



# PITT

## Occupational Therapy Newslink

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SUMMER 2016

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New Faculty
- New partnerships
- New opportunities for community outreach

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- From the Chair... 2
- Faculty Highlights 2
- CScD Graduates 2
- Student Spotlight 3
- Student Successes 3
- Alumni Spotlight 3
- OT Summit 4

# Pitt OT Welcomes New Faculty

With expanding programs and exciting new partnerships, it is no surprise that the Department of Occupational Therapy has welcomed three new full-time faculty over the past year.



Jennifer White, MOT, OTR/L joined the Department as a Visiting Instructor. Jennifer worked in both inpatient

rehabilitation and acute care at the University of Washington Medical Center, where her last 5 years were spent as the Clinical Lead on Acute Care. In this role, Jennifer contributed to the development of the Early Mobility Program for the Cardiothoracic, Surgical, and Medical Intensive

Care Units. Most recently, Jennifer worked for Centers for Rehab Services as the Senior Occupational Therapist on the UPMC Mercy Brain Injury Unit.



Ann Marsico, MOT, OTR/L is an Instructor and Pitt's new Academic Fieldwork Coordinator. Ann comes to us with over 20

years of clinical, fieldwork, and management experience and has worked for Mercy Health System and Centers for Rehab Services at UPMC Presbyterian and UPMC St. Margaret. Ann's most recent role at UPMC St. Margaret was as Director of Occupational Therapy and Director, Rehab Services.



Alyson Stover, MOT, JD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor, was previously an adjunct faculty member with our Department

and also is a three-time alumna of Pitt. Alyson's clinical practice has been primarily in pediatrics and she is the owner of Capable Kids — a multi-disciplinary pediatric therapy clinic north of Pittsburgh. Alyson has a post-graduate certificate in Health Law. Her interests include the impact of administration and management on the role of the OT practitioner; advocacy of the profession and clients; and the impact of health law and policy on access to and the delivery of occupational therapy services.

## Camp Inspiration

The word inspire has dual meanings—it can mean exertion of an animating and enlivening experience as well as to breathe into or upon. *Camp Inspire at the Woodlands* uniquely marries both meanings into an amazing one-week overnight camp for children who are ventilator dependent. Partnered with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and Philips Home Healthcare, Camp Inspire provides a care team for each camper including respiratory therapy, nursing, and a Wood-

lands Counselor. Every year Philips Home Healthcare sponsors a carnival night, engaging the children in fair games, food, and entertainment. Dr. Joanne Baird and Dr. Alyson Stover have collaborated with the staff and engineers at Philips to provide activity modifications that allow all campers, regardless of ability level, to participate. This year Dr. Baird, Dr. Stover and Pitt students and alumni assisted volunteers, camp



(L to R) Dr. Stover, Dr. Baird, MOT students Maddie Iannomorelli and Taylor Hoffay, and Pitt OT Alumna Julie Schubert

staff, and campers with on-the-spot activity adaptations. The Pitt OT crew represented the distinct value of occupational therapy, and at the end of the night everyone left a little more "inspired."

## From the Chair...



Dr. Elizabeth Skidmore,  
Chair, Department of  
Occupational Therapy

The 2015-2016 Academic Year brought new people, new experiences, and new opportunities for the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Pittsburgh. The Department appointed three new faculty — Ann Marsico, MOT, OTR/L, Jennifer White, MOT, OTR/L, and Alyson Stover, MOT, JD, OTR/L. The Department commenced its new Doctor of Clinical Science Program, and conferred degrees on the first two graduates of the program in August 2016. The Department hosted the 1st Annual AOTA-AOTF Summit for Future Scientists and the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Research Summit in May. Pitt OT faculty received new research funding from the University of Pittsburgh Innovation Institute, University of Pittsburgh Physicians Foundation, the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, the Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne, the Rheumatology Research Foundation, and the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research. The Department enjoyed new and expanded relationships with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and Istituto Mediterraneo per i Trapianti e Terapie ad Alta Specializzazione (UPMC's partner in Palermo, Sicily). These partnerships are supporting new educational, clinical, and research opportunities for Department of Occupational Therapy students and faculty. The Department and the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences also saw the appointment of a new Dean, Anthony Delitto, PT, PhD. All of the “newness” over the past year has been valuable and exceedingly positive, and we look forward to continued developments and growth in the upcoming 2016-2017 Academic Year.

*Elizabeth Skidmore*

## Faculty Achievements

### Papers

**Sethi, A.**, Stergiou, N, Patterson, T., Patten, C., & Richards, L. (In Press). Speed and rhythm affect temporal structure of variability in reaching post stroke: A pilot study. *Journal of Motor Behavior*.

**Skidmore, E. R.**, Swafford, M., Juengst, S. B., & **Terhorst, L.** (In Press). Self-awareness and recovery of independence with strategy training. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*.

### Grants

**Amit Sethi, PhD, OTR/L** ob-

tained funding from the Medical University of South Carolina's National Center for Neuromodulation for Rehabilitation to study non-invasive transcranial random noise current stimulation and functional electrical stimulation to improve hand movement in individuals with severe impairments after chronic stroke.

Jon Rittenberger, MD, Joe Mettenberg, MD, and **Elizabeth Skidmore, PhD, OTR/L** obtained funding from the University of Pittsburgh Physicians Foundation Fund to

examine changes in brain structure and function and cognitive function in response to therapeutic exercise after cardiac arrest.

### Presentations

**Nancy Baker, ScD, MPH, OTR/L** presented two papers on the Prevention of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders at PREMUS2016: 9th International Scientific Conference in Toronto, Canada.

**Alyson Stover, MOT, JD, OTR/L**, was a featured speaker at the 2016 Midyear Workshop of the Northeast District of Ohio Occupational Therapy Association in Youngstown, Ohio.



## CScD Celebrates Its First Graduates

In 2015, the University of Pittsburgh welcomed its inaugural class of OT fellows into the Doctor of Clinical Science in Occupational Therapy Program (CScD). One year later, the program is celebrating the first graduates of the program.

On July 13, 2016, Jessica Leslie successfully completed her Capstone Defense, *Examining*

*Inpatient Rehabilitation after Stroke to Inform Post-Acute Care Bundling*. Jessica completed the CScD Master Practitioner Track with a concentration in Neurological Practice. Jessica has accepted a position as Lead OT on the Neuro-Oncology Service at Beaumont Hospital in Dearborn, Michigan.

On July 20, 2016, Anne Stankiewicz successfully com-

pleted her Capstone Defense, *Clinical Utility of the Late Life Function and Disability Instrument-Computer Adaptive Test for Measuring Disability in Geriatric Primary Care*. Anne completed the CScD Master Practitioner Track with a concentration in Gerontological Practice. Anne has accepted a position as Lead OT at Greensburg Care Center in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.



# Student Spotlight: Catherine Leece

**Catherine Leece**, is a second year MOT student and is working with Dr. Amit Sethi, in developing the I-HITS system. The I-HITS system is envisioned to improve arm and hand movement after stroke. Catherine is the Student Entrepreneurial Lead on the I-HITS project. In this position, she successfully participated in the Pitt Ventures First Gear Program, which is a competitive program offered by the Innovation Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. As

the Student Entrepreneurial Lead, Catherine led the customer discovery process, interviewing 58 potential customers for I-HITS, including medical insurance representatives, rehabilitation therapists, clients, and clinic managers. Through these interviews Catherine validated the problems of compliance with treatment outside therapy, which is associated with poor arm and hand recovery after stroke. The interviews also allowed Catherine to gain an insight into the

willingness of the clinical managers and clients to purchase I-HITS. She successfully presented her findings to local business investors and the entrepreneur University community. Catherine was instrumental in validating the need of the I-HITS system, which is significant to ensure the clinical utility of the I-HITS system in stroke rehabilitation.



## Students Making News

**Elise Pure** (MOT '17) was selected for a Medical and Graduate Student Preceptorship from the Rheumatology Research Foundation, 2016-2017.

**Stephanie Rouch** (MOT '17) developed and implemented a research project — *Changes in balance, grip strength, and well-being in adults with developmental disabilities after a 6-week partner dance program*. Ms. Rouch partnered with community based “Yes You Can Dance Program” to assess the ef-

fect of this program on its participants. Ms. Rouch was assisted by MOT colleagues **Samantha Bowen, Alyssa Campisi, Samantha Chamberlin, Kristen Kowalski, Alice Li, Leah McCarthy, Elise Pure, and Stacey Sabu.**

MOT students **Elise Pure** and **Alice Li** (Co-chairs, MOT '17) and **Sara Ellis, Josselyn Mackey, and Juliana Carlin** (MOT '18) raised money and walked in the Arthritis Foundation Walk for the Cure.

**Anne Chen and Hannah Pecyna** (MOT '17) developed a talk on body mechanics, titled *Take Back Your Back*, and presented the talk to patients at the UPMC Musculoskeletal Medical Home.

**Jamie Crisman, Rob Evans, Brianna Garcia, Kasey Gehlhaus, Kristen Kowalski, Alice Li, Hanna Morris and Casey Reitz** (MOT '17) volunteered at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Sensory Friendly Performance for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (children and adults) and their families on June 25, 2016 at Heinz Hall. The event focused on advocating for accessibility in the arts.



# Alumni Spotlight: Erin (Gibbons) Moser, MS, OTR/L

When it comes to promoting occupational therapy in the school setting, **Erin Moser, MS, OTR/L (MOT '04)** does not let any grass grow under her feet. For the past 10 years, Erin has been employed as a school-based occupational therapist for the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, providing services to youth in preschool through high school for two counties. Prior to working in schools, Erin was an early intervention therapist for children age 0-3.

Erin is involved in “Project Max” — a grant funded project to maximize access

and learning for students with complex instructional needs. She also serves on her organization’s Labor Management committee. In this role, Erin is part of an interdisciplinary team advocating for strategies to improve occupational therapy services in the school districts that she serves.

When asked how she thought the University of Pittsburgh Occupational Therapy Program prepared her for practice, Erin noted that her many and varied experiential learning opportuni-

ties were invaluable to her practice. Despite being a well seasoned clinician, Erin continues to use the skills she acquired as a student at Pitt.

Congratulation Erin!

You make us Pitt Proud!







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Please contact us with changes to your email or address.

### Department of Occupational Therapy Mission

- **Educate** students to practice and to become leaders in evidence-based occupational therapy in a variety of settings
- **Engage** in research to advance the practice of occupational therapy
- **Contribute** to the profession and the community through service, participation, and research

Alumni - Please contact us!  
 We would like to highlight  
 YOU in a future issue!

# OT Summit: Reaching the Peak in Excellence

In May, the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Occupational Therapy was the host site for the 5th Annual Occupational Therapy Summit of Scholars — a 2 day event where scientists gather to present findings from their funded research programs, engage in mentoring, and develop collaborative networks with other research scientists. The Summit was held at the Herberman Conference Center at UPMC Shadyside Hospital. Over 130 occupational therapy scholars attended the event on May 21 and 22.

The weekend started with a Welcome Reception on Friday night sponsored by the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and UPMC Centers for Rehab Services. Plenary sessions during the event



focused on this year's theme of *Building Bridges in Intervention Research*. Plenary presentations were given by current and former Pitt OT Faculty including **Nancy Baker, ScD, MPH, OTR/L, Roxanna Bendixen, PhD, OTR/L, Ketki Raina, PhD, OTR/L, Juleen Rodakowski, OTD, MS, OTR/L, Amit Sethi, PhD, OTR/L, Elizabeth Skidmore, PhD, OTR/L, and Lauren Terhorst, PhD.** Over sixty abstracts were accepted for poster and podium presentations at the Summit. In addition to poster and podium

presentations, the Summit included two new features: a Poster Grand Rounds Competition and Networking Meetings where Summit attendees could request time to meet one-on-one with Senior Scientists to discuss their research.

The event was co-hosted by a consortium of universities: Boston University, the University of Kansas, and the University of Pittsburgh.

The next two Summits will be held in Boston and Kansas, respectively. The local planning team included **Nancy Baker, ScD, MPH, OTR/L, Elizabeth Skidmore, PhD, OTR/L, Laura Waterstram, MOT, OTR/L,** and Pitt MOT Student, **Samantha Chamberlin.**

