

## Founding faculty member retires

By Katelynn Northam, reprinted with permission from Dal News

At the end of May, over 500 occupational therapists gathered in Halifax to take part in the Canadian Association for Occupational Therapy (CAOT) conference. It is the fourth time that the national association has held an OT conference in the city, and it is particularly significant this year with the imminent retirement of Dr. Elizabeth Townsend, current director of the School of Occupational Therapy at Dalhousie and one of the founding faculty members of the school.

Since 1982, Dalhousie University's School of Occupational Therapy has been turning out world-class occupational therapists who have gone on to have successful careers in many different fields. Dr. Townsend was instrumental in the opening of the school, which has now produced over 1,000 alumni and remains the only school for occupational therapy in the Atlantic provinces.

"I was tantalized by the possibility of creating a vibrant new curriculum particularly that would bring out the possibilities for occupational therapy," she says of her decision to get involved in the school so many years ago, which has helped to significantly increase the number of occupational therapists who live and work in the region.

Occupational therapy is defined by CAOT as "the art and science of enabling engagement in everyday living, through occupation; of enabling people to perform the occupations that foster health and well-being; and of enabling a just and inclusive society so that all people may participate to their potential in the daily occupations of life."

"It's one of the broadest and most flexible professions anywhere," says Dr. Townsend, explaining that occupational therapists don't only work in hospitals, but in many different sectors such as transportation. Her research has focused on areas of mental health and the ways in which mental health systems either support or limit possibilities for people to live well. "It was out of doing that critique and analysis that I realized that the philosophic foundations of occupational therapy are congruent with philosophic ideas of social justice.

"I was attracted to occupational therapy because I saw the possibility of making a difference by seeing the potential in people that others couldn't see."



Elizabeth Townsend (centre) is joined by colleagues Mary Law from McMaster (left) and Helene Polatajko of the University of Toronto (right) as she delivers her keynote speech.

Dr. Townsend says the opportunities that Dalhousie provided her during her time here have opened many doors. "My time at Dalhousie has been characterized by incredible opportunities to be creative, to create an innovative curriculum, to make international connections, and to become involved in the national scene in shaping what we do to help people live a more meaningful life, even when they have what would seem to others to be challenges."

She has nothing but good things to say about the many students who have come through the school during her time there. "My experience is of huge pride. There is a sense of putting Dalhousie on a world stage where our alumni are highly respected around the world. I get letters from students in New Zealand, Australia, or India saying how proud they are of being a Dalhousie occupational therapy graduate."

Professor Townsend will remain at Dalhousie as a professor emeritus. She encourages students to look at occupational therapy as a possible career choice, citing an affinity for thinking outside of the box, willingness to use both sides of the brain and to work across disciplines, a passion for advancing justice in the world, and creativity as characteristics of potentially great occupational therapists.

These are all areas Dr. Townsend knows a thing or two about. Crystal Grass, an assistant professor in the department, says that many view Dr. Townsend as a visionary. "She has a view to the future of what's possible."

## Driving towards a unique training program

**M**cGill University, in partnership with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, the Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec and the Constance Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre (CLRC) has created a unique higher education training program in driving rehabilitation for occupational therapists.

**T**his program aims at training qualified professionals with a solid expertise, based on evidence, which will enable them to effectively intervene in driving screening and evaluation, retraining and vehicle adaptation for different targeted populations. The program is offered in English and in French and includes five courses. The courses are accessible by Internet and some are complimented by practical workshops supervised by expert clinicians. This training program will furnish the student with the necessary tools enabling them to play a leading role in this sector, as part of their profession. Information on the program is available at [www.mcgill.ca/spot/gradprogram/](http://www.mcgill.ca/spot/gradprogram/).

# ACOTUP

NEWSLETTER – Summer 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.

## Seventeen days of winter Olympic celebration



Donna Drynan, UBC associate professor, at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

By Donna Drynan, clinical associate professor & academic fieldwork coordinator UBC, OS&OT Department

**W**ell, February came and went with a blast! It seems so long ago but the memories are still fresh. UBC was bustling with Olympic activity, hosting women's hockey and men's Paralympics sledge hockey at the newly renovated Thunderbird arena. Quite a few faculty and staff were suited up in the infamous Blue Smurf volunteer uniforms and many attended events throughout the city and at Whistler. The students were granted a two week "reading" break so they too participated in the festivities which the whole world watched on television. The city was alive and we were so happy to welcome so many visitors from far and wide and that we could share our west coast hospitality with everyone.

**I** was personally stationed at the Athletes Village at Whistler so was able to chat and visit with many of the athletes from around the world; a highlight was seeing Jon Montgomery's gold medal (Skelton event) pass through the security scanner. If you were not able to be in Vancouver to share in the excitement, we hope that you will take another opportunity to visit our fair city sometime soon.

Dr. Tal Jarus, newly elected president of ACOTUP.



## Meet the new ACOTUP president

**D**r. Tal Jarus is the Head, Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at UBC. Dr. Jarus has extensive academic experience in research, teaching, graduate supervision, and administration. She earned a B.O.T. at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and completed her M.A. and PhD in occupational therapy from New York University. Prior to her arrival to Vancouver, Tal was the head of the OT department in Tel Aviv University.

**D**r. Jarus' primary area of research and graduate supervision includes motor learning with an emphasis on skill acquisition, retention and generalization, and measuring and enabling participation in life situations and its effect on health and well-being. Other research interests that she pursues include evidence-based practice of occupational therapy.

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

The submission deadline for the Fall 2010 issue is October 12, 2010.

## Online interactive guide to clinical decision-making

With financial support from the School of Medical Rehabilitation Endowment Fund at the University of Manitoba, and hosted by the McMaster University website, faculty from the University of Manitoba (Jacquie Ripat and Leanne Leclair) and McMaster University (Mary Law, Lori Lets and Brenda Vrkljan) have created an interactive online presentation entitled *Occupational Performance Process Model (OPPM) and the Canadian Practice Process Framework (CPPF): An Interactive Guide to Clinical Decision Making*.

University of Manitoba and McMaster University faculty have been using the online presentation with students and practitioners to: 1) provide an overview

of the OPPM and CPPF; 2) advance understanding of the differences and similarities between the process models; and 3) demonstrate the application of these models to practice through the use of a video case study. Based on a presentation offered at the 2009 Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists National Conference, the interactive presentation is available at [www.srsmcmaster.ca/Programs/MSOT/ProfessionalFramework/ProcessFrameworks/tabid/3541/Default.aspx](http://www.srsmcmaster.ca/Programs/MSOT/ProfessionalFramework/ProcessFrameworks/tabid/3541/Default.aspx) for all to access. An online survey is also available on the same website to provide feedback to the authors on the presentation.

## ACOTUP members gather in Halifax

Thirty-two ACOTUP members gathered in Halifax for this year's annual meeting. With filled agendas, the council, CUFÉ, education, curriculum and research committees discussed a wide variety of issues to further the associations' goal of upholding educational standards for the occupational therapy profession.

All committees met over the May weekend (May 29-30) prior to the council meeting on May 31. This included the education and research committees, both of which are still getting off the ground, and they continued the work of establishing bylaws, terms of reference, objectives and goals.

The national curriculum coordinators meeting was well-attended and began with small group discussions on program curriculum success stories, challenges and new program/curriculum initiatives. The group then defined the role of

the curriculum committee which includes developing linkages for support, developing standards, providing consistency by coordinating and designating, giving guidance to other organizations, and identifying national programs. A discussion then took place regarding the CAOT exam blueprint and how this may impact the occupational therapy curriculum.

The CUFÉ meeting was also very productive and covered a variety of topics beginning with a report from the Canadian Guidelines for Fieldwork Education in Occupational Therapy (CGFEOT) Task Force along with their recommendations. It became apparent very quickly that further dialogue would be needed on the topic and members hope to organize an gathering in the future to allow for these conversations to continue. This was followed by a detailed

discussion of the National Fieldwork Placement Service as well as group conversations on education, research and project initiatives along with an opportunity to provide feedback on the ACTOUP draft bylaws.

The ACOTUP council was the final



The ACOTUP education committee met for its first face-to-face meeting in Halifax, NS during the CAOT conference this past May.

meeting on the schedule and was attended by 12 members along with Bonnie James and Paula Inglis from the association management firm Megram Consulting Services Ltd. The president's report was circulated prior to the meeting. Donna Collins reported that ACOTUP is progressing well and that the committee meetings are a great opportunity to share and have been very success full. The new governance structure is coming along well and she also thanked Megram and the executive for their support over the year.

A revised executive director description was circulated to members. It was determined council would start the hiring process and the executive would create an advertisement to be circulated to the members and posted on the ACOTUP and possibly the CAOT websites.

The communication plan prepared by Megram for the council was discussed and it was suggested that special projects would become a separate contract with the executive director that would include completing the communication plan priority list. It was decided the website would be a top priority and each council member would further review the communication plan.

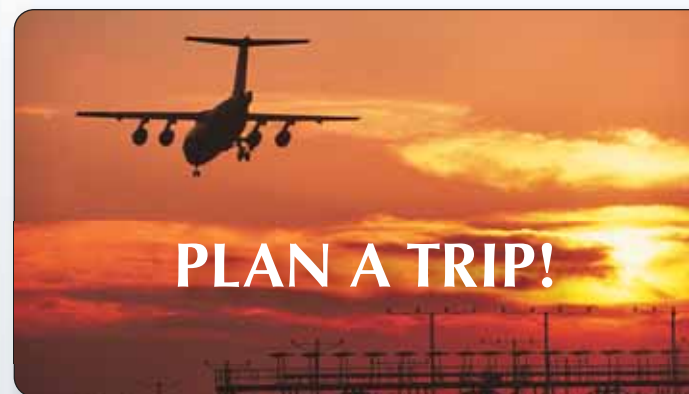
Nominations were accepted for the executive committee. The motion to accept the nominations of Tal Jarus, president; Susan Rappolt, vice chair; Margaret Jamieson, treasurer for the 2010-2011 term; Bernadette Nedelec, treasurer for the 2011-2012 term; Tanya Packer, research committee liaison; and Lili Liu, education committee liaison was moved by Martin Brousseau and seconded by Sandra Everit and duly carried.

A special presentation was made to Dr. Liz Townsend in recognition of her retirement as director of the School of Occupational Therapy at Dalhousie University. (see article in this issue)

Outside of meetings, members were able to enjoy the Nova Scotia hospitality, scenery, culture and culinary delights. Activities include boat tours, visits to area museums and even the Alexander Keith's brewery. Several members went on a haunted walk around the city and enjoyed intriguing stories of ghostly buildings, troubled spirits and odd occurrences.

"The haunted walk was a fun evening that provided the opportunity to see the "dark" side of Halifax," says Tal Jarus. "With a great story teller and wonderful companion of fellow OTs we strolled around Halifax to discover that there is life after conference. This tour allowed us to discover which ACOTUP members are braver than others!"

Everyone also took advantage of the abundance of seafood, with some attendees even managed to bring some live Atlantic lobsters home.



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

**Vancouver, British Columbia**  
National Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities Conference  
September 29 to October 1, 2010 | [www.interprofessional.ubc.ca](http://www.interprofessional.ubc.ca)

**Pasadena, California**  
OT Association of California 34th Annual Conference  
October 15-17, 2010 | [www.otaconline.org](http://www.otaconline.org)

**Chiang Mai, Thailand**  
5th Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Congress  
November 19-21, 2011 | [www.wfot.org](http://www.wfot.org)

## A nationwide collaboration

The University of Ottawa OT Program is excited to be part of a nationwide collaboration to support internally educated OTs. The Occupational Therapy Examination and Practice Preparation (OTEpp) project assists internationally educated occupational therapists (IEOTs) transition into Canadian practice. OTEpp is led by the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario in partnership with the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT). OTEpp is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program and by the Government of Ontario.

OTEpp offers IEOTs the opportunity to participate in core academic curriculum that reflects Canadian practice. Additional resources include practicum experience, exam preparation, work readiness and career guidance.

The core curriculum is being offered in English in face-to-face classes at McMaster University and at the University of British Columbia and in an online format. The University of Ottawa will be offering the core curriculum in French both in a face-to-face and online format starting this July.

For more information, please visit [www.otepp.ca](http://www.otepp.ca), or contact Elizabeth Steggles, National Project Manager, [stegggl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:stegggl@mcmaster.ca).

## NFPS update

Hot summer days means the advent of slower time schedules – and while students are now enjoying their summer vacations, the National Fieldwork Placement Service is finishing up placement applications for the 2009 – 2010 academic year and undertaking their annual statistical work.

With a record number of applications this year, NFPS is proud to report that 228 students secured an out of catchment placement, more than any other year. The Greater Toronto Area remains the location of choice for many students followed by British Columbia and Ottawa. Manitoba and Saskatchewan remain the least requested locations despite many excellent learning experiences available in the provinces. Research has also been completed that looks at the enrollment numbers for the universities who use the service, sites available to NFPS in each university catchment area, along with each universities' annual NFPS application numbers. This will help NFPS plan for the future.

Anita Law, NFPS coordinator has been overseeing the placement service for more than a year and will be heading off on maternity leave in September. She is pleased with how the service has developed over the past 12 months and confident the service will continue to evolve in the future. "We have been able to streamline the process, make it more efficient, effective and transparent," she says. "Our ultimate goal is to find an appropriate placement for every student that applies through NFPS. Limited site availability is always an issue, particularly as we are seeing record number of applications, however developing strong relationships with site coordinators continues to result in multiple placement offers from individual sites."

Megram and ACOTUP have worked hard over the past five months on a new contract, which was due for renewal at the end of this year. Both are pleased to announce an agreement has been reached which will see Megram continuing to run NFPS for the next two years.