

**Dominican University of California**  
**Department of Occupational Therapy**  
**News & Notes - Fall 2007**

*Occupational therapy is skilled intervention that helps individuals and groups achieve independence, participate fully in their communities, and meet personal goals in the areas of work, play, education, leisure, daily living, and social participation. Occupational therapists are licensed health professionals working in hospitals, clinics, schools, and the community.*

***Faculty and Staff Updates***

This fall we have some faculty and staff changes to report. Associate Professor **Bonnie Napier** retired from her full time faculty position in May, but will stay on as an adjunct faculty member to mentor master's theses and teach her favorite classes, including Culture and Human Occupations, which ended the summer with a smashing international potluck. We wish Bonnie well with her new leisure pursuits such as quilting and paper crafting. She also continues to work on a book about culture in healthcare, which will be published by F.A. Davis. Assistant Professor **Karen Pitbladdo** will be serving in a full-time capacity this year, adding OT Conditions to her teaching load and also providing academic advising. Academic fieldwork coordinator **Suzanne Degen** is scaling back to half time to enjoy her garden and get ready to be a grandmother! She will be sharing fieldwork responsibilities with **Jane Dressler**, who is also teaching the psychosocial core classes. Dr. Dressler will be responsible for placing students in Level I and Level II fieldwork sites serving persons with psychosocial disabilities and/or mental health diagnoses. Department assistant **Ginny Lee** has been promoted to Program Coordinator. Congratulations, Ginny!

***Student Successes***

The following students graduated with a Master of Science degree in Occupational Therapy in May, 2007: **Melissa Areyan, Courtney Booker, Joseph Boudreau, Thera Hampton, Emily Hamren, Annie Harshbarger, Paul Hollenbeck, Laura Lindholm, Brittany Loe, Rachel Louro, Dexter Mar-Tang, Christina Marzorati, Tiffanie Ng, Christine Power, Vanessa Preston, Erendeira Sierra-Rodriguez, Kristina Tipolt, Darshna Upadhaya, and Sara Westergard.** Congratulations, all!

Many of the 2007 grads are already employed, and several have already passed the NBCOT examination, including:

- **Melissa Areyan, OTR**
- **Brittany Loe, OTR**
- **Rachel Louro, OTR**
- **Dexter Mar-Tang, OTR**
- **Christina Marzorati, OTR**
- **Christine Power, OTR**
- **Vanessa Preston, OTR**
- **Thera Blair, OTR**

***Annual Summer OT Fieldwork Educator's Meeting at Dominican***

On Thursday July 12 th, 2007, Dominican University of California hosted the annual **Northern California**

**Collaborative Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Educators Meeting**, which was a great success. Over fifty fieldwork educators from a variety of sites in northern California attended this very informative meeting. **Debby Bolding**, MS, OTR/L, CHT, the Clinical Education Coordinator from Stanford Hospital and Clinics, gave a wonderful talk on Clinical Reasoning and Critical Thinking. **Gigi Smith**, MA, OTR/L, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator from San Jose State University updated the group on governmental issues. There was also lots of time for networking, lots of time for questions and answers and, true to any large gathering of occupational therapists, lively discussions. This meeting is an annual event co-hosted by Dominican University of California, Samuel Merritt College, San Jose State University and Sacramento City College.

### ***Campus-Community Initiatives***

Several exciting campus–community partnerships are in place or under way in the OT department this fall. Students in Ruth Ramsey’s community program development course host a booth at the annual **Marin County Senior Information Fair** on October 10, 2007. Students at the booth provide resources for seniors independent living, fall prevention, adaptive equipment, and community mobility. The Information Fair, which takes place at the Marin County Civic Center is the largest event for seniors in Marin County and attracts more than 5,000 visitors annually.

The Dominican OT Department will also partner with the **Marin County Division of Aging** and the **Marin County Commission on Aging** to host the second annual **CarFit** event for seniors over the age of 65 who own a registered vehicle. CarFit will take place on **Saturday, October 23, 2007 at the Marin Civic Center from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**, and is free and open to the

public. CarFit is a screening event designed to help mature drivers find their perfect “fit” and so they may continue to drive safely as they age. OT students and commissioners are trained to conduct a 15-minute 12-point checklist for vehicles and recommend vehicle adjustments to help vehicles fit better with their owners. The OT students will show participants easier ways to open car doors, sit comfortably, and see clearly while driving. OT faculty will also be on-site to make additional recommendations and referrals. For more information, go to [www.asaging.org/carfit](http://www.asaging.org/carfit)

National School **Backpack Awareness Day** is coming up soon, and the Department of Occupational Therapy will be promoting this event among Dominican students. **This year’s event is Wednesday, September 19, 2007.** Backpack Awareness Day provides an opportunity for OT’s to educate students about the dangers of overloading their backpacks, and to inform them about the profession of occupational therapy. DU/OT students will also be visiting local elementary and high schools to talk about backpack safety and occupational therapy.

Students will also be assisting with a county-wide community health event, **Bi-National Health Week**, which offers screening, education, and referrals to Marin County residents. This project is being undertaken in cooperation with the **Community Health and Prevention Program of Marin County**, and will also include the gathering of oral histories from event participants, focused on health-related issues.

### ***Continuing Education***

The second annual **OT Continuing Education Seminar Series** will take place in the spring of 2008. The Department of Occupational Therapy

will host 3 all-day Seminars, one each in February, March and April, 2008. All seminars will be held on Saturdays in Creekside Room. Tentative topics are: **autism spectrum disorder; upper extremity anatomy review and shoulder rehabilitation; and occupational therapy for persons with dementia and/or in assisted living.** For more information, go to [www.dominican.edu/pace](http://www.dominican.edu/pace).

### ***Scholarly Activities***

This fall, program director **Ruth Ramsey** will attend the national OT Program Director's Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island. **Stacy Frauwirth** will be attending the Society for the Study of Occupation Annual Meeting in October. Academic Fieldwork Coordinator **Suzanne Degen** and DUC/OT alumni **Erendeira Sierra-Rodriguez** and **Rachel Louro** are presenting a poster on "The Umbrella Project", at the annual conference of the Occupational Therapy Association of California. The poster describes a pilot interdisciplinary program between OT and nursing students promoting health and wellness in community settings. **Erendeira Sierra** also presented her poster at NCAST-AVENUW, a program supporting Infant Mental Health Development. **Maya Fok** (2009) recently received a \$2,500.00 scholarship from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation and **Angela DeGraffenreid** (2008) also received a scholarship from AMBUCS, a group supporting children with disabilities.

### ***OT Alumni News***

- **Melissa Areyan** (2007) works at the University of California at San Francisco.
- **Dexter Mar-Tang** (2007) is at 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Healthcare Facility in San Francisco.

- **Rachel Louro** (2007) and **Eileen Garcia** (2005) are both working at Kaiser Rehabilitation Center in Vallejo.
- **Marci Pickell** (2001) is now the director of Petaluma Care and Rehabilitation.
- **Mikki Romo** (2001) has a private practice in pediatric OT in Marin County.
- **Dominic Urmini** (2000) also works at Petaluma Care and Rehabilitation.

### ***Dominican Alums Return!***

DUC alumni **Alison Chaplin** (2000) and **Amy Rogers** (2001) have returned to teach part-time in the OT department at Dominican this fall. Amy also works for Blue Skies Employment Agency in Marin County, helping persons with serious mental illness get and keep jobs. Alison works as a hand therapist at Kentfield Rehabilitation Center.

### ***Give us the Scoop!***

We would love to hear from DUC/OT alumni, community partners, and friends for future newsletters. Drop us a line and tell us what you are up to: jobs, babies, projects, research needs, volunteer opportunities for OT students, interesting conferences, workshops, courses you have attended. Contact us at: [r Ramsey@dominican.edu](mailto:r Ramsey@dominican.edu), or [g lee@dominican.edu](mailto:g lee@dominican.edu)

