Helping Older Adults Age in Place

The U.S. Census predicts that by 2030, the number of people over the age of 65 in this country will double, with the overwhelming majority of them living independently in their own homes. How to help older adults “age in place” is the focus of research in the Program in Occupational Therapy’s Participation, Environment and Performance Laboratory.

“We focus on the role that the environment plays in supporting older adults who have functional limitations,” says Susan Stark, PhD, MSOT ’89, OTR/L, FAOTA, Principal Investigator. “In doing so, we are interested in what home and lifestyle modifications can be made so that people can remain safe and productive as long as possible.”

Stark’s laboratory draws students and therapists from around the country because it has a national reputation for training individuals to conduct complicated occupational performance assessments in a home environment.

“There are not a lot of people that do these kind of assessments and we’re trying to change that,” says Stark, who has received funding for her clinical research from multiple sources, including the National Institute on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“In 2010, we published the In-Home Occupational Performance Evaluation assessment, which provides therapists with a standardized tool to carefully evaluate the capacity of each person to age in place. We also teach students and therapists how to..."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Tim Wolf Receives Grants

Tim Wolf, OTD ’07, MSCI, OTR/L, Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Neurology, received a two-year $152,000 grant from the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR). The funds will be used to augment task-specific training in cognitive-oriented strategies for persons recovering from stroke.

“The focus of the study is how do we improve generalizations and transfer of gains in rehabilitation out to home, community and work environments,” says Wolf.

Wolf also received a four-year, $389,107 grant from the National Institutes of Health to evaluate whether self-management intervention will improve health outcomes for persons with mild stroke.

“This study focuses on helping people learn strategies to manage symptoms of the chronic disease,” he says.

“The goal of my research is to improve participation outcomes for persons with neurological injury. Both of these studies will help address that,” Wolf adds.
Another exciting academic year began on August 24th when we welcomed 85 new students to the Program in Occupational Therapy! These phenomenal students, ages 20 to 50, come to us from 58 colleges and universities in 25 states and the country of Chile, with undergraduate majors in psychology, health science, biology, and kinesiology, to name a few. These students met rigorous admission requirements for the Program, and I am sure these “best and brightest” will continue to move the profession and science of occupational performance forward.

Orientation took place in our newly renovated auditorium. Completed over nine months, the new facility features tiered seating, moveable chairs throughout, outlets and power at each station to allow for laptop use, cameras for webcasts and recording of lecturers, increased and better-positioned speakers along with a hearing-assist system, and moveable tables on the lower-level. Photos can be seen on page 7.

Our science and research are a critical part of the Program and you will read about Dr. Susan Stark’s important work in this issue and more about the work of our PhD faculty in future issues. PhD Faculty include Dr. Stark, PhD, MSOT ’89, OTR/L, FAOTA, and myself, as well as Lisa Connor, PhD ’92, MA ’90, Jack Engsberg, PhD, David B. Gray, PhD, and Allison King, MD, BS ’92.

Kerri Morgan, MSOT ’98, OTR/L, ATP, alumna and instructor in the Program, participated in the 2012 London Paralympic Games and won bronze medals in both the 100m and 200m T52 races. We are thrilled for Kerri and know you are, too. Please see the article about Kerri on page 3.

Please email wuotinfo@wusm.wustl.edu and let us know what you are doing! We want to share your good works and professional stories with all of our alumni.

M. Carolyn Baum, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Professor of Occupational Therapy and of Neurology
and Elias Michael Executive Director,
Program in Occupational Therapy

Baum honored for “Character”
Dr. Baum was the focus of the St. Louis Character Spotlight in the August 10, 2012 issue of the St. Louis Business Journal. Her exceptional career as a scientist, educator, and clinician, as well as her passion for photography, cooking, and Italy are highlighted.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OT.WUSTL.EDU.

New Faces

Parul Bakhshi, PhD, DEA (M. Phil), earned her doctorate in Social Psychology from René Descartes University, Paris, France. Her research focuses on identifying links between theoretical/assessment frameworks and expectations of real-life situations in low and middle-income contexts.

Huiping (Ping) Lieser, PhD, earned her doctorate from Kansas State University, specializing in educational computing, design, and online learning. She has over 10 years experience in educational technology, training, consulting, and e-learning design. She works with faculty and students to integrate technology in teaching and learning, recently assisting faculty with the development of Blackboard courses.

Adam Pearson, OTD ’11, OTR/L, holds teaching and clinical roles. He provides home safety and occupational therapy services for community clients, including The Bridge.
HELPING OLDER ADULTS  CONTINUED FROM COVER

work in a client-centered way to design tailored treatment plans. In other words, we don’t want to tell people what to do; we want to serve as educators and facilitators and allow older adults to make their own choices. This approach enhances adherence rates.”

Currently, Stark oversees clinical trials evaluating home modifications.

“We are looking at how interventions such as home modifications can remove barriers faced by older adults. For example, we are evaluating the effect of such modifications on fall reduction. We also are developing new approaches to tailored treatment planning. Our focus is on manualizing the intervention while giving therapists the flexibility to be creative and to tailor treatment. We continue our work to refine and offer valid assessment tools that specifically measure performance and the impact of environmental barriers. In addition, we are conducting a systematic review of the evidence for home modification that will contribute to the development of a new practice guideline for home modification for the American Occupational Therapy Association.”

On the horizon is a potential new fall detection device that the laboratory is creating for pilot testing within the next year.

“We want to be able to detect in advance when someone is likely to fall,” she says, “Especially if they have cognitive impairments that might preclude their participation in interventions, we want to find a way to intervene to prevent a fall from occurring.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OT.WUSTL.EDU.

Team USA!

Morgan Earns 2 Medals in 2012 London Paralympic Games

Kerri Morgan, MSOT ’98, OTR/L, ATP, instructor in Occupational Therapy and Neurology, came home with two bronze medals in track and field competition from the 2012 Paralympic Games held in London in September. She placed third in the 100m and 200m T52 races. Morgan, who placed fifth in both the women’s 100m T52 and 200m T52 races as a member of Team USA in Beijing in 2008, was thrilled with the opportunity to represent the United States for the second time in these events at the Paralympics.

The Paralympics are an extension of the Olympic competitions, with multiple sporting events for individuals and teams with visual, mobility, and intellectual disabilities. All athletes compete in defined classifications based upon the event and level of disability.

“For example, I am a T52 athlete, with the “T” for track, the 50 class for wheelchair races, and the 52 specifically means I have some hand and trunk weakness,” explains Morgan.

Last year, Morgan won a gold medal in the 800m T52 and silver medals in the 100m, 200m, and 400m T52 competitions at the IPC Athletics World Championships in New Zealand. She also serves as team captain of the St. Louis Rugby Rams, competing in quad rugby. In 2009, Morgan was the first woman to be selected for the US National Rugby team, which earned a gold medal

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Occupational Therapy Scholarship Fund

Help support future occupational therapists with a donation to the Program in Occupational Therapy’s Scholarship Fund. A gift to the program fills an immediate need by lessening the debt burden on our students, allowing them to focus on their education and training. Donations also may be made in honor or in memory of an individual. Checks should be payable to Washington University and mailed to the Program in Occupational Therapy, Washington University School of Medicine, 4444 Forest Park Ave., Campus Box 8505, St. Louis, MO 63108.
Alumni

Fran Cohen, OT ’51

Frances J. Cohen, OT ’51, graduate, former research assistant, and wonderful friend of the Program, passed away July 22, 2012. In 2011, Fran was presented with the Alumni Achievement Award for her support and loyalty to our program. Her legacy is great, and one of the most enduring is her support for students. We know you join us in celebrating Fran’s life.

Seals Receives Excellence in Clinical Education Award

Tim Seals, MSOT ’96, OTR/L, former Clinical Director for PRO-Rehab in St. Louis, was recently honored by occupational therapy students with the Excellence in Clinical Education Award. “I’m honored to receive this award,” says Seals. “I think it’s our professional responsibility to be an active part of the development of our profession. Teaching students also made me a better clinician because it forced me to think outside of the box to get the students engaged and actively participating.” Seals is now in a new position as a clinical specialist with Baltimore Therapeutic Equipment.

Please Send Us Your Email Address!
Save a tree and send us your email address to get future versions of the OT Link digitally. Email wuotinfo@wusm.wustl.edu.
Alumni News

Destination: Biomedical Science Corps, U.S. Air Force

Having grown up in a military family, Kathryn “Kate” Baker, MSOT ’10, says she has always had a deep respect for “the sacrifices our servicemen and women make every day in protecting our freedom.” In July 2012, Baker joined the ranks of the military, commissioned as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force’s Biomedical Sciences Corps, one of five corps that comprises the U.S. Air Force Medical Service.

“This is a privilege that will lead to the fulfillment of a lifelong dream,” says Baker. “My profession as an occupational therapist provides me the opportunity to assist others in regaining function following injury so they may return to the roles that give their lives meaning and enjoyment. Providing this service to our Armed Forces allows me to be a part of something bigger than myself.”

Military occupational therapists evaluate and treat active-duty members of the Armed Forces, as well as family members and retirees who have physical, psychosocial and/or developmental limitations. She is now stationed at David Grant USAF Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base in California and is one of 15 occupational therapists currently serving in the Biomedical Sciences Corps.

“In transitioning to the Air Force, I am particularly thankful for the skills I’ve gained in treating individuals with poly-trauma injuries at Duke,” Baker says. “The client with physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments creates a unique challenge and I feel my background will aid me in meeting the needs of the increasing number of veterans returning from deployment.”

She credits Washington University for much of her career success. “My fieldwork experiences and the outstanding faculty gave me all the tools I need to be an effective therapist, no matter what population I serve,” she says. “The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) seminar helped me to think outside of the box when developing a client-centered treatment program. The time I spent working in Dr. Carolyn Baum’s and Monica Perlmutter’s Applied Clinical Reasoning Lab also has contributed to my client interaction and presentation skills.”

She adds, “I am able to use my occupational therapy skills to serve my country, and for me, there is no greater honor. I cannot imagine a more rewarding or fulfilling career.”

TEAM USA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

in Argentina during international competitions.

“The first wheelchair sport I participated in was wheelchair rugby,” says Morgan. “It’s pretty much bumper cars in wheelchairs, with players crashing into each other. Transitioning from rugby to track was quite different in that track is more of an individual sport, not a team sport. But

I can definitely say that I have an entire team supporting me — both from work and school.”

In April, the St. Louis Rugby Rams placed 1st in Division II at the National Playoffs in Kentucky. Coach of the rugby team is Sue Tucker, MSOT ’00, OTR/L, a clinical specialist in the Program in Occupational Therapy and a recent inductee into Washington University’s Sports Hall of Fame.
Student News

Making a Difference in Burkina Faso

With the guidance of a St. Louis-based non-profit organization (Small Rain), three Washington University occupational therapy students are initiating a long-term partnership to address the healthcare needs in the West African country of Burkina Faso. The students, Erin Sanborn, OTD ’13, Sarah Dacy, MSOT ’12, and Frances Montanye, OTD ’13, collaborated with Small Rain for 10 months in planning and designing a health-care questionnaire for 43 villages northwest of the country’s capital.

“We surveyed over 800 women from the villages over the course of five days,” says Sanborn. “The most commonly identified need was improved healthcare services for children, including proximity of services and affordable medications.”

The students also performed malnutrition evaluations. “We screened more than 400 children and found that less than 10 percent were at risk for malnutrition,” says Dacy. “But sickness among the children was prevalent, with illnesses such as diarrhea, stomach pain, malaria, infection, and fever.”

“While there, we also identified the need for an educational program to help women transition their children from breastfeeding to solid foods,” adds Montanye.

The students hope to expand the outreach relationship between Small Rain and the Program. The three are scheduled to present their qualitative and quantitative survey findings at the Missouri Occupational Therapy Association conference in November 2012.

Helping Seniors Get CarFit

The Xi Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon Occupational Therapy Honor Society sponsored a day-long CarFit event this past spring for older adults in the community. CarFit is a national education program designed to teach seniors how to properly adjust their vehicles to optimize safety. Trained student educators went over a 12-point checklist that included evaluating seat belt use, steering wheel tilt, head restraint setting, line of sight over the steering wheel, positioning of gas and brake pedals, and other adjustments.

“There are times when the fit can be improved to ensure the driver has the most control over his or her vehicle,” says Cresencia Burhans, OTD ’12, one of the student organizers of the event.

CarFit was created by the American Society on Aging in collaboration with the American Automobile Association (AAA), AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association.
Commencement was held on May 18, 2012, in Graham Chapel on the Danforth Campus of Washington University in St. Louis.

Orientation and Picnic

Welcome picnic in Forest Park.

Ready for classes to begin.

New Auditorium

After nine months of planning and work, the Program debuted its renovated auditorium. The new space features better integration for mobility devices, tiered seating, and modular tables that enable a more interactive setting and improve both utility and the student learning experience. Technology updates include multiple screens, an improved sound system, and easily accessible outlets for laptop use. We posted more photos at Facebook.com/OT.WUSTL.

Watching Kerri Morgan’s 100m race in the new space.

Find Us on Facebook and Twitter!

Wondering what’s going on with the Program in Occupational Therapy between newsletters? We’ve got a solution for you! Visit our Facebook page and Twitter page for all the news you crave. From events to program updates, we’ve got it all. Do you have news or photos you’d like to share? Send, post or tweet it to us and you could become one of our social media stars!

www.facebook.com/OT.WUSTL
www.twitter.com/WUSTLOT
Upcoming Events

April 19, 2013

OT Scholarship Day
Eric P. Newman Educational Center (EPNEC)
320 S. Euclid Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110

April 25-28, 2013

AOTA 93rd Annual Conference & Expo
San Diego, CA
www.aota.org/ConfandEvents/2013Conference.aspx

May 17, 2013

Commencement

Please visit us at ot.wustl.edu and on Facebook and Twitter for more Program news!

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