school. She also served on numerous committees for the McGill Association of University Teachers, including trustee on the McGill University Long Term Disability Committee and vice president internal, as well as representative for the Faculty of Medicine on the Senate Nominating and Review committees.

Those of us at McGill, along with Beverlea's family, friends and other colleagues, celebrate her many achievements and wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

News from the University of Toronto

HEATHER MOYSE WINS GOLD AT VANCOUVER 2010

Heather Moyse, an MScOT Graduate from the Class of 2007, national-team rugby player and native from Summerside, PEI, teamed up with Kaillie Humphries to win Canada's first-ever gold medal in women's bobsled at the Olympics on February 24. U of T faculty, staff and students were awed by Heather's and Kaillie's thrilling rides, which were also track records. We are very proud of you, Heather!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING CLASS OF 2009

We are delighted to report that our OT 2009 graduates performed exceptionally well on the November 2009 CAOT Certification Exam. They received high scores across all categories of basic knowledge and professional content.

THELMA CARDWELL RESEARCH DAY 2010 – AN INSPIRATIONAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER

This year the Department's Thelma Cardwell Research Day will take place on Wednesday, June 23, 2010. The department is very pleased to announce Todd Nicholson as our 2010 Thelma Cardwell Keynote Speaker. Paraplegia resulting from a car accident in 1987 did not dissuade Todd from pursuing his goal of a career in sports. Introduced to Paralympic sports during his rehabilitation, Todd is now ranked among the top sledge hockey players in the world, and is captain of Team Canada and participated in the 2010 Olympic Games.

Todd has also been a member of Canada's duathlon and triathlon team, and is involved with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Kids Sports and the Canadian Paralympic Committee. In this Olympic year, we are especially happy to have Todd Nicholson share with us the realization of his occupational goals.

CAOT ACCREDITATION 2010

The department is in the throes of preparing for the Academic Credentialing Council of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists in-depth accreditation process. The department was named one of the top three occupational therapy programs in North America by the 2003 Accreditation Team. The on-site visit will take place on October 25-27, 2010. The department is very grateful to have the expertise of Dr. Helene Polatajko, who is spearheading and coordinating the accreditation process for us, with the administrative assistance of Liz Pounsett.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR, DR. LINDA WILSON VISITS THE DEPARTMENT

Dr. Wilson, international occupational therapy scholar and Principal Lecturer, School of Occupational Therapy, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, Aotearoa / New Zealand, visited the department from January 11-22.

Dr. Wilson's presentations on the use of oral histories and document analysis to examine changes in New Zealand's occupational therapy practice, education, contexts, and women's employment were well-received by faculty members, and collaborations focusing on community participation, client safety, and cultural competency were struck.

FACULTY NEWS

Faculty of Medicine Graduate Faculty Teaching Award: we are very pleased to report that Dr. Jill Cameron has been selected to receive the 2009-2010 Early Career Excellence award.

The award recognizes outstanding contribution to the training and experience of graduate students, as evidenced by excellence in teaching, supervision or mentorship and dedication to students. Jill will be presented with the award at the 8th Annual

Education Achievement Celebration on May 13th.

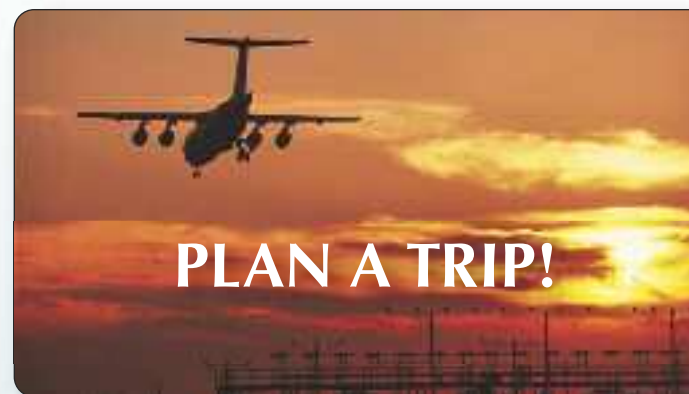
We are very happy to welcome both Dr. Michelle Keightley and Ms. Rachel Stack back from their parental leaves.

Dr. Keightley's research was recently featured in a Globe and Mail article proposing a brain bank to study hockey concussions. Rachel Stack will resume her vital role, with Donna Barker, in developing and coordinating clinical placements for each of our 160 MScOT students. We thank Iris Greenspoon for her very capable skills while Rachel was on leave.

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, CUFÉ, curriculum, and education and research committee meetings. All meetings will be held at the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel located at 1919 Upper Water Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Meeting dates include: the education and research committees are meeting Saturday, May 29, 2010 evening from 5 to 7 p.m.; the curriculum committee and CUFÉ 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.



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

Dublin, Ireland
Association of OTs of Ireland Annual Conference
May 28-29, 2010 | www.aoti.ie

Brighton, Sussex, U.K
College of OTs 34th Annual Conferences and Exhibition
June 22-25, 2010 | www.cot.co.uk

Queensland, Australia
OT Australia 2011 National Conference
June 29 to July 1, 2010 | www.austo.com.au

Anti-stigma initiative at the University of Alberta

University of Alberta faculty member Susan Burwash instituted a contact-based anti-stigma initiative in the first year mental health course she teaches. This initiative pairs teaching assistants ("client-educators") who are persons living in the community with a mental illness, with small groups of students.

Students meet two to three times with their client-educator to complete a narrative-focused interview, to receive feedback from their Client-Educator about their interviewing skills and to collaboratively develop a presentation that shares the client-educator's story with the larger class.

This initiative is one of 17 anti-stigma projects across Canada involving healthcare professionals chosen by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) as a promising practice. The MHCC's "Opening Minds" research team is working collaboratively with agencies to evaluate if, and how, these initiatives influence attitudes of healthcare students/practitioners.

Students participating in the study complete an attitude survey before meeting their client-educator, afterwards and again three months following the class. Client-educators will also be interviewed about their experiences.

While both students and client-educators in previous years have reported that this initiative has been a positive learning experience, we are excited to have the

Home for the summer?

Summer is always a popular time at the National Fieldwork Placement Service! Many students studying away from home opt to apply for placements in their home communities. Others see the summer as a chance to explore another part of Canada, and apply to NFPS for a chance to combine work and travel.

As such, it is not surprising to see an increase in demand for large urban centres (after all, they are "home" to most Canadians) like Toronto during the summer months. To alleviate some of the pressure, NFPS no longer places international students in these high demand areas during the months of June, July and August.

Because site saturation is an ongoing problem, particularly in the Greater Toronto and southern Ontario locations, students should try to select areas outside of these communities for summer placements and take the chance to have an adventure and see somewhere new!

Many sites in the large urban centres have already made commitments for placements this summer and fall and are not able to take any additional students.

EASING DEMAND

A choice of fieldwork dates is a new approach initiated by Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario, which has been very helpful. Both these universities provided two date options for some of their fieldwork placements. Not only does this allow students to express their preference but it also enables sites to have more flexibility and options.

Another interesting development has been the increased number of site OT's who have specifically requested students from their Alma Mater. Comments often surround remembering how difficult it was for them to find a placement during their school days.

As the weather warms and summer approaches, we remind students to increase their chances of an out-of-catchment placement by being flexible with their location choices and with their field of practice choices. During such a high demand time, the more flexible students can be, the more possibilities will open for an exciting and unique placement. For more information, please visit www.nfps.ca.