

THE MOTIVATOR

Online edition of the
**Occupational Therapy Alumni
Newsletter**
Summer-2004

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Greetings From The Director



Dear Friends,

We hope you have enjoyed your summer, and had the chance to take some time to do all those things that winter doesn't seem to allow.

This is an exciting issue. Within these pages you will read about an stimulating trip some of our faculty and students embarked on to Cuba; a project that took other students behind the scenes of Broadway's production of *The Lion King*; and a journey to the steps of New York City's City Hall, where a member of our faculty and an alumna provided important testimony to New York City Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings. We are also sharing with you highlights from some of our recent research symposium, and from our commencement, where Actor Daryl Mitchell humorously and poignantly conveyed to students his first hand experience of life in a wheel chair.

Our program keeps earning top marks. According to the 2004 Edition of USNews and World Report, our program remains among the top of all occupational therapy programs nationwide, where we've earned the 9th spot. Our faculty continues to distinguish itself. Immediately following the conferring of their doctoral degrees, Glen Gillen, Ed.D., and Ann Burkhardt, OTD, published their second edition of *Stroke Rehabilitation - A Function-Based Approach*. Marianne Mortera, our Fieldwork 1 educator, also received her PhD. Following these accomplishments, both she and Glen were promoted to Assistant Professor. Read about their dissertations within this edition. Glen, along with Pat Miller, received service awards from AOTA.

Publicity continues to rain upon us. In addition to numerous publications in journals and books by all members of the faculty, Pat Miller was once again on television! In addition to her testimony at City Hall, she was interviewed about falls and the elderly for the public access television program "*You should live so long*". One of our postprofessional graduates, Sigrid McCabe '03, was featured in the New York Times for her work with Columbia's Cooperative Aging Project. And I am being featured in a special edition of USNews and World Report, and in *Therapy New York Magazine*.

In the last edition, we highlighted one of our students, Melanie Barber, who became involved in the political process. Melanie has since been elected to the position of Financial Manager of AOTA's Association of Student Delegates!

And finally, we bid a farewell to long time faculty member Dr. Jane Bear-Lehman, who will be redirecting her academic career in the fall. In the 15 years she has served on our faculty, she has played an important role. Jane will stay on in an adjunct position as she completes her grant for the NIH.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *The Motivator*.

Sincerely,
Janet Falk-Kessler, Ed.D., OTR, FAOTA
Director, Programs in Occupational Therapy

A Trip to Cuba

Submitted by Emily Raphael



First Year Student Joclyn Gordon, Professor Emily Raphael, Postprofessional Student Meghan Featherston, Professor Debra Tupe, Second Year Student Ali Nash

In January of 2004, a group of occupational therapy faculty and students from Columbia and Thomas Jefferson Universities, as well as a sociologist, and a filmmaker traveled to Cuba as participants in an international educational and service learning experience. Debra Tupe, Class of '84 and our program's Instructor for Indirect Service, organized and led this trip. Debra is also on the faculty at Thomas Jefferson's OT Program in Philadelphia. Debra began traveling to Cuba in 1999, when, as part of her master's degree in international health, she visited Cuba and envisioned the possibility of bringing occupational therapy services there by means of educational exchanges and fieldwork opportunities. Debra is currently pursuing her doctorate in sociology at Temple University.

Emily Raphael, Class of '87 and Instructor in our program, also participated in this trip. Emily has a background in anthropology and cross-cultural occupational therapy, and is a special education doctoral student at Teachers College. Joining them were three Columbia students: first year student Joclyn Gordon, second year student Allison Lesch, and Postprofessional student Meghan Featherston.

Columbia students raised over \$500 to buy much needed supplies for the clinics and schools. , In addition, they received a large donation of therapy aids from George Miller, founder of G.E Miller, Inc. and graduate of Columbia's Physical Therapy Program.

On this trip, which most of us experienced as a transforming one, we had many amazing opportunities to observe and meet with a diverse group of dedicated health care providers and educators. All of us had read recommended books and seen movies, but nothing prepared us for the charismatic individuals and their remarkable system of universal social, educational and medical services which exist throughout the island. We were able to meet and talk with parents and their children with disabilities while they participated in activities.

One of the sites we visited is a newly renovated family-centered rehabilitation institute, directed by the pediatric neurologist, Dr. Jorge Rodriguez. He works holistically with children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, hearing and speech impairment, and Willard-Praeger syndrome. Among Debra Tupe's goals is to collaborate with Dr. Rodriguez in establishing a series of occupational therapy workshops, led by skilled American pediatric specialists. Cuban therapists attending the workshops will learn about adaptive equipment, handling techniques, feeding programs and sensory integration. A second goal of Debra's is to create a student exchange program for Level I and II fieldwork.

Other interesting sites that we visited included a small Cuban publishing company where they printed their books on paper made from sugarcane and the Association for People with Disabilities. In order to understand Cuban society, it is important to appreciate the importance of the role of women beyond their families in Cuba. The Federation of Cuban Women is made up of local organizations that act as a public health and family education system. They are responsible for the dramatic drop in HIV on the island because of their campaign's free condom distribution system. Every municipality has a Federation home where families can turn to for help in resolving domestic disputes.

Our future ability to travel to Cuba will in large measure depend upon our government's policies towards travel to this country. If we are able to continue with our educational exchange, Columbia and Thomas Jefferson expect to develop increased opportunities for service learning and collaboration.

Supervisor of the Year

Some of us first got to know Gwyneth Hotaling when she enrolled in our OT Program some 15 years ago. Since that time, clients and families also got to know her, through her work with United Cerebral Palsy of New York State, the Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center, Volunteers of America's Bronx Early Learning Center, and her private practice. Lucky for us, she placed a high value on educating our students.



Gwyneth's talent in blending knowledge with experience, her gift in imparting passion for occupational therapy, and her unyielding commitment to occupational therapy clinical education, makes us proud to name her our first, Supervisor of the Year.

Faculty Research



Marianne Mortera, PhD:

The Cognitive Screening Measure

The purpose of this study was to provide for occupational therapists a new assessment that could allow for an appropriate, efficient and cost-effective means for screening individuals with cognitive deficits post brain injury. The author developed and then tested the Cognitive Screening Measure (CSM). The CSM is a screening instrument used to assess seven selected processes during an individual's performance of a functional task, with the intent to determine which cognitive processes require further assessment. As the study results showed initial content validity and interrater reliability, the author plans to begin use of the CSM in the clinical setting and to continue further instrument testing and subsequent refinement of the CSM.

Glen Gillen, EdD:

***Coping Behaviors Of Stroke Survivors Undergoing
Inpatient Rehabilitation:
An Exploratory Study***

Data were collected on 16 acute stroke cases via standardized assessments, semi-structured interviews, and a medical records review completed during the first week of inpatient rehabilitation. It was found that the cases used combinations of several coping strategies. All cases used a higher number and frequency of adaptive rather than maladaptive strategies. The variables of gender, depression, self-efficacy, and the number/severity of co-morbidities all influenced ways of coping. In addition, the coping strategies used by the cases during stroke rehabilitation were most often not consistent with self-reports of dispositional coping style.

The majority of the cases were able to identify positive consequences of their stroke. Themes included: increased social relationships, increased health awareness, change in religious life, personal growth, and altruism.



The 22nd Annual Interdisciplinary Research Day

Submitted by Jane Bear-Lehman, PhD, OTR, FAOTA

The 22nd Annual Interdisciplinary Research Day sponsored by the Programs in Occupational Therapy at Columbia University was held on Thursday, May 13, 2004 on the Columbia University Medical Center campus. The two plenary session speakers were Ms. Adria Armbrister, a doctoral student in Sociomedical Science, Mailman School of Public Health, who addressed “Lupus: A special problem for women of color”, and Dr. Glen Gillen, who presented his recently defended doctoral study from Teachers College entitled “Coping behaviors of stroke survivors undergoing inpatient rehabilitation: An exploratory study. Members of the Class of 2004 gave six papers during the concurrent sessions and presented eleven scientific posters spanning the various practice areas and issues in occupational therapy. These presentations included topics in hand strength, sensation and functional use or mobility among the urban dwelling well-elderly; ethical issues, belief systems and cultural awareness impacting our field and those whom we treat; procedural inquiries specifically addressing methods to assess or treat individuals who have had a stroke, using sensory integration therapies for children with autism, and understanding coping mechanisms in different populations including graduate students. One paper has already been accepted for presentation as a scientific poster at the upcoming American Society of Hand Therapists meeting in October 2004. Thanks is extended to all of the Columbia University Programs in Occupational Therapy faculty and students for their generous participation to make this a wonderfully inspiring day.

Class of '84 members
Ann Bentley and Maureen



Presenters Adria Armbrister and Glen Gillen



Students at the Poster Session



The Lion King

Reprinted from *InVivo*, vo. 3, no. 6



Makeup artist Elizabeth Cohen gets Nomvula Dlamini, who plays Rafiki in "The Lion King," ready for a performance.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Students Tame Makeup Artists' Strains at "The Lion King"

Behind the scenes at the Broadway show "The Lion King" at the New Amsterdam Theater lies a drama the audience knows nothing about. It's a story about makeup artists who suffer from physical injuries due to the strenuous nature of their work and the help that came to them unexpectedly from a group of occupational therapy students at Columbia.

Working on Broadway isn't all glitz and glamour. There's also pain, something Elizabeth Cohen, supervisor of "The Lion King" makeup crew, can attest to. Ms. Cohen has suffered with a

severely irritated thumb joint on her right hand and has experienced chronic shoulder and back pain for several years. Other makeup artists also complain about joint and muscle pain.

Ms. Cohen developed tendonitis five years ago from contorting her body while applying actors' makeup. A seemingly benign switch from using water-based paint to grease paint precipitated the damage – grease paint requires the use of tools with small handles that must be gripped tightly as opposed to the tools for water-based paint, which have thicker handles and are easier to manipulate. The tension of using the new tools aggravated her thumb joint. In December 2003, Ms. Cohen's condition forced her to take a leave of absence.

This is where a student in Columbia's program in occupational therapy enters – stage left – and the plot thickens. The student, Ali Lesch, and her classmates, were assigned a project in a class called "Occupations," taught by Danielle Butin, instructor in occupational therapy. They had to find people with interesting occupations, analyze the physical and psychological requirements needed to perform their jobs, and contribute recommendations and perspectives on ways to reduce repetitive work-related injuries and improve function. Students were required to present the person interviewed with a set of recommendations specifically targeted to the individual's environment.

Ms. Lesch and her classmates, Alexia Lantzounis and Donna Lick, visited the "Lion King" production at the theater to watch the makeup artists at work. They observed that the artists engaged in repetitive hand movements requiring the use of a great deal of arm strength. They noted the way the artists moved, sat and stood. They realized that the way they opened makeup jars could lead to joint inflammation in the wrist and fingers, causing pain, stiffness and fatigue and that the way they grasped paintbrushes could cause tightening of muscles in the wrist and fingers. They saw that the artists' shoulders were often in an outstretched position while reaching to paint a performer's face, which can cause stiffness in the neck and shoulder. In addition, the cramped space the artists work in prevents proper movement. The way products are set up and the manner in which artists move around as they apply makeup to the actors aggravate lower back and shoulder pain.

This past January, the students presented their report and recommendations. Those included a good deal of avoidance – of placing sustained pressure on the back of fingers and thumb, of remaining in one position and bending the back for long periods, and of reaching and gripping with an outstretched elbow and a bent and twisted wrist. The students also recommended the use of aids such as a foam grip that builds up tool handles to protect hand and finger joints. Other recommendations included using a tall stool on wheels so the artists can sit or stand while applying makeup and a small step stool so the artists can raise their legs eight inches off the floor to alleviate back strain.

As the curtain comes down, Ms. Cohen says she is going to closely follow the students' recommendations and pass them on to her crew.

Testimony Provided to New York City Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings



Pat Miller at a press conference following testimony.

On April 19, 2004, Dr. Patricia Miller, Associate Professor of Clinical Occupational Therapy, along with Columbia OT graduate Lois Rosage, Cl. '85, provided testimony to New York City Council's Committee on Housing and Buildings. Their respective testimony was in support of INT.NO 58, which would amend a local law to require protective devices for seniors and disabled persons who reside in multiple dwellings.

Dr. Miller's expertise on fall prevention provided the context from which she reviewed for the council the

personal, medical, and financial consequences associated with falls. Ms. Rosage's nearly 20 years of experience maximizing function and safety by adapting environments for individuals with disabilities, and the last 7 years with *The Philadelphia Corporation For Aging*, providing home accessibility evaluations to their elderly consumers so that homes can be made safer with increased accessibility, enabled her to specifically address home modifications from both an independence standpoint, and a financial one.



Lois Rosage, OT ' 85

Commencement

May 19, 2004

Keynote Speaker Daryl “Chill” Mitchell

Daryl Mitchell, actor and activist, sent the Class of 2004 a message of hope and heart as he relayed his personal story. Mr. Mitchell, seen most recently as the supervising manager of the Stuckey bowl bowling alley on the television series *ED*, began as a Rap artist, before becoming a regular on *Veronica’s Closet* and *The John Larroquette Show*. He also appeared in a number of films. After being paralyzed in a motorcycle accident in 2001, Mr. Mitchell was determined to continue his career as actor and producer, and will be seen in a new series later this fall. Mr. Mitchell spoke of the importance of caring about one’s clients, their families, and about how important occupational therapy is.



Class Speaker: Ali Nash Lesch Class of 2004



Welcome to friends, families, faculty, and fellow graduates. Thank you for the honor of allowing me to represent our class on this celebratory day. From the day you chose me, ideas and thoughts have been entering my head. As I attempted to pull together a coherent speech, I had no idea how to clearly articulate the emotions and thoughts associated with the bittersweet nature of this day.

I decided to fall back onto the principles of a good occupational therapy case study as a way of organizing my speech and in fact, I have found it to be an excellent way of looking at life. For those of you not in the program, the sections of a case study include: background history, evaluation and assessment, long and short-term goals, and finally a good treatment plan.

Our class is made up of many different personal histories. Some came straight from undergraduate school while others left interesting jobs, such as paralegal, guide dog trainer, and recreational therapist. A few of us, myself included, left behind the life of a classroom teacher. Whatever our personal background, we all chose this path at this time for a specific reason. To make this choice, many aspects of our life needed to be put on hold - marriages, friendships, and other interests.

Two of my classmates felt so strongly about attending this program that they were willing to commute over 2 hours each way, every day, and neither of them ever complained! In spite of trying to put life on hold, life, as always, has a way of moving on. Over the past two years, we've had 5 marriages, 3 new babies, and our very own, lone male classmate is due to be a father this month!

Now that we have covered some background history, we move into evaluation and assessment.

Most of us began our assessment by questioning and doubting the life-changing decision to drop everything and attend school full time. I know I did this from day one. Was I making the right decision? Would I be successful in this new pursuit?

The answers sometimes come in unusual ways.

During orientation, in August of 2002, I found a diamond in the crack of the sidewalk – Right outside this very auditorium. Regardless of whether or not is genuine, I took it as a much-needed positive sign that perhaps I did belong up here, on this campus at the College of Physicians and Surgeons. After orientation and before classes began, I took advantage of my last weekend of freedom, Labor Day 2002 and I got married!

The following Tuesday morning, newly wed, I attended my first seminar. Dr. Janet Falk-Kessler looked around at our new and nervous class and asked, “Which one of you is Allison Nash?” I thought, oh no, they've found me out...I don't belong here...they don't want me here...or I owe them more money! What seemed like hours later, I somehow managed to identify myself. Janet held up my wedding announcement from the New York Times, with warm

congratulations and a smile. My second good omen and another confirmation that I was in the right place!

Having more confidence that we belonged here, we began school in this auditorium with no idea what the next 2 years would really hold, the first year was heavy on classes in mental health, taught by Professor Emily Raphael. We focused on psychosocial issues and mental illnesses that stand in the way of successful functioning. Put that DSM IV in our hands and we were learning about disorders we didn't even know existed. As a matter of fact, if I ever got tired of studying I'd procrastinate by looking up disorders and categorizing myself and everyone I knew into some exotic diagnosis!

Our second year, Dr. Glen Gillin shifted our focus to physical disabilities. All of a sudden we found ourselves absorbed with the different styles of wheelchairs that strangers were using, what motor patterns are required to simply lift a bottle of beer, or how people shifted their weight on the subway to stay upright (that's an ankle strategy, I think!).

And instead of counting sheep, since Leslie Kane's anatomy class, we counted and named muscles to put us to sleep. Then, if by some miracle you were still awake, doubtful given our level of exhaustion, you could go through them again and match them to their action in the body.

Any good assessment must also acknowledge the challenges. Those of you in the audience who live with us are probably familiar with the pitfalls. Many of us developed pain in our note-taking hand, thus barring us from other activities such as doing the dishes or playing tennis. And, many of us missed functions with families and friends, like a Mother's Day dinner, a Broadway play, some weekends away, and a few missed birthdays. Please accept this blanket apology!

Next is goal setting, short-term goals and long-term goals. Short-term goals I'd say we have already accomplished – we've written the papers, passed the tests, and made it here to graduation! Long-term goals are still ahead of us. I believe that the most important goal is to set out and make this world a better place.

This ceremony marks an important passage, the closing of one door and the opening of another. Such moments are intrinsically bittersweet. This is a day of great joy – completing our work, learning so many new skills, making it to graduation fills us with pride and happiness. However, occupational therapy asks us to see and work with people who are suffering. And on a grander scale, regardless of one's religious, spiritual or political beliefs, we can agree that societies around the world are struggling... that is why we are here today, for occupational therapy is one way for the healing to begin.

We've already come up with some specific long-term goals in our indirect service class with Professor Debra Tupe. Some proposals were: a community-based program for babies with HIV in Trinidad; ways to decrease recidivism in juvenile detention settings; ideas to help 12-year-old boys with ADHD find ways just to make friends; and programs to support returning soldiers from Iraq.

Yes, these were just proposals. And yes, we were required to write them to "get the grade." But, no we no longer need to "get the grade." We're done! It's graduation. But one more take home message – we're not going to sweat the small stuff, there's healing to be done and we need to make it happen. Our world, our country, our cities, our towns, and our neighborhoods have a place for us because they need us.

Now we're prepared to develop treatment plans. Concretely, we need to finish our fieldwork, pass our licensing exams, and get jobs. The rest of the treatment plan is hard, but relatively straightforward - re-start our lives and maintain a balance between work and play. Enough about us – the graduates of this esteemed institution! This day is as much about all of you, faculty, family and friends here to celebrate with us today.

To all of the faculty, and Mrs. McGillicuty – thank you! Classmates asked me, “What are you going to say at gradation” and I asked them, “What do you want me to say?” They wanted me to be sure to use this speech as an opportunity to thank you, our professors. You left your doors wide-open, answered emails within 60 seconds, and hosted us at your homes to work on research.

As Dr. Marie Anzalone taught us, there is such a thing called goodness-of-fit. In pediatrics, it is the fit between child and family, child and environment, family and environment. For us, the goodness of fit has meant being in the right place at the right time. You set the bar high, and more than getting good grades, you encouraged us to be active members of the community - the class community, the graduate community, and the professional community we are about to enter. And that being part of this occupational therapy community is not just a 9 to 5 job, but a way of living our lives that values compassion, creativity, and service to others. Again, thank you.

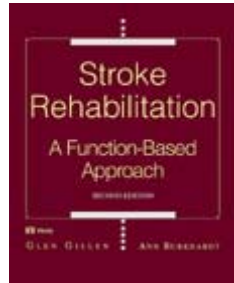
And last but not least, thanks to all of you, our friends and family, including those who have traveled from Minnesota, California, Alabama, Oregon, and Trinidad.

While it may differ from family to family, and friend to friend, I am confident that all of the graduates have been graced with tremendous support. For some it was financial support, relying on spouses and family while we attended this program full time. All of us have received moral support, being rooted for at the end of first semester, bone tired and sure we cannot study one more piece of information, yet still with an anatomy and neuroscience exam ahead of us. And, of course, the concrete, reliable kind of support at 1AM - “please just look over this paper for typos and grammar because I can't read another word.” How lucky we all are!

Because I have the unique opportunity to be up at the podium, I have to take advantage of the moment to thank my own friends and family who are here today. You have taught me invaluable lessons about what it means to truly collaborate, make mistakes, and move forward. I'd like to especially thank my mother who has taught me what strength looks like and my father who has taught me about leadership. And one more, thanks to my husband for more than I can possibly say as I stand here today.

For Your Interest

Be among the first to own



Stroke Rehabilitation, 2nd Edition - A Function-Based Approach

By Glen Gillen, Ed.D., OTR/L, BCN and Ann Burkhardt, OTD, OTR/L, BCN

Available through Elsevier Publishing, *“this 2nd edition remains the only comprehensive evidence-based text on the Occupational Therapy management of the stroke patient. The book is based on the most up-to-date research on stroke rehabilitation and presents its content in a holistic fashion, combining aspects of background medical information, samples of functionally based evaluations, and treatment techniques and interventions. There are chapters on specific functional aspects of living after stroke, such as driving, sexuality, mobility and gait, and self-care.”* See our website for details.



At Dr. Gillen's Book Signing:

Top row – Meredyth Wasserman, Glen Gillen, Joan Wagner
Bottom row - Debra Rothberg, Cat Duffy, Yulia Zemlo, Grace Kim

Learning@Columbia

On the occasion of Columbia's 250th anniversary, we are delighted to announce the launching of **Learning@Columbia**, Resources for Columbia Alumni. At the heart of this new suite of Web resources is a library of over one hundred e-seminars with Columbia faculty. We are providing Columbia alumni access to these seminars without charge.

The site also highlights other Web-based learning resources at Columbia, including a rotating set of innovative Web sites and online publications. You'll also find opportunities for face-to-face learning, including faculty visits to alumni clubs and the Alumni Travel Study Program.

This program, provided by the University and produced by Digital Knowledge Ventures, can be found at: http://c250.columbia.edu/c250_forum/learning_columbia/index.html