



MISERICORDIA  
UNIVERSITY.

# MU nOTes

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2016

In the 2015 spring semester, Dr. Joseph Cipriani ran an inaugural international service learning class with upper level students from our OT program. The culminating experience for the class was a week long trip to Kingston Jamaica where the class helped provide services and training for the children and staff of Mustard Seed Communities. MU's OT department has partnered with Mustard Seed Communities and Therapy Missions to help provide a sustainable, cooperative relationship to assist Mustard Seed in meeting the needs of their children. Dr Jennifer Dessoye of the OT department also chaperoned the trip and added her expertise in pediatric practice. *-Dr. Joseph Cipriani, Professor*

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"Misericordia University ranks in the top tier of the Best Regional Universities – North category of U.S. News and World Report's 2016 edition of Best Colleges, and was designated a 2016 Best Northeastern College by the Princeton Review."

*Paul Krzywicki*  
Misericordia University Assistant  
Director of Marketing and  
Communications

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OT students Amanda Casem and Mary Boyle work with a staff member and a child on a sensory mat built and donated by the class.

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## Obstacle Course in the Sensory Social Group

### Sensory Social Group

**S**ensory social group is held at Misericordia University in the Occupational Therapy (OT) labs during the month of July. It comprises 15 OT treatment sessions where children with autism are encouraged to learn good social skills and strategies to deal with their sensory challenges. The group incorporates a fun, play-based environment that embeds the challenge to the student to use prosocial behaviors throughout each activity. (Child is taught a social skill and is required to use that skill throughout the camp, as each social skill builds upon the next). The group atmosphere allows the children to learn from one another as well as build friendships with each other.

Each session begins with learning and trying out a social skill with the group through a fun activity. Then, the children complete a “sensory obstacle course” where they complete gross motor activities and sensory challenges. Next, they complete a “sensory craft” such as making weighted animals, scented beans, colored rice, calm down jars, etc. Throughout the entire camp, they complete 15 different sensory crafts which they compile into a “sensory toybox” to take home or to school. Parents are invited to attend the final session of camp where they will be educated in the use of each item to assist them with their child’s sensory challenges. (Continued on next page)

### Dr. Shah Travels to Singapore

Dr. Lalit Shah recently attended and did a presentation on the "Study of Pre-Handwriting Factors Necessary for Successful Handwriting in Children" on March 3-4, 2016 in Singapore. The research was part of the completion of the project done with students in the weekend master's program at Misericordia University. Student researchers are Katarzyna Bialek, OTS; Melinda L. Clarke, OTS; and Jessica Jansson, OTS.



Photo from left to right: Dr. Lalit Shah and Shakun Shah at the 18th International Conference on Occupational Therapy in Singapore.

Each session ends with a “sensory snack” where the children learn about tolerating different textures in their mouth and proper snacks to choose in order to help the child be more alert and focused.

We will be hosting the sensory social group for a third year from July 11-19. The group sessions are led by Dr. Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L who is an assistant professor in the OT department. She will be assisted by 6 Level I graduate students and 2 research fellows. Data collected through this program is utilized for masters levels student research requirement within the Misericordia OT curriculum.

*-Dr. Lori Charney, Assistant Professor*



## SENSORY OBSTACLE COURSES

Children complete a “sensory obstacle course” where they complete gross motor activities and sensory challenges.

### Children learn how to:

- ◆ talk to a friend appropriately
- ◆ ask a friend to play a game
- ◆ encourage friends during game play
- ◆ identify their own emotions, as well as those of their peers
- ◆ “Stop, think and make good choices” when they are upset
- ◆ Use sensory strategies to be more alert and focused
- ◆ Improve their ability to follow multi-step directions
- ◆ Choose good methods to calm their emotions when they become upset
- ◆ Maintain an appropriate topic of conversation with a friend
- ◆ Reduce restrictive repetitive behaviors (known as stimming)
- ◆ Reduce sensory aversions
- ◆ Use sensory strategies at home, in the community, and at school

# Fall Prevention Clinic

Misericordia University held a free “Fall Prevention Program” on nine Thursday mornings from 9-11 a.m. beginning Sept. 24, 2015. Designed to help people who may limit their activities because they have a fear of falling, the sessions were held as part of a National Fall Prevention project. The workshops were held in John J. Passan Hall, home of the Misericordia University College of Health Sciences at 100 Lake St., Dallas.



Misericordia University faculty members Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L, assistant professor of occupational therapy, and Nicole Evanosky, PT, DPT, assistant professor of physical therapy, and students from both departments collaborated on the program. This interdisciplinary model of instruction was an initiative of the interprofessional education task force as Misericordia University to encourage better role identification and respect throughout a team process of health care delivery.

Eligible participants learned to identify ways to prevent falls in the home and within the community. They were instructed in and completed an individualized exercise program to build strength, balance and confidence. Attendees also had an opportunity to participate in vision, balance and blood pressure screenings throughout the nine sessions of the program.

The program was open to those 65 years or older, who are living independently within the community. Sessions were held Sept. 24, Oct. 1, 8, 22, 29, Nov. 5, 12, 19 and Dec. 3.

“We have so many people in the community who limit their activities because they are unsteady on their feet and are afraid of falling in their home or in the community,” explains Dr. Charney. “With the right physical therapy and occupational therapy instruction, they can gain independence and freedom and lessen the chance of falling and hurting themselves. It is a great opportunity in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy to help members of the community while giving our students the chance to put to good use the skills they have learned in the classroom.”

*-Marianne Puhalla, Staff Writer*

“With the right physical therapy and occupational therapy instruction, they can gain independence and freedom and lessen the chance of falling and hurting themselves.”

*-Dr. Lori Charney  
Assistant Professor*

## MU's OT Honor Society

Pi Theta Epsilon, meaning advancement in occupational therapy, is Misericordia University's occupational therapy honor society. This honor society is a national organization which recognizes the academic accomplishments of hardworking occupational therapy students. It also promotes research and scholarship among students as a means to advance the field of occupational therapy. Members of MU's Pi Theta Epsilon engage in a number of scholarly, as well as, service-oriented activities.



Photo from left to right: Deirdre Stevens (secretary), Allison Hausman (president), Kelly Ferry, Todd Levy, Michelle Hsia, Jennifer Snyder (vice president), Alexis Campbell (treasurer).

## OT Honor Students Participate in Intercollegiate Presentation

Misericordia University's Psi Chapter of Pi Theta Epsilon co-hosted three occupational therapists from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in an intercollegiate presentation event with honor society chapters from the University of the Sciences, Temple University and Salus University.

The event, hosted at The University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, consisted of a presentation about the rehabilitation process of Zion Harvey, the world's first pediatric bilateral hand transplant patient. A short reception was held after the event where students from all four of the host universities could network.

Michelle Hsia, Todd Levy and Kelly Ferry, three of the four occupational therapists who worked on the case, donated their time to share their knowledge about this new therapy process. Eighty four students and faculty in both the occupational and physical therapy departments at Misericordia University attended the lecture that had over 160 attendees.

A \$300 donation was made to the rehabilitation department at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia on behalf of all four chapters. The host universities hope to make this speaker series an annual event.

- Allison Hausman, Senior Occupational Therapy Student



## Meet MU's OTI Club

OTI (Occupational Therapy International) is "dedicated to increasing knowledge and understanding of occupational therapy in diverse cultures and countries". Its goal is to educate students about occupational therapy both locally and internationally, as well as, participate in service projects.



## Jamaica Service Trip 2015

Photo: from left to right, first row: Kerrie Hall , junior; Kristi Cianfichi, senior; Amanda Casem, senior.; Row 2: Mary Boyle, junior; Maria Weidemoyer, senior; Jamie Opela, senior; Dr. Jennifer Dessoeye; Deirdre Stevens, junior ; Row 3: Dr. Joseph Cipriani; John Ignatovich, senior.



Photo from left to right: Alyssa Parker, Beth Pfisterer, Mariah Thomas, Allison Alexander, Jen Snyder, Jenna Aimes, Isabella Beatrice, and Kayla Daughtery

## Occupational Therapy International Club Provides Weighted Blankets for Upcoming Jamaica Trip

The Occupational Therapy International Club is an active club in the department that has participated in a variety of initiatives across and outside of campus this academic year. Members have been providing assistance to teachers at Kistler Elementary during after school programming and in assisting young students who need extra help in the classroom. They have completed a number of successful fundraisers, have held a movie night, provided cards for Veterans, and held fun and informative activities in Banks Center, among other things.

Most recently, members and friends got together to support those occupational therapy students and faculty who are going to Jamaica this summer on a service trip to assist children in the Mustard Seed Community. Club members purchased materials, and using a sewing machine shared by Beth Pfisterer, they made a number of weighted blankets for the children of Jamaica. The weighted blankets were designed to provide calming proprioceptive and tactile input to young children who may have difficulty with modulation, influencing their ability to participate.

The club officers for the Occupational Therapy International Club include Mariah Thomas, President; Jennifer Snyder, Vice President; Allison Alexander, Treasurer and Jenna Aimes, Secretary. The club advisor is Dr. Ellen McLaughlin.

*-Dr. Ellen McLaughlin, Associate Professor*

# MU STUDENTS SHINE AT AOTA CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO, IL.

## “Experience from the Field: Implementation & Evaluation of Multi-Sensory Stimulation in Geriatric Practice”



Photo left to right: Amanda Cobucci, OT Student; Brittany Lohr, OT Student; Maria Weidemoyer, OT Student; Lauren Zack OTD, OTR/L, adjunct faculty.

## “Linking Sensory Strategies and Social Skills Training to Improve the Social Participation in Children with ASD”



Photo from left to right: (standing) Dr. Ellen McLaughlin, Kelsey Maas, OT student; Logan Zeitler, OT Student; Dr. Lori Charney (research chair); Crouching - Carly Zaklukiewicz, OT Student; Danielle Makadon-Malone, OT Student

## “Study of Pre-Handwriting Factors Necessary for Successful Handwriting in Children”



Photo from left to right: Katarzyna Bialek, OTS; Melinda L. Clarke, OTS; Jessica L. Jansson, OTS

## “Factors Influencing Faculty Recruitment & Possible Options for Hiring New Faculty in OT Programs”

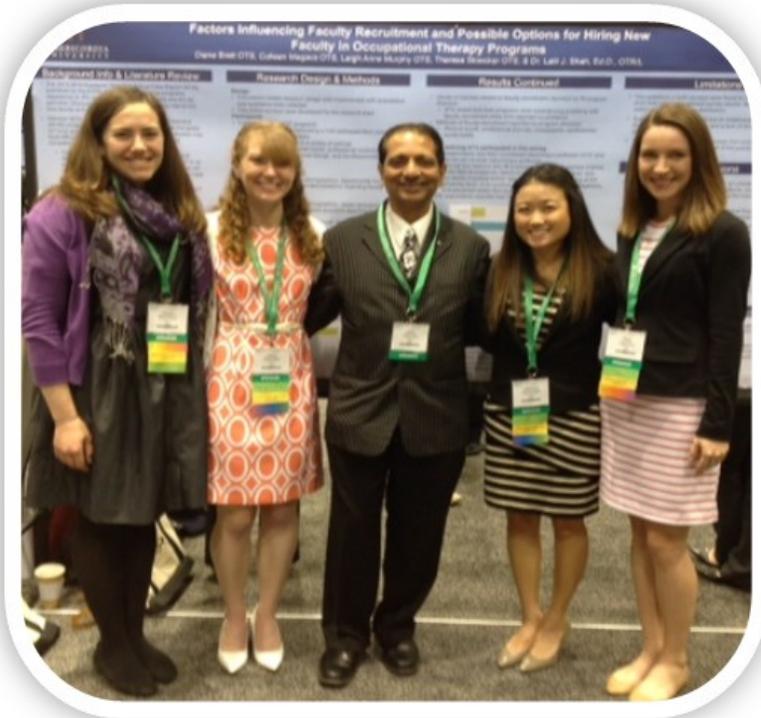


Photo from left to right: Tessa Stoecker, OT Student; Colleen Magacs, OT Student; Dr. Lalit J. Shah; Leigh Ann Murphy, OT Student; and Diane Brett, OT Student.

## “The Lived Experiences of the Oldest Old”

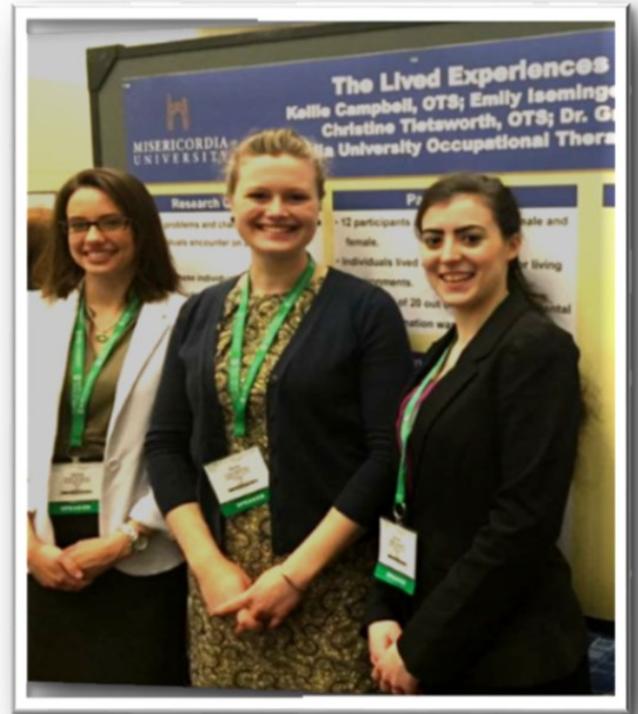


Photo from left to right: Jenna Pendleton, Emily Iseminger, Kellie Campbell. Not pictured Christine Tietsworth and Research Chair Dr. Grace Fisher.

## “The Lived Experiences of the Oldest Old”



Photo from left to right: Jenna Pendleton, Kellie Campbell, Dr. Grace Fisher, Christine Tietsworth, and Emily Iseminger

## SERVICE

### *Local To Global*

OT students and faculty at Misericordia are among the most active providers of service on campus. We take seriously the four charisms of the Sisters of Mercy - **mercy, service, justice, and hospitality**, and try to make them come alive, each in our own way, locally, regionally, and globally. Here are a few of many examples: MU OT students and other majors regularly travel the globe to provide service in locations such as Jamaica, Peru, Guyana, and Honduras.



Photo from left to right: Kaitlyn Wilson, Becky Price, Alyssa Parker, Olivia Powers, Megan Brownmiller, Bailee Hymers, Alison Parkes, and Mariah Bostwick coordinate an assembly line of healthy ingredients for members of the Nanticoke center to make healthy trail mix.

## Service Learning Spring 2016

OT275 and OT 221 both have service learning components. Students often report that these experiences add greatly to their learning when the service project applies directly to classwork. With this in mind, Dr.'s DaLomba and Templeton decided to synthesize the objectives of their service learning projects this semester. The students completed an occupational profile on an individual/member during a first visit to the various Active Senior Centers in the area (Dallas, Plains, Kingston, Nanticoke, and St. Luke's Villa). They helped these "clients" to identify a need area in their lives and an appropriate meaningful activity to help meet that need. From the collection of desired activities, the students designed an "intervention" and presented this during a follow up visit to each center. The students presented a wide variety of information including diet/nutrition, desirable levels of physical activity, cognitive strategies, and computer usage (to name a few). Gail Voynton of the Nanticoke center described the Easter Egg/nutrition trivia, and trail mix making activities as ones that got even her most withdrawn members to participate. Of course we all know that participation is at the heart of all we do. Well done, sophomores!

*Dr. Elaine DaLomba, Assistant Professor*

## OT Students Study the Intervention Process

OT 511/771 Adult Occupational Performance Intervention II students studied the OT Intervention Process (evaluation/assessment, intervention planning, and discharge process) with adult clients that have Multiple Sclerosis, Guillan-Barre, ALS and Post Polio Syndrome. For the lab component, Dr. Dawn Evans provided the students with a case study in which they were a home health OT and go to the home of a client who has been diagnosed with MS. The OT must problem solve how to teach body mechanics, pacing, and energy conservation to the client.

The students were given walkers, canes, chairs, and a variety of garden tools and asked to clinically reason out loud and consult and collaborate with “the client”. In the case study, one student was the client. This not only encouraged clinical reasoning and peer collaboration, but client centered practice.

*Dr. Dawn Evans, Assistant Professor*





## OT Weekday Students and Weekend Students Get Together

OT International Club members from the weekday program were in Passan Hall to meet and form relationships with fellow Misericordia OT students on April 2, 2016.

## 100% NBCOT PASS RATE

Pass rates are reported for all schools online on a state by state basis. Program results from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) can be found online at <https://secure.nbcot.org/data/schoolstats.aspx>. The 2015 pass rate for the Misericordia University OT entry level program was 100%.

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our Occupational Therapy Programs and Services.

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