

# USC Ocean

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2016



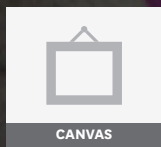
## LIVE ON. RUN ON. FIGHT ON!

USC occupational therapy alumna Annemarie Orr helps  
**Boston Marathon bombing survivors Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes**  
get back to the life they left behind.

**PGS. 20-26**







**A WORLD OF WONDER |** This spring, 12 children with autism and other special needs were treated to a trip to the museum, thanks to a new partnership between USC Chan and the Help Group. The series of field trips to the California Science Center is meant to optimize the social interactions of students, in the fourth through the sixth grades, in a museum setting while also giving them hands-on experiences to supplement what they're learning in their science classes.







## FEATURES

### A Champion for Diversity | 28-29

Assistant professor of clinical occupational therapy Karrie Kingsley MA '01, OTD '07 and a team of USC Chan faculty, students and alumni are hoping to make occupational therapy even more inclusive for the LGBT community with a new series of continuing education courses.

### Better Together | 30-33

An interdisciplinary course brings together students from occupational therapy, physical therapy, dentistry, pharmacy, medicine and social work to provide 360-degree health consultations to low-income seniors.

## DEPARTMENTS

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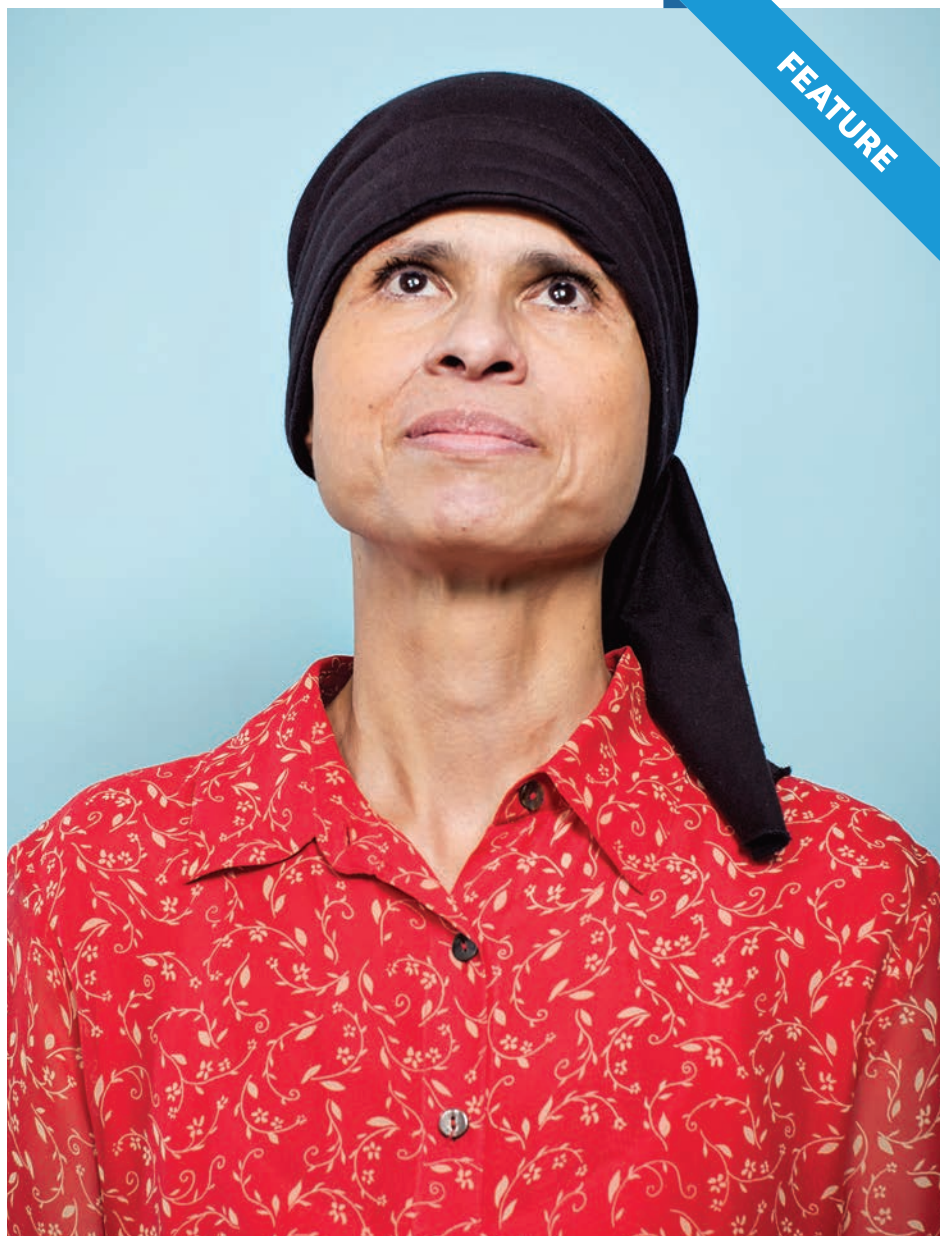
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**A Deeper Meaning | 36**



### RETURN TO ME | 18

Debuly Salinas had all but given up hope when a flyer from USC Chan's Optimal Living with Multiple Sclerosis program came in the mail. Just 11 weeks later, the 51-year-old's got a new lease on life, doing things she thought impossible only months ago.

## USC Chan MAGAZINE

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USC University of  
Southern California





Florence Clark PhD '82, OTR/L, FAOTA

## Dear Alumni and Friends,

Strength comes in many forms. In its most literal form, strength is the quantitative force produced by muscular contraction at maximal effort, a “client factor” to be considered by occupational therapists throughout intervention because of its impact upon a person’s engagement in meaningful activity.

But when used in its increasingly abstract definitions, the word strength takes on gradually intangible connotations. It can refer to one’s talents for a particular skill. It can mean the capacity to influence external ideas and actions. And it can even describe a degree of resilience or durability in the face of otherwise adverse circumstances.

Indeed, this issue of *USC Chan Magazine* portrays strength in myriad ways. Learn about USC’s Interprofessional Geriatric Curriculum, which unites students from across the health disciplines and leverages their unique strengths to provide health care consultations to older adults (pgs. 30–33). Assistant clinical professor Karrie Kingsley MA '01, OTD '07 explains how practitioners can strengthen their capacity for inclusive, client-centered care for LGBTQ individuals (pgs. 28–29). Meet Debulynn Salinas, whose everyday life has been reinvigorated thanks to our Optimal Living with Multiple Sclerosis program (pgs. 18–19). Last but not least, beginning on page 20, read about Annemarie Orr '07, MA '09, OTD '15 who led Boston Marathon bombing survivors Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes through their rehabilitation journey at Walter Reed Army Medical Center — the true personification of the slogan “Boston Strong.”

As I enter into what will be my final semester, capping 28 years as administrative leader of USC occupational science and occupational therapy, I have been reflecting upon this idea of strength, and what causes a multi-faceted academic program like ours to be as vital, as influential and as strong as it has become. I believe the answer lies among the many people, including our faculty, staff, students, alumni and colleagues across the nation and the world, that together compose the division. People are at the heart of any organization, and through the everyday pursuit of excellence, progress and innovation, year by year, we grow ever closer to our mission of improving lives near and far. Thank you for all that you do to make our Trojan Family a strong one!

Fight On!

**Florence Clark PhD '82, OTR/L, FAOTA**

Associate Dean, Chair and Mrs. T.H. Chan Professor of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy  
USC Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy  
Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC



## COVER STORY

### RACING TOWARD THE FINISH LINE

The Boston Marathon terror attack of 2013 blasted their world apart. But USC Chan alumna Annemarie Orr helped Justin Downes and Jessica Kensky (pictured at right) put their lives back together again with a little help from occupational therapy.

20-26



Patrick Downes and Jessica Kensky stroll through Harvard Square in July 2012, months before a terror attack at the Boston Marathon would change their world forever.

PHOTO BY ALLANA TARANTO/ARS MAGNA STUDIO

## CONTRIBUTORS



**LEAH STEIN DUKER**  
MA '06, PHD '13

**Title:** Research Assistant Professor

**Writer, "Cancer Treatment: Can We Do Better?," Page 8**

**Meaningful occupations:** Taking care of my new son Asher, hiking, dancing, spending time with friends and family.

**Reason why you became an occupational therapist:** In third grade, I wrote an essay about what I wanted to be when I grew up. I asked my mom, "How can I help people?" and she said OT. She was right.

**About her article:** "My hope is not only to develop great interventions to decrease stress in children and their caregivers but also to open other health care professionals' eyes to the value of OT in non-traditional areas!"



**KARRIE KINGSLEY**  
MA '01, OTD '07

**Title:** Assistant Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

**Writer, "A Champion for Diversity," Pages 28-29**

**Meaningful occupations:** Running, surfing, cooking, spending time with family and friends

**Reason why you became an occupational therapist:** My mother suggested it. She was right — as mothers usually are.

**About her article:** "As a member of the LGBT community, I feel connected to this topic. But the reason I became so involved was to support our students, who express concern about whether they are prepared to navigate their careers as LGBT clinicians (or allies) that want to deliver sensitive and responsive care."



**KIMBERLY PERRING LENINGTON**  
MA '12, OTD '13

**Title:** Assistant Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

**Writer, "A Deeper**

**Meaning," Page 36**

**Meaningful occupations:** Spending time with family, swimming at the beach

**Reason why you became an occupational therapist:** I discovered OT while caring for my grandmother, and it seemed like the perfect blend of science and art. What is better than enabling people to engage more fully in their lives?

**About her article:** Writing about OT and why it inspires me is a daunting task. I hope my article resonates with some readers. If nothing else, I hope it inspires others to push themselves and even volunteer if possible.



# FOTO NOT FINISHED

FOR MARY FOTO, PROFESSIONAL AWARDS AND ACTIONS ARE ALL IN A LIFETIME'S WORK.

BY MIKE MCNULTY '06, MA '09, OTD '10

2016 is turning into quite the year for USC Chan Board of Councilors member Mary Foto '66. Becoming a member of Half Century Trojans — USC's esteemed alumni who earned an undergraduate degree at least 50 years ago — was just the start.

During the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) annual conference, Foto was honored with two exclusive awards recognizing her many decades of outstanding contributions to the profession.

First, she earned the Presidents' Commendation in Honor of Wilma L. West, which is jointly awarded by AOTA and the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF). This rare award (bestowed a mere 16 times since its creation in 1990) honors an exceptional leader who has made a lifetime of sustained contributions to the profession. Foto joins five other Trojan luminaries to have received the Presidents' Commendation, including former faculty members Florence Cromwell MA '52, Lela Llorens, Joan C. Rogers MA '68, Carlotta Welles MA '53 and the award's namesake, Wilma L. West MA '46.

Foto also received the AOTF Meritorious Service Award, which recognizes retiring members of the AOTF board of trustees who have made sustained and exemplary contributions in support of the foundation. Foto joined AOTF's board in 2008, served in the role of secretary and concluded her most recent term in 2015.

Foto is renowned as a non-physician medical review expert, and she has served on numerous advisory and review committees at both the state and national levels. A past president of AOTA, she has authored dozens of peer-reviewed articles and serves as chief executive officer of two rehabilitation and medical review companies.



Mary Foto '66

It is this particular combination of knowledge and skill that landed Foto on a sub-group of the American Medical Association/Specialty Society Relative Value Scale Update Committee, often abbreviated as "RUC."

RUC is an expert panel that forwards recommendations to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) about the relative value of physician services under the Medicare physician fee schedule, which is the master guide from which CMS determines the dollar amounts of its payments made to providers.

The particular RUC sub-group on which Foto is serving is the Emerging CPT (Current Professional Terminology)/RUC Issues Workgroup. The goals of this nationwide interprofessional group are to identify coding and payment solutions, answer questions surrounding advanced payment models such as accountable care organizations and to develop recommendations to the RUC for new initiatives.

Katie Jordan MA '03, OTD '04, associate chair of clinical services and associate clinical professor, serves as alternate adviser to the workgroup. Alongside Foto, Jordan is diligently addressing these critical issues and advocating on behalf of the value — monetary and otherwise — of occupational therapy clinical services, which ultimately impact the bottom lines of the nation's more than 110,000 occupational therapists.

"In my opinion, Mary is a living legend," Jordan said, "and it's an incredible and humbling opportunity to work with her, learning from one of our profession's best, as we work to strategically position occupational therapy within the broader arena of reimbursement and value."

## WHO'S WHO OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMENDATIONS?

More than one-third of the recipients of the prestigious AOTA-AOTF Presidents' Commendations in Honor of Wilma L. West have been Trojans, including:

Wilma L. West MA '46 (1990)  
Carlotta Welles MA '53 (1991)  
Lela Llorens (1997)  
Florence Cromwell MA '52 (1999)  
Joan C. Rogers MA '68 (2010)  
Mary Foto '66 (2016)







PHOTO BY PHIL CHANNING

## USC Chan Launches Sensory Integration Continuing Education Certificate Program

*Beginning in August, the new initiative is latest in decades-long lineage of Trojan excellence.*

BY MIKE MCNULTY '06, MA '09, OTD '10

The USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy has launched its new Sensory Integration Continuing Education (CE) Certificate Program with inaugural courses scheduled to begin in August.

Offered via either online or in-person formats, with in-person courses to be hosted at domestic and international sites, the program will provide practicing occupational therapists advanced knowledge in the theory, assessment and intervention principles of sensory integration as inspired by the late USC faculty emeritus A. Jean Ayres '45, MA '54, PhD '61.

"USC has long been the intellectual home of sensory integration, dating back more than 50 years to the esteemed Dr. Ayres," said Florence Clark PhD '82, associate dean and chair of USC Chan. "I was one of Dr. Ayres' students, and I hope she would be proud of the ways in which USC has safeguarded her legacy and, thanks to this new CE certificate program, is shepherding it into the present day."

The 100-hour, five-course program is open to occupational therapists registered in the United States and to international therapists who have graduated from accredited occupational therapy educational programs. Participants who complete the five-course sequence will receive a USC certificate of completion as a validation of their advanced knowledge and skills, which not only enhances resumes but can indeed improve the quality of therapeutic interventions provided to patients.

The first course in the program's sequence, "Theoretical Foundations of Sensory Integration: From Theory to Identification," covers the basic neurobehavioral principles that undergird SI theory. The second course, "Sensory Integration Evaluation and Clinical Reasoning: From Identification to Intervention," is designed around accurate assessment of SI function and dysfunction in multiple pediatric populations. The

third course, "Sensory Integration Treatment: From Intervention to Participation," focuses on intervention planning and clinical reasoning using an SI frame of reference. The final two courses are chosen from among several specialized topics, including school-based practice, early intervention, autism and feeding and eating challenges, to allow participants to focus their learning toward their own clinical interests.

Ayres, who was both an occupational therapist and educational psychologist, sought to better understand the relationships between sensory information and children's neurological capacities for effectively using that sensory "input" for "output" movements and behaviors. She developed a theoretical framework, standardized tests and a clinical approach for the identification and remediation of sensory integration problems in children, and her publications spanned a 30-year period starting in the 1960s.

Beginning in 1977 with OT 610, USC's world-renowned, hands-on clinical course originally taught by Ayres herself for nearly 40 years, USC has continued to develop and refine sensory integration content and materials to meet the needs of the global community of SI scholars, clinicians and the patients whom they serve.

It should come as no surprise then that the chosen group of instructors of USC's first Sensory Integration CE Certificate Program are themselves renowned leaders in sensory integration research, education and practice, each having more than 20 years of clinical experience. The program's instructors include clinical professor Erna Blanche, research assistant professor Stefanie Bodison, professor Sharon Cermak and alumna Diane Parham MA '81.

"Learning about SI from such a renowned figure as Dr. Blanche was simply amazing," said pediatric therapist Samar Aljishi MA '14, OTD '16. "Dr. Blanche was taught by Dr. Jean Ayres herself, and sitting in her class made me feel I was part of a time-honored tradition."

The design of the program combined with the rigor of its curricular content, convenience of its distance learning option and world-class expertise of instructors aims to provide participants an unparalleled learning experience. By better serving the worldwide sensory integration community, USC both sustains its rich heritage while strengthening its bright future.

Additional information about the program including locations, dates, instructors and registration details is available at [chan.usc.edu/academics/sensory-integration/continuing-education](http://chan.usc.edu/academics/sensory-integration/continuing-education).





YOUR WORLD

# News Briefs

Lectures, grants, awards — there's always so much going on at the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. Keep your finger on the pulse with these division news briefs:

## AWARDS



### USC Chan ranked third in nation by U.S. News & World Report

This spring, the *U.S. News & World Report* released its 2017 Best Graduate Schools rankings, and the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy was among the top three programs. The top spots went to Boston University and Washington University in Saint Louis, both of which tied at No. 1 with an assessment of 4.6/5. USC Chan received an assessment of 4.5/5. In response to the news, USC Chan posted "Proud to share the podium with our colleagues and friends at BU and WashU — coast to coast, occupational therapy is helping people live life to its fullest!" on its Facebook page. The rankings are based on responses to surveys sent to administrative leaders and program directors of 164 AOTA-accredited programs.

## LEADERSHIP



### USC Chan announces speaker and topic for its 25th USC Occupational Therapy Symposium

USC Chan has announced details surrounding its 25th annual USC Occupational Science Symposium. The symposium, titled "Behavior Changes: Theories Informing Occupational Science," will feature lectures by Wendy Wood MA '88, PhD '95, a world-renowned expert on social behavior and habit formation; Dr. Judith Hibbard, author of the Patient Activation Measure for assessing patient knowledge, skill and confidence; and Dr. Edward L. Deci, who co-founded the self-determination theory of human motivation. Dr. Mary Vining Radomski will deliver the Wilma West Lecture. Radomski is a clinical scientist at Sister Kenny Research Center in Minneapolis. The symposium takes place Sept. 23 at the Radisson Midtown at USC. For more information, go to [tinyurl.com/OTSymposium](http://tinyurl.com/OTSymposium)

## AWARDS



### USC Chan professor honored by Society for Applied Anthropology

The Society for Applied Anthropology honored USC Chan professor Gelya Frank at its 76th annual meeting in Vancouver, Canada, in March 2016 for her contributions and achievements during the past decade. At the Society's 2006 conference, Frank and USC Chan Emeritus Professor Ruth Zemke brought together a panel of anthropologists, occupational therapists and scientists as well as disability scholars to examine and better understand disability. The group has met every year since then and has been responsible for establishing a field school in Guatemala and composing a textbook dealing with disability justice titled, *Occupying Disability: Critical Approaches to Community, Justice and Decolonizing Disability*.

## GRANTS



### Former post-doctoral fellow receives \$1.1M NIH grant

USC Chan volunteer faculty member Valerie Hill has received a \$1.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to research lifestyle interventions for disadvantaged and underrepresented stroke survivors. The grant, called the NIH Pathway to Independence Award, will allow Hill to develop and assess the feasibility and efficacy of life management programs for disabled populations. As a postdoc in the Training in Rehabilitation Efficacy and Effectiveness Trials, Hill earned a fellowship with the Los Angeles Stroke Prevention/Intervention Research Program. She is currently a research associate at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Downey, Calif.

## FACULTY



### Roll raised to senior member of American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine

Assistant professor Shawn Roll has been named a senior member of the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine. A senior membership is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated substantial accomplishments in the field of ultrasound. Fewer than 5 percent of the Institute's members achieve such a distinctive membership. The American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine is a multidisciplinary medical association comprised of more than 9,000 physicians, sonographers, scientists, students and other health care providers from across the nation. It is dedicated to advancing the safe and effective use of ultrasound in medicine.

## DID YOU KNOW?



### Did you know? — Division professor sits on AOTA Commission on Education

USC Chan associate professor of clinical occupational therapy Julie McLaughlin Gray MA '95 PhD '06 recently began her second term as the occupational therapy program director on AOTA's Commission on Education. As part of the commission, McLaughlin Gray has been lead author on an article about the importance of "Interprofessional Education in Occupational Therapy Curricula," which was published in the November 2015 issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. She's also currently drafting an article titled, "Importance of Primary Care in Occupational Therapy Education." The Commission on Education is a visionary group that identifies, analyzes and anticipates issues in occupational therapy. McLaughlin Gray began her appointment in 2012.





# Research Buzz

## CANCER TREATMENT: CAN WE DO BETTER?

How environmental adaptations might improve the chemotherapy infusion experience

BY LEAH STEIN DUKER MA '06, PHD '13

RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

"Cancer sucks": It's a phrase you see everywhere — on websites and social media, on bumper stickers, billboards and buttons. And it's true; cancer does suck and so does cancer treatment.

But what if we could make cancer treatment, chemotherapy infusions specifically, a little bit better? What would make the infusion experience a kinder, gentler one? Well, that's what I'm hoping to explore with my current research.

Let me start from the beginning of my research career. I've been fortunate to work with USC Chan professor Sharon Cermak for the past seven years, examining the impact of adapting the sensory environment to decrease stress in children with autism spectrum disorders when undergoing dental cleanings. Our results have been exciting and suggest that changes to the environment do indeed improve the experience of children undergoing dental care, and we are continuing to investigate how and why this intervention works.

This line of research opened my eyes to the potential of environmental adaptations to improve the physical and psychosocial well-being of patients and their families during a variety of difficult health care experiences.

My perspective was intensified when multiple people in my life were diagnosed with and treated for cancer. While sitting with them during chemotherapy infusions, I couldn't help but observe how aspects of the environment — fluorescent lights, incessant noise, uncomfortable chairs and pervasive feelings of boredom and social isolation — seemed to increase stress and anxiety. It was this confluence of my research and personal experiences that inspired me to apply my knowledge about the manipulation of environmental factors with the goal of reducing stress during chemotherapy infusions.

Currently, environmental adaptations are utilized in select cancer treatment centers in Arizona for oncology inpatients and also during rehabilitation services at New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Yet despite enthusiasm for this type of intervention and promising results with populations such as individuals with developmental disabilities, chronic pain, dementia and women in labor, you might be surprised to learn that its use for patients with cancer has not yet been scientifically examined.

My current two-phase, mixed methods study aims to determine just what physical, sensory and/or social environmental factors are predictors of stress in children undergoing outpatient chemotherapy infusions (OCI) and in their caregivers. Specifically, I will be interviewing children



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO

Leah Stein Duker MA '06, PhD '13

undergoing OCI, their caregivers and health care providers working in the infusion center to identify what environmental factors cause stress or are beneficial during infusions. I will then observe patients during their OCI and collect data on the stress experienced by the children and their caregivers to determine which environmental factors are associated with this stress.

My research is taking place at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and I am lucky to have mentors helping to guide my research both at USC (including USC Chan, the department of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the department of psychology at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering) and at CHLA (from specialties including clinical psychology, pediatric pain management, nursing and patient care services).

The results from this study, which is funded by an Institutional Career Development award from the Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute and a USC Zumberge Fund award, will provide the foundation to develop an innovative intervention to modify environmental factors during chemotherapy infusions to decrease behavioral, physiological and psychosocial stress in children with cancer and their caregivers during care.

Ultimately, this research will serve as a model for better understanding the impact of the environment during patients' difficult health care procedures, for generating appropriate stress-reducing interventions and for supporting patient-centered care that can improve short- and long-term outcomes.

I could not be more excited to be at the forefront of this research as I truly believe that environmental adaptations have the potential to positively impact the experiences of any number of people during any number of different stressful health care procedures.

In the end, cancer still sucks ... but, hopefully, treatment doesn't have to.





## MOUNTAINTOP MENTOR

One of the first kids who Carey Sokol MA '96 taught to snowboard was only able to see in about 10 percent of his field of vision.

After just three days under Sokol's tutelage, the partially sighted teen was tearing down intermediate runs and doing jumps. "He was so excited to be really engaged in an outdoor sport — something he didn't normally participate in," says Sokol, academic coordinator of fieldwork education and instructor of clinical occupational therapy at USC Chan.

The mountaintop teaching experience came as part of Sokol's volunteer work with Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, a nonprofit organization in Mammoth Lakes, Calif., that is dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with disabilities by offering year-round sports and activities.

"It's such a nice blend with my skills in occupational therapy and their belief in helping people engage in skiing and snowboarding," Sokol says of the volunteer work she started a year ago.

Sokol's been amazed at the determination she's seen on the mountainside, as children with autism or cerebral palsy and wounded veterans connect with nature, each other and the world at large.

"It's all about occupation," Sokol says, "and how that engagement can bring such meaning to people's lives."

For more information on Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, go to [disabledsportseasternsierra.org](http://disabledsportseasternsierra.org).

—John Hobbs MA '14







Finn Wittrock, clinical instructor Kimberly Morris-Eggleston and Kate Crowley

## STAR SIGHTING

This spring, actor Finn Wittrock (*Unbroken*, *American Horror Story*) participated in the Occupational Therapy Extravaganza, which was themed “Art of OT: Intersections of Creativity, Artistry and Therapy.” Wittrock, who is the son of faculty member Kate Crowley MA ’93, OTD ’07 and staff member Peter Wittrock, spoke about how he used creativity, empathy and character-centeredness as an actor — all characteristics he saw in his mother’s work as an occupational therapist. USC Chan also welcomed Debbie Wang ’07, MA ’08 who founded Limitless, a wheelchair dance troupe.

## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE 101

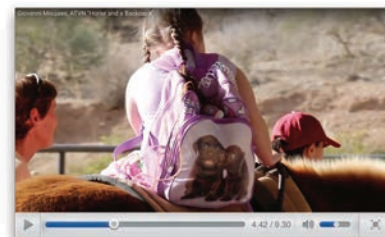
USC Chan Board of Councilors member Grace Ho ’81, MA ’82 penned an article for the February 2016 issue of *President* magazine, a prestigious Japanese business magazine akin to *Forbes* or *Fortune*. In the article, the best-selling author and motivational speaker laid out three basic rules of etiquette that people should adopt to be successful in business (and life). “First-class people are humble and willing to learn, unlearn and relearn,” Ho says. Here are the rules she espouses:



1. Respect other people’s time:  
Don’t be late for appointments.
2. Don’t interrupt when another person is talking.
3. Be flexible and attentive to his or her needs and situations.

Learn more about Ho’s work at [mentalfengshui.com](http://mentalfengshui.com)

## VIDEO ROLL



### HORSE AND A BACKPACK

Giovanni Moujaes ’17 recently produced a broadcast package for Annenberg Television News about Carousel Ranch, a Los Angeles horse ranch that provides equine therapy for children with disabilities. Watch it here: [tinyurl.com/horseandabackpack](http://tinyurl.com/horseandabackpack)



### YONSEI IN L.A.

USC Chan’s Global Initiatives recently hosted six students from Yonsei University for a 17-day international exchange program. The students chronicled their time in this video montage. Watch it here: [tinyurl.com/yonseiinla](http://tinyurl.com/yonseiinla)



### STARRING JOHN MARGETIS

USC News recently published a story on assistant professor of clinical occupational therapy John Margetis ’11, MA ’12, OTD ’13, who hasn’t allowed his “limb differences” to hold him back one bit. Watch the video here: [tinyurl.com/drsmargetis](http://tinyurl.com/drsmargetis)

# 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT:

Jenny Martínez '09, MA '10, OTD '11  
Assistant Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy

BY YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '16

Later this summer, Jenny Martínez steps into the role of chairperson of AOTA's Gerontology Special Interest Section. Martínez, who specializes in care for adults, trains occupational therapy clinicians to creatively approach and connect with their patients. Here are some other things to know about Martínez:

## **She was drawn to the profession.**

Martínez didn't set out to become an occupational therapist. The first-generation college student studied health promotion until she read an article about a day-in-the-life of an occupational therapist. "I remember feeling the description had been written just for me," she says. "I was excited to find a career that allowed me to be creative and to make a positive impact on the lives of others."

## **Her upbringing heightened her desire to provide care to underserved communities.**

Martínez grew up in a low socioeconomic status community with little to no access to health care. "I remember thinking this was the norm growing up," Martínez says. Eventually she learned about issues of health equity, social justice and occupational imbalance that affected communities like her own. "This awareness helped focus my efforts on effecting positive change for diverse communities," she says.

## **Leadership and involvement are among her interests.**

Practice focused on older adults has made her an ideal leader in AOTA's Gerontology Special Interest Section. "Serving at a national level to support and advance care for older adults is an exciting and natural extension of my interests," she says. Presently, Martínez works with assistant professor Natalie Leland on improving quality of post-acute care and research assistant professor Stacey Schepens Niemiec on lifestyle interventions for older Latino adults.

## **She believes in personalized care for all.**

Martínez's career is centered around improving the quality of care and overall health of adults from marginalized groups. As assistant clinical professor, she helps prepare clinicians to deliver culturally sensitive care. "My intention is to help our profession meet the unique challenges faced by people experiencing the negative effects of disparities and inequities," she says. "It's a privilege to be able to share occupational therapy, a powerful healing and transformative agent, with others."

## **She is a budding seamstress.**

Martínez stresses the importance of creative outlets. For her, they are drawing and sewing. "My proudest sartorial accomplishment has been making my own wedding dress, with lots of help of course," she says. She also enjoys strength training and backpacking.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO





**UP  
FRONT**

# THE NEXT BIG THING

LAST YEAR, USC CHAN BOARD OF COUNCILORS MEMBER SEMIRA DARIUSHNIA AND HER HUSBAND MARK MOSHAYEDI PLEDGED \$100,000 TO SPONSOR AN ANNUAL STUDENT COMPETITION THAT PROMOTES INNOVATION IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS. MEET THE THREE FINALISTS FROM THE FIRST-EVER MOSHAYEDI INNOVATION AWARDS. THE WINNER, DANIEL LUO '16, MA '17 RECEIVED A **\$5,000 SCHOLARSHIP.**

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO



**MIRI LEE MA '15, OTD '16**  
**OURTOPIA**

**Elevator Pitch:** Ourtopia is an on-demand mobile app that allows users to find and connect with each other — based on mutual interest, passion and occupation — to share meaningful experiences.

**How will this help someone lead a better life?** Individuals will be able to find others and connect, based on their current location, to share and exchange experiences that are meaningful to them. By doing so, I hope to create a world where people feel a sense of purpose, belonging and connectedness.

**What have you learned about yourself through this competition?** I learned that I thrive most when I am connected to people who believe in me. Although I stood up at the podium alone while delivering my presentation, I felt as though I had the entire division standing alongside me. This project couldn't have been possible without the faculty, staff and my peers who supported me along the way.



**ARIEL MAZEL-GEE MA '16**  
**HABITKICK**

**Elevator Pitch:** HabitKick is a mobile app for smoking cessation that helps users replace cravings with alternate health-promoting activities. It's customizable, cutting-edge and grounded in occupational science.

**How will this help someone lead a better life?** HabitKick allows users to cultivate meaning by maintaining their ability to fully engage in activities that might otherwise have been hindered by debilitating health concerns. The app also prompts smokers to identify and engage in personally meaningful activities in lieu of smoking, allowing them to take control of their own lifestyle choices in tangible, personalizable and actionable ways.

**What have you learned about yourself through this competition?** Probably the coolest thing I learned is that I really love the process of ideating and designing things. Seeing my idea come together in the way that it did was just about the best learning experience I could have asked for!



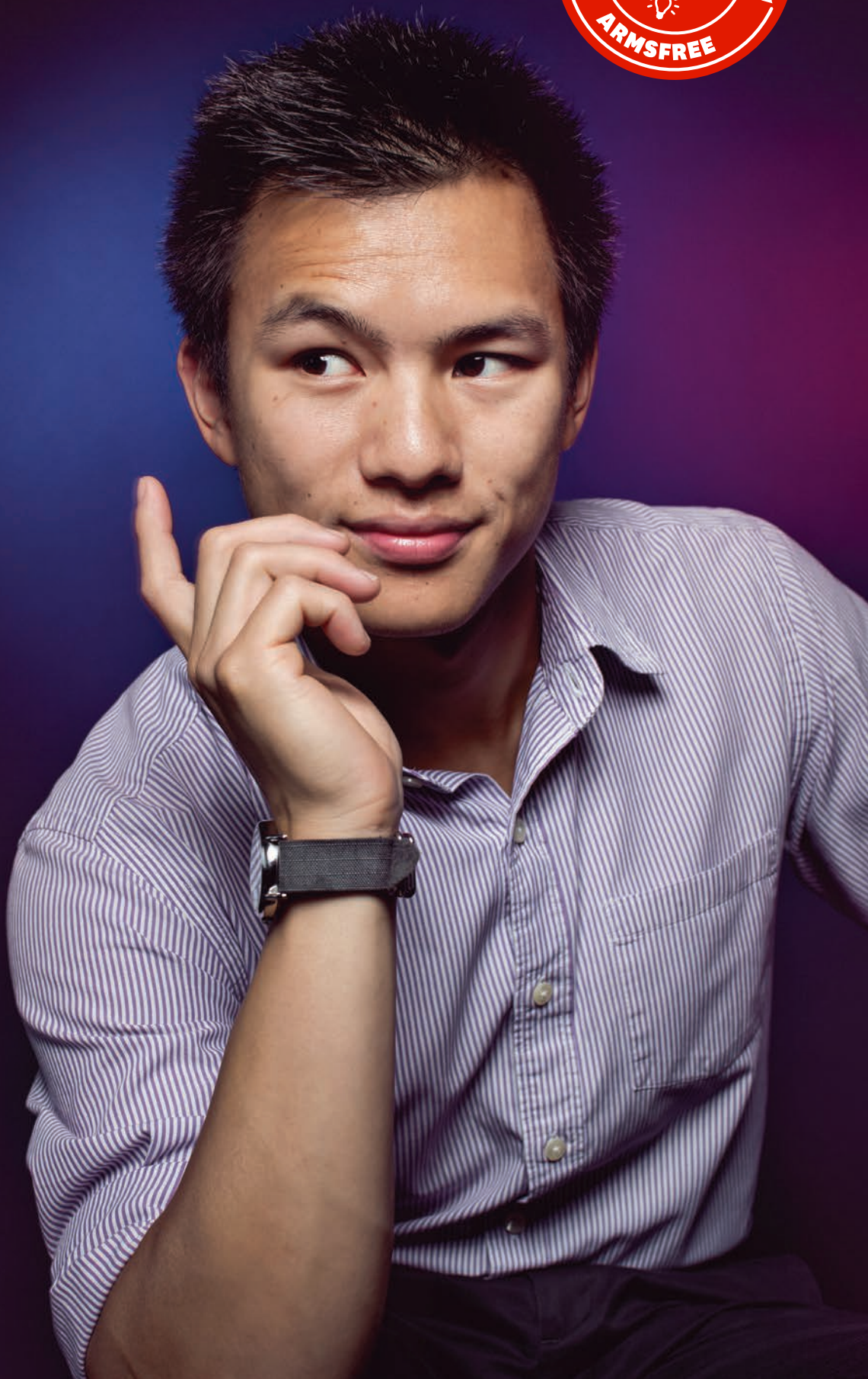


**DANIEL LUO '16, MA '17**  
**ARMSFREE WEARABLE STROKE**  
**THERAPY**

**Elevator Pitch:** ArmsFree is a revolutionary, wearable stroke therapy sleeve that leverages trace muscle contractions remaining in the arm after stroke to help clients regain independence in their lives.

**How will this help someone lead a more meaningful life?** Users will be able to take ArmsFree home with them, receiving constant, functional therapy that makes engagement in meaningful activity easier and more enjoyable. As a result, occupational therapists will be able to spend less time remediating biomechanical symptoms of stroke. Hours of therapy spent reducing spasticity and increasing range of motion can be instead dedicated toward helping individuals return to driving, dancing, sports and beyond.

**What have you learned about yourself through this competition?** Without the competition, I don't think I would have had the extra push to actually develop ArmsFree and share it with our faculty. Creating ArmsFree has really been an incredibly educational experience for me, and I'm incredibly thankful to the division for having the forward vision to hold this competition and the great ideas that come with it.





## HALL OF HONOR

# MATCH GAME



A. Jean Ayres '45, MA '54, PhD '61



Mary Reilly '51



Wilma L. West MA '46



Elizabeth Yerxa '52, MA '53



Janice Burke MA '75

Test your knowledge of USC's occupational therapy legends. Match the portrait hanging in USC Chan's Hall of Honor with its effigy's contribution to the field.

- 1 First person in U.S. to receive master's degree in occupational therapy. Helped guide the profession toward evidence-based practice and saw preventive care value in occupational therapy.
- 2 Developed "sensory integration theory," which helped explain relationship between deficits in interpreting body and environment sensations with academic or motor learning, still widely studied today.
- 3 "Godmother" of the philosophical base of occupational therapy; Famously said, "Man, through the use of his hands, as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health."
- 4 Current USC Distinguished Professor Emeritus who helped set the philosophical and value base of occupational therapy. She also initiated and advocated for occupational science research to advance the profession.
- 5 Latest addition to the Hall of Honor who is recognized as one of the founders of the "Model of Human Occupation," the most widely used theory in occupational therapy research and practice.

Answer Key:  
1C, 2A, 3B, 4D, 5E



## AMERIC@N FIELD TRIP:

This spring, USC Chan's Global Initiatives team welcomed 10 students from Coventry University for an international exchange trip. During their travels, the British students toured USC Chan, Cedars-Sinai's occupational therapy services and the Pediatric Therapy Network and attended several USC occupational therapy courses. The trip was chronicled on Twitter:

NICOLA BRADLEY

**SO GRATEFUL TO USC STUDENTS TO HAVE GIVEN UP SO MUCH TIME TO MAKE US FEEL INCREDIBLY WELCOME. INTERESTING CULTURAL EXPERIENCE. #COVOTTOUSC**

AISHA OGUNDARE

**SO AMAZING TO SEE CEDARS SINAI OT SERVICES, DEFO INSPIRED SOME POSITIVE IDEAS FOR CHANGE TO BRING BACK TO THE UK. #COVOTTOUSC**

CARA GRANT

**FEELING INSPIRED AFTER VISITING THE NEUROPLASTICITY LAB @ USCCHANOSOT — AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY IN OT. #COVOTTOUSC**

BETH EVANS

**AMAZING TALK ABOUT LIFESTYLE REDESIGN TODAY, LOTS LEARNED AND TO THINK ABOUT, AMAZING PROGRAM.**

# GenNext

Meet the occupational scientists and occupational therapists taking the profession boldly forward.

**LUCÍA FLORÍNDEZ '08,  
MCM '11, PHD '18**

**Age:** 30

**Hometown:**

Lima, Peru, and Los Angeles, Calif.

**Educational background:**

Bachelor's degree in international relations; master's degree in communication management

**Meaningful occupations:**

Zumba, socializing, watching and playing soccer, traveling and spending time with my dogs, Cesar, Gracie, Mel and Skippy

**What would you like to do with your degree?**

I'm very interested in pursuing research around minority populations. I want to continue pursuing research that improves the lives and occupations of these populations and that helps mitigate health disparities. I'm also passionate about making sure minorities get culturally tailored interventions and communications so that cultural divides between patient and provider can be bridged.

**What's your dissertation about?**

My PhD immersion is in the sensory adapted dental environment, and my adviser is Dr. Sharon Cermak whose specialty is autism. So I'm investigating the in-home, oral care-related practices of 16 Latino families — eight with a typically developing child, eight with a child with autism — to see how the presence of chronic disorders like autism impacts their daily in-home, oral health routines.

**You were recently awarded a grant to conduct this study. What can you tell us about it?**

It's called the Center for Health Equity in the Americas Ambassador Brigade Fellowship. The goal of the fellowship is to promote research and researchers who are trying to address health inequities in underserved populations.







# RETURN TO ME

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at 24, Debulyn Salinas had all but given up on life. Then one day, a mailer advertising USC's Optimal Living with MS program landed on her doorstep.

BY BREANNE GRADY MCM '10

**D**ebulyn was at her breaking point when she got into the USC Optimal Living with MS program in late 2015.

Her journey through the 11-week program this spring has restored her faith in people and most importantly, in herself.

In a corner of a spacious classroom, 51-year-old Salinas is quietly organizing her personal items for the day's photo shoot. She greets everyone in the room with a warm smile and tight hug as introductions are made.

She has even prepared homemade hummus, her favorite food, for all in the room. One senses almost instantly that she is a very special person — someone who doesn't take a single smile, hug or hummus-sharing experience for granted.

Salinas was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when she was only 24 years old.

"There went the high heels and pencil skirts," she quips with a laugh, almost 30 years later.

Salinas hasn't come by this sense of humor

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**"THE THERAPISTS CARED  
AND BELIEVED IN ME ... THEY  
ALSO HAD FAITH  
THAT THINGS WERE GOING  
TO GET BETTER."  
—DEBULYN SALINAS**

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easily. Over the past five years especially, she has dealt with increasing depression and less than ideal medical treatment — factors creating a profound despair that caused her to isolate herself from friends and family.

"I needed a purpose," she explains, her voice cracking a bit. "I thought my life was over."

As fate would have it, she received a mailer for the USC Optimal Living with MS program last November. She mentions that she now keeps this mailer in her Bible and asserts "it's going to stay there."

Co-sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, USC Chan and the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, the program works with MS patients from all walks of life who are recruited by the MS Society. Salinas was selected for the spring 2016 class.

Assistant professor of clinical occupational therapy Ashley Uyeshiro Simon '08, MA '10, OTD '11 explains that a main tenet of the program is Lifestyle Redesign, a treatment technique focused on helping patients improve daily habits and routines to improve their overall health outcomes.

"The most beautiful part of this model is that the participant is not just a passive recipient of therapy," Uyeshiro Simon says. "We emphasize their role as a teacher and encourage them to teach the students what it is like to live with MS on a daily basis, the types of physical, emotional and occupational problems that they encounter."

Throughout the program, class members are paired with current USC Chan students who then work together on a variety of topics such as occupational roles and engagement, stress management and dealing with social isolation, home evaluations and safety/fall risk prevention; and self-advocacy and assertiveness.

Salinas was paired with Christina Huynh MA '16, OTD '17 for a group module focused on energy conservation and fatigue management in which participants were taught how to recognize their own signs of fatigue and utilize different skills to conserve energy. All class modules encourage participants to analyze their own habits and routines, then implement positive changes from an arsenal of techniques at their disposal.

"This program is so amazing because it is so holistic," Huynh says. "The participants receive OT and PT services and learn about other topics like Tai Chi, expressive journaling and nutrition."

Uyeshiro Simon notes that while Salinas started the program very impacted by her MS,

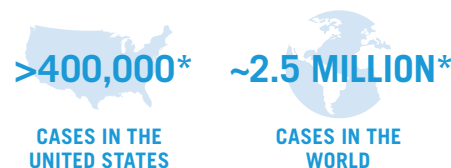
she has improved greatly because she made the decision to dive into the program completely.

"Because of this decision, every week she was committed to making small changes to her daily routines, habits and functional engagement, and by the end of the program, she was moving better, thinking more clearly and had become a much better advocate and agent for her own health," Uyeshiro Simon says. "She reconnected with her family, rediscovered her faith, ate solid foods for the first time in years and found herself being a participant in her own life."

Since participating this spring, Salinas has a

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## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS BY THE NUMBERS



**IN THE UNITED STATES,  
ABOUT 200 NEW CASES ARE  
DIAGNOSED EACH WEEK.**

Source: Multiple Sclerosis Foundation  
\*Estimated

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newfound hope about her life.

"The therapists cared and believed in me, but they also had faith that things were going to get better," Salinas shares, "That overrode all the negativity I had been carrying around for the last five years."

Uyeshiro Simon stresses that Salinas never hesitated to express her gratitude to the many faculty members involved. This gratitude seems to be shared by all in the program — patients, students and faculty alike.

"I taught Debulyn skills such as how to be safer in her home, to conserve energy and to manage stress, but what she taught me was bigger than that," Huynh says. "She really showed me the importance of human connection, compassion and staying positive. And for that I am so thankful."

Salinas will continue to project her gratitude in the future. During the photo shoot, it's visible on her face.

"Each morning, I wake up, and even if I have nowhere to go, I still get dressed as if I'm going somewhere," she says. "I have a large collection of pajamas; now, I'm not using them as much. I want to experience life, I want to be able to say, 'I'm in!'"





# RACING TOWARD THE FINISH LINE

USC CHAN ALUMNA ANNEMARIE ORR '07, MA '09, OTD '15  
USES THE POWER OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TO HELP  
BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING SURVIVORS JESSICA KENSKY  
AND PATRICK DOWNES GET BACK TO THE LIFE THEY KNEW.

BY JAMIE WETHERBE MA '04



**DID YOU KNOW?** Blue and yellow are the official colors of the Boston Athletic Association, organizer of the Boston Marathon. In the aftermath of the 2013 terror attack, the colors have taken on added dimension as a way to show solidarity and fortitude in the face of terrorism.



**DOWNES AND KENSKY WITH THEIR  
NAPPING SERVICE DOG, "RESCUE."**

PHOTO COURTESY OF WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER



**H**ow do you decide to amputate your leg? That was the impossible question Jessica Kensky faced two years ago at Christmas.

Kensky and Patrick Downes, her husband of six months, both lost their left legs below the knee in the Boston Marathon bombing. The blast, one of two successive detonations at the race's finish line, also tore off the heel pad and Achilles tendon on Kensky's right leg.

For about a year following the 2013 terror attack, Kensky saw countless doctors and underwent several surgeries to repair her right limb.

"My leg was so badly damaged and I was in so much pain, I felt like it was gone in a lot of ways — at least the healthy leg I knew," says Kensky, a registered nurse and avid runner who, along with Downes, had competed in the Boston Marathon prior to 2013. "How does one begin to decide if they're going to keep a limb or not? It's such a bizarre, unimaginable situation to be in."

In 2014, Kensky and Downes gained special status to become patients at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, a rare designation that requires Secretary of Defense approval.

Unlike the civilian world, the facility features state-of-the-art technology and specialists who treat military blast amputees in one centralized location and fosters the kind of camaraderie that only comes from sharing a space with individuals recovering from similar injuries.

"Jess wanted to return to the life she had before," says Annemarie Orr '07, MA '09, OTD '15, Kensky's occupational therapist at Walter Reed Bethesda. "She wanted to take the [subway] to the grocery store, cook a meal for her husband and entertain, go back to work as a nurse and walk her dog. She would say, 'I'm living my life in 20-minute increments.' She could only tolerate standing for that long."

## LETTING GO

Following several surgeries at Walter Reed Bethesda during which a medical team led by orthopaedic surgeons attempted to salvage her leg, Kensky still suffered from debilitating pain.

As Kensky and Downes left the base in 2014 to spend the holidays at home in Boston, Orr gave Kensky a binder, complete with a cartoon of the couple and their dog on the cover that said, "Track Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

The binder was meant to help Kensky track her daily activity — how long it took to accomplish tasks, her pain level and her perception of her own functioning.

"It was a good way for her to very plainly and clearly see what her life was like and whether or not she needed to amputate and move forward with that decision," Orr says.

"What she did was so personalized; she knew I was a nurse, and I wanted scientific evidence that said I should not keep my leg," Kensky adds. "After charting for a couple of days, I stared at this binder. In my gut, I knew I couldn't live with this leg."

"I had never made a decision like this before — I can't compare it to anything else," Kensky continues. "Even the huge decision of who you're going to marry is something that you can technically undo; this is cutting off your limb. Annemarie helped me really come to my own conclusion very naturally and very confidently; it was such an incredible gift. I don't know even now if she realizes how important that was to me."

## SAYING GOODBYE

Kensky scheduled her surgery at Walter Reed Bethesda for January 2015. Her first amputation happened without warning or consent. But now Kensky found herself in another unimaginable situation: How do you say goodbye to your right leg?

"All these interesting thoughts kept coming," Kensky says. "I wasn't

going to have any feet or ankles; I wasn't going to have any toes."

"Jess came in [the day before her surgery] and said, 'What do I do? Do I have people sign it?' We went through all these different things that didn't seem right," Orr says.

Orr remembered a patient with a double amputation she once treated whose grandmother had porcelain plates of his footprints as a child hanging on her wall. "For him it was difficult but really neat to go back to his grandmother's house and see that she still had his footprints because that was all he had left of both of his feet," she says.

Orr designed a therapeutic activity in which Downes and Kensky — along with their service dog, Rescue — painted their right feet in blue and yellow, colors that have come to signify solidarity in the bombing aftermath, and stamped their footprints on a page.

"We got really into it. We were laughing and making jokes like, 'this art will be worth twice as much tomorrow,'" Kensky says. "So much of it is how excellent Annemarie is at reading her patients. That's not a therapeutic exercise for everyone, but for me, it really was."

Following her surgery, Kensky continued her occupational therapy with Orr, this time with bilateral below-knee amputations.

At Walter Reed Bethesda, Orr and two other staff occupational thera-

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**"ANNEMARIE NEVER SAID 'I DON'T KNOW' OR 'YOU CAN'T DO THAT.' IT WAS ALWAYS, 'SHOW ME THE MOUNTAIN, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW WE'RE GOING TO CLIMB IT.'"**

**—JESSICA KENSKY**

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pists in the medical center's amputation service cover everything from basic self-care, like dressing and bathing, to returning to community activities and reintegration.

"For Jess, it was a lot of how to get around in her wheelchair, how to go out and grocery shop, how to bathe her dog safely and take him out for walks," Orr explains. "And getting her back into the community socially so she was confident with her amputations, mentally and physically, so she's independent with and without her prosthetics."

While Orr had worked with many service members and their families at Walter Reed Bethesda, Kensky and Downes posed a unique challenge.

"Jess' goals are different than a lot of the service members," Orr says. "We were also working with a husband-and-wife team, which was a new experience for a lot of us."

Though he was by Kensky's side throughout her rehab journey, Downes was further along in his own recovery process.

"I'm an amputee in a very different way," says Downes, who recently ran the 2016 Boston Marathon, finishing in under six hours. "I've been learning to see the world through my new set of eyes, and I also need to be able to look at it through Jess' eyes, and Annemarie made that happen."

"She helped to get a real sense of where Jess was physically, and the implications for that psychologically, and how I could do little and subtle things throughout our day to assist her in ways that wouldn't really highlight her disability but would make the world feel more accessible."

## COMMON GROUND

Orr and Kensky instantly had a connection that went beyond the clinic: both are runners in their early 30s, health care providers and California natives.





**DOWNES RAN THE 2016 BOSTON MARATHON ON A BLADE, FINISHING IN JUST UNDER SIX HOURS.**









# MILE MARKERS

It's been more than three years since their lives were forever changed by a terrorist attack. Here are some of the milestones from Downes' and Kensky's journey:

## APRIL 15, 2013

Kensky and Downes both lose their left legs below the knee in the Boston Marathon bombing.

## AUG. 22, 2014

Kensky and Downes become patients at Walter Reed Bethesda, where they meet Orr.

## DECEMBER 2014

With the help of Orr's charting task — measuring how long it takes to accomplish daily activities, her pain level and her perception of functioning, Kensky decides to amputate her right leg.

## JAN. 20, 2015

Orr designs a therapeutic activity to help Kensky say goodbye to her right leg, in which Kensky makes colorful, commemorative footprint artwork.

## JAN. 21, 2015

Kensky undergoes voluntary amputation of right leg, which had not healed properly since the terror attack.

## MARCH 9, 2015

Kensky testifies in Boston Bombing trial.

## APRIL 18, 2016

Downes completes the Boston Marathon in just under six hours on a carbon-fiber, blade-shaped prosthesis.

## MAY 17, 2016

Kensky has the 10th surgery after her voluntary amputation, this time to reattach a muscle segment on her right leg.



## SEE IT NOW

Watch Downes and Kensky deliver the keynote address at the 2016 American Occupational Therapy Association's annual conference: [tinyurl.com/racingtowardthefinishline](http://tinyurl.com/racingtowardthefinishline)



"If I'd met her any other way, we would've gravitated toward each other," Kensky says.

Orr also saw reflections of herself in Kensky. "You can't help but see what she would want her goals to be and how similar they are to what mine would be," Orr says.

Those goals can fluctuate during the many months of rehabilitation. After her second amputation, Kensky refused to shop.

"I had gained a lot of weight; I was depressed and going to a store was overwhelming because people would stare at me," she says. "I didn't know what to wear now that I had these two giant prosthetics."

Orr and Kensky's physical therapist took her — and Downes' credit card — on a surprise shopping spree. "There was a lot of OT involved, too," Kensky says. "Skinny jeans are in style, so Annmarie taught me how to dress my prosthetics by pushing them through the jeans then putting them on my legs."

But, more than keeping up with the latest fashion, Kensky was learning to feel like herself again.

"She knew as a young woman that it was really important for me to get a pair of jeans, learn how to shoe shop without crying," Kensky says of Orr. "The clinical and logistical parts overlapped, but it was wrapped up in my psyche, too."

Along with Downes, the pair game-planned for Kensky to attend a rustic farm wedding as a bridesmaid, including finding pictures of the venue to strategize what Kensky would need to navigate stairs or use the bathroom.

"I had four different assisted devices, including a modified scooter, to get through this wedding," Kensky says. "I could sit ladylike and when I went to give my speech, I was pushed to the front and I had a basket with my speech, my bouquet and my glass of wine. That wasn't the original intent of that device, but that helped me meet my goals and my needs at that event."

Downes adds that more than just moving through the event, Orr helped Kensky maintain her femininity.

"You can scoot up stairs but it's not the easiest or most appropriate thing to do in a bridesmaid's dress," he says. "It's about how to maintain your dignity and get where you need to go and participate in the activities you want to participate in."

Adds Kensky, "OT is so unique because what's important to me becomes her goals too. It always felt like she was on my team."

## A LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY

Three years after the blast, Kensky is still on the road to recovery.

"I thought I was going to make this horrible decision to amputate my leg, and after that, it was going to be smooth sailing," she says. "And it hasn't been that way at all."

Since her voluntary amputation, she's undergone another 10 surgeries, most recently to reattach a segment of muscle in her right leg.

"I was in so many different phases: a new amputee on the left, limb salvage on the right, then bilateral amputee, then mobile bilateral amputee," Kensky says. "I wouldn't know how to get through all these stages without Annmarie at my side."

While Kensky is still a patient at Walter Reed Bethesda, she's finished her occupational therapy. Still, she says, "I feel like I can think like an OT; I can hear Annmarie's voice in my head."

And that guidance continues to help her face physical and psychological challenges with confidence and purpose.

"I have a whole life ahead of me and my legs aren't growing back," she says. "Annmarie never said, 'I don't know' or 'You can't do that.' It's always, show me the mountain, and I'll tell you how we're going to climb it. It's an amazing profession. I think had I not been a nurse, I would have been really happy being an OT."

## DOGGIE INSTAGRAM

Kensky and Downes have chronicled their journey on Instagram through the eyes of their service dog, Rescue. Follow @rescueboston on Instagram to see some of their (err ... Rescue's) best posts:



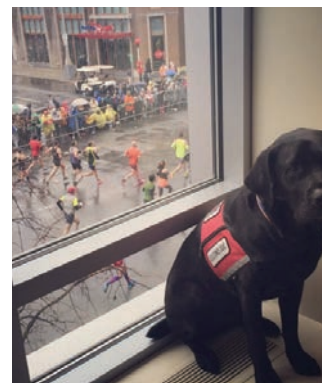
**@RESCUEBOSTON:** Taking care of my Momma pre-op. Hoping that today is her last in a long line of surgeries. But either way she's got what it takes to keep marching on. #bostonstrong #wickedstrong #doyourjob



**@RESCUEBOSTON:** I will always be by my mother's side <3 #surgery #wickedstrong #servicedog



**@RESCUEBOSTON:** Freedom Tower with the Achilles Freedom Team. 9/11 - Never forget. #usa #nyc @4WTC



**@RESCUEBOSTON:** Waiting for my dad to come down the home stretch at the #bostonmarathon! #2yearsstronger #rolldeep



**@RESCUEBOSTON:** Supporting my mom while she gets up on two prosthetics for the first time! #supermom #bostonstrong



**@RESCUEBOSTON:** PLAY BALL! Go SOX! October here we come. Photo credit @ars\_magna



## CELEBRATING A LEGEND

After 28 years, Dr. Florence Clark is stepping down as USC Chan's associate dean to focus on scholarship and division initiatives.



Dr. Clark and USC Distinguished Professor Emeritus and primatologist Jane Goodall



Dr. Clark and USC President C. L. Max Nikias

“You have been and will continue to be a bright light and inspiration to me and so many others. Thanks for your leadership!”

—Shannon Lozano MA '08, OTD '09

“She was quite influential in shaping the way I think and how I practice OT even to this day.”

—Beverly Bostwick Mulherin MA '80

“It was obvious from the start that [Clark's] passion was going to take her far! What I didn't realize as a young person was how far she would take the entire field of occupational science and occupational therapy!”

—Jan Pervier-Muff '76

Have a poignant memory, story or photograph of Dr. Florence Clark?

Send it to [aboutclark@chan.usc.edu](mailto:aboutclark@chan.usc.edu) and we will share it with Dr. Clark and the USC Trojan Family!





## **A CHAMPION FOR DIVERSITY**

**A CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSE AIMS TO TRAIN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS TO BETTER PROVIDE CARE TO LGBTQIA INDIVIDUALS.**

**BY KARRIE KINGSLEY MA '01, OTD '07**

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GANDOLFO

**W**ith four years of experience as a clinical occupational therapist, Tanya\* felt confident walking into almost any situation at her inpatient rehabilitation facility. But this day was different. Tanya would be evaluating a new patient, Jennifer, a transgender female who was unable to undergo gender-affirming surgery due to extenuating medical complications.

"It wasn't her transgender identity that was confusing for me — I consider myself supportive of LGBT people," Tanya said. "But nothing in my training prepared me for Jennifer's unique circumstances."

Jennifer wanted nothing more than to be discharged home and was referred to occupational therapy for self-care education, including learning how to place her own urinary catheter.

"The nurses told me Jennifer was being difficult and refusing to address this important part of her care," Tanya continued.

Through an open, though somewhat uncomfortable discussion, Tanya learned that Jennifer absolutely refused to touch her own penis, an essential step of the self-catheterization process. Upon this discovery, Tanya realized she had much more to learn to provide effective, client-centered care to Jennifer.

"Jennifer is a woman, and as such, the notion of acknowledging her penis as part of her anatomy was unthinkable, a betrayal to the core of her gender identity," explained USC Chan student Joe Ungco MA '16.

At April's American Occupational Therapy Association conference in Chicago, I joined Ungco and a team of USC Chan students and alumni to lead conversations, which included Jennifer's and Tanya's scenario, during our continuing education course "Promoting LGBT Inclusivity in Occupational Therapy." Joining us on the podium were Bryant Edwards MA '05, OTD '06, Elizabeth Goo MA '15 and Michael Gragnani MA '14, OTD '16.

We designed our presentation to introduce and define LGBTQIA — the acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual — identities, to describe health care disparities impacting this community and to identify easy-to-implement strategies that can enhance inclusive and affirming clinical encounters in any practice setting.

The experiences of attendees ranged widely — from members of the LGBT community to informed allies to people with little previous experience interacting with LGBT people — and fostered a lively open forum of shared reflections on clinical situations, including personal stories from within the profession, some of which unfortunately depicted a perception of marginalization.

\*Tanya's name has been changed for this article.

For example, Ungco shared a story on behalf of a transgender male occupational therapy student at another institution.

"In class, they had an ethical dilemma assignment, and the prompt was simply, 'You are working with a transgender woman and you feel uncomfortable; what do you do?,'" Ungco recalled. "My friend was appalled that the entirety of this ethical scenario was framed around discomfort with trans people and, more so, that his classmates responded negatively. Yet the worst part of this story was that the professor seemed to support the students' responses."

From my perception, such a classroom scenario was not perceived to be safe. As a faculty member, I especially have an obligation to create and protect safe learning environments for all students, but it also speaks more broadly to the climate in our profession.

Scarce literature exists within occupational therapy and occupational science publications specific to the needs of LGBT clients, the experiences of LGBT clinicians and best practices for promoting LGBT inclusivity. According to a 2008 survey of 373 Midwestern occupational therapists published in the *Journal of Allied Health*, 64 percent of respondents reported receiving no education regarding LGBT issues during their schooling.

LGBT individuals often avoid routine health care as a direct result of negative experiences, oppression and discrimination by providers and the greater health care system. This disparity between occupational therapy's principle of client-centered practice and inadequate training on LGBT-specific health needs inspired our USC Chan team to develop this continuing education course to better serve this population.

With an overwhelmingly positive response from attendees, we look to continue providing education and training on occupational therapy's role with LGBT individuals and hope to put USC at the forefront of this important clinical area.

The more time I spend researching and engaging with others regarding LGBT issues and the occupational therapy profession, the more I am convinced of its importance. My colleagues and I have realized our responsibility and pledged our commitment to illuminate these complex, important and often overlooked aspects of comprehensive care.

Everyone makes mistakes related to client care. The issue with respect to the LGBT community is that, because of these mistakes, they may not continue to seek care. As occupational therapy faculty, students and clinicians, how we correct our mistakes while simultaneously striving to become more client-centered is what matters most.

## STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION

### STRENGTHEN YOUR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE INCLUSIVE, CLIENT-CENTERED CARE TO LGBTQIA INDIVIDUALS WITH THESE GUIDELINES:

#### INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS

- 1 Avoid assumptions, for example, by asking "Do you have a partner or spouse?" rather than questions about "husband" or "wife."
- 2 Ask open-ended questions such as "Who do you live with?" rather than "Are you married?"
- 3 Only ask personal questions that are directly relevant to delivery of care.
- 4 When in doubt, ask a client how they prefer to be identified.

#### WORKING WITH FAMILIES

- 1 Respect the client's definition of family rather than imposing your own.
- 2 Recognize that household division of labor may not follow traditional gender roles.

#### WORKPLACE/COWORKERS

- 1 Avoid gossip regarding an individual's orientation or gender presentation.
- 2 Avoid jokes or inappropriate language.

#### FACULTY/EDUCATION SETTINGS

- 1 Create and protect safe spaces for learning. Use inclusive and affirming language. Represent LGBT individuals in case scenarios.
- 2 Teach students how to be responsive, rather than reactive, to LGBT individuals.

#### ENVIRONMENTS

- 1 Incorporate inclusive materials such as pamphlets, resources and patient rights statements that include LGBT people.
- 2 Post symbols indicating "Safe Zones" or "LGBT trained clinicians."





# BETTER TOGETHER

## INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE BRINGS DISPARATE HEALTH PROFESSIONS TOGETHER TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE CONSULTATIONS TO LOW-INCOME SENIORS.

BY JOHN HOBBS MA '14

There's an old parable that tells of a group of wise men unknowingly standing in a dark room with an elephant.

Each is allowed to touch just one part of the unknown object to identify it. Afterward, the men debate vigorously: One is convinced the tusk is a spear; another thinks the tail's a whip; someone argues the animal's flank is a wall.

It is only after sharing information and working together that they're able to arrive at the realization that a giant pachyderm stands before them.

It's this collaborative spirit that is the foundation of interdisciplinary team-based health care models — also called integrated health care models — that is at the heart of the Interprofessional Geriatric Curriculum (IPGC), an innovative course that pairs USC health professions students with low-income seniors facing chronic illnesses.

"IPGC provides our students with an interprofessional learning experience in which the distinct value of occupational therapy can really shine — to both our patients and to our professional colleagues from other disciplines," says Ashley Halle '08, MA '11, OTD '12, assistant professor of clinical occupational therapy at USC Chan and one of a handful of faculty members serving as advisers in the multidisciplinary course.

IPGC began in 2011 with a \$450,000, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded to the family medicine department at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, with Jo Marie Reilly, associate clinical professor of family medicine as co-principal investigator. Reilly envisioned using IPGC to teach primary care physicians how to work in interdisciplinary teams.

Since then, the program has grown tremendously, adding disciplines and increasing the number of students enrolled. In total, nearly 400 future health care professionals have taken the course since it began.

"As health care delivery becomes more interdependent and complex, it is critical that each health care team member works in concert to provide optimal patient care," Reilly says. "IPGC's success is its ability to value the contribution of each health care student and help them recognize that the most important member of the health team is the patient. Working together, each student maximizes and complements each other's skills, to provide the best patient care possible."

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A group of health professions students, including USC Chan student Lucy Hosoda MA '16, OTD '17 (second from right), watch as Alyssa Kano DPT '17 teaches Leonel Aguirre a simple towel exercise to increase his tender neck's range of motion.





PHOTOS BY JOHN SKALICKY

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#### HOW IT WORKS

The course — an elective at USC Chan that will soon be integrated as an experiential assignment in a course on adulthood and aging — holds three sessions at low-income senior residences across Southern California. Its goal is twofold: to better educate students from dentistry, medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant practice, pharmacy and social work about what the other professions do and to provide health assessments, exams and referrals for senior citizens.

“People don’t have diseases in neat little categories,” says Cheryl Resnik DPT ’97, IPGC faculty adviser and associate professor at the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. “It’s about getting to know a person as a complete human being as opposed to a single issue.”

Halle adds, “I hear from former students that they enjoyed it at the time, but they didn’t truly realize how valuable the IPGC experience was until they transitioned into the real world where they’re having to function on teams regularly.”

Senior citizens were chosen to “teach” the future health professionals because they often take many medications for a variety of age-related illnesses, making them ideal patients for multidisciplinary patient care.

The class meets five times in total, with three sessions centered around actual patient health care consultations. One consultation session is dedicated to medication management and cognitive testing, another is focused on mobility and home safety and a third highlights oral health care and nutrition.

Each class session begins with a didactic portion where representatives from each of the professions share with the group of about 90 students information about typical assessments their profession conducts that can be administered by any medical professional to better understand a patient’s overall health status.

“Learning about the various assessments that other professions performed was helpful because, if present in the patient’s chart, I will now be able to recognize it,” says USC Chan student Lynn Kim MA ’16.

Afterward, the teams — comprised of at least one representative from each profession — and a faculty adviser visit low-income seniors in their apartments to provide home-based consultations. At the end, the teams discuss their observations and strategize how best to help the patient.

#### THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSESSMENT

“I felt very happy during the visits,” explains Leonel Aguirre, 77, one of the seniors given advice by the USC interdisciplinary team. “I really





**Left:** Leonel Aguirre, 77, still lifts weights to stay healthy and strong long into his golden years.

**Right:** A singer at heart, Aguirre doesn't miss a beat before breaking out his karaoke machine and singing "*Las Clases de Cha Cha Cha*" for the students.

appreciated all the information about my health."

During Aguirre's second session dedicated to mobility and home safety, the retired house painter complained of a stiff neck. The physical therapy student showed him a couple of exercises he could do with a towel to increase his range of motion.

"Before, when I'd reverse the car and look over my shoulder, I couldn't move my neck. Now, I don't have any problems," Aguirre says.

He also talked about his wife who recently had surgery on both of her knees.

"Because of her knee surgery, she's delicate, and I'd obviously like to prevent her from falling and to care for her very cautiously," Aguirre says, through a Spanish translator.

The occupational therapy student toured his residence, pointing out hazardous areas — including floor rugs — that could lead to a fall.

"Working with the resident in their home was an immensely valuable experience for me," Kim says. "It allowed me to see the patient in their context, not the context of the clinic or hospital."

#### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While the program proves beneficial to the seniors receiving health advice from a team of USC students, it's what it can do for patient care

that could make the biggest long-term impact.

"Our students feel they communicate better, that they are better equipped to resolve conflicts, that they feel more assertive and better understand team dynamics," Halle says.

"This experience reaffirmed the value and unique perspective that occupational therapy brings to an interdisciplinary team," Kim adds. "The view I had about the other disciplines became broader as well as I learned more about the services they offer."

The faculty members behind IPGC hope the program continues to grow, so they can teach even more future health care professionals how to work collaboratively.

"I actually would like USC to set up a Center for Excellence in Interprofessional Education, Research and Practice," Resnik says, pointing out that integrating interprofessional education is now an accreditation standard for every single health profession at USC.

"There's really nothing like this experience," Resnik adds. "It offers our students a 360-degree view of the patient's life rather than just looking at it through their own lenses."





# In Print



**Julie Bissell** MA '79, OTD '12 and **Sharon Cermak** co-authored "Frameworks, Models and Trends in School-Based Occupational Therapy in the United States," published in *The Israeli Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

**Florence Clark** co-authored "The Role of Habit in Recurrent Pressure Ulcers Following Spinal Cord Injury," published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*. The article was also written by **Donald Fogelberg** PhD '08.

**Natalie Leland** co-authored "Non-Pharmacological Approaches to Reducing Negative Behavioral Symptoms: A Scoping Review," published in *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*. The article was written with occupational science doctoral student **Carin Wong** PhD '19.

**Sook-Lei Liew** MA '08, PhD '12 was the lead author of "Improving Motor Corticothalamic Communication After Stroke Using Real-Time fMRI Connectivity-Based Neurofeedback," published in *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair*.

**Jaynee Taguchi Meyer** MA '99, OTD '06 was the lead author of "Maintaining Longevity in the Role of Academic Fieldwork Coordinator," a chapter in the second edition of the textbook, *The Essential Guide to Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Education: Resources for Educators and Practitioners*, published by the American Occupational Therapy Association.

**William Morgan** authored "The Normativity of Sport: A Historicist Take on Broad Internalism," published in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*. Morgan also authored "Sport, Habermas and the Moral Sphere: A Response to Lopez Frias," published in the journal *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*.

**Elizabeth Pyatak** '02, MA '04, PhD '10, MS '15 was the lead author of "Developing a Manualized Occupational Therapy Diabetes Management Intervention Resilient, Empowered, Active Living With Diabetes," published in *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*. The article was co-authored by occupational science doctoral student **Kristine Carandang** PhD '18 and **Shain Davis** MA '12, OTD '13.

**Elizabeth Pyatak** '02, MA '04, PhD '10, MS '15; **Jesús Díaz** '05, MA '08, OTD '09; and **Celso Delgado** '03, MA '05, OTD '10 co-authored "Engage/Trojan Neighbors: A Community Service Partnership Between an Academic Division and Residential Community" in a special issue of the journal *Work* focusing on faculty-in-residence programs in higher education.

**Shawn C. Roll** co-authored "Mindfulness Interventions in Physical Rehabilitation: A Scoping Review," published in the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. The article was co-authored by occupational science doctoral student **Mark Hardison** PhD '19.

# In Print

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## FEATURED PUBLICATION



Assistant professor **Natalie Leland** was acknowledged by American Occupational Therapy Association president Amy Lamb during her inaugural presidential address at April's AOTA conference, as an exemplary “agent of change” whose work is empowering the profession of occupational therapy.

Leland was specifically recognized for her research article “Nursing Homes that Increased the Proportion of Medicare Days Saw Gains in Quality Outcomes for Long-Stay Residents,” published in *Health Affairs*, the leading peer-reviewed journal of health policy research.

Leland and co-author Michael Lepore, a senior researcher at RTI International in Washington, D.C., and adjunct assistant professor at Brown University, examined four years' worth of nationwide nursing home data. Because Medicare more generously reimburses the rehabilitative care provided to short-stay residents than it does to long-stay ones, Lepore and Leland wanted to investigate any impacts caused by this reimbursement discrepancy.

The authors found that increasing the proportion of Medicare-covered patient days in a nursing home was significantly associated with improvements in long-stay residents' quality outcomes. More specifically, Lepore and Leland found that an increased proportion of Medicare-covered patient days was associated with decreases in the percentages of long-stay residents' daily pain (from 5.1 to 3.4 percent), worsening pressure ulcers (from 2.5 to 2.0 percent) and declining performance activities of daily living (from 15.9 to 14.9 percent).

These insights reinforce previous research showing superior quality outcomes in nursing homes with greater financial resources at their disposal. They also bolster arguments for financial investments in nursing homes, including increases in Medicaid payment rates, that can support better care for long-stay residents.

“With nursing homes caring for a greater proportion of Medicare-covered, short-stay, post-acute care patients over the last decade, there has been growing concern that the quality of care for Medicaid-covered, long-stay residents may be deteriorating,” Leland explained. “However, in our study we found the opposite: When caring for a more acute patient population (short-stay patients), there was a beneficial ‘spillover effect’ among long-stay residents. Over time, as facilities cared for more short-stay patients, quality outcomes for long-stay residents improved.”



## CLASS NOTES

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**Julie Bissell** MA '78, OTD '12 transitioned out of her role as USC development officer at the conclusion of the 2015-16 academic year. Bissell, who also teaches the graduate-level course, “Contemporary Issues in School-Based Practice,” has served as a development

officer since 2006 and has played an essential role in the division's advancement operations. An expert on school-based practice issues, Bissell co-chairs the Occupational Therapy Association of California's School-Based Practice Subcommittee. In that capacity, she looks forward to continuing the statewide advocacy effort aimed at gaining credentialed status for occupational therapists from California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

**Mona Kazemi** '08, MA '11, OTD '12 is proud to open her own pediatric clinic, Cayman Theraplay. Located on Grand Cayman, the largest of the three Cayman Islands, Cayman Theraplay aims to meet the therapy needs of children, from birth to 18 years old.

**Nicole Wilson Rabbani** MA '10 and Juleon Rabbani MPH '08 welcomed their daughter, Lana Phare.

Do you have news to share — personal or professional — with the Trojan Family? Let us know by emailing [fighton.ot@usc.edu](mailto:fighton.ot@usc.edu) and your submission will be included in the next issue of *USC Chan Magazine*. Fight On!





**BY KIMBERLY PERRING LENINGTON MA '12, OTD '13**

When I first learned about occupational therapy, I was taking care of my grandmother in what ended up being the last six months of her life. She had lived with us for 21 years and was one of the strongest women I've ever known. I had seen her slowly lose her independence and yet maintain her sense of strength, grace and presence. In those precious few months, I worked with her to maintain who she was and enjoy the things she liked. Through her, I realized just how important occupations can be and how they indeed define us.

While studying at USC, it became apparent that I had picked an intrepid profession. Through class discussions, I learned that OT is a profession that straddles the borders between the medical and the social, the “what’s covered by insurance,” the “what’s important,” and everything in between. During the course of its nearly 100-year existence, occupational therapy has been pushing boundaries and focusing on what matters most to those we work with. The beauty of the profession is that its core belief — that we are occupational beings — transcends settings, abilities, health statuses and cultures. It is a constant in a profession that is growing into new practice settings and changing within the evolving health care landscape.

One of these evolving practice areas that I love is in the non-profit sector. Along with my work here in Los Angeles, I started volunteering a few years ago with Operation Walk. This organization consists of health care professionals who provide free hip and knee replacements and therapy to individuals around the world. With Operation Walk, I have traveled to Guatemala and Nicaragua and, in both of these countries, the lives of our patients are all at once similar and distinct from patients I work with here at USC. In these communities, I've found that the ability to walk from place to place

can determine to a significant extent, perhaps even more so than in the United States, how much one participates in roles and routines.

There just isn't the same infrastructure in other countries. For example, there may not be paved roads and sidewalks or access to wheelchairs, walkers and canes that enable my clients here to access their home and work environments despite significant pain. Thus, therapy after surgery can literally be the first step towards being able to engage in family and community life.

One of my patients in Nicaragua lives on a farm and was no longer able to go out to help with morning chores due to knee pain. She told me in our initial session that not being able to contribute to the work that needed to be done made her feel useless. She was one of my hardest-working patients and continually made me improvise to simulate her home environment.

On these trips, the same restrictions to practice that we experience in the United States don't apply. Instead, we can focus on providing the best occupational therapy possible and training the patient and family for successful reintegration into daily life. There is a strength of community between patients, therapists, surgeons, nurses, internists, family members and other volunteers that allows for true collaboration — a sentiment I have tried to keep with me and implement here.

Through the time with my grandmother, studying and working at USC and my experiences volunteering, I have gained a great appreciation for the power of simple and complex occupational life. There is no “one-size-fits-all” in this profession, and that's exactly what keeps me wanting more.

For more information about Operation Walk, please visit: [www.operationwalk.org](http://www.operationwalk.org).



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The 25th USC Occupational Science Symposium, entitled “Behavior Change: Theories Informing Occupational Science,” takes place Sept. 23 at the Radisson Hotel Los Angeles Midtown at USC. Scheduled speakers include:

- Dr. Wendy Wood, Provost Professor of Psychology and Business at the University of Southern California
- Dr. Judith Hibbard, Professor Emerita and Faculty Fellow, Institute for Policy Research and Innovation at the University of Oregon
- Dr. Edward L. Deci, Professor of Psychology and Gowen Professor in the Social Sciences at the University of Rochester
- Dr. Mary Vining Radomski, Clinical Scientist at Sister Kenny Research Center (Minneapolis) to deliver the Wilma West Lecture

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