NEWS AND MEDIA OUTLETS REPORT DAILY ON THE NEAR-EPIDEMIC RISE IN PREVALENCE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) AMONG CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES. DESPITE THE alarmiNG STATISTICS, METHODS FOR DIAGNOSING THIS PUZZLING CONDITION HAVE A STRONG SUBJECTIVE COMPONENT. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT DIAGNOSIS IS INFLUENCED BY THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FAMILY AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDER, AND OTHER NONMEDICAL FACTORS, SUCH AS RACE, GENDER, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS? USC DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OLGA SOLOMON, PH.D., WHO TEACHES AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, GRANT-SUPPORTED COURSE TITLED “INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS” (SEE SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER), IS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OF A NEW R01 GRANT, “AUTISM IN URBAN CONTEXT LINKING HETEROGENEITY WITH HEALTH AND SERVICE DISPARITIES,” THAT WILL STUDY THIS PHENOMENON. THIS NIMH-FUNDED RESEARCH GRANT, 1R01MH089474-01, WILL BRING $1,248,025 TO THE DIVISION OVER THE NEXT 2 YEARS.

Q: WHAT WILL THIS STUDY INVESTIGATE?
DR. SOLOMON: THE PROJECT EXAMINES HOW RACE, GENDER, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, FAMILY CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION DURING CLINICAL ENCOUNTERS AFFECT THE ACQUISITION OF DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM AND RELATED SERVICES FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN LIVING IN LOS ANGELES. IT IS A 2-YEAR, MULTI-METHOD ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY THAT WILL FOLLOW A COHORT OF 16 AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN RECENTLY DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM, THEIR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS AND THEIR PRACTITIONERS TO DOCUMENT THE CHILDREN’S PATHWAYS TO AN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER DIAGNOSIS AND SERVICES.

The project is “powered” by an interdisciplinary team of researchers and clinicians that includes three members from the Division [Mary Lawlor, Sc.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, Sharon Cermak, Ed.D., FAOTA, and Dr. Solomon], three members from CHLA UCEDD and one from the Department of Preventive Medicine at Keck School of Medicine. This is a very exciting collaboration among the Division, CHLA UCEDD and Preventive Medicine and I am thrilled to lead these distinguished colleagues in this research endeavor and learn from each of them as we work together.

What we know about autism so far has not been considered in sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts and there is still little understanding of everyday experiences and circumstances of children’s and families’ lives. We know that even though the diagnosis of autism is carried out through standardized diagnostic instruments, it can also be quite subjective. This project foregrounds this issue. In research literature, heterogeneity in autism is talked about as if it is an objective, purely clinical phenomenon, but we would benefit from looking at heterogeneity within ASDs as a sociocultural phenomenon as well. What that means is that the interpretation of atypical behavior in autism can be examined against sociocultural expectations of normative child development under default socioeconomic circumstances. To achieve this goal, the project will examine heterogeneity in ASDs as a socioculturally-based phenomenon in three areas. First, we are interested in characterizing patterns of communication among African American caregivers and practitioners during clinical encounters that are vital for developing partnerships and that are vulnerable to misunderstanding. Second, we are interested in identifying the landscape of structural barriers to, and opportunities for, African American children receiving timely and accurate diagnosis and appropriate services. Finally, we are convinced that focusing on African American caregivers’ knowledge and expertise about ASDs and the social

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)
I was saddened to learn that alumnus Richard “Dick” McCauley passed on September 21, 2009, after a courageous battle against cancer. Dick had served as a valued member of our Board of Councilors and was a dear friend. This past August, I was fortunate to have visited Dick in Florida, and as it turned out, he had a final opportunity to challenge me to think about a set of values we might consider internalizing to insure the profession is able to meet societal needs in the future. Dick will be remembered for his extraordinarily generous nature; in fact, he and Clayton Brown, his partner at the time who is now deceased, gave the lead gift of $100,000 that enabled the Division to secure and renovate the Center for Occupation and Lifestyle Redesign®. More recently, Dick gave another gift of $100,000 to support diversity scholarships in our Division.

It seems in periods when people are struggling to live, as the time shortens, something quite mystical happens. And so I think it did in Dick’s life. When my husband John and I visited Dick and his partner Fred Werling in their Sarasota home, I did not know at the time that this encounter was occurring six weeks before Dick’s passing. I was inspired to interview Dick regarding his wisdom on what our profession needed to do to secure our ability to meet societal needs into posterity. These words were the very last ones Dick would ever again speak to me. Because this was an “interview,” I diligently recorded what he said. Then, within a day or two, I composed an essay to capture Dick’s insights as best as I could. I could have not anticipated at that time that this essay would appear after Dick had left us. Here is my best effort to recap our conversation.

Dick shared that occupational therapists seem to hold a particular set of values. He mentioned kindness, openness and honesty. He described how we value giving to others rather than taking, quietly doing good work in the background rather than in the limelight, being caring rather than critical, and being humanistic rather than cold-hearted and tough. And as I have traveled the country meeting occupational therapists from nearly every state, I have agreed. This is the beauty of our collective souls.

But Dick went on to express his belief that in some ways these very values have kept our profession out of the public consciousness. He then mapped out a vision of other values we could choose to embrace that he believed would move our profession forward, without compromising the ethical substance that has always constituted the profession’s essence. Dick began our conversation with, “Florence, occupational therapy is almost 100 years old and not enough people know about us. We, therefore, have to begin to value communicating unrelentingly to the public about what we do and what we’ve accomplished. It’s not enough to talk about how great we are to one another – we need to get the word out.”

Dick also said we must value activism. He recounted the story of Rosa Louise McCauley Parks (yes, one of her names is McCauley), who, in an act of defiance, came to symbolize the Civil Rights Movement. She was 42 when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white person. Parks’ activism resulted in the Montgomery bus boycott, and eventually she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She is described as having been tired of giving in. Following her lead, we occupational therapists should be tired of accommodating others when such decisions may compromise our ability to serve the public good.

He said that if occupational therapists know we are making important differences in people’s lives, we need to feel entitled to respect by others. Too often occupational therapists understand the value of the work they do, but fearing others don’t get it, they simply refrain from communicating so as not to experience the pain of disapprobation. Dick also stressed that within our work settings we must personally strive for excellence and not condone anything less in our colleagues. He said we must value taking risks. Even when we don’t know for sure that we can do something, we should pursue possibilities. In short, he said, we need to have a “will try” attitude.

Dick’s comments keep reverberating in my mind. What if all occupational therapists adopted an “I will try” attitude? What if we spoke up without hesitation each and every day about what we do? What if we embraced advocacy and activism? What if we pursued possibilities without fear? When we individually and collectively change our attitudes and our behavior, I believe that we will see an occupational therapist receive an award from the President of the United States – but more importantly, we will see occupational therapy achieve equality with the other health care professions and heighten our impact on society. I will always cherish these words Dick shared with me on that day. They will remain forever in my heart.
Avishai Sadan was appointed Dean of the USC School of Dentistry effective August 1, 2009. He also holds the University’s G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery Dean’s Chair in Dentistry.

Dr. Sadan came to USC from Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, where he was Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs and also chaired the Department of Comprehensive Care. Previously, Dr. Dr. Sadan served as editor-in-chief of Quintessence International and Quintessence of Dental Technology (QDT). He has been a member of the editorial boards of other journals as well, and has published and lectured extensively, both nationally and abroad, on biomaterials, fixed prosthodontics and esthetic and implant dentistry.

Outside the University, Dr. Sadan is a member of the American College of Prosthodontists, the Academy of Osseointegration, the European Academy of Esthetic Dentistry, the American College of Dentists, the Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society and the Pierre Fauchard Academy. He holds B.Sc. and D.M.D. degrees from Hebrew University’s Hadassah School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem, where he also completed an internship in maxillofacial prosthodontics and oral medicine. In addition, Dr. Sadan received training and completed a fellowship in prosthodontics, emphasizing esthetic and implant dentistry, at the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Dentistry.

“With great pride, the School of Dentistry will maintain its partnership with the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, which has not only risen to the top of the field but has also maintained their well-deserved reputation for years,” stated Dr. Sadan following his appointment.
Towards a “Seismic Shift” in International OT Practice

by Tracey Samuels

(In June, Great Britain’s College of Occupational Therapists held their 33rd Annual Conference and Exhibition in Brighton, England. Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, delivered the keynote address, speaking on “Lifestyle Redesign® and Occupation.” Other Conference speakers ranged from occupational therapy practitioners and researchers from around the world to members of the British Parliament. Tracey Samuels, editor of OTnews, a publication of the British Association of Occupational Therapists and College of Occupational Therapists [BAOT/COT], wrote about Dr. Clark’s presentation in this article originally published in the August 2009 issue of OTnews, reprinted with permission.)

The research conducted in the U.S. around Lifestyle Redesign® will create a “seismic shift in occupational practice” in the future. This was one of the key messages delegates heard from Professor Florence Clark, pioneer of the Lifestyle Redesign® approach. Professor Clark, Associate Dean, Chair and Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California (USC), kicked off this year’s COT Annual Conference with an inspiring keynote address on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of Lifestyle Redesign® in producing positive health outcomes in the well elderly.

“Lifestyle Redesign® builds on nearly a century of occupational experience, helping individuals after chronic conditions or catastrophic disability,” she told around 750 delegates. “It has been demonstrated to be efficacious, cost-effective and effective in producing positive health outcomes in well elders.” Professor Clark proposed that Lifestyle Redesign® creates the identity of OTs as the “architects of life;” occupation is the building block of lifestyle, she said, and lifestyle is the key to health.

This innovative preventative occupational therapy intervention has been found – through two Well Elderly studies of over 800 well older adults in the U.S. – to be highly successful in enhancing their physical and mental health and well-being. The first USC Well Elderly study took place between 1994 and 1997, to assess whether the type of preventative occupational therapy now referred to as Lifestyle Redesign® led to improved health and well-being in older adults. A randomized clinical trial of 361 people showed significant health improvements in the OT preventive treatment group; 90 percent of the therapeutic gain was retained at 6-month follow up. A decade later, the second USC Well Elderly study, which took place between 2004 and 2008, sought to replicate the previous results on the positive effects of the Lifestyle Redesign® intervention, test effectiveness versus efficacy, and examine the mediating mechanisms responsible for its positive effects. This second study had a larger sample (460) and shorter intervention period, and encompassed more research sites with greater diversity [see related story, page 12 — Editor].

The results of the second Well Elderly study are yet to be published, but Professor Clark gave delegates an overview of the key outcomes. Significant gains were in mental health, she stressed, specifically the CES-D depression scale. The study again demonstrated the intervention’s cost effectiveness. Discussing why the Lifestyle Redesign® program works, she quoted participants from the study, who said “there was someone there to trust,” “we could be ourselves,” and “we can make mistakes, there will be no judgment.”

Professor Clark also discussed the University’s Pressure Ulcer Prevention Studies (PUPS I and II), where Lifestyle Redesign® is being studied for effectiveness in preventing pressure ulcers in people with spinal cord injury and to develop an intervention for prevention. Around 60 percent of participants had spinal injuries as a result of gunshot wounds related to gang activity, she explained. The group was followed for 2 years, and an “individual risk profile” developed to ascertain what goes into a “pressure ulcer event sequence.” This was then translated into a manual for intervention. As an intervention, Lifestyle Redesign® creates “person-environment fits to enable flourishing” and “personalized prevention plans that become habitualized,” she explained.

Proposing the analogy, “OT as architect for life,” Professor Clark concluded that Lifestyle Redesign® can be applied to all areas of occupational therapy and is furthering the American Occupational Therapy Association’s centennial vision and fortifying occupational therapy’s value in the future of health care.

For more articles from OTnews, visit http://www.baot.co.uk/Homepage/Library_and_Publications/Occupational_Therapy_News (OTnews), or http://www.baot.co.uk
North Coast Medical Donates Equipment for Lab

The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy is the recipient of an extremely generous donation of essential tools, assessments, and educational materials for the Experiential Learning Lab from North Coast Medical (NCM). These items will be used for hands-on learning by students enrolled in the adult physical rehabilitation courses in the first year of the Master’s programs. This contribution reflects an update of the Division’s teaching materials, as well as providing needed additional supplies to make it possible to run concurrent experiential learning laboratories to accommodate the class of 112 students this semester.

Among the new assessment tools donated by NCM to enable students to have an enriched educational experience are instruments to address client factors and skills, such as the O’Conner Tweezer Dexterity Test, Purdue Pegboard, Minnesota Manual Dexterity Test, the Lowenstein Occupational Therapy Cognitive Assessment, goniometers of various sizes and the Semmes-Weinstein Sensory Assessment. Also new to the lab are tools to assess readiness for intervention, including automatic blood pressure machines, stethoscopes and sphygmomanometers. Additionally, NCM has generously donated new wheelchair cushions, transfer training gait belts, armrests and desk trays for wheelchairs.

“During a recent visit with NCM’s Chief Operating Officer Jeff Applegate and his wife Lisa, we spent a fair amount of time at the ADL lab,” Mark Biehl, CEO of NCM, explained. “We noticed that some of our Hand Therapy posters were on the wall. Seeing our company’s presence in the lab, albeit insignificant, felt good. I felt so good that we immediately offered to support the lab by updating the equipment and supplies used. The response from the Division was amazing and gratifying. As our company matures, we look forward to bringing both innovation and value to the markets we serve. We strongly believe that a functional working relationship with USC is an ideal environment to accomplish this objective.”

These items are greatly appreciated by faculty and students alike, and the Division looks forward to working with NCM and providing future opportunities for pilot testing and feedback from faculty and future occupational therapy clinicians on their innovations. The Division sincerely thanks North Coast Medical and Mr. Biehl for supporting its program and students.

Jordan to Support Practice and Clinical Education

Katie Jordan, OTD, OTR/L, has rejoined The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy as Associate Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy. In addition, she has been named Associate Chair of Practice and Clinical Education for the Division, a new post recognizing the continuing rapid expansion of occupational therapy patient services on the Health Sciences Campus.

“The future plans for widespread expansion of patient services initiated by the University’s purchase of USC University Hospital means that the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy must be ready for growth,” explained Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA. “The creation of this position is a necessity as the various clinical arms in the Division broaden to meet the demand to assign and mentor more USC occupational therapy interns and residents in these services.”

Dr. Jordan earned her MA in 2003 and her OTD in 2004 from the Division. From 2006 through 2008, she served as Director of the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP). During her tenure, Dr. Jordan balanced her administrative duties with clinical practice, helping to cultivate the development of Lifestyle Redesign® programs for weight management and executive health, among other applications. She was also a fieldwork educator as well as supervisor of OTD residents. In 2008, she and her family moved to Austin, TX, where Dr. Jordan oversaw a multidisciplinary team providing physical rehabilitation at Cornerstone Long-Term Acute Care Hospital.

“Dr. Jordan is an ideal candidate to support the expansion of the Division,” Dr. Clark declared. “Under Dr. Jordan’s leadership, the OTFP flourished, witnessing a significant increase in revenue and developing a stellar reputation. She has demonstrated outstanding mentoring and teaching skills, as well as exceptional ability to handle contractual arrangements and regulatory details.”

“I’m thrilled to return to USC and the Division and for this opportunity to serve as the new Associate Chair,” Dr. Jordan affirmed. “I’m excited to combine my clinical and administrative skills to promote occupational therapy services on the USC campuses.”
Division Co-Hosts Talk by Primatologist Jane Goodall

Distinguished Adjunct Professor of the USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and Department of Anthropology, Jane Goodall spoke on USC campus about her lifelong work with chimpanzees. Dr. Goodall noted that insights into human life developed at the Division are similar to her own work, in that she studies how chimp society and individual daily lives are influenced by activity and expressed through affective behavior and the use of tools. Pictured at right (l. to r.), Celso Delgado, MA ’05, OTD student; Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA; Dr. Goodall; Miriam White, MA-II student; Stephanie Mielke, MA ’00, OTD ’06; Christine Kim and Wendy Chiu, MA-II students; and Beth Pyatak, MA ’04, Ph.D. student.

Fieldwork Update

A Level I fieldwork experience was added in the Fall, enabling Division students to go to practice sites earlier in their programs, 1 day per week for 6 weeks in September and October. Students continue to have a 1-week Level I fieldwork experience in November and a 2-week Level I fieldwork in another setting in March.

In Spring 2009, our first Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) exchange student, Ching-Wai “Wallis” Chan, was educated at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles by Division alum Jenifer Schildcrout, MA, OTR/L. We will facilitate the clinical training of the next HKPU student in the Los Angeles area in Spring 2010.

Level I fieldwork opportunities are being offered again in Ghana and Romania. Confirmed International Level II fieldwork opportunities in Summer 2010 include Romania, Hong Kong and Japan, with potential development in other countries. Collaboration with Diane Kellegher, Ph.D., OTR/L, on the TOTS Training Grant continues, with utilization of early intervention Level II part-time fieldwork opportunities for students.

The Division fieldwork team anticipates a highly productive and well-coordinated fieldwork placement year, and thanks all of our very loyal and growing community of fieldwork sites. We greatly appreciate your partnership and excellence.

Homecoming Weekend Offers Range of Division Events

The Division begins its celebration of Homecoming Weekend on November 13th with a continuing education course (3 PDUs/.3 CEUs), Lifestyle Redesign® Tools for Your Practice. Taught by Camille Dieterle, OTD, OTR/L, the 3-hour workshop will afford hands-on experience and discuss the history, current and future applications of Lifestyle Redesign®, as well as basic principles and tools that can be applied to any practice setting.

The Division will honor the Half Century Trojans, our alumni who graduated in 1959. As caretakers of the history and tradition of the USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, our Half Century Trojans are uniquely positioned to promote the Trojan Spirit and to strengthen the bonds that connect our alumni across generations. The Class of 1959 is invited to attend the Half Century Trojans’ annual luncheon on November 13th at 11:30am. The Division is pleased to announce these members of the Class of 1959 are the newest Half Century Trojans:

Virginia Barr, Judith Bauer, Felice Celikyol, Bernadine Choren, Harriet Dolbeck, Ellen Duffy, Karlene Fukima, Afton Higgs, Margaret Hoff, Roberta Kendall, Eileen Landis, Joanne MacDonald, Teresa McCoy, Fred Moore, Alberta Walker, Doris Walker, Eileen Wong, and Virginia Zapp

The Trojan football team takes on the Stanford Cardinal on Saturday, November 14th at the Coliseum. We will host a Homecoming pre-game BBQ with our colleagues in the School of Dentistry and the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, starting 3 hours prior to kick-off.

For more information on any of these activities or to make plans to attend, visit our website (http://ot.usc.edu) or contact Jackie Mardirossian at (323) 442-2811 or jmardiro@usc.edu.
Redesign of the Division’s Website Offers New Features

I

f you haven’t logged on to the new website of the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy lately, you truly would not recognize it. Found at a new “address” – http://ot.usc.edu – the website is now a one-stop destination for information on the Division’s programs, faculty, alumni, and the profession itself in a visually appealing, very user-friendly format. Among the new features you’ll find on the website and its links:

About Us includes contact information, the Division’s Mission and Vision statements, lists of our Board of Councilors and Staff, history of the Division and the Center for Occupation and Lifestyle Redesign® and videos about our students, practice areas, the Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice and Division events.

Pages for the Faculty, Academics and Admissions introduce our programs and professors to prospective students and others with an interest in our programs and activities. The Research page provides information on the Division’s grant-funded research projects, listings of recent faculty publications and titles of dissertations completed by our Ph.D. graduates. This section also provides a link to USC’s Rehabilitation Science webpage. Patient Care informs health care consumers about occupational therapy interventions and what to expect as clients of the Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice or USC University Hospital.

The Alumni page has several employment resources, including postings of openings in the Division itself, links to job boards and listings sent directly to the Division. There is also a link to click to post jobs you might have to offer to fellow alums. News and events can be found here (as well as on the home page), including PDFs of past issues of this Newsletter. You can also click on links to join the Division Alumni Association, or to see photos of your fellow alums.

Please visit the Giving page to support the Division with a donation you can easily make online.

Are YOU looking toward the future?

Further your education at USC, the Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Program ranked one of the top in the nation by U.S. News and World Report since 1998!

Expand your clinical skills and remain at the cutting edge! Consider...

The Clinical Pathways to Excellence

• Technology for Occupational Therapy
• Dysphagia Across the Lifespan
• Enhancing Motor Control for Occupation
• Ergonomics
• Hand Rehabilitation

• Lifestyle Redesign®
• School-Based Practice
• Universal Design and Environmental Modification
• Sensory Integration Theory
• Sensory Integrative Dysfunction and Practice

• Motivational Interviewing

Expand Possibilities, Locally to Globally...Consider

The Post-Professional Master of Arts Degree (MA)

Advance Health Care, Promote Wellness or Develop Advanced Practice Skills...Consider

The Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD)

Prepare as a Career Scientist in the Science of Everyday Living...Consider

The Doctor of Philosophy in Occupational Science (Ph.D.)

Admitted Ph.D. Applicants Are Awarded Full-Tuition and $28,000 Fellowships

For more information, call toll-free: 866-385-4250, e-mail: otdept@usc.edu, or visit us on the web at: http://ot.usc.edu
Acquisition of Hospitals Leads to Growth for Division

The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy is now expanding its practice arm exponentially to keep pace with growth and development in University-wide clinical services due to the recent acquisition by USC of USC University Hospital (USCUH) and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. An integrated academic medical center is now being created that affords new opportunities for hands-on experience in occupational therapy and research. As a consequence, the Division is now optimally positioned to provide occupational therapy services to health care consumers throughout the range of care, from inpatient to outpatient follow-up. It is also growing its Lifestyle Redesign®-based preventive and wellness interventions for individuals and at-risk populations. “The growth and development of occupational therapy services at USC means that our program is perfectly situated to link practice, research and education,” declared Division Associate Dean and Chair Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA.

At USCUH, for example, occupational therapy practitioners are providing services alongside other health care professionals in a wide range of specialties, including heart and lung, weight loss and digestive disorders, orthopedics and sports medicine, organ transplant, cystic fibrosis, neuroscience and neurosurgery, head and neck, oncology, breast cancer and psychiatry. In addition, USCUH occupational therapists are now developing interventions for clients with visual impairments in partnership with ophthalmologists at USC’s Doheny Eye Institute.

“There is an incredible amount of growth and development of current and new services going on in the hospitals, outpatient clinics and across the campus,” pointed out Kathy Gross, MA, OTR/L, Director of Occupational Therapy at USCUH and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. “While it’s challenging to keep up with all of the changes happening daily, it’s a really exciting time for creating innovative occupational therapy services and collaborating with physicians and other health care providers.” With this growth in demand for services, well-qualified clinicians are currently being recruited for clinical faculty and staff positions who will provide the “just right fit” for existing occupational therapy services, lead the development of new programs and mentor students, as well as interface with physicians, the full array of health professionals and community agencies. For more information on employment opportunities, contact Ms. Gross at kathleen.gross@health.usc.edu or (323) 442-8833.

The acquisitions of both hospitals has also increased clinical opportunities for student training across all of the Division’s academic degree programs. It is particularly serendipitous that the launch of our OTD Advanced Clinical Practice track coincides with the increased demand for services. In addition to coursework, each OTD student on this track must complete a 20 to 40 hour per week residency on a clinical service. OTD residents on our Advanced Clinical Practice track are spearheading areas of program development, facilitating the growth of our services and defining the unique contributions of occupational therapy. “This year, four OTD residents immersed in areas of specialty clinical practice, including oncology, neurology, low vision, and cardiac/cardio-pulmonary, are working with us,” Ms. Gross explained. “These areas have been targeted for growth of services at the hospitals. The residents are not only receiving in-depth experience in these specialties from widely skilled occupational therapy clinicians, physicians and other health care professionals, but are also leading program development. In addition, one OTD resident on the Administrative Leadership track is gaining experience in leadership and management skills by doing his residency with USC University Hospital administrators.”

“OTD students are also being provided with residency experiences in the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP). In this setting, they treat clients in existing programs and develop new applications of Lifestyle Redesign® during their year here,” noted Camille Dieterle, OTD, OTR/L, Director of the OTFP. “For example, last year Chantelle Rice created Lifestyle Redesign® for Diabetes Management as her OTD project, which has now become a permanent program. This year’s residents are developing Lifestyle Redesign® interventions for smoking cessation, chronic headaches and for breast cancer survivors, which have been developed in response to the needs of health care consumers on the Health Sciences Campus [HSC].”

MA students in the Division are now doing fieldwork affiliations at USCUH and OTFP, as well as working with mentors through independent study experiences at these facilities. For Master’s students who have an interest in Lifestyle Redesign® and in pursuing an OTD degree, Dr. Dieterle suggests that they contact her as well as Academic Coordinator of Fieldwork Education Jaynee Taguchi-Meyer to interview for a Level II fieldwork affiliation at the OTFP, enroll in OT583 (Lifestyle Redesign®) in their second year and, if possible, take an OT500 course at the OTFP to get as much exposure as possible to Lifestyle Redesign®.

Clinical opportunities have also become available for undergraduate students who serve as volunteers. In this capacity, they can observe occupational therapists in the Division’s practice settings. ■
The success of recent Life Advisor continuing education training sessions taught by Camille Dieterle, OTD, OTR/L, Director of the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP), has led to plans to offer 3-day courses in four cities as well as on the USC campus next year. “Many participants went out of their way to express to me and the other instructors how powerful the training was for them,” Dr. Dieterle noted. “Participants planned to incorporate what they learned into their practice settings and were preparing to shift their career into prevention and wellness. What struck me the most was both the participants’ hunger for knowledge and tools relevant to wellness and prevention.”

“President Obama’s announcement on the opening day of the training program that prevention and wellness are a priority for health care emphasized to us that occupational therapy is at a pivotal point in becoming a health profession that addresses this vital need in our health care system,” Dr. Dieterle added. “USC is on the forefront in training clinicians in this area and getting the profession ready.”

Additionally, OTFP is promoting what networks relevant to information about autism and autism interventions will bring us important insights into the work that families carry out to secure a timely and accurate diagnosis for their children, as well as necessary services and interventions.

Q: What caused you to become interested in this research area, and to pursue the grant?

Dr. Solomon: I came to USC with 10 years of experience in autism research and an enduring interest in narrative and meaning-making in everyday life. I think my research has always been anchored to my interest in everyday experience and meaning-making, as well as in well-being and health. But it was only when I started working on the Division’s Boundary Crossing study that followed for 13 years a cohort of 30 African American families with children with a range of chronic conditions and illnesses that I began to see the importance of carefully looking at caregivers’ and children’s experience in all the complexities of sociocultural context. I was especially drawn to understanding the dynamics of meaning-making and the construction of selves in clinical encounters, and what consequences that has for negotiations of diagnoses, services and ultimately futures. This was truly eye-opening for me. I felt infused enough with these ideas that I was compelled and ready to apply the Boundary Crossing methodology, tried-and-true after so many years, to the question of disparities in autism diagnosis for African American children.

Q: What are goals for this study?

Dr. Solomon: I hope that because of the remarkable collective expertise of the research team, we will identify communicative and structural processes and dynamics that can be changed to improve and speed up the acquisition of autism diagnosis for African American children. This is so important because early identification and intervention in autism is critical and has lifelong implications for both children and families. I hope that the study will contribute to improving timeliness and accuracy of diagnosis among African American children and will facilitate practitioner-family partnership in the diagnostic and intervention-planning encounters. This is a unique opportunity to have a direct positive impact on the lives of children and families which is consistent with the goals of occupational science.

Q: What are your feelings about being awarded this grant?

Dr. Solomon: I am thrilled and honored that this grant was funded by the NIH. I feel we are building on the autism research and expertise that has been in the Division for many years. I feel that the Division is claiming an important and unique place in autism research and I am very fortunate to be doing my work here at USC. I feel very passionate about this research direction and I know we are up to the task. I am also grateful for the mentorship and support that I received through the years from my colleagues in the Division. I also feel fortunate to be part of the University-wide efforts in autism research. I believe that USC is emerging as a powerhouse of unique, innovative ideas and directions so needed to move the field of autism research forward. I can’t wait to start this work.
Alumni and Student News

The senior class of the Division (BS ’09 students) had 100% participation in the 2009 USC Senior Class Gift Challenge issued to students throughout the University. All combined, USC seniors generously donated a total of $19,629.86 to renovate the VKC Bell Tower on the University Park Campus. For more information on the gift, visit www.uscseniorgift.com.

MA-II students from the Class of 2009 generously donated a bolster swing for the new Child Development and Sensory Integration Lab as their Class Gift to the Division. The purchase of the swing is instrumental in launching the new lab and will provide ongoing enriched hands-on educational opportunities for future generations. For more information on the class’ efforts, visit http://ot.usc.edu/giving/class_gift.

Elizabeth J. Yerxa, BS ’52, MA ’53, Ed.D., OTR Ret., FAOTA, authored Infinite Distance between the I and the It, which appeared in the July-August issue of American Journal of Occupational Therapy. Dr. Yerxa is a Professor Emerita of the Division.

Bonnie Nakasuji, BS ’74, MA ’94, OTD ’08, OTR/L, and Division Assistant Professor Jaynee Taguchi-Meyer, MA ’99, OTD ’06, OTR/L, are among the first trainers in AOTA’s Fieldwork Educator Certificate Program. The program will offer 2-day training sessions to prepare practitioners and academic fieldwork coordinators to provide best practice in fieldwork education.

Susan L. Spitzer, MA ’95, Ph.D. ’01, OTR/L, co-authored the book Activity Analysis, Creativity and Playfulness in Pediatric Occupational Therapy: Making Play Just Right. Published by Jones and Bartlett Publishers, PDF downloads of Chapter 1 are currently available at http://www.jbpub.com/catalog/9780763756062/samples/.

Claudia Dunn, MA ’05, co-authored Response Factors Surrounding Progression of Pressure Ulcers in Community-Residing Adults with Spinal Cord Injury with Division Professors Florence Clark, Mike Carlson and Jeannette Jackson. The paper was published in the May-June issue of American Journal of Occupational Therapy.

Carlin Daley, MA ’06, OTD ’07, OTR/L was a panelist at the “Women in Leadership” symposium, sponsored by the California Diversity Council and the USC Professional Development Department. She also co-presented with Division alums Camille Dieterle, MA ‘07, OTD ’08, OTR/L, Karen McNulty, MA ‘04, OTD ’08, OTR/L, and current Ph.D. candidate Beth Pyatak, MA ‘04, OTR/L, of “Making the Connection: Creating Leaders in Research, Education and Practice Through Doctoral Study in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy” at the 2009 AOTA Conference and Expo held in Houston, TX.

Current Ph.D. student Sook- Lei Liew, MA ‘08, OTR/L, attended the Summer Institute in Cognitive Neuroscience (aka “Brain Camp”), a 2-week intensive training in neuroscience held in Santa Barbara, CA.

Births


Losses from the Division Family

Richard J. “Dick” McCauley, MA ’53, passed away on September 21, 2009 (see related story, page 2). He generously supported a number of charitable and educational organizations, and funded numerous scholarships including the Richard McCauley Fellowship at the Division. Mr. McCauley thought giving was “fun,” urging people to “get out of yourself and into the world.” His donations made it possible to purchase the Center for Occupation and Lifestyle Redesign®, the interior renovation of which he co-designed and co-funded. Mr. McCauley traveled around the world four times, quipping “my favorite trip is always my next one.” He was proud to have been commencement speaker at the Division’s 2008 graduation and a member of the Board of Councilors. Mr. McCauley is survived by his life partner Fred Werling, nephews Barry (and his wife Kathy), Dominic, Nick, Simon and Jonathon Vieaux, and niece Japen Vieaux.

Micky T. Hinthorn, BS ’53, passed away on April 2, 2009. Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Hinthorn founded occupational therapy services and developed a pediatric psychiatric service at the Children’s Health Council in Palo Alto. She was active in the American Association of University Women, the Belmont Friends of the Library and the Coastside Women’s Club in Half Moon Bay, CA. A member of the Half Century Trojans who had been a student of the late Margaret Rood, Ms. Hinthorn was a frequent donor to the Division. She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Wayne Hinthorn, and her brother, Hagop Terzadian.
Alumni Have New Options for Staying Connected

The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy is offering several ways for its alumni to keep in touch with the USC Trojan family in general, and specifically with the Division. From social networking websites to opportunities to participate in activities in the community, choices for involvement are available to fit each alum’s preferences and lifestyle.

To connect with the larger USC family, there is the USC Alumni Association. The USC Alumni Association has over 100 alumni groups in major cities around the world, making it easy to stay in touch with USC. New Trojan online communities are developing through the FightOn!line feature. Alumni Association benefits include access to the ProQuest Library online research database, the USC Career Planning and Placement Center, Trojan Travel and a variety of Trojan discounts on campus. Membership is automatic upon graduation; however, you must register at http://alumni.usc.edu, where you can find more information on the Alumni Association.

The Division’s newly redesigned website (see related story, page 7) has an entire section designated for alumni, as well as information throughout the website that is of interest to alums, including announcements of upcoming events, Division news, continuing education, mentoring opportunities and job postings. Get started at the Division’s new home page – http://ot.usc.edu.

The Division is making its presence known in cyberspace. Alumni can join the Division on the popular Facebook website. Facebook provides an online community that connects people with friends and colleagues around the world to share photos and videos, send e-mail messages, promote events and explore common interests. Go to www.facebook.com and search for “USC Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Alumni.”

Many professionals also network on LinkedIn, including Division alums. Go to www.linkedin.com.

Annual Fund 2009-2010 Campaign

With YOUR help, The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy can enhance our students’ hands-on assessment and intervention skills and support the advancement of new scientific research and evidence-based practice with a

Child Development and Sensory Integration Lab

Fundraising Goal: $100,000
A gift of any amount makes a difference!

Please visit http://ot.usc.edu for a comprehensive list of items to be included in the Child Development and Sensory Integration Lab, and for links to donate online.

For more information, please call (323) 442-2149
Well Elderly Study Featured at Gerontology Conference

A symposium, “The USC Well Elderly Study II: Broad-Based Implications for Future Gerontological Research,” will present five papers representing various aspects of the second Well Elderly Study (WEII) at the 62nd Annual Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Conference in Atlanta in November. The GSA meeting is the premier gathering of gerontologists worldwide. Because the theme of the conference is “Creative Approaches to Healthy Aging,” it will provide an especially fitting setting to showcase innovative occupational science research. Dr. Sidney Stahl, a widely known and respected gerontologist at the National Institute on Aging at National Institutes of Health who served as the Project Officer for WEII, will be the panel discussant.

The first Well Elderly Study, a randomized clinical trial, demonstrated the efficacy of a comprehensive individualized lifestyle intervention in slowing down age-related declines among independently living older adults. In WEII, this intervention was tested under less controlled, more natural conditions to demonstrate the effectiveness of using it in “real world” settings. The intervention was led by occupational therapists at 21 different sites, including senior centers and senior residences throughout the greater Los Angeles area. The practitioners met with participants individually and in weekly groups over a period of 6 months, which was 3 months shorter than in the first study. In addition to having many more sites and a shorter intervention period, WEII followed each participant for 12 months instead of the 6 months in the first study.

Another goal of the WEII study was to tease apart the reasons why this activity-based lifestyle program brings about positive changes in health outcomes and mental well-being. Many testing instruments were added to investigate these hypothesized mediating mechanisms including coping strategies, social support, perceived stress and control, and the frequency and meaningfulness of activities. Stress-related hormones (specifically, cortisol, DHEA and alpha amylase) were collected from saliva samples as other potential mediating factors. The 460 study participants were tested in all of these areas every 6 months for a period of 18 or 24 months. As a consequence, WEII has provided a rich and robust data set that can be mined for future investigations of many questions regarding lifestyle intervention and healthy aging among independently living older adults.

The first of the five papers to be presented at the GSA symposium will be “Factors That Impacted Effect Size in the Well Elderly II Clinical Trial,” which will delve into issues that arise when the effectiveness of natural-setting interventions is tested. This includes identifying how the program may be more effective in some settings or for a subset of participants, such as older versus younger, or one education or ethnic group.

The second paper, “Mediating Mechanisms of the Well Elderly II Intervention Effects,” describes the results of a path analysis to discover the relationship between the lifestyle intervention and positive health outcomes. The first level analysis indicates that healthy activity was a distinct mediator, which has implications for the design of wellness and prevention programs for older adults.

The last three papers address research considerations specific to older participants who are diverse ethnically, economically, educationally and functionally. “Measurement Difficulties and Correction Procedures on Reverse Scored Items for Older Adult Respondents” examines a specific depression scale, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D). This questionnaire, like many others, poses statements for respondents from both a positive and a negative perspective. Examples include “In the last week I felt happy” and “In the last week I felt depressed.” This paper reports that some older adults were more likely than others not to adjust their responses to accommodate the shift. Mike Carlson, Ph.D., and Rand Wilcox, Ph.D., developed a correction procedure that will be useful with other measures as well when applied to older populations.

“A Biosocial Model of Health and Well-Being Derived from Well Elderly II” describes the associations among three salivary biomarkers (cortisol, DHEA and alpha amylase) with characteristics of ethnically diverse, community-dwelling older adults. Of special note is that WEII is the first large study to analyze all three salivary biomarkers in this burgeoning area of psychobiological research.

The final paper, “Recruitment and Retention of Older Ethnic Minorities,” examines particular challenges in working with study participants. Researchers have recognized that standard methods of recruiting have not been effective among older ethnic minorities and that changes are required to address health care disparities. The WEII team utilized creative, non-traditional recruitment techniques. They focused on recognizing varying day-to-day issues, values and life-course of the participants and then tailoring recruitment strategies accordingly.

WEII presenters at GSA are Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA; Stan Azen, Ph.D.; Jeanine Blanchard, MA, OTR/L; Carlson; Barbara Cherry, Ph.D.; Chih-Ping Chou, Ph.D.; Doug Granger, Ph.D.; Jeanne Jackson, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA; Deborah Mandel, MA; and Wilcox.
Chantelle Rice, MA’08, OTD’09, OTR/L (who also earned a BA at USC, in 2007), has joined the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP) as a clinical faculty member. This appointment allows her to capitalize on and continue the success achieved with her OTD project, the Lifestyle Redesign® Diabetes Program. Dr. Rice created and administered at OTFP earlier this year.

Mindful that nearly 24 million Americans are affected by diabetes and another 57 million are estimated to have prediabetes, Dr. Rice chose to address this at-risk population’s needs from an occupational therapy perspective. The intervention she developed used Lifestyle Redesign® principles. A similar program, the Diabetes Prevention Program, demonstrated that healthy lifestyle changes resulted in a 58% reduction in onset of diabetes, a more effective outcome than medication. Dr. Rice recruited study participants who were at high risk of developing diabetes or had already been diagnosed with either type-2 diabetes or prediabetes. The group, which met once weekly for 60 to 90 minutes for 9 weeks and dealt with topics such as eating healthier, becoming more physically active, better understanding diabetes, taking control of blood sugar levels and managing stress, reported outstanding results. One participant was even able to discontinue use of insulin thanks to the lifestyle modifications she learned and enacted during the program.

“I am very excited to have Dr. Rice in the Practice,” stated Camille Dieterle, OTR/L, Director of OTFP. “Her diabetes program was a huge success and will continue on as a permanent program. Our clients greatly benefited, and we have attracted the attention of more clients and more referring physicians. As a result, we now have a strong demand for the intervention here on the Health Sciences Campus.”

As an OTFP clinician, Dr. Rice will not only work with clients in the diabetes program, but also with those in the Lifestyle Redesign® Weight Management Program, which, for the 6 years since its inception, has successfully helped people to improve their health and well-being through better eating, activity and other lifestyle choices. “I am honored to have the opportunity to be a clinical faculty member in an innovative practice setting such as OTFP,” Dr. Rice affirmed. “Lifestyle Redesign® is the reason I became an occupational therapist. I look forward to following my passion, which is to help others achieve health and provide them with the tools to live well.”

Rice Joins USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice

Wendorf “Blends” Admissions, Lifestyle Redesign®

Recognizing the needs of truck drivers to improve their health while still meeting job demands, Shannon Wendorf, OTD, OTR/L, used skills she developed as a resident at the USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice (OTFP) to create an OTD project tailoring Lifestyle Redesign® for truckers. Dr. Wendorf’s innovative 7-week pilot program addressing food choices, snacking, stress reduction, sleep and exercise, resulted in a decrease in weight, fat mass and blood pressure overall for the group of participants, as well as an increase in subjective quality-of-life measurements as captured by the RAND SF-36. With this experience under her belt, Dr. Wendorf has been appointed as a clinical faculty member in the Division.

Of Dr. Wendorf’s appointment, Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, commented, “Dr. Wendorf is a terrific role model for those wishing to enter our profession. She is energetic, poised and extremely knowledgeable regarding all that is great about our profession.” In her new position, Dr. Wendorf will provide clinical services at the OTFP and assist in the Division’s admissions arm.

Dr. Wendorf earned her MA in 2008 and her OTD in 2009 from the USC Division of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science. While at USC, she served as Treasurer and then Co-Chair of the Occupational Therapy and Science Council. As a faculty member, Dr. Wendorf will also advise the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club, facilitate bi-weekly meetings and social networking events, bring occupational therapy practitioners to speak about their areas of expertise and interact with students, and arrange opportunities for students to get first-hand exposure to occupational therapy practice through “shadowing” clinicians. She will be the Division’s contact person for USC undergraduate students interested in majoring in occupational therapy. In her clinical role, Dr. Wendorf will provide services in the weight management practice using Lifestyle Redesign® interventions.

“What I love about my job is that I get to tell people every day how great occupational therapy and the Division’s programs are,” Dr. Wendorf enthused. “I love working with the students, faculty and staff at USC because I am surrounded by people who are health conscious, hard-working, driven and committed to being the best they can be.”
Guest Lecturer Paul Fontana Stresses Professionalism

While occupational therapists often work in partnership with clients, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are professionals, and, as such, should cultivate activities that advance the field. This was the message delivered to students in the USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy by Paul Fontana, OTR, FAOTA, Owner and President of the Center for Work Rehabilitation, Inc. (CWR) at The Fontana Center in Lafayette, LA. Mr. Fontana conducted professional seminars for MA and OTD students at the Center for Health Professions and at the home of Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA.

“When a student graduates and enters the occupational therapy profession, they become a professional,” Mr. Fontana asserted. “As a professional, there are certain responsibilities. One is to become a lifelong learner; another is a commitment to training the next group of therapists, and another is to join, support and become a lifelong member of state and national occupational therapy associations. It is imperative that we have a strong professional association to ensure that we have a seat at the table when policies, regulations and legislation are being discussed. Political advocacy is the responsibility of all of us.”

A registered and licensed occupational therapist with almost 30 years of experience, Mr. Fontana studied occupational therapy at LSU. Since founding the CWR, which specializes in injury prevention, rehabilitation and return-to-work programs, Mr. Fontana has also been a frequent speaker at seminars throughout the United States. In 2002, he became the only occupational therapist (or physical therapist) ever to testify before a U.S. Senate Committee, addressing the OSHA Ergonomics Rules. Mr. Fontana is also an expert in Worker’s Compensation issues. “Paul is a great inspiration,” remarked Dr. Clark. “He understands true professionalism and what it will take to make sure occupational therapists are able to meet societal needs.”

Leadership Awards Send Students to Three Conferences

The Division presented 10 students Leadership Awards of $250 each to cover conference fees and travel expenses for the 33rd Annual OTAC Conference in Sacramento. These awards were created to enable a critical mass of our students to engage in career-building activities such as networking, advocacy and attending seminars. Applicants for the award submitted a résumé and an essay of 300 words or less explaining their interest in leadership and how they hope to benefit from attending OTAC. Awarded included 1st-year MA students Lindsey Castro, Erin Corbin, Christine Kiley, Robin Munsey, Amy Oettle and Jennifer Tompkins; 2nd-year MA students Erin Askin, Michelle Farmer and Miriam Yu; and OTD Student Laura Herrell.

Students will also be eligible to compete for 10 Leadership Awards of $500 each to attend the 2009 AOTA/NBCOT National Student Conclave, to be held in Baltimore, MD in November. These funds will be awarded to cover conference fees and travel expenses. For more information on the Student Conclave, visit http://www.aota.org/ConfandEvents/Conclave.aspx.

In the Spring, the Division hopes to be able to fund a group of outstanding students to attend the Annual AOTA Conference and Expo in Orlando. This will be a once-in-a lifetime chance for them to attend the inauguration of Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, as President of AOTA. The Conference will also be an opportunity to develop leadership and advocacy skills, form professional connections and expand their knowledge. However, to accomplish this, we are inviting our alums to contribute to our “Fight On Fundraising Effort.” The goal is to raise a total of $10,000 as well as receive gifts of frequent flyer miles to support a minimum of 10 students with $1,000 each, to cover conference travel and fees. For more information on this fundraising drive, contact (323) 442-2149 or visit ot.usc.edu.
Division Professor Facilitates Guatemala Field School

The NAPA-OT Field School in Antigua, Guatemala has had its first season, running for six weeks this past summer. A project of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and its section, the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA), the field school is the first within the AAA and the first AAA project that provides a program that reaches out across disciplines. Gelya Frank, Ph.D., Professor, USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and Department of Anthropology, was instrumental in the establishment of the NAPA-OT Field School, which is open to applicants from any university program. This year’s participants were from nine American universities.

The mission of the field school is to train leaders in anthropology and occupational therapy to promote “occupational justice” through research, practice and program development. Building on the work of Elizabeth Townsend, Ann Wilcock, Gail Whiteford and other scholars, the field school defines occupational justice as “sharing concepts, theories, practice and resources to help bridge structural inequalities so that communities, families and individuals can participate in their society’s valued activities according to their desires and potential abilities.”

Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, praised the project, observing that “Dr. Frank is doing terrific work that gives USC a special luster in the community of practitioners who are invested in occupational justice and interdisciplinary study and practice.”

The field school aims to provide a setting for multidisciplinary teaching, learning, and practice between anthropologists, occupational therapists and disability studies scholars and activists. It accepts students at various phases of their career, including practice and research. Of the 14 students in the 2009 cohort, 12 were occupational therapy graduate students and 2 were anthropology students. Practice opportunities for occupational therapy students include Level II fieldwork, a non-credit international fieldwork experience and post-professional experience for recent graduates. Research opportunities include training in anthropological methods and disability approaches at the Master’s and doctoral level.

In 2009, the pediatrics component of the field school was directed by USC alumna Nancie T. Furgang, MA, OTR/L, Director of the Developmental Care Program, School of Medicine, University of New Mexico. The component was offered at the school’s NGO partner, Common Hope/Familias de Esperanza, and with infants and children with disabilities at Obras Sociales de Hermano Pedro, a charitable clinic. Other components included a gerontological program at Casa Maria in San Filipe de Jesus under Margaret A. Perkinson, Ph.D., of the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at Saint Louis University, and a disability studies program at Transitions, an independent living center, under anthropologist Devva Kasnitz, Ph.D., a respected leader in disability studies.

In addition to seminars on-site in Antigua, Guatemala, the 2009 field school offered the opportunity to participate in a specially designed online Political Practice of Occupational Therapy module. In 2010, the field school aims to partner with Guatemala anthropology colleagues to work with the relocated community of Panabaj (Santiago Atitlan) as it recovers from the devastating effects of Hurricane Stan.

The program is committed to helping mentor and build opportunities for field school faculty and students to “ladder” into future leadership positions. The field school coordinator this summer was USC graduate Keri Bronson, MA, OTR/L, currently a therapist at Pediatric Therapy Network. Next summer, Ms. Bronson will be Assistant Director of Pediatrics for the NAPA-OT Field School.

Dr. Frank has been appointed visiting professor in the Graduate Program in occupational therapy at the University of New Mexico this Fall, and in the occupational therapy and anthropology programs at the University of Cape in Spring 2010.

Let’s Keep in Touch!

Do you have news you’d like to share with fellow alums? A new position, a publication or honor, or perhaps an addition to your family? We’d like to hear from you and report your news in an upcoming issue of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy. Also be sure to let us know if you have any updates in your contact information. Please e-mail your news and/or updated contact information to jmardiro@usc.edu. You can also send your information to: USC Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, Attn: Jackie Mardirossian, 1540 Alcazar St., CHP-133, Los Angeles, CA 90089-9003. Be sure to include your name, degree and class year, home and e-mail addresses, and telephone number.

We would also like to know your interests in what you’d like to read about in an upcoming newsletter.
Mary Kay Gallagher, MA, OTR/L, and Shawn Phipps, MS, OTR/L, have joined the Board of Councilors of the USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Both of these outstanding Southern California-based occupational therapists bring to the Board a wide range of experience as clinicians, instructors and presenters on occupational therapy topics at numerous conferences.

Ms. Gallagher earned her MA from the Division in 1986, where she was named to the Dean’s Honor List. A specialist in pediatric practice, she has a SIPT certification and studied sensory integration with the late A. Jean Ayres, Ph.D. at USC. Ms. Gallagher has spoken on her research interests, including oral motor and feeding, sensory integration and learning disabilities, to USC students and at OTAC and AOTA conferences. In 1992, she founded Gallagher Pediatric Therapy, where she continues as CEO. Based in Fullerton, CA, and offering services in San Bernadino, Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Gallagher Pediatric Therapy employs a staff of over 100 people, including occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech therapists.

“I am delighted that Mary Kay has joined the Board of Councilors,” commented Florence Clark, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, Associate Dean and Chair of the Division. “She will bring to this Board not only her significant skills gained through long-term oversight of a private practice, but also her tremendous commitment to the profession.”

Mr. Phipps is a researcher and clinician who specializes in physical disability, with expertise in treatment of adults and children. Currently a Therapy Manager with California Children’s Service, he was previously an instructor and practitioner at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, working on the various services offered at that institution over the course of 10 years. Mr. Phipps has also been an Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy at California State University-Dominguez Hills, and is a published researcher. He has been recognized with numerous awards and has held many offices in professional organizations, including his current post as President of OTAC. Video of his recent presentation on professional membership is at http://ot.usc.edu/about-us/videos/events/.

“Shawn is a natural leader who is visionary and has tremendous energy,” said Dr. Clark. “As a Councilor, I am confident he will make a significant contribution in shaping the future course of the Division.”