

AOTF

connection

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THE AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOUNDATION ■ Vol. 10, No. 1 Spring 2003

D.C. in '03 — Come Join Us in June

AOTF is pleased to sponsor several exciting events at this year's AOTA Conference, Thursday, June 5 through Monday, June 9, 2003. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to our hometown and to sharing our experience and what we love about Washington, D.C. to our friends. Here are highlights of our conference events.

Our first event will be the **Doctoral Network Reception and Annual Meeting** on Thursday, June 5 from 8pm-10:30 pm. The focus this year will be "What Can the Mentoring Process Teach Us that We Don't Already Know?" Franklin Stein, professor emeritus of the University of South Dakota and founding editor of *Occupational Therapy International*, will explore the importance of mentoring relationships. A group discussion will follow with time for networking. The \$25 fee includes refreshments.

Pi Theta Epsilon, the national honor society of occupational therapy, is hosting a very exciting plenary session Friday, June 6 from 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm on "**Disaster Preparedness and Response: OT's Role**". This timely session will discuss the role occupational therapy has in federal, state, and local planning for man-made or environmental disasters. How can occupational therapy practitioners and associa-

tions become part of the systems and organizations responsible for directing disaster planning and emergency response? What are the various agencies that participate in current disaster preparedness planning and how can you become involved? Through focus groups held around the country, members of the AOTF Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises have gleaned answers to these questions and are eager to share them. This session is included in your conference registration fee.

One of Washington D.C.'s treasures will be the site for the **Foundation's Annual Reception**, Saturday, June 7 from 8 pm to 10 pm. The Woodrow Wilson House Museum was built in 1915 and was home to the Wilsons after his presidency. This National Trust Historic Site is filled with mementoes from the Wilson's private collection as well as being a living textbook of American life in the 1920's.

Enjoy this summer evening with your colleagues as you stroll through the Georgian revival house and out to the terrace and garden with your colleagues. Your attendance generously supports the Foundation's essential programs in research and education on behalf of the profession and your fee of \$100 includes hors d'oeuvres and open bar.



The Woodrow Wilson House viewed from the garden.

After a good night's sleep, join us for our ninth annual **Breakfast with a Scholar** held Sunday, June 8 from 7:30 am-9 am. This year's Breakfast features Steve Zeitlin, director of City Lore, an organization dedicated to preserving New York City's and America's living culture. Dr. Zeitlin will speak on "The Meaning Makers: Folk Art, Storytelling, and the Construction of the Self through Time." As a noted folklorist, commentator for public radio, and literary scholar, Zeitlin will share his perspectives on how people express themselves and bring meaning to their lives through art and artistic

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Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises Spurs Concept Paper

At its Fall 2002 meeting, the AOTA Representative Assembly voted to support the Foundation's request to develop an official Association concept paper about occupation in societal crises. AOTF, under its Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises, will collaborate with the AOTA Commission on Practice to complete this paper by the fall of 2003. The principal author, Marjorie Scaffa, will address occupational therapy's unique role during critical events when people experience abrupt disruptions in their habits and life patterns that threaten their mental health.

Along with the concept paper, the Task Force seeks to establish a national network of occupational therapy practitioners that is prepared to respond to emergencies. To most efficiently accomplish this goal, AOTF is investigating opportunities to partner with external organizations such as the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF) and the American Red Cross. These organizations offer

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specialized training courses to certify mental health professionals, including occupational therapy practitioners, as first responders and stress managers in times of national and local emergen-

The Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises was created by AOTF in response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001 to raise the consciousness of occupational therapy practitioners about their roles in providing interventions during societal crises.

Chaired by AOTF President Jane Davis Rourk, its members are Carolyn Baum, Janice Burke, Charles Christiansen, Georgiana Herzberg, Mary Ann McColl, Diana Ramsay, and Marjorie Scaffa.

cies. AOTF will work with the AOTA leadership and existing Association bodies to promote this national network and identify potential candidates who may wish to take advantage of this opportunity.

AOTF is also asking the AOTA Committee of State Association Presidents, Program Directors, and the SIS Standing Committee to share models of practice and assessments that may be useful tools in disaster planning and response. Based on this information, AOTF will create a resource packet for occupational therapy practitioners who wish to assume a leadership role in preparing for, and responding to, societal crises.

In addition, AOTF is privileged to partner with Pi Theta Epsilon in sponsoring an interactive plenary session on this topic at the 2003 AOTA annual conference in June. For more information see the conference article on page one. Participants will be invited to contribute their perspectives and experiences to the development of the concept paper. ■

Corporate Leadership Committee on its Way

In January, AOTF launched the Corporate Stewardship Program, an exciting new initiative to form corporate partnerships that promote occupational therapy and advance the Foundation's vision and goals. Members of the Corporate Leadership Committee, an integral part of the Corporate Stewardship Program, have pledged to help design approaches and implement strategies for acquiring funds to support the Foundation's Institute for the Study of Occupation and Health. Martha Kirkland, AOTF's Executive Director, describes this initiative as opening up avenues and expanding opportunities for the future of occupational therapy. Committee members will give us entrée to "new corporate arenas and give us the opportunity to work with extraordinary people who are interested in working towards promoting occupational therapy," explains Kirkland.

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Committee members expressed their commitment to the Foundation's vision of promoting social participation for people regardless of age or ability.

The Corporate Leadership Committee currently has seven members and is chaired by Don Lang, Secretary of the AOTF Board of Directors, and former Chairman and President of Maginnis & Associates (now Marsh Affinity Group Services). Other members include representatives from the retail, pharmaceutical, medical, and design industries, and representatives from occupational therapy as well as Foundation staff, Martha Kirkland, and Stephanie Aldrich, Development Associate. Kirkland describes it as a privilege to work with people who are so passionate about occupational therapy and its promotion.

The first Corporate Leadership Committee meeting was highly successful, filled with exciting new ideas for corporate involvement including marketing strategies, lists of prospective corporate donors, and several ideas for promoting AOTF. Also coming out of the meeting were a request for an immediate proposal from a corporation and a desire to sponsor an annual conference event by another

company. Committee members expressed their commitment to the Foundation's vision of promoting social participation for people regardless of age or ability. In addition to other suggestions, the Committee recommended establishing partnerships with associations and related professions in order to discuss solutions to societal barriers, and to address future needs that will allow people to participate fully in society and to achieve the promise of aging in place.

The Foundation is looking forward to the next meeting of the Corporate Leadership Committee in May.

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Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

The AOTF Board of Directors elected, at its November meeting, two occupational therapists to join the Board for three-year terms. The Foundation is pleased to welcome Diana Ramsay and



Diana Ramsay

Sharon Goode Ryan.

Diana Ramsay serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of

the Sheppard Pratt Health System which is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland. She is responsible for overall program operations and delivery of clinical and administrative services for the hospitals, day hospitals, acute care general hospital programs, outpatient services, schools, child and adolescent residential treatment centers, professional services, joint ventures, and community-based psychiatric rehabilitation subsidiaries. In this capacity she establishes overall strategic directives and policies to optimize the service quality, resource allocation and program efficiency of the Health System. Ramsay also is the past president and a current

member of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. She also serves on the board of the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems.

Sharon Goode Ryan studied occupational therapy at Sargent College of Allied Health Professions at Boston University. She has trained health professionals on techniques and treatment modalities used in occupational therapy, and she has treated geriatric rehabilitation patients.

Ryan's long history of volunteer work and community service includes leadership positions in support of education, social agencies serving the needs of families and children, and in support of the arts — theatre and music. She is a Trustee of Boston University and serves on the Dean's Advisory Council of Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at Boston University. ■



Sharon Goode Ryan

AOTF Vision

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation promotes a society in which individuals, regardless of age or ability, may participate in occupations of their choice that give meaning to their lives and foster health and well being.

Through its dedication to scientific inquiry, education and leadership development, the Foundation pays tribute to the significance of everyday activities in enabling those who face personal challenges to realize their full potential in society.

CONFERENCE

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expression. He will illustrate how people use art to define and “construct” themselves in both joyful and stressful times. By transforming readily available and ordinary materials, people create expressions of enduring beauty and worth that are a tribute to their communities and lives. The Breakfast series continues to be generously sponsored by AOTF corporate partner Marsh Affinity Group Services. Proceeds benefit the Foundation's research and

education programs. Breakfast is included in the \$45 fee.

Later that day, attend the joint **Research Colloquium, Posters and Tea** on Sunday from 1:30-4:30. One setting, one time, and one fee! The colloquium brings together the three research themes that have been featured throughout the conference — social participation, sensory processing, and participatory action research. Under the ICF umbrella of “social participation,” four scholars will discuss aspects of measurement applicable to practice

when the focus is on the pursuit of meaningful occupations across the life span. An exciting array of scholars will present research and engage in dialogue about the future of occupational therapy with respect to these themes. Twenty-eight research posters by graduate students can be viewed from 12:30 on. Don't miss this intellectually stimulating event! The fee of \$25 includes high tea.

See you in D.C.! ■

Regional Workshop Series Acclaimed

The workshop series designed to facilitate the transition to post-baccalaureate entry for the profession came to a conclusion this winter. As the written evaluations by attendees attest to, this workshop series has more than satisfied its mission of preparing schools and faculty to a revision of occupational therapy education. ACOTE, AOTA and AOTF staff and leadership developed this three-workshop series and offered it on a regional basis to facilitate the revision of existing educational programs in accordance with the ACOTE Standards established in 1998. Goals included the realization of the concept of “occupation” as basic to the educational process; the exploration and development of alternative practice sites for fieldwork; the integration of research, evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning as the means of preparing practitioners to be responsive to societal need; and the heightened awareness among faculty of their need to be engaged as mentors in a scholarly practice.

Twenty-three schools, assisted by eight facilitators, participated in a training process designed to enhance the

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strengths of each individual education program. On-line assignments were established as requirements, with each school using the time between workshops to examine issues concerning leadership, evidence-based practice, reviews of literature relative both to curriculum development and concepts

of occupation, and methods for promoting the use of occupation and occupational therapy within their local and regional communities.

End-of-series evaluations resulted in high praise for the workshop and its methods. Participants enjoyed the facilitation process, noting that each school was encouraged to be unique in the program it developed, making the workshop process “feel” like a more personalized consultation. While some faculties reported difficulty in leaving time for curriculum development, others appreciated the deadlines established by the recurring workshops and reported satisfaction in the process and its results.

While the series has officially concluded, programs wishing to benefit from the educational experiences utilized in the workshops may contact the Foundation to arrange consultation. Please contact Nedra Gillette at ngillette@aotf.org. ■

AOTF Acknowledges the Generosity of Colleagues

AOTF's 2002-2003 Annual Giving Campaign began in November with a mailing to over 37,000 AOTA members and friends of the Foundation. The Foundation is overwhelmed by the generosity and support of both private contributors and our corporate sponsors. This year, gifts from our top donors have added to our giving campaign, enabling the total to reach \$186,000. The Foundation is grateful for this endorsement of its initiatives that promote education and research to advance excellence in occupational therapy. Projects such as *OTJR*:

Occupation, Participation and Health, and the Wilma L. West Library disseminate information about the profession of occupational therapy. The Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises (discussed on page two) will continue its mission of helping people deal with the devastating effects of fear and loss associated with traumatic events.

Contributions also provide funding for the Center for Outcomes Research and Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago (CORE). Over the past three years, CORE has stimulated over

\$10 million in external grants for almost 30 outcomes studies documenting the effectiveness of occupational therapy. Clinical evidence emanating from this investment in outcomes research promotes effective occupational therapy practice and preserves the profession's competitive edge.

The Foundation is indebted to its supporters and invites everyone to learn more about our programs by visiting our website at www.aotf.org. A donation can be made on our secure site by clicking on “Contribute.” ■

Competence, Mastery and Independence: Our Cultural Heritage

by Marjorie E. Scaffa

The Task Force on Occupation in Societal Crises acknowledges with gratitude Marjorie Scaffa's contributions toward promoting the unique role that occupation and occupational therapy play during stressful times. In her paper, "Competence, Mastery and Independence: Our Cultural Heritage," Dr. Scaffa describes how engaging in activities, or occupations, can combat feelings of helplessness and motivate people to regain control and mastery. We are pleased to present her paper here.

One of the values prominent in American culture is our belief in competence, mastery and independence. Throughout our history, Americans have overcome adversity. We are a fiercely independent people and we believe that with hard work and dedication, anything is possible. One of our guiding principles is "if you can dream it, you can achieve it." As a collective, Americans stand up and face challenges directly, often with a sense of confidence in the justness of their cause. We believe in ourselves and have a sense of personal efficacy and effectiveness that comes from past experiences of success.

However, our view of ourselves changed dramatically with the tragic and stressful events of September 11, 2001. We were confronted with our own vulnerability and a pervasive sense of helplessness and loss of control. Feelings of alarm, apprehension and trepidation continue to distress us as we enter global conflict in the Middle East.

Critical Incident Stress Model

According to Terry Gorski, a noted expert in mental health and addictions, when individuals are confronted with an incident that produces an overwhelming level of stress with which the individual cannot cope, the typical emotional reaction is one of helplessness. We feel inadequate and often say, "What can I do?" Helplessness is so uncomfortable and disconcerting that we quickly convert this feeling into anger, fear, or depression, or any combination of these three. We all know people who respond with anger when they feel out of control in an attempt to regain the illusion of control. Some are paralyzed by fear and are unable to take any constructive action. They often become obsessed with safety concerns. Those who respond with depression are depleted of psychic energy and are immobilized as a result. If these feelings persist for a long period of time, a person may develop a generalized anxiety disorder, a major depressive episode, or a post-traumatic stress disorder needing professional treatment. One way to overcome and transcend these debilitating feelings of helplessness, anger, fear, and depression is through competent action that produces feelings of mastery.

Competence and Confidence

In the months following September 11th and continuing to the present day, we have heard several messages repeatedly in the media. The first message was "go back to your normal routine," or in other words, get back to the "job of living." This idea and admonition was not entirely satisfying especially in light of the second message we heard, that "life in the United States has changed forever, it will never be the same." These two messages are some-



Marjorie Scaffa

what contradictory and leave us wondering how to respond. Returning to life as usual seems unrealistic and does not honor those who lost their lives in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania on September 11th, and those who may lose their lives in the current war. The fatalistic idea of "life will never be the same" engenders more feelings of helplessness.

To move beyond helplessness, we need to use our skills, talents, and abilities in creative new ways that move us forward in a changed but positive direction that is consistent with our altered view of ourselves and our world. When we use our skills, talents and abilities effectively, the inevitable result is a feeling of mastery, and feelings of mastery are incompatible with feelings of helplessness, anger, fear, and depression. Mastery leads to a sense of increased confidence, which allows us to move forward, to progress. Mastery provides a measure of control over our current circumstances. Think of the terms "master mechanic" or "master electrician." These are people who have high levels of competence and who are con-

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fidant in their abilities. Their competence and confidence inspires confidence in us. So competence, mastery, and confidence can be contagious.

One antidote or remedy for our current psychological and emotional state as a nation is to do what we have done in the past, to channel our energy in new and creative ways to achieve our objectives. We cannot merely accept the trauma of September 11th and the current crisis; we must transcend and transform them for the good of future generations. We are clearly in a time of transition and the choices we make and the actions we take will leave a lasting impression for those who follow us.

Making a contribution, experiencing mastery

A number of people and organizations, for example firefighters and law enforcement officers, used their skills, talents, and abilities in new ways to benefit those directly affected by the terrorist attacks. In the process, they achieved a sense of mastery in the current environment and restored confidence in the future of our great country. A restaurant owner in Texas wanted to do something to help out in the weeks immediately after the attacks, but wondered what skills he had that could be of benefit. He decided to take some of his staff and equipment and set up an on-site barbecue food service for those tired and hungry workers and volunteers at "Ground Zero." He used his occupational skills in new ways to overcome his feelings of helplessness and make a contribution of his time and talents.

But, you are saying to yourself, this is all fine, but I do not own a business and I could not take time off from my job to travel to far away places to offer assistance. So what am I to do? Let me

offer a few suggestions. Another strength of American culture is our sense of altruism. We believe that if you help one person, you help us all and our country becomes a better place to live. So use your skills, talents, and abilities in your own community. You can read to children, feed the homeless,

Another strength of American culture is our sense of altruism.

visit elderly shut-ins, help an adult learn to read. The list is really endless. Just contact your local volunteer agency and get to work. The activities and occupations of our everyday lives can be used to benefit others in need and enhance our individual and collective sense of well-being.

Another strategy to facilitate competence and mastery and build confidence is to learn a new skill or participate in an activity or occupation that you have wanted to do for a long time but just never somehow got around to doing. You can learn to bake bread from scratch, take ballroom dancing lessons, learn to swim, write stories for children, try out a new sport or hobby. A larger repertoire of skills leads to increased resilience or the ability to cope adaptively with adversity and "bounce back" more quickly from our difficulties. These strategies can be helpful in any stressful situations in our lives.

As an occupational therapist, I am trained to use activities of self-care, work, and leisure to improve mental and physical health and well-being. Through these activities, occupational therapy helps individuals attain their

highest level of function, maximizing their ability to live life to the fullest despite barriers, and thereby facilitating mastery and independence. The goal is not to simply accept one's limitations or disabilities, but to transform and transcend them, and participate in life and society fully.

In some ways, we were all temporarily "dis-abled" by the events of September 11th. We lost our confidence and sense of mastery. We can regain them. Let's transform ourselves and our country to become better and stronger than it was before. Let's transcend our current reality and create a new, more promising future through our everyday activities and occupations.

Marjorie Scaffa, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA is Associate Professor and founding Chairperson of the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of South Alabama in Mobile. ■

AOTF Mission

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable, nonprofit organization dedicated to refining and expanding the body of knowledge of occupational therapy, advancing practice of the highest quality, and promoting understanding of the value of occupation in the interest of the public.