

REVISTA OT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

VOL 39 NO. 2 / Spring 2026 EDITION

April is OT Month!

TOTA
90TH ANNIVERSARY

1936-2026

Honoring 90 Years of Impact

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Revista *OT* is posted online three times a year by the Texas Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., 2323 Clear Lake City Blvd. Suite 180-197 Houston, TX 77062.

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REVISTA OT: Spring Edition 2026



**WE
NEED
YOU!**

to let other OTs and OTAs understand the importance of becoming a member of TOTA – the ONLY professional organization that supports and advocates for occupational therapy practice in Texas. Invite someone to join TOTA today!



Save the date!
2026 Call for Proposals
Open: March 1 - May 31

OTs, OTAs, and OT Students are welcome to apply!

Become a Presenter for the
TOTA 2026 Annual
Conference

<https://www.tota.org/2026-annual-conference>



Call For
Candidates!

Open February 6th - April 30th, 2026

✓ ***District positions***

✓ ***State positions***

TOTA 2026 Elections:
Submit Your Nominations!



Scan code to see the benefits of a TOTA Membership and Join or renew today!



MedCare Business Solutions

2026 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE



We can unlock the potential of your practice with our top-notch billing management service

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE



Visit us at the TOTA Annual Conference in San Marcos!

*Depends on claim volume



FREE VIRTUAL CE/CEU*

COMPREHENSIVE AUTOMOTIVE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS



ONE HOUR VIRTUAL

Sessions are held
two times each
month for
convenience



**REGISTER
TODAY**



FREE CEU

*AOTA, CCMC,
RESNA = 1
CE/CEU
AOTA Approval
ID#13541

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the unique process involved in researching and evaluating mobility equipment solutions that are available for your clients.
- Differentiate between key mobility equipment participants and providers involved in the automotive mobility equipment industry.
- Identify useful mobility equipment resources to assist clients and their caregivers
- Summarize the risks of poor awareness about safe mobility equipment options.





Motivations CEU

Accredited Courses for Rehabilitation Professionals

357 Mastering Pediatric Postural Control: Foundations and Strategies for Balance Development and Treatment

- Austin, TX (Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas) on Friday, April 24, 2026, 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

#329 Pediatric NDT Intensive Handling Intervention Course Developed by Gail Ritchie

- San Antonio, TX (Angels of Care Pediatric Home Health) on June 5- 6, 2026, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

#380 Working with Babies and Toddlers: Contemporary NDT in Action

- Corpus Christi, TX (Driscoll Children's Hospital) on Friday-Saturday, June 19-20, 2026.

331 Ataxia, Autism and NDT

- San Antonio, TX (Pediatric Therapy Associates) on Friday-Saturday, October 9-10, 2026 from 8:00 am -5:00 pm



TEXAS PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION



American Occupational Therapy Association

Approved Provider



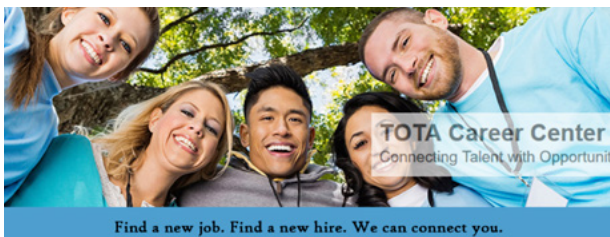
REGISTER NOW

www.motivationsceu.com

2026 CEU COURSES – TEXAS On-Site Lab Courses

Connecting Jobs and Employers

Are you looking for a new job? Employers, are you looking for a new hire? Visit our TOTA Career Center where we connect talent with opportunity.



CYNTHIA MILLER-LAUTMAN
Occupational Therapist and Speaker

NEW CE OPPORTUNITY

MAKE THE SENSORY CONNECTION

A HUMAN APPROACH TO SELF-REGULATION

Practical and OT-centered, this course makes sense of sensory throughout the lifespan.



4 HOURS OF CE ✓

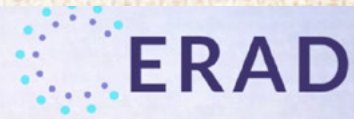
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6 MONTHS OF ACCESS TO COURSE MATERIAL ✓

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Open to OT & PT Practitioners



Learn how to support recovery during hospital admission and the first 6 weeks postpartum using a model adopted by 120+ hospitals.


What's Included:

- ✓ Clinical pathways for maternity unit consults and early recovery
- ✓ 1:1 consultation to support your program or initiative

Training Details: **Only \$997 (Non Member \$1297)**

 November 13, 2026

 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM  San Marcos, TX

 Hybrid Format (Online + In-Person Lab)

Limited to 20
Participants

Register by October 15, 2026

REGISTER NOW >



AOA American
Occupational Therapy
Association

Approved Provider

Approved by the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners

HEALTH CARE

A day in the life of an occupational therapist

By Alice Adams
JOBS CORRESPONDENT

Those who become occupational therapists often choose this profession because it consists of skills and knowledge from a number of disciplines, including the sciences, sociology, psychology and education. They may work in a hospital, rehabilitation facility, in the homes of patients through home health or in schools. Occupational therapists sometimes specialize in working with certain age groups or patients with specific disabilities or diseases.

Mary Hennigan, MOT, MBA, executive director of Texas Occupational Therapy Association and a member of occupational therapy at Texas Woman's University, said occupational therapists are required to earn a master's degree to practice, and there is discussion about increasing the educational requirement to a doctorate in occupational therapy.

"For the master's program we take inherently creative and innovative people and train them in the use of therapeutic activity and how to motivate patients to do the best they can with these activities," Hennigan said.

The Advance for Occupational Therapy Salary Survey by Danielle Bullen indicates, depending on the setting, occupational therapy salaries in the U.S. range in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually.

Every day in the life of an occupational therapist is different and is roughly the following in a hospital:

» 7-7:45 a.m.: Take care of preparation, making sure therapy area is in order and paperwork activities, making sure all implements to be used with patients through the day are available, checking individual treatment plans. Determine how much time will be needed for each patient, and make sure all information sheets and instruction sheets have been copied and any notes from last therapy session are reviewed.

Check with supervisor, look over notes and ask colleagues for suggestions if a patient is not progressing.

» 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: See patients. Typically, an

occupational therapist sees between five and eight patients daily or more, depending on the patient census.

When a patient is first seen, a history is taken, allowing the therapist to learn more about the patient. Often things relevant to the patient are worked into therapeutic activities.

From the history, the patient's chart and information from the physician, family and caregivers, short- and long-term goals are established, and a treatment plan is developed. Patients may be recovering from a stroke, surgery, illness, accident, etc.

"Occupational therapists use what we call therapeutic use of self," which means taking each patient's needs into consideration and how we can best address those needs," Hennigan said. "Knowing what's relevant to a patient can be worked into a therapeutic activity. In designing meaningful activities into a treatment plan, patients often are more motivated and will be more apt to perform the activities."

First patient: Mr. B is a 75-year-old retiree who has experienced a light stroke. Because he has lost some strength on the right side (including the hand he writes with), the OT works on his handwriting, using an erasable white board and some pages from a checkbook that have been copied. They also work on his dexterity, picking up coins and putting them into a jar. This is a timed activity and, due to his competitive nature, there are set goals to lower the time.

Second patient: Molly is 50 and has had surgery to replace arthritic joints in the fingers of her right hand. Using a special bandaging technique, Molly's fingers are positioned so each can work separately. Then the exercises she needs to perform several times daily are explained to Molly and her husband, who is helping Molly rehabilitate.

Third patient: The OT was halfway through 17-year-old Jake's session when they needed him for an MRI, which was rescheduled because of an emergency patient. Jake was recently in an automobile accident. His therapy

includes working on dressing himself — buttoning buttons, tying shoes.

Fourth patient: 80-year-

old Ginny was evaluated yesterday. She experienced a stroke, leaving her with weakness on her left side. Evaluations include range of motion, strength, coordination, skin and/or wound condition, pain, swelling, functional postures and body mechanics. The evaluation requires 45-60 minutes. Her treatment plan was discussed, and today is complete and what the treatment plan will be.

The goals are to improve her upper-body strength so she can push her wheelchair to the dining room of the senior community where she lives. Treatment begins by teaching Ginny how to roll her wheelchair to the OT gym, using both the left and right side of her body. When it becomes obvious her left side is weak, a one-sided technique is taught. Since her son and daughter are with her, they are also taught the process so they can help Ginny practice.

» 12:30-1 p.m.: Lunch, unless schedule changes, which it often does. Sometimes there is no time to eat. This happens because there are times when a patient is still eating a meal when the therapist is ready to work with him or her. Sometimes they are sleeping or not available at the planned time. When this happens, Plan B is a good step, or there's always paperwork to complete or calls to make. Flexibility is key.

» 1-3:30 p.m.: See patients.

Fifth patient: Bobby, 34, had two fingers amputated. During evaluation, he said all he wanted was to be able to shoot his gun during deer season and hold a can of beer. Thanks to several therapeutic activities, Bobby will be ready for hunting season. He is being discharged.

Sixth patient: Back to Jake, who is learning to use an implement called a "button hook." Adaptive driving aids also are discussed. Driving has been one of Jake's concerns. Arrangements are made for Jake to work with another occupational therapist who conducts adaptive driving evaluations.

» 3:30-4 p.m.: At the end of the day, there is preparation for tomorrow as well as assessing each patient's care.



What it takes to be an occupational therapist

We asked area occupational therapists to tell us what characteristics can lead to success in their chosen field.

The best occupational therapist is someone who wants to work with people. If you're not willing to get in there and work with the whole person, you won't make much difference. We also look for people with a sense of creativity, someone who has the ability to think of new ways of doing things. They need to be problem solvers, people who can look at a situation and analyze it. But, foremost, a good OT needs to have compassion and empathy. They must be someone who has the ability to put themselves in another person's shoes and figure out how they feel."

— Loree Primeau, PhD, OTR, OT; occupational therapy department chair; University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

■ ■ ■
"A person should enjoy accumulating knowledge and experience, coupled with a strong desire to give the best therapy you can give each patient."

— Joan Liberatore, OTR; Shriners Hospital for Children-Houston

■ ■ ■
"Therapists have to keep on pushing the patients' buttons. You have an additional strength if you are bilingual. You must be a person who is able to relate to all ages and all backgrounds easily. If you're able to communicate, you're able to build a relationship and build trust. It is difficult to have that therapeutic relationship without trust."

— Mack Ivy, OTR; clinical coordinator of occupational therapy; CHRISTUS St. John Hospital

■ ■ ■
"Someone who is outgoing,

flexible, has a sharp clinical mind, can make decisions and still make therapy fun and playful would be well-suited to this career. You have to have a good balance of interpersonal skills and a sharp clinical mind in order to interpret movement, determine what deficits are there and decide how to best assist the patient."

— Jill Lack, OTR; Texas Children's Hospital

■ ■ ■
"A good occupational therapist is someone who is compassionate and cares about the people they work with. This is someone who has a desire to continue to better themselves. If you really want to better yourself, you continue learning, but first and foremost, you have to have a true desire to be of service to another person."

— Rose Banda, OTR; Texas Children's Hospital

TEXAS

JANE E. MYERS, O.T.Reg. Director of the Junior League Occupational Therapy



Department of the Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children. She has been active as organizer and first president of the Texas O.T. Ass'n. In national affairs she is a member of the Study Committee. She writes her hobbies and interests are "amateur photography, jewelry making, music and sports."

From License to Leadership: Carrying Our Profession Forward

John S. Luna, OTR, OTD – TOTA President



John S. Luna, OTR, OTD

“I passed.”

The inner monologue that many occupational therapy practitioners remember as they stare at the screen, or open the envelope, waiting to see the words confirming they have passed the NBCOT exam and are now eligible for licensure in the state where they hope to practice.

For me, my initial licensure came in, well, let's just say, quite a while ago, but it was a time when the exam was offered in limited locations and only a few times per year. You truly had to make every attempt count. After months of waiting, I opened the screen and logged onto my NBCOT portal to see if there were any updates, and miraculously it had changed. There was a number, and that number indicated that I had passed.

I knew immediately that this moment carried enormous implications for both my career and my life. It meant I was now eligible for licensure in the state of Texas. I could better serve individuals in my community as a licensed occupational therapy practitioner. It meant dedicating myself to continually enhancing my skills to provide the best care possible. But one thing I did not fully understand... I do not think I fully appreciated that holding a Texas license was not just a credential. It was a commitment to not just my advancement, but it was a commitment to support the advancement of our profession.

While my license from TBOTE allows me the privilege of professional practice within the scope defined by our rules and practice act. That scope is shaped by policy. Policy can change. Legislative and reimbursement environments are constantly shifting. Our scope is not self-protected. It is sustained through professional engagement.

Professional engagement in:

- Professional associations through leadership, service, and membership;
- advocacy at the system level,
- our commitment to lifelong learning and teaching;
- advancing the profession through research and scholarship, and
- community engagement and outreach.

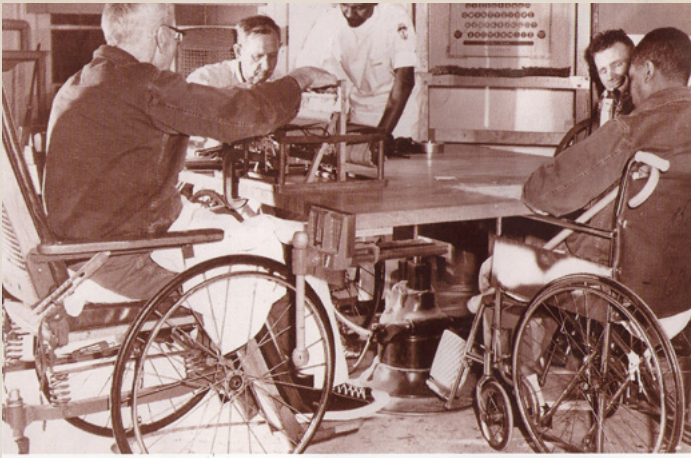


Occupational Therapy Month is a time not only to celebrate our profession, but also to recognize our history. It is also a time to reflect on our engagement, to recognize the collective power that engagement has to carry our profession forward. You do not need a title to lead, only an awareness of your influence.

As we step into April 2026, it is important that we pause and gain awareness of what our future holds and the opportunities before us to influence that future collectively, as a profession. There are opportunities to help clarify our scope of practice within the broader arenas and settings in which we work, along with opportunities to define ourselves and the degrees which provide pathways more clearly into the profession. There are opportunities to advance and refine our scope of practice in ways that reflect the evolving needs of the communities we serve. There are also opportunities to prepare intentionally for upcoming reviews, such as the upcoming sunset reviews scheduled over the next years. There are opportunities all around to influence our future. The future of our profession will not simply unfold around us –it will be shaped by how prepared, engaged, and unified we choose to be.

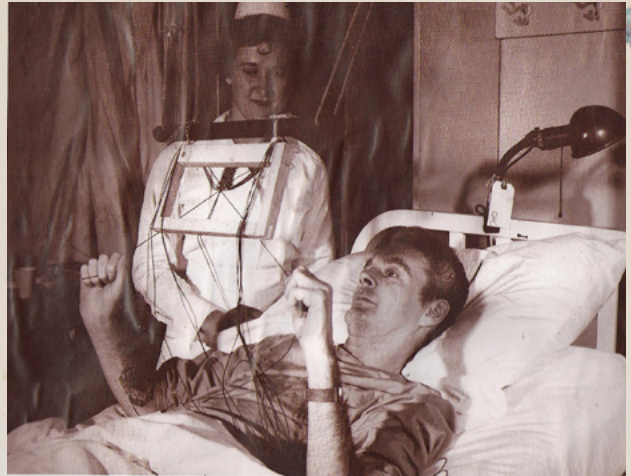
In closing, I want to express my appreciation to our TOTA members, and to all occupational therapy practitioners and students for the work you all do each day. Whether you are supporting early morning ADLs, catching a student between classes, or staying late to ensure a client receives the care they need, your expertise, dedication, and advocacy make our profession stronger across Texas.

TOTA 90th Anniversary: Honoring 90 Years of Impact in Texas



20. Group activities promote recovery for occupational therapy patients in a clinical setting circa 1944.

1940s



19. Cord knotting was one of the activities prescribed for this Air Force vet receiving occupational therapy in a World War II military hospital.

WW2



24. In 1957, Mrs. Harris, OTR uses coordination activities with children who are most likely recovering from polio.

1950s



25. Overhead arm slings help position a patient for performing functional activities in an occupational therapy clinic of the 1960s.

1960s



Some of the 80 district and state board members pose in front of the THA Building in Austin, site of the TOTA business office.



Happy OT Month and Happy 90th Anniversary, TOTA!

Judith Joseph, OTR, MA, FAOTA –TOTA Executive Director



Judith Joseph,
OTR, MA, FAOTA

For several years, I've visited academic programs across Texas to share TOTA's *why, how, and what* we do for the OT community and how we differ from the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners (TBOTE). I often quote our mission: *"The Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) was established for the benefit of professionals and students of occupational therapy."* I contrast that with the licensing board, which is *"charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Texas."*

Recently, I have shifted my approach. Instead of starting with TOTA, I start with the students. I ask them to tell me about themselves – and I ask them to be honest. The room usually goes quiet. Then I pose a series of questions:

- Think about your investment in yourself.
- Why did you go into this profession?
- What area of practice do you plan to work in?
- What are your professional goals?
- Do you resent being forced to join TOTA?

They answer the third question easily- pediatrics, geriatrics, rehab. But that last question makes them uneasy. There's nervous laughter, glances around the room, and silence. It is clear the conversation is happening internally, even if no one says it aloud.

I also ask them to look at our state and district leadership. Do they see former professors? Does involvement in TOTA feel like an extension of school? Was their student experience something they want to carry forward, or something they'd rather leave behind?

Recently, I met with our student representatives, Maya Landgrebe and Leena Lozano, who shared feedback from the 2025 student networking event. Students reported not knowing what TOTA was or what it did. Some resented being required to join TOTA and AOTA on top of other fees and textbooks. Many students attended conference sessions without understanding what was being offered or how to choose sessions that aligned with their goals. They also offered thoughtful recommendations for improving the student experience and how to better support their needs.

These conversations have led me to ask a difficult but necessary question: **Are we, as an association, failing?** After 90 years, what *should* we look like? Is it time to revise our mission statement? Let's be honest, it is a bit wordy. Our mission states that TOTA exists *"to be responsive to the professional development, information needs, and educational requirements of its members; to advance and improve the practice of occupational therapy for the benefit of the consumers; and to anticipate and respond to the organizational, political, economic, and social features of the health care delivery system at the local, state and national levels."*

I believe in asking uncomfortable questions because I want this association to thrive. I want new leaders to emerge with fresh, innovative ideas. Our profession has changed. Are we embracing that change, or are we unintentionally stifling growth and silencing voices that need to be heard? A dear friend, Dorit Aaron, MA, OTR, CHT, FAOTA, once told me, *"You have to know when you need to move on and let other people step up to lead."*

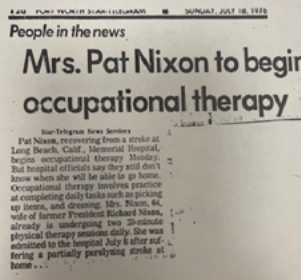
Students, you are the future. I encourage you to engage with TOTA, explore leadership roles, and lend your voice to the conversations that will shape our next chapter. We are ready to listen, learn, and grow with you.

As we celebrate TOTA's 90th anniversary, I hope we all recommit to that mission, not just in words, but in action. Here's to many more years of service, growth, and meaningful impact for the Texas OT community.

Best,
Judi



TOTA 90th Anniversary: Honoring 90 Years of Impact in Texas



Harriett and Don Davidson present the annual Newsom award to Jean Spencer and Lynne Tupper.



Randy and Diane



Mary Ann Monkhouse



April 1, 1996 TOTA Board Meeting

April 1, 1996 TOTA Board Mtg.

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Patti Redding | Chris Furan | Michael Rodriguez | Teri Powers | Shel Harnish |
| Mack Ivy | Michael Pirkle | Dorrit Aaron | Pam Kathleen | |
| Gary Wade | | | | |

c: Sherie Jarrell, Esther Bell, Augusta Gelfand

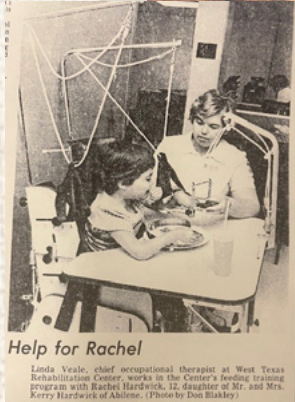
B: Robbie Olivares, Dawn Butler, Dianna Puccetti, Evie Harness



Miss Olga Wheeler, occupational therapist at Baylor Hospital, who recently graduated from a post-graduate course in spastic training in Miami, Fla., is shown as she helps a little patient, Bill Sterling, with his project. The purpose of occupational therapy is to aid patients, such as those who suffer from spastic paralysis, in finding interest in some craft or hobby which will aid in taking off their physical condition.



Big Texas



Help for Rachel
Linda Veach, chief occupational therapist at West Texas Rehabilitation Center, works in the Center's feeding training program with Rachel Hardwick, 12, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kerry Hardwick of Abilene. (Photo by Don Bishop)



TOTA Board Members



Alamo South representatives enjoying lunch... (L to R) Evie Harness, Lynda Jennings, Eva Hengel and Michelle Coronado.

Officers

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President: | John Luna |
| Vice President: | Keegan McKay |
| Secretary: | Laurie Stelter |
| Treasurer: | Jason Perez |
| Executive Director | Judith Joseph (<i>employee</i>) |

District Chairpersons

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Alamo South: | Thelma Ochoa |
| Capital Centex: | Lacey Spark |
| Great Plains West: | Chris Lasek |
| Gulf Coast East: | Renee Shepherd |
| Rio Grande: | Grisel Contreras |
| Trinity North: | Kayla Allen |

Appointed Committee Chairs

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Committee on Conference: | Evie Harness |
| Committee on Development: | Paula Perkins |
| Committee on Education: | Open |
| Committee on Legislative & Political Affairs: | Open |
| Committee on Membership: | Patricia Bowyer |
| Committee on Standards and Practice: | Leslie Smart |
| Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: | Open |

Adhoc Committee Chairs

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Awards and Recognition Committee | Carol Regli |
|----------------------------------|-------------|

Appointed Board Members

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Historian | Esther Bell |
| Parliamentarian | Lynda Jennings |
| OTA Representative | Layman Darnell Miller |
| OT Student Representative | Maya Landgrebe |
| OTA Student Representative | Leena Lozano |

Consultants

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| TOTA Legal Advisor | Richard Y. Cheng, JD, OT, CHC |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|

Newsletter

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Editor: | Rachelle Elliot |
| Design and Production: | Justine Boyer |
| Client Relations Manager | Sarah Stevens |
| Continuing Education Services | Paula Cook |

TOTA THANKS
OUR ORGANIZATION
MEMBERS

Occupational
Therapy
Benevolence
Endowment

Texas
Occupational
Therapy
Foundation

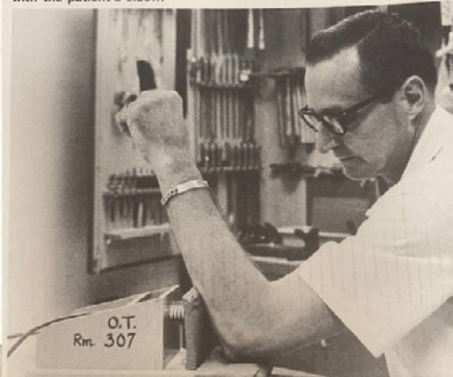
Texas Society
for Hand Therapy

TOTA 90th Anniversary: Honoring 90 Years of Impact in Texas



TOTA Awards

Charles Reed demonstrates a call button that may be pushed with the patient's elbow.



THERAPY OFFICERS

The Texas Occupational Therapy Association, now holding a three-day conference at the Shamrock Hilton, has chosen new officers. They include, from left, Miss Louise McMillan of Waco, president; Mrs Alice Curd of Houston, vice president, and Mrs Hope Kenney of Houston, national delegate. The conference will close with a banquet Saturday night.—Post Photo



A Social got encouragement from TWU student Carol Kneibach as she tried to drink from a cup without the use of sight.



1979 TOTA Board of Directors



Fred and Augusta



Left to right Jane Ladd, OTR and Judy Glenn, OTR, TOTA 1985 Conference Co-chairs.



WACO Proclamation

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOOK WHAT'S NEW

Nominate a Colleague for a TOTA 2026 Award

Each year, the Texas Occupational Therapy Association proudly recognizes colleagues who have made meaningful and lasting contributions to the occupational therapy profession and the Texas community. The Annual Awards Ceremony is a special moment to honor the practitioners, assistants, students, and leaders whose dedication strengthens our association and elevates the impact of OT across the state.

Recognizing one another is more than a tradition—it is part of our professional responsibility. Taking the time to highlight excellence, service, and innovation helps us celebrate the heart of our profession and inspire the next generation of occupational therapy practitioners.

We invite you to join us in celebrating these outstanding individuals.

Explore the award categories and nominate a colleague for one of TOTA's prestigious 2026 Awards.

Help us honor those who advance our association, uplift our profession, and make a difference in the lives of the clients and communities we serve.

<https://www.tota.org/award-categories>

State and District Board Positions

TOTA 2026 Elections

Call for Candidates
February 6 through
April 30, 2026



2026 TOTA Nominating Committee

Chair: Tiffany Green, COTA, M.Ed.
Molly Amlung, OTR
Amber B. Armstead, OTR, DrPH BCPR
Elizabeth DeLuca-Berg, OTR, OTD, CAPS
Natalie Pravinkumar, OTR, OTD
Cindi Tiongco, OTR, Ph.D.

**LEADERS
NEEDED**

Call for Candidates for the TOTA 2026 Elections

The TOTA Elections Nomination period opened on February 6, 2026, and closes promptly at 11:59 pm CST (just before midnight) on April 30, 2026.

Visit the TOTA website and view the eligibility and participation requirements: <https://tota.memberclicks.net/elections>

The following positions will be available:

| State Board Positions | District Board Positions | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| President | Alamo South District | Chair |
| Treasurer | Capital Centex District | Vice Chair |
| | Great Plains West District | Chair |
| | Gulf Coast East District | Vice Chair |
| | Rio Grande District | Chair |
| | Trinity North District | Vice Chair |
| | Capital Centex District | Capital Centex District Secretary |
| | Gulf Coast East District | Gulf Coast East District Secretary |
| | Trinity North District | Trinity North District Secretary |

TOTA 90th Anniversary: Honoring 90 Years of Impact in Texas



TOTA Founder – Clyde Dowell Myres



60th Anniversary Quilt



USEFUL CURE—Mrs. Jane Sims at United States Public Health Hospital uses wood carving as therapy for her drug-addicted and neuro-psychiatric patients.



HANDICRAFT TRAINING SESSIONS were held at the Veterans Administration Hospital to show members of the 12th Air Force Airmen's Wives Club and other persons how to teach arts and crafts to residents of Woodland Springs. In photo above, Miss Louise McMillen, occupational therapist at the hospital, explains stenciling to Mrs. H. V. Harmon, former member of the Woodland Springs board of directors. Looking on are Meses James Bryant, Jock Ramsey and John Estes of the 12th AF Airmen's Wives Club.



Reggie, Esther, Barb



HEDDA HOPPER'S HAT—This pink flower-laden hat, donated by movie columnist Hedda Hopper, will be given away during a banquet of the Texas Occupational Therapy Association at the Roosevelt Hotel Saturday night. Modeling the hat is Miss Beverly Jones, shown here with Miss Natalie Smith. Both are registered occupational therapists at the VA Hospital in Waco. The hat will be on display at Waco Civic Theater opening the "Remarkable Mr. Packer" Friday night and at a swap bar in the Banquet Room at Roosevelt Hotel Friday and Saturday. Donations to Texas OT's school fund will be accepted where the hat is displayed. John Bennett Photo.



2014 Art Dilly Speaker



—Star-Telegram Photos.

president-elect of the state hospital body. Miss Margie Woodward (right) of the Austin State Hospital, was chosen president of the occupational therapy group.



Play With Purpose

Positioning, warmth and a bit of rocking movement provide young Rick Shahan relaxation before Therapist Delaine Robie begins work on the youngster's

TOTA 90th Anniversary: Honoring 90 Years of Impact in Texas

TEXAS STATE ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Minutes - July 5, 1936

A group of Occupational Therapists and doctors met Sunday A.M., July 5, 1936, at the Melrose Hotel in Dallas, for the purpose of organizing a state Occupational Therapy society. Miss Jane Myres conducted the meeting. During breakfast there was an informal discussion on the importance of, and benefits to be derived from, a state organization.

Those present were:- Dr. A.J. Schwenkenberg and Dr. W.B. Carrell, Miss Jane Myres, Mrs. Clyde M. Meyers, Mrs. Griffith, Miss Margie Woodward, Miss Olga Wheeler, Miss Rodean Mowhead, Miss Charlotte Dracup, Mrs. Thomas Nickleson.

At the meeting, following the breakfast, the Occupational Therapists organized, electing the following as officers: -

President - Miss Jane Myres, O. T. Reg.
2201 Welborn Street
Scottish Rite Hospital
Dallas, Texas

Vice-president - Miss Margie Woodward, O. T. Reg.
Austin State Hospital, Box 96
Austin, Texas

Secretary-treasurer - Miss Olga Wheeler, O.T. Reg.
2201 Welborn Street
Dallas, Texas

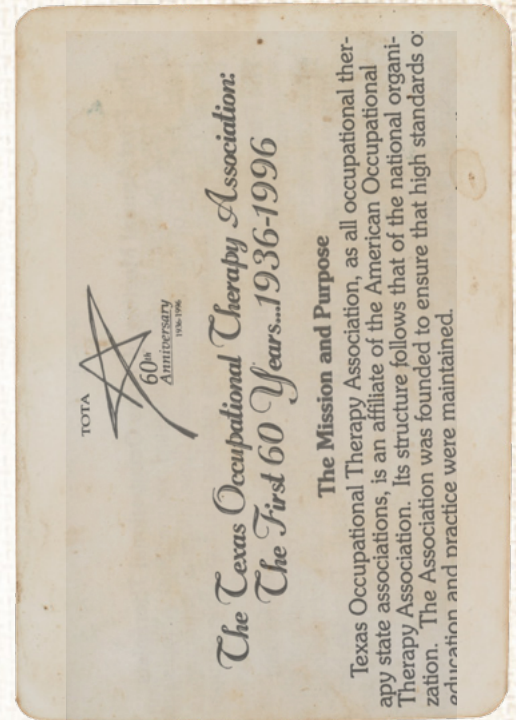
Board of Managers - Miss Alice Eads, O. T. Reg.
Mrs. Clyde M. Meyers

Membership Committee - Miss Charlotte Dracup
Mrs. Thomas Nickleson

The by-laws were read, revised and accepted. It was unanimously voted that Dr. A.J. Schwenkenberg and Dr. W. B. Carrell be made honorary members of the association. It was voted that a copy of the minutes, by-laws, and an application blank, be mailed to each prospective member.

The next meeting will be held in Austin, on the last Sunday in October, 1936.

Respectfully submitted,
Olga Wheeler, O.T. Reg.
Olga Wheeler, O. T. Reg.



Tim Davis; Dee Weddle; Kristie Garnett; Todd; Marla Miles



2007 Day at the Capitol



Mack Ivy and Sophie Rydin

Meet the TOTA Lobbyists

www.tota.org



Kate Goodrich

is a lobbyist and partner in the Public Policy and Law practice group at K&L Gates. She has held key legal and policy roles within the Texas Legislature, including serving as Deputy General Counsel and Policy Advisor to the Speaker of the Texas House

of Representatives. In that role, she provided counsel on legislative and procedural matters and advised on priority legislation related to the state budget, transportation, veterans' affairs, housing, and local government. Kate has also served as Deputy General Counsel in the Texas Senate Health and Human Services Committee and as a Policy Analyst for the Senate Finance Committee, where she worked on complex fiscal and policy issues impacting the state. A proud "Double Longhorn," Kate earned both her bachelor's degree and her law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She lives in Austin with her new husband and their old dog.

Kate has represented the Texas Occupational Therapy Association previously in a different capacity, and is thrilled to be working with Texas' OTs again



Austin McCarty

is a government affairs advisor and a member of the Public Policy and Law practice group responsible for developing and guiding state and federal advocacy efforts on behalf of multiple clients, ranging from start-ups to "Fortune 500" companies. Prior to joining the

firm, Austin served as Legislative Consultant at the Texas Association of Counties (TAC), with primary responsibilities to the Sheriffs' Association of Texas. Prior to departing TAC, he contributed to the establishment of the TAC Federal Outreach team. Austin also served as director of government affairs for two of the state's leading trade associations, where he was responsible for advancing complex legislative agendas, planning and executing membership events, and managing political contributions, among other responsibilities. Austin co-leads the state political action committee with Kate Goodrich-Wright to allocate and distribute contributions to key state legislative and statewide races. He also serves in the United States Naval Reserve as a Chief Petty Officer and Aircrewman. He has been awarded numerous citations and medals for sustained superior performance of duty.

Meet the new Texas Society for Hand Therapy President

www.tota.org

Jessica Johnson, OTR, MOT, CHT, CPAM

Jessica is honored to serve as the new President of the Texas Society for Hand Therapy (TSHT). An occupational therapist for 18 years, she has dedicated her career to advancing patient care and supporting excellence in hand therapy practice. For the past 13 years, she has served as a pediatric hand therapist at Children's Health in Dallas, where she is passionate about helping children and families achieve meaningful, functional outcomes through skilled, evidence-based intervention.

Her professional experience includes a broad foundation in occupational therapy, spanning geriatrics, continuum of care

settings, and orthopedics, before specializing in hand therapy. This diverse background allows her to approach treatment with a comprehensive, patient-centered perspective.

Jessica is deeply grateful for the opportunity to help advance the hand therapy community alongside colleagues who are committed to lifelong learning, mutual support, and upholding the integrity of the profession. She looks forward to strengthening professional connections, promoting continuing education, and championing the mission of TSHT across Texas.



Acknowledging Our District Education Chairs

Megan Taylor, OTR, OTD
TOTA Education Committee Chair



Megan Taylor,
OTR, OTD

Author Elizabeth Andrew wrote, *“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”* We are incredibly grateful for our volunteer District Education Chairs whose dedication helps bring meaningful, high-quality continuing education to practitioners and students across Texas.

This quarter, we are proud to highlight several who are going above and beyond:

- Welcome, **Carol Zaricor!** Carol joins us as the new District Education Chair for the Gulf Coast East District. We are excited for her leadership and enthusiasm in supporting continuing education opportunities in her district.
- **Terri Grundy**, District Education Chair for the Capital Centex District, is developing short instructional videos to guide OT practitioners and students through the Conference Call for Proposals process. Watch the TOTA website for these helpful, step-by-step resources!
- **Molly Setliff**, District Education Chair for the Great Plains West District, recently presented *“Supporting Meaningful Participation in Neurocognitive Disorders.”* If you missed the live version, the session is available on TOTA’s Learning Management System (LMS).

Thank you to all our District Education Chairs for the time, expertise, and heart you pour into serving our profession.

2026 Annual Conference – San Marcos

We are excited to return to San Marcos for the 2026 Annual Conference as we celebrate 90 years of TOTA!

Call for Conference Proposals

Presenting at conference is a meaningful way to contribute to the profession, highlight evidence-based practice, and support the growth of OT practitioners and students across Texas.

The submission deadline is May 31 – don’t wait! Need guidance on how to complete the proposal? Terri Grundy’s short instructional videos will be available on the TOTA website to walk you through the proposal process step-by-step and make submission clear and manageable.

Call for Conference Reviewers

TOTA is seeking experienced practitioners to review conference proposals and CE Events.

If you:

- Have at least 5 years of clinical experience
- Hold an active or retired TBOTE license in good standing
- Are a current or retired TOTA member

Apply today on the TOTA website!

Education in the Districts and TOTA’s LMS

Stay current with TOTA’s library of online continuing education courses. Courses remain available on TOTA’s Learning Management System (LMS) for six months, so check back regularly for new additions.

Currently Featured Courses:

- Anatomy Refresher, Parts I and II
- Managing Difficult Clients in a General Hospital Setting for the OTP
- Introduction to Electrophysical Agents – Foundations of Electrotherapy
- Older Driver Safety Awareness: The Role of Occupational Therapy
- Older Driver Safety Awareness: What’s Next – Exploring Driving Retirement and Community Mobility
- Creating Wellness Programming for Community-Dwelling Older Adults to Age in Place
- Upper Extremity Treatment Continuum within Occupation-based Practice Post-stroke

We are always looking for presenters and diverse topics. If you are interested in presenting, contact me or your District Education Chair – we are happy to help you submit a CE application!



TOTA Member Matters

Your Voice, Your Profession, Your Community

Patricia Bowyer, OTR, MS, Ed.D., FAOTA, SFHEA
State Membership Chair



Patricia Bowyer, OTR,
MS, EdD, FAOTA, SFHEA

Occupational therapy in Texas is strong because of those who show up, engage, and advocate—not only for their clients, but for the future of the profession itself. One of the most meaningful ways to support occupational therapy across our state is through active membership in the Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA).

TOTA exists to serve you. It provides a platform to ensure your voice is heard at the district and state levels. TOTA supports advocacy efforts that directly impact your practice and strengthens the visibility and influence of occupational therapy throughout Texas. When we are engaged, our collective voice becomes stronger, helping ensure that our profession remains recognized, respected, and included in decisions that affect our clients and our practice.

By joining and maintaining your membership, you help:

- Advocate for occupational therapy at the district and state levels
- Strengthening recognition of OT's value across healthcare, education, and community settings
- Build meaningful connections with colleagues and mentors
- Stay informed about professional opportunities, resources, and emerging practice areas
- Support initiatives that directly benefit you, your clients, and your community
- Help shape the future of occupational therapy in Texas

Your involvement matters. Participating in your district, attending meetings, and engaging in TOTA activities ensures that occupational therapy remains visible, influential, and positioned for continued growth.

The TOTA Membership Committee Is Here to Support You

The TOTA Membership Committee is ready to serve our TOTA constituents—and to support both current and prospective members in understanding the value of engagement. We are committed to helping occupational therapy professionals across Texas stay informed, connected, and empowered.

Whether you are a current member, considering joining, or simply curious about what TOTA offers, we welcome your questions, ideas, and feedback. If you would like more information about membership, want to become more involved, or have ideas to share, we encourage you to reach out.

Please contact a member of the State Membership Committee:

- Patricia Bowyer — pbowyer@twu.edu
- Carol Regli — carolregliotr@gmail.com
- Jennifer Parpacen-Smith — jpsmith.ot@gmail.com

We would truly value hearing from you—whether you are a current TOTA member or not. TOTA cares about you, your professional needs, and the clients and communities you serve.

Join. Engage. Let your voice be heard. Together, we can strengthen occupational therapy across Texas.

TOTA - An Organization That Serves Every Career Stage

Layman Darnell Miller COTA, MBA Med
TOTA OTA State Representative



Layman Darnell Miller,
COTA, MBA Med

In December 2025, I retired from my position as an Occupational Therapy Assistant Program faculty member at a Texas community college. I worked in academia for more than 17 years, but as an occupational therapy assistant for 40 years.

I remember the graduation ceremony that occurred over 40 years ago at Letterman Army Medical Center in August 1985. There were three of us graduating that day (program completion and graduation were done differently in the Army) and the post commander General B* awarding each of us our certificates and then spending time with each of us conversing and taking pictures. That was a wonderful day.

When I arrived at my first assignment, Fort Riley, Kansas, I was excited, yet nervous (to say the least), to what I was going to experience. My first patient did not disappoint. Sergeant M* was a tank commander who was walking alongside his tank when it ran up an embankment and the tank rolled on top of him. He sustained multiple injuries which were visibly evident, but his positive attitude helped ease me into what I was going to see next. Unwrapping the bandage revealed a complete degloving injury on the anterior surface of the forearm from the elbow to just proximal to the wrist. My first thought was, "What do I do now?"

During my 40 years as an OTA, I have had the opportunity to work in many of the traditional OT settings and in a few emerging ones as well.

So, why the trip down memory lane? Well, it is good to look back, because reflection brings clarity and realization of one's path. You remember those who helped you on your journey and the many opportunities that came your way.

When considering TOTA, I look at it through the arc of one's OT journey. In the beginning, TOTA offers students opportunities for networking at district and state events, participation in advocacy, potential for scholarships, the opportunity to present research, and so much more.

For the entry level practitioner, TOTA offers a place to upload your resume for employers to review. There is a career corner, where employers are posting job offerings. There are even practitioners available who are excited to mentor and guide you through those first years' jitters.

For all practitioners, there is the opportunity for networking and continuing education. Not just to satisfy the TBOTE requirement, but to enhance your skills or venture into something new and unexpected; Professional growth.

For all practitioners, student to advanced practitioner, TOTA provides leadership opportunities to serve the profession and help maintain and build a stronger organization.

So, what happened with Sergeant M*? Besides his laughter when he saw the shocked look on my face, my Supervising OTR, Captain H*, sat with me at that moment and every day after until she and I were comfortable and confident in my ability to treat not just this soldier, but the many who came after that.

And that is what TOTA offers-- dedicated volunteers who are willing and able to meet with you and help you along your path. Be it intervention, advocacy, legislation, TBOTE Rules, or other OT related topics, TOTA is here to serve you.



Philanthropy In Action at AOTF

Lawrence Liff, MA,
Chief Development Officer



Lawrence Liff, MA



Driven by donor vision and the AOTF mission, philanthropy is having a significant impact on occupational therapy, our evidence-based practice, and our ability to deliver high quality care.

In just the last few months, AOTF has:

- Endowed the Dr. A. Jean Ayres Doctoral Scholarship- which supports an occupational therapist conducting research in sensory integration and sensory processing pursuant to their doctoral dissertation
- Created the Michelle Parkins Scholarship- which supports an OTD student's Capstone project focused on sensory integration and relationship-based interventions
- Launched an endowment campaign for the Dr. Carolyn Baum Cognitive Function in Daily Life Mentor Award
- Secured funding for events and programs on AI in OT

In addition, Texas schools helped raise over \$4,000 in the 2026 St. Catherine Challenge, which provides vital funds for the Intervention Research Grant, a unique program that offers up to \$100,000 for early-stage OT research studies.

Do you work with children who have sensory issues or adults with cognitive decline? Do you need more information about how to incorporate AI into OT? Do you need more evidence for your practice or more resources for your education? If you said yes to any of these questions, AOTF is the OT organization for you.

Philanthropic support for AOTF means more research and more resources for OTPs in Texas. Over the last decade, AOTF has funded OT research, mentored future scientists, and published articles in OTJR from faculty at UTMB,

TWU, UT San Antonio, UT El Paso, and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. In addition, AOTF has awarded financial aid to dozens of OT students in Texas through the TOTA Scholarship.

AOTF invites you to support our mission and engage with us, as a donor, a volunteer, or as an advocate. Only with the dedication of our donors and volunteers are we able to fulfill our mission, and as you can see, donors and volunteers are having an incredible impact.

If you are attending the AOTA INSPIRE in Anaheim, CA, please join us for our signature events: the Breakfast with a Scholar, the Research Excellence Symposium, the Academy of Research Symposium and the State of the Science Symposium.

Our Breakfast speaker is Dr. Kevin B. Johnson, MD, MS, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who is a national leader in digital innovation. His talk will explore how AI can strengthen the core mission of OT as well as how it will reshape documentation, communication and decision making in healthcare.

Our State of the Science Symposium topic is "Coaching: Where Science Meets Practice" and will feature five research leaders who will examine the evidence supporting coaching practices and its implementation across practice areas and settings.

More information about AOTF and how you can support OTs (both in Texas and across the country) can be found at www.aotf.org

What Was Relevant 90 Years Ago is Still Vitally Important Today

Sue Ram, OTD, OTR
Guest Writer
Director of Student Affairs – Edgewood University



Sue Ram, OTD, OTR

Occupational therapy (OT) has always been about helping people live meaningful, engaged lives. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Vision 2030 reminds us that access, connection, and collaboration are not abstract ideas. They show up in our everyday choices as practitioners, educators, and students (AOTA, 2025). This year holds a special meaning for OT in Texas. Ninety years ago, OT practitioners gathered for TOTA's first organizational meeting because they understood something that still matters today. The profession does not grow without people who are willing to stay connected, advocate, and support one another.

That responsibility continues with TOTA members. AOTA's Vision 2030 may sound like a big goal, but it lives in the small, consistent ways we show up for the profession and for each other. Staying involved at the state level is one way we help ensure OT remains accessible and responsive to the communities we serve. TOTA's membership is not just about joining an organization. Here are ways you can maximize your membership in the shared work of advancing the profession.

If You Are a Student

Professional responsibility does not begin after graduation. It begins while you are still learning. Students can get involved by attending TOTA events, volunteering, serving on student committees, or simply showing up to learn how advocacy and leadership shape practice. Early involvement helps build professional identity and reinforces that OT extends beyond the classroom. It is about belonging to a profession that values connection and service, and TOTA has a space for students to belong.



If You Are a New Practitioner

The transition into practice can feel overwhelming at times. Professional involvement may seem like one more thing on top of learning a new role, managing responsibilities, and finding your footing. Staying connected through TOTA can provide support during this transition. Attending continuing education, volunteering in small ways, or networking with peers can help ground practice in shared values and remind new practitioners that they are not navigating this journey alone. TOTA offers many avenues for new practitioners to make a seamless transition to practice, from monthly webinars to district networking events.

If You Are a Seasoned Practitioner

With experience comes responsibility. This may look like mentoring students or new graduates, volunteering on a committee, presenting a continuing education unit (CEU), or stepping into local or national leadership roles. Sharing knowledge strengthens practice across the state and supports the next generation of OT practitioners. Your experience matters, and your involvement helps shape the profession's future through your knowledge and wisdom.

If You Are an Educator

Educators play a critical role in shaping how students understand professional responsibility. Modeling involvement, encouraging membership, supporting conference participation, and connecting coursework to advocacy help students see engagement as part of practice. Educators connect the classroom and clinic, bringing valuable perspectives that strengthen the profession.

No matter where you are in your career, there are shared ways to support TOTA. Hosting or presenting a CE event, volunteering, taking on leadership roles, advocating, and inviting a colleague or student to join makes a difference. As TOTA celebrates its 90th year, this is an invitation to stay connected, support one another, and recognize involvement as part of our shared responsibility in building the future of OT together!

Reference
American Occupational Therapy Association. (2025). Vision 2030. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 79(4), 7904420010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2025.794010>

Celebrating Occupational Therapy Month

Crystal M. Smith, OTD, OTR, DipACLM



Crystal M. Smith, OTD,
OTR, DipACLM

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) Congress 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand, was a global gathering of occupational therapy practitioners, educators, researchers, and students committed to advancing our profession. Held every four years, the WFOT Congress represents the largest international convening of occupational therapy practitioners. Previous host countries have included Australia (2006), Chile (2010), Japan (2014), South Africa (2018), and France (2022), reflecting the global reach of this event.

The 2026 theme, “Inspiring Change, Innovating Futures,” resonated throughout every aspect of the Congress, emphasizing occupational therapy’s responsibility to respond to global health challenges with creativity, evidence, and a steadfast commitment to occupation-centered practice. From emerging technologies to rapidly growing ones such as artificial intelligence (AI), to community-based innovations, the message was clear: our professional identity must continue to evolve while remaining grounded in participation, inclusion, and human dignity through person-centered, occupation-based care.

The Congress opened with a vibrant opening ceremony that celebrated cultural exchange and global unity with a performance by a Thai dance company; this was followed by a warm and inviting welcome reception. Keynote addresses were strategically placed throughout the week, challenging attendees to consider the future of

occupational therapy in light of health inequities, global affairs, and technological advancements, while educational sessions spanned diverse topics, including population health strategies, mental health and wellbeing, trauma-informed sensory integration theory, restoring sleep tranquility, equity and inclusion initiatives, AI, and more.

Presenters at the conference shared cutting-edge research and practice models that emphasized knowledge translation to bridge research findings into real-world application. In addition to lightning talks and longer educational sessions, WFOT formally honored leaders whose scholarship and service have shaped the profession worldwide with awards. The Congress party provided an opportunity for informal connection and celebration, and the closing ceremony offered reflection on collective accomplishments and forward momentum.

Beyond the formal program, some of the most meaningful moments occurred in everyday interactions. I met occupational therapists from across continents and engaged in occupation-centered conversations over breakfast, lunch, and dinner; in taxis navigating the city; and on trains traveling between venues. These spontaneous exchanges were awe-inspiring reminders of our shared professional language and values. The benefits of connection and co-creation were palpable. Interactions at the WFOT Congress served as a reminder that intra-professional collaboration across countries fosters innovation, strengthens global research networks, and advances our collective professional identity.

Global research and innovation are essential to occupational therapy’s future. Congresses like WFOT elevate our vision, reinforce evidence-informed practice, and cultivate leadership that transcends borders. As we await the announcement of the WFOT 2030 location in the coming months, I encourage Texas practitioners to consider the transformative impact of participating in global events. When we gather internationally, we do more than attend a conference, we shape the future of occupational therapy together.



The Inside-Out Evolution: From Clinical Recovery to Life Mastery

Kimberly Bachmeier, OTR,
Certified Life Mastery Consultant and DreamBuilder Coach



Kimberly Bachmeier,
OTR

As occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants, we are the ultimate architects of adaptation. Throughout my work life, (which has included clinical OT, fitness instructor, running coach, and entrepreneur), I have realized that while we are experts at helping people function within their circumstances or environment. There is a higher calling in helping people flourish. This realization eventually led me to my role as a Transformational Life Coach and Life Mastery Consultant, certified by the Brave Thinking Institute (BTI). By bridging clinical science with “Inside-Out” transformation, we help patients reclaim not just self-reliance, but true mastery over their lives.

Dissolving the “Mental Contractures”

As a home health OT, I often encounter patients who are physically “stable” but emotionally paralyzed. I recently worked with a woman who had survived acute respiratory failure. At home, she was terrified to shower, leave her apartment, or take the elevator, because she was haunted by the fear of her oxygen running out. Similarly, I worked with many elderly clients whose greatest “disability” was not weakness or poor balance, but a debilitating fear of falling.

Traditional OT often focuses on task modifications, home modifications, or select exercises. By incorporating “Brave Thinking” technology, we address the internal landscape first. We treat the “mental contractures” - those limiting beliefs and fear-based narratives - before we ever step into the hallway. We shift the focus from “what I’m afraid will happen” to “what I would love to do.”

By coaching the above-mentioned patient, I was able to shift her mindset, so she was not only walking and showering again, but she was able to integrate into her community.

The Power of Intentional Recovery

I have seen similar transformations with stroke survivors. By teaching visualization, mindfulness, and positive self-talk (the “language of success”) as formal interventions, I have watched patients exceed their initial prognoses. I educate them on the power of gratitude, intention-setting, and the “power of awareness” focusing on what you want rather than what you don’t want.

When patients fixate on pain or limitation, I introduce “the shift.” I guide them through therapeutic breathing and multisensory visualization of a meaningful activity they love. By engaging in all the senses, we move beyond cognitive thought and into neurological encoding. We are effectively training the nervous system to adopt this vision as a somatic baseline, allowing the body to “memorize” the sensation of health and well-being before the physical movement begins.

Healing from the Inside-Out

As occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants, we utilize the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) model. My approach simply expands the “Person” to include their vibrational state and the “Environment” to include their mental atmosphere.

My background in movement has shown me that the body goes where the mind leads. Today, my mission is to teach and empower people to step off the “hamster wheel” of reactionary living and become the deliberate designers of their own experience. We are far greater than any medical diagnosis, situation, or condition! I invite my colleagues to ask our clients not just “What can you do?” but “What would you love?” When we align daily occupations with a high-level vision, we are not just doing therapy; we are empowering a total life rewrite.

I Bought A Shirt

Rachelle Elliott, OTR, MOT
Revista OT Newsletter Editor



Rachelle Elliott, OTR,
MOT

I bought a shirt the other day, while I am not a big proponent of “wearing my beliefs” I saw this shirt and knew that I needed to publicly have the opportunity to express how I feel. This shirt reads “Big fan of human rights.”

The idea of social justice is not exclusive to marginalized people groups. You do not have to be living in an area of conflict to be affected by the actions of people on either side of the issue. Justice has been considered a core value of occupational therapy my entire OT career. OT Practitioners have an obligation to acknowledge not just social justice but also how social justice impacts a person’s occupational justice.

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT; 2019) defines occupational justice as “The right for all people to engage in occupations they need to survive, define as meaningful, and that contribute positively to their own well-being and the well-being of their communities” (p. 1).



It can be tempting to shut down a conversation with a peer, or with a community member, when the events you see on the news are not happening in your backyard. However, for many people in our country that distance is encroaching closer to home every day. No matter in which setting you practice, you work with someone impacted by these current events.

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote of how a true neighbor responds in challenging situations:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others. In dangerous valleys and hazardous pathways, he will lift some bruised and beaten brother to a higher and more noble life.”

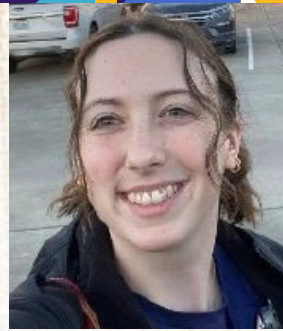
– Martin Luther King Jr., [Strength to Love](#)

How we respond as Occupational Therapy Practitioners to the injustices we see in person or in our communities impacts our ability to best care for our clients. We must ask ourselves these types of questions regularly: Do we treat all our clients equally? When someone lives in poverty and does not have to newest or cleanest wardrobe does that change how much time we spend getting to know them or how much effort we spend to work on their deficits? When someone does not speak our primary language do we still take the care and effort to make certain they have an appropriate home program with written instructions? What about when we have a client who has specific religious preferences that do not match our own- do we ensure that we set our personal beliefs aside to best meet the needs of our client?

We have an obligation as OTP’s to promote social and occupational justice. We also have an obligation as a member of the human race to be big fans of human rights.

What Do You Mean Fieldwork is Starting Soon?

Maya Landgrebe, OT State Student Rep and
Leena Lozano, OTA State Student Rep



Maya Landgrebe, OTS



Leena Lozano, OTAS

Leena Lozano (OTA) and Maya Landgrebe (eOTD) have recently started their first level two fieldwork (FW) rotations, both at inpatient rehabs! In this article, we want to share with you some of our “wish we had known” and do’s/don’ts to FW! Please keep in mind these are our experiences, and everyone’s journey is different!

When we started, we both felt overwhelmed and did not know where to start. Is the facility going to be nice? Do I know enough? Is my fieldwork (FW) educator nice? Let us tell you: it’ll be okay! They do not expect you to come in knowing everything to be a perfect OT/OTA, as long as you are willing to learn!

Before FW:

- **Review which setting you are going into.**
 - a. Learn about requirements, insurance, common diagnosis, etc. to help you prepare before your first day.
- **Reach out to your FW educator beforehand!**
 - b. Introduce yourself to them and ask how you can be prepared before FW!
- **Trust yourself!**
 - c. You know more than you think you do, and you have worked hard to get here!

During FW Dos/Don’ts:

1. Ask questions!

- a. Do: No one will fault you for being curious. Do not be afraid to ask questions and get to know what you are dealing with.
- b. Don’t: Stay quiet or move on.

2. Trust your FW educator.

- a. Do: Trust them and their expertise; they have been in your shoes too!
- b. Don’t: Think you know better. You can learn even more from those with true experience.

3. Be willing to step in and try new things.

- a. Do: Try something you have not done before. Put what you have learned into practice!
- b. Don’t: Step away or try to avoid things, you got this, try it out and learn!

4. Keep in contact with your support system.

- a. Do: Keep up with your cohort; they are going through the same feelings you are. Make sure to spend time with your friends/family, as they love and support you through it all!
- b. Don’t: Cut yourself off; you are loved by others!

5. Take notes.

- a. Do: Write down intervention ideas, things you want to learn more about, what changes you would want to make, quick ways to document, etc.
- b. Don’t: Write down personal information or HIPPA protected info.

6. Be willing to learn from everyone!

- a. Do: You will meet different practitioners and disciplines in FW. Everyone is different, and it’s important to see unique perspectives!
- b. Don’t: Not listen because it’s not your FW educator, or think you know better!

The beauty of FW is putting what we learned into practice. FW has allowed us to be creative with personalized activities and learn so much about the communities we are serving. We love you guys, and we love serving as your OTA and OT student reps. Never hesitate to reach out with any questions! You can reach us at our Instagram [@tota_students](https://www.instagram.com/tota_students) or our emails txotstudentrep@tota.org and txotastudentrep@tota.org.

Capstone Opportunities and Barriers in Maternal and Pelvic Health

For OT and PT students searching for Capstone opportunities in acute care pelvic health and maternal health, we recorded a roundtable discussion with clinicians for them to obtain more information on these emerging areas of practice.

View this video created by the Pelvic Health Network
Video Link: https://youtu.be/gm0w8ITKcEI?si=ybPeVQ_wzqwFA6Ak



From Student to Adjunct: What Emerging Clinicians Bring Back to the Classroom

Natalie Pravinkumar, OTD, OTR
Rio Grande District TOTA Member



Natalie Pravinkumar,
OTD, OTR

Three years ago, I sat behind a desk as a first-year student at the University of Texas at El Paso's Doctor of Occupational Therapy program, buried in textbooks and trying to convince myself that caffeine counts as a food group. Today, I stand at the front of that same classroom as an adjunct faculty member, while also practicing in inpatient rehabilitation and conducting stroke research. While the transition from student to clinician is expected, moving from student to educator requires something different - turning academic experiences into lessons that help future therapists actually think, not just memorize.

As I returned to the classroom to teach, imposter syndrome quietly waved hello. What could a very early-career clinician possibly contribute to student learning? Gradually, I realized that my close connection to both the student experience and current practice offered a unique vantage point. I asked myself: knowing what I know now, what would have better prepared me for fieldwork and real-world practice?

The answer was not tougher exams, more assignments, or heavier textbooks. It was synthesis - the ability to connect concepts across courses and apply them to messy, unpredictable clinical realities.

In early coursework, students naturally prioritize memorization. Examinations reward recall, and academic success often depends on mastering details quickly and efficiently. However, in practice, patients do not come neatly labeled with isolated impairments. Movement, cognition, environment, emotion, and occupation

collide, testing therapists' clinical reasoning in real-time. Therapists must integrate these pieces to understand how a person can engage in meaningful life activities, instead of simply reciting muscle actions on command.

This gap in my education stuck with me. Memorization may carry a student through exams, but synthesis carries a clinician through practice. My recent experience as a student, combined with daily clinical practice and ongoing research, allows me to teach with a translational lens. I remember the mental load of OT school, and I see clearly how foundational knowledge informs decision-making in real-world practice. This perspective shapes classroom discussions, the questions I pose, and how I connect theory to occupational performance from day one.

Emerging practitioners bring a unique superpower to academia. We know firsthand when concepts felt abstract in the classroom, and we now know where those same ideas become essential in practice. This dual awareness helps us to guide students beyond just surviving coursework toward developing professional reasoning earlier in their training.

Inviting early-career clinicians into teaching does more than fill a faculty seat. It strengthens the profession at its foundation. We bring immediacy, empathy, and a healthy dose of realism, showing students that what they are learning is not just for exams, but for life past school. If we can do that while sharing a laugh or two along the way, then we are not just shaping future therapists; we are shaping the profession itself.



MAKE AN IMPACT!

Help shape the future of TOTA, represent your peers, network, and build your leadership skills!

[SUBMIT APPLICATION HERE](#)

Applications Are Being Accepted for TOTA 2026 State OT & OTA Student Reps – NOW through April 18, 2026!

www.tota.org

Qualifications for the State Student Representatives (OTA and OT)

TOTA's Bylaws, Policies and Procedures outlines the qualifications a student (OTA and OT) must have to apply for the role of State Student Rep (One representative is an OTA student and one representative is an OT student).

Must be current TOTA members and retain their membership while serving in these volunteer positions. Attend an OTA and OT school in Texas and are in good standing with their schools.

The positions rotate among the OTA and OT schools. Current volunteers are students from Texas Woman's University Houston and Houston Community College. Students from the other OTA and OT schools are welcome to apply for these positions.

Must be a student during the entire year they serve as the State Student Representative (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027).

Will need to fully complete the State Student Representative application and submit it by April 18, 2026 PM.

Must obtain and submit with your completed application a written recommendation letter from one of your faculty members.

From the student applications, TOTA's President interviews, selects, and appoints (1) OTA student and (1) OT student to these positions.

Build Leadership Skills

- Build lasting leadership skills such as teamwork, effective and clear communication, time management, and much more.
- These skills will positively impact your time as a student and beyond into your time as a practitioner.

Networking

- Work with the TOTA board of directors and have direct contact with students from all across Texas.
- You never know who will be your future boss, colleague or connection!

Make a Lasting Impact

- Your contribution as a student leader directly impacts the students of TOTA.
- You amplify the voices of students within Texas and impact how TOTA serves the students within the organization!

Responsibilities

- Act as the liaison between all TOTA students and TOTA at the state level.
- Support and communicate with the District Student reps and SOTA-TOTA reps.
- Work with your OT/OTA Student counterpart to plan and execute a student session at the annual TOTA conference.
- Work with your partner to write three student articles for *Revista OT*.
- Run the Student TOTA Instagram account.
- Act as a mentor to the incoming state rep for the year following your active state role.

DISTRICT ZONE

Great Plains West

Chris Lasek, OTR, MOT
Great Plains West District Chair

The Great Plains West District (GPWD) had our annual Bubba Klostermann Lunch & Learn series this Spring. We had a great line up of speakers with the focus this year being on adult rehab. On February 19th, Molly Setliff presented "Supporting Meaningful Participation in Neurocognitive Disorders", where we learned how to engage those with dementia in meaningful occupations. On March 19th, Vinita Menon-Jobes talked about "Upper Extremity Treatment Continuum Within Occupation-based Practice Post-stroke", where we learned how to apply Neuro-Developmental Therapy (NDT) principles for stroke patients. Our final lunch & learn will take place on April 30th with Amber Armstead presenting on "Creating Wellness Programming for Community-dwelling Older Adults to Age in Place". All these 1-hr CEs are recorded and available to watch on TOTA's LMS website. Our district will also be celebrating OT Month in April by participating in several events throughout our region. Check TOTA's calendar to see when and where these will be taking place.



Chris Lasek, OTR, MOT

ACU SOTA ACTIVITIES

Abilene Christian University (ACU) Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) has also had an exciting and meaningful Spring 2026 semester! Their members gathered for social events, such as to create Valentine's bags for SOTA members to express their appreciation for one another and participated in *Share the Love* where members made 80 homemade cards for a local rehabilitation and long-term care facility. They also volunteered in varying roles at *Night to Shine*, an incredible event hosted by Tim Tebow's Foundation to celebrate individuals with disabilities. In March, they had a Talent Show event to bring their cohort together and celebrate community by showcasing their talents.

They are excited about the remainder of the semester and all that it will bring! They are also ready to celebrate OT month in April! They will be hosting a sticker design competition to feature ACU SOTA's creative side, and hand delivering these to local clinics to celebrate OT Month. On top of that, they have a large group preparing to attend the AOTA conference in Anaheim! They look forward to the social and learning opportunities that abound as this semester continues to unfold!

Update provided by Analeaha Dunaway, ACU SOTA liaison.

Night to Shine



Share the Love



DISTRICT ZONE

Gulf Coast East

Renee Shepherd, COTA, Ed.S
District Chair



Renee Shepherd,
COTA, Ed.S

Happy OT Month! Occupational therapy practitioners play a pivotal role in fostering resilience and independence in communities. Practitioners inspire long-lasting change and demonstrate the profound value of OT in real-world settings both in and outside the clinic by integrating evidence-based practice with community-focused initiatives. This month we will highlight the service that some of the programs in GCED are providing to the community.

Texas Woman's University's SOTA-Houston members play an active and meaningful role in supporting their community at the annual No Falls Festival, hosted by the Houston Area Parkinson's Society (HAPS). During the festival, the OTD students are hands-on contributors, assisting at the fall-prevention testing stations by providing close guarding for participants to prevent falls or injuries should a loss of balance occur. Students also facilitate smooth transitions between stations, ensuring each participant moves safely and comfortably throughout the event.

The Occupational Therapy Assistant students at Lone Star College in Kingwood have made a meaningful impact in the community by partnering with organizations such as Bridgewood Farms, New Horizons Activity Center, and The Lighthouse of Houston, students have supported adults with physical and cognitive limitations in developing functional life skills, social participation, and independence. Their involvement not only enhances participants' confidence and vocational skills but also their quality of life, promoting inclusion and community engagement.



Houston City College has partnered with Autism Moms of Houston to create Alex's Autism Alliance. The Alliance provides social skills, community engagement, and behavior management services to individuals over the age of 21 who have aged out of traditional services.

By integrating evidence-based practice with community-focused initiatives, practitioners inspire long-lasting change and demonstrate the profound value of OT in real-world settings. These efforts reaffirm the importance of collaboration, creativity, and a shared commitment to advancing occupational justice.



Trinity North: Building Momentum, Strengthening Community, Advancing Our Profession



Kayla Allen, OTR, OTD, CALM, CDP, CSRS

Kayla Allen, OTR, OTD, CALM, CDP, CSRS
Trinity North District Chair

The Trinity North District is stepping boldly into a new season of growth, collaboration, and impact. At our recent District Meeting, leaders and members gathered to align with TOTA's three-year strategic plan and identify tangible ways to better serve occupational therapy practitioners, assistants, and students across our district.

Our focus is clear:
Education, Engagement, and Expansion.

Advancing Educational Excellence

One of the strongest themes from our discussion was the need for more in-person continuing education and experiential learning opportunities. Trinity North is committed to developing advanced, relevant, and practice-driven CE events that meet the evolving needs of clinicians across settings. From specialized educational offerings to interactive learning formats, we are working to ensure our district provides meaningful professional development that strengthens competence and confidence in practice.

In alignment with TOTA's mission to advance the profession, we are also exploring partnerships with academic programs and community organizations to create bridges between education, clinical practice, and service.

Strengthening Membership and Student Engagement

Currently, district membership engagement sits at approximately 3.3%, with a goal to grow to 10% through intentional outreach and involvement. A key priority is strengthening student and practitioner participation through awards, district events, and increased representation.

Open leadership opportunities include:

- Committee on Membership
- OT District Student Representative
- OTA District Student Representative
- SOTA Representatives

We encourage members who are enthusiastic about leadership, advocacy, and professional development to step forward. Engagement is not just about attendance; it is about ownership of our profession's future.

Community Presence and Advocacy

Trinity North is also expanding its presence within the community. Plans are underway to explore community partnerships during Brain Injury Awareness Month and OT Month. These initiatives reflect our commitment to advocacy, visibility, and service beyond our clinical walls. Serving the profession includes serving our communities.

Transparency, Training, and Communication

The district is aligning closely with state-level leadership to improve communication, clarify expectations, and strengthen support systems for the district chair and district committees. Clear training pathways and collaborative planning ensure that Trinity North operates with excellence and accountability.

Your Voice Matters

Trinity North is your district. Whether you are a student, OTA, OT, educator, or emerging leader, your ideas, expertise, and participation shape the impact we can make together.

We invite you to:

- Attend upcoming events
- Explore leadership roles
- Renew or confirm your membership
- Share ideas for CE topics and community initiatives

Together, we are not only growing in numbers. We are strengthening relationships, advancing clinical excellence, and elevating occupational therapy across Trinity North District.

Let's build something powerful together.



TOTA HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

- Esther Bell, OTR, FAOTA (1998)
*Robert K. Bing, EdD, OTR, FAOTA [b. 1929-d. 2003]
O. Jayne Bowman, OT PhD (2020)
*Lenore Brannon, OTR [b. 1898-d. 1986]
Cindy Brosig, OT, CHT (2021)
Reggie Michael Campbell, OTR, MS, FAOTA (2016)
*F. Catherine Currie, OTR [b. 1915-d. 1998]
Donald Davidson, OTR (2001)
Harriett Davidson, MA, OTR (2015)
*Dorothy Jocelia Denn, OTR [b. 1912-d. 1999]
Ruth Dodds OTR (2020)
*Virginia Chandler Dykes, OTR (1989) [b. 1930-d.2022]
Grace Gilkeson, PhD, OTR, FAOTA (1995)
*Nancy Griffin, EdD, OTR (2000) [b. 1936-d. 2014]
Mary Leary Hennigan, OTR (2022)
Gayle Hersch, PhD, OTR (2017)
*Margaret Hope Keeney, OTR [b. 1913-d. 2003]
*Lucile Land Lacy, OTR [b. 1901-d. 1994]
Jaclyn F. Low, OTR, PhD, FAOTA (2014)
*Cruz Antonia Mattei, OTR [b. 1924-d. 2011]
*Eileen S. McKee, OTR [b. 1923-d. 2010]
*Lillian Hoyle Parent, MA, OTR, FAOTA [b. 1921-d. 2016]
Suzanne Peloquin, OTR, PhD, FAOTA (2012)
*Ruth Whipple Pershing, OTR [b. 1923-d. 1998]
Jean Polichino, OTR, MS, FAOTA (2020)
Terri Powers, OTR (2022)
Kathlyn L. Reed, PhD, OTR, FAOTA, MLIS (2010)
*Irene Greer Robertson, OTR [b. 1921-d. 1996]
*Sophie Lin Rydin, PhD, OT [b.1950-d.2020] (2020 Awarded posthumously)
Gretchen M. Schmalz, OTR (2002)
*Jane Foliart Sims, OTR [b. 1900-d. 1990]
*Geraldine Ann Skinner, OTR [b. 1924-d. 1991 (1989)
Caroline Ann Smalley Polliard, OTR (2000)
*Patricia Ann Truchon Ramm, OTR (1990) [b. 1928-d. 2007]
Leonard Sobel, OTR, MOT (2020)
*Pearl Jones Tennyson, OTR [b. 1904-d. 1993]
*Lynn C. Tupper, OTR, MPH, MOT (2013) [b. 1947-d. 2015]
*Luanna S. Vana, OTR [b. 1918-d. 2008]
*Fannie Vanderkooi, OTR [b. 1894-d. 1990]
*Cary Starke Westhause (1994) [b. 1932-d. 2001]
*Virginia White, PhD, OTR, FAOTA (2008) [b. 1921-d. 2018]
*Rena Worthington, OTR [b. 1909-d. 2002]

*Deceased

Updated: 12/10/2018, 3/13/2020, 11/15/2020,
3/16/2021, 2/22/22, 3/17/23, 2/19/24, 2/12/25

TOTA PAST PRESIDENTS' EMPLOYMENT

www.tota.org

| NAME | DATE | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Jane Ethel Myers | 1936-1938 | Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children, Dallas |
| Marjorie Ellen Woodward | 1939-1940 | Austin State Hospital, Austin |
| Beatrice Manning Cooney | 1940-1942 | Wichita Falls State Hospital, Wichita Falls |
| Edna Lucile Vehlow | 1943-1945 | McCloskey General Hospital, Temple |
| Lenore Brannon | 1946-1948 | US Public Health Service Hospital, Fort Worth |
| Lucille Land Lacy | 1949-1951 | Veterans Administration Hospital, Houston |
| Mary Britton | 1951-1955 | Baylor University of College of Medicine, Houston |
| Gladys Irene Greer (Robertson) | 1955-1958 | Hermann Hospital, Houston |
| Mary Alice Wood Coombs | 1958-1961 | Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools, Austin |
| Mabel Louise McMillen | 1961-1962 | Veterans Administration Hospital, Waco |
| Mary Lee Kaylor | 1962-1964 | Veterans Administration Hospital, Waco |
| Patricia Mary Fong King | 1964-1966 | United Cerebral Palsy Vocational Unit, Austin |
| Mary Joyce Newsom | 1966-1970 | Texas Institute of Rehabilitation & Research, Houston |
| Robert Kendall Bing | 1970-1974 | University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston |
| Patricia Ann Truchon Ramm | 1974-1976 | Austin Travis County Public Health, Austin |
| Joy Louise Watson Boone | 1976-1978 | University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston |
| Georgiann Fort Laseter | 1978-1980 | Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas |
| Cynthia Gayle Jones | 1980-1984 | Balcones Special Services Cooperative, San Antonio |
| Donald Allan Davidson | 1984-1987 | University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston |
| Rita K. Handley | 1987-1990 | Texas Dept. of Mental Health & Mental Retardation |
| Cary Eliz. Starke Westhause | 1990-1994 | Texas Advisory Board for Occupational Therapy, Austin |
| Paul David Ellsworth | 1994 | University of Texas San Antonio |
| Esther Bernice Bell | 1994-1998 | Gonzales Warm Springs Fnd. Rehab. Center. Gonzales |
| Sheree Gibson Jarrell | 1998-2000 | Navarro College, Navarro |
| Gary Arthur Wade | 2000 | University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston |
| Evie Harness | 2000-2004 | Christus Santa Rosa Hospital, San Antonio |
| Mack Ivy | 2004-2008 | MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston |
| Lynda Jennings | 2008-2012 | The Village at Incarnate Word, San Antonio |
| Judy Robinson Skarbek | 2012-2016 | Methodist Hospital, Houston |
| Robin Van Clearman | 2016-2020 | Private Practice, Houston |
| Jason Lynn Stark | 2020-2024 | Cole Health, Spring |

Employment is based on location at time person was president.

1/2/2026

Happy OT Month!



TOTTA
90TH ANNIVERSARY



1936-2026

Honoring 90 Years of Impact