

REVISTA OT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

VOL 35 NO. 3 / Summer 2022 EDITION



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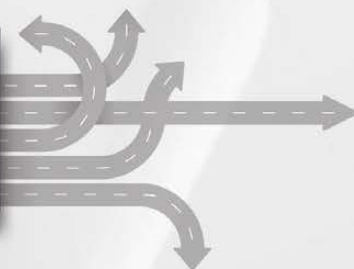
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TOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



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REVISTA OT: Summer Edition 2022

2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXHIBITOR REGISTRATION IS LIVE!

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**CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO AND
TO ACCESS THE 2022 PROSPECTUS**



Letter from the President

Jason Stark, OT, MHA – TOTA President



Jason Stark, OT, MHA
TOTA President

Time is slowing down for no one. We, students, faculty, practitioners, and human beings, all feel this. Demands for increased productivity affect both personal and professional lives. I see the toll that this is taking on our overall bandwidth and ability to serve, volunteer, work, play, and mentally adapt to a fast-paced world.

I would like to share my perspective. As we race from task to task and try to juggle all that is thrown our way, we must take care of ourselves. A little self-care can go a long way. It's not that we can't do x or y, it's that we just need to pause, breathe, take the minutes we need for ourselves to be our best version of ourselves. If we can do this, then we are more likely to be able to continue our service to patients and students, profession, volunteer organizations, and each other. It can be as simple as taking *One Minute for Yourself*.

Spencer Johnson, MD, is one of the most admired thought leaders and widely read authors in the world. Dr. Johnson is often cited as the best there is at taking complex subjects and presenting simple solutions that work.

In his book *One Minute for Yourself*, Dr. Johnson shows how stopping and taking a minute out of the day can make life more meaningful and enjoyable for us and for those nearby.

I will share a few quotes from the book as reminders for all who spend most of their time taking care of others to also take care of themselves.

Taking Care of Me:

- Taking Care of Business Includes Taking Care of Your "Self"
- The greatest reason for outer success-at work and in life-is inner success.
- I treat myself the way I would like others to treat me.
- Take care of yourself by looking at what you want versus what you need.
- Ask yourself, "What is the best way for me right now to take better care of Me?"

- In one minute, you can change your attitude, and in that minute, you can change your entire day.
- When you take good care of yourself, you feel less angry towards yourself and others. When you are happier you work better, and you treat others better.

Taking Care of Thee

- The way you treat others is the way you treat yourself.
- Whenever you start to criticize yourself take a minute for yourself to simply stop, look and ask yourself: Is there a better way to take care of myself right now?
- When other people take good care of themselves, they are happier with themselves and with me!

Taking Care of We

- Even more important than my being loved is being loving.
- We can have a wonderful relationship together when I have one with me and you have one with you.
- When we've taken good care of ourselves, we can share our Best Selves with each other.
- When every person in the world takes better care of themselves, everyone in the world will feel better taken care of. Then we may finally begin to care more about each other.
- It's just good business, for you to take that important one minute for your "self" and to encourage others to do the same.

Johnson, Spencer (2005). *One Minute for Yourself: a simple strategy for a better life*. Harper Collins Entertainment.

Please take care of yourselves.

Jason Stark
President

Judith Joseph, Executive Director



Judith Joseph, OTR,
MA, CDRS, TOTA
Executive Director

I AM A MEMBER because [CLICK HERE TO ANSWER](#)

In my April 2022 article, I addressed concerns about why occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are not members of TOTA. If you didn't have a chance to read the article, here is a brief statistical recap.

- Only 4.4% of the approximately 18,335 licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants in Texas are TOTA members.
- There are 1,685 total TOTA members, 649 occupational therapists, 147 occupational therapy assistants, and 878 student members.
- Student membership numbers continue to decline due to fieldwork, capstones, and graduation.
- Practitioner numbers have not risen, although the number of schools in Texas has expanded.

I asked people to respond to the question, "I am not a TOTA member because." I received a few responses through the google survey and email. I would like to share some of those responses and provide comments.

NON-MEMBER: I was a member as a student and in my first few years of practice, but let my membership lapse due to the state conference being held at a time of year that I can very rarely attend.

RESPONSE: In the past TOTA membership was required to attend the annual conference. We eliminated that requirement and began using a virtual platform for the conference in 2020. This gives us the opportunity to provide on-demand content in addition to the in-person experience for the attendee through the end of the year.

NON-MEMBER: I'm a student and can't afford to renew with all the expenses of boards, books, and license coming up.

RESPONSE: This year, TOTA provided free webinars and informational sessions from TBOTE and an NBCOT Exam Prep Workshop (Virtual). Plans are underway for a virtual seminar on OT fellowships in Texas and a half-day in-person workshop on preparing students for the first 2 years of practice. Stay tuned for more innovative ideas!

NON-MEMBER: Cost and I am a school-based therapist and don't feel like there are many resources for us other than the school-based conference held every other year.

RESPONSE: TOTA has a school-based practitioner's focus group formed by Jean Polichino, OTR, MS, FAOTA. On June 11, TOTA held a 2-hour virtual session, "School-based Occupational Therapy: Solutions for Multi-tiered Systems of Support", by Lou Ann Hintz, Ph.D.,

OTR. A second session was planned but had to be postponed.

NON-MEMBER: I spend a lot of money on certifications, recertifications, CEUs, and specialty memberships (Neonatal Therapy). My pay has not increased but all of these have!

RESPONSE: TOTA has not had a practitioner membership dues increase in over 10 years. To ease the payment burden, TOTA offers monthly dues installments of \$9.75/month for OTAs and \$13.75/month for OTs. The costs of hosting annual conferences and virtual events have increased substantially over the years. Our administrative costs have not been passed on to our members. Instead, we are focused on sources of revenue other than membership dues. TOTA is the only organization in Texas that advocates for occupational therapy practice.

NON-MEMBER: I am overextended with work responsibilities and home. Not interested in politics.

RESPONSE: We acknowledge how over extended people are and thus provide CE opportunities in the evening, on weekends, and on-demand through our learning management system. TOTA also used a virtual platform for our conferences and gave attendees an opportunity to have access to pre-recorded educational content through the end of the year. Let's face it, not many people are interested in politics. However, political decisions, those made by local school boards as well as state and federal elected officials, have affected the practice of occupational therapy since the early years of the profession. For example, occupational therapy did not become a service covered under Medicare because some senator or representative thought it was a good idea. It took the efforts of occupational therapy practitioners led by the AOTA to bring our value to their attention.

There is safety in numbers. TOTA officially represents its members, but we stand in the gap for all occupational therapist assistants, occupational therapists, and occupational therapy students (OTA and OT) in Texas.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback, please know we hear your concerns and are working hard to gain your support. To our members, thank you for your support and I ask that you share with others why you are a TOTA member. Be sure to include your name.

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TOTA Education Chair Report

Megan Taylor, OTR, OTD



Megan Taylor,
OTR, OTD
TOTA Education Chair

I hope you are enjoying the incredible continuing education (CE) opportunities TOTA is offering in 2022! TOTA strives to serve the interests of members by providing high-quality, evidence-based information through peer reviewed CE events. Check out this list of the newest live and recorded, TOTA-approved CE courses:

- **School-based Occupational Therapy: Solutions for Multi-tiered Systems** – Lou Ann Hintz, PhD, OTR
- **Orthotic Fabrication Made Easy** – Cecilia Fierro, OTD, OTR, Jesus Delgado, MOT, OT, CHT, CLT, and Noah Munoz, MOT, OTR
- **The Art of Sexuality and Disability** – Jennifer Summers, OTR, OTD

These courses can be found through TOTA's Learning Management System (<https://texas-occupational-therapy-association.teachable.com/>) and are FREE to TOTA members. For a complete list of courses provided either virtually or at various in-person locations, visit the TOTA website at <https://www.tota.org/approved-courses>.

Save the Date

Plan on attending our 2022 TOTA Annual Conference on November 11-12, 2022, in Denton for more outstanding CE events as we "jOURney forward"!

Contact me with any education questions:

Megan.r.taylor@ttuhsc.edu



TOTA 2022 Election Results

97 TOTA members cast their votes in the TOTA 2022 elections from June 1 – June 30, 2022.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2022 TOTA Elections and thank you to all who voted and ran! These candidates will assume office on November 11, 2022, following the TOTA Annual Business Meeting.

**President
State Treasurer**

JASON STARK
SHARI FELTON

Trinity District Positions

District Vice-Chair JULIE HEBERT
District Secretary ASHLEY BREWER HARRELL

Gulf Coast East District

District Vice-Chair ANGELA RENEE SHEPHERD
Secretary SABRINA STARKS-TARBLE

Great Plains West

District Chair CHRIS LASEK
Treasurer Write-in candidate – MOLLY AMLUNG

Rio Grande District

District Chair KALEIGH STEVENS
Treasurer TIMOTHY TU

Capital Centex District

District Vice-Chair LACEY SPARK
Secretary No candidate

Alamo South

District Chair Write-in candidate – MONICA CLARK
Treasurer No candidate

Proposed Changes to Bylaws

97 TOTA members cast their vote with 86 voting in favor of the addition of the DEI standing committee and 10 in opposition.

MOTION 1: Addition of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee as a Standing Committee.
Passed

95 TOTA members cast their vote with 76 to approve the removal of the district treasurer position and 19 in opposition.

MOTION 4: Removal of the District Treasurer Position.
Passed



The 2022 Nominating Committee:

Ricky Joseph - Chair
Erik Johnson
Julie Hebert
Cecilia Fierro
Leonard Sobel
Laura Novak

2022 TOTA Annual Conference- jOURney Forward 2022

Evie Harness, OTR



Evie Harness, OTR,
TOTA State
Conference Chair

Two years ago, we booked a new venue for our annual conference. Unfortunately, COVID had different plans for us. Finally, the time has come. We are very excited to invite you to the 2022 TOTA Annual Conference at The Embassy Suites by Hilton Denton Convention Center. We will be evaluating this location as a possible site in the rotation for future conferences.

We love that this venue is close to the Denton campus of Texas Woman's University. TWU alumni may enjoy taking time over the weekend to stroll down memory lane. The hotel is in the newly developed Rayzor Ranch area with convenient shops, dining, and live music. Along with free parking, two other popular amenities are the free made-to-order breakfast and complimentary evening receptions. What a great way to finish off a long day of sessions by kicking up your feet and networking with old and new friends.

This year, our conference will continue the two-day (Friday/ Saturday) live schedule. We also plan to offer additional prerecorded sessions on Sunday. Attendees will have the opportunity to view these sessions until the end of the year. In addition to participating in program offerings, we hope you will take time to browse and visit with vendors in the exhibit hall. This year we will have a Kendra Scott-Pop-Up Shop with 20% of the sales going to "Stepping Stones" of Denton. Stepping Stones is a peer group for persons with early-stage Alzheimer's and other dementias. The purpose of the group is described as "setting a pathway to support, educate, and engage those with dementia and their caregivers." TWU occupational therapy students serve as volunteers. Social workers offer concurrent family support groups.

We look forward to our 2022 Key-Note Speaker, Claudette Fette, PH.D., OTR, CRC. She is a faculty member at Texas Woman's University. Mental health will once again be a focus of the coming legislative session, Claudette brings expertise in strength-based practice and assessment, mental health promotion and early intervention, psychosocial rehabilitation, and community-based practice, and facilitating meaningful occupation.

New for TOTA Conference 2022:

The Artifact Center: The Artifact Center is a dedicated virtual function for poster sessions. Presenters will submit their materials through Whova (our conference app and virtual platform), from photos and PDFs to pre-recorded videos and even a Livestream link from any major site. More information will be provided to presenters in the coming weeks.

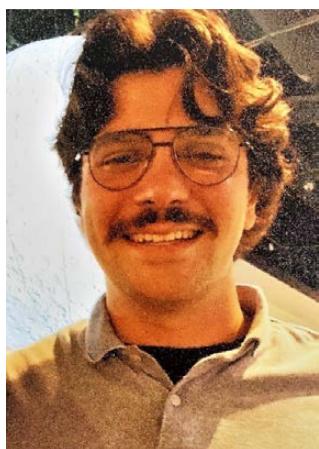
Changed Timing of Annual Business Meeting:

Rather than the usual 10-11 a.m. time slot on Saturday, this year the TOTA Annual Business Meeting will be held Friday at 6:30 p.m.

tota.org



TOTA 2022 Endowed Scholarship Recipients



Name: Hunter Bozant

Institution: San Jacinto College South

Anticipated Graduation Date: May 2022

My name is Hunter Bozant. I received a traumatic brain injury in 2015 due to a motor vehicle accident. Occupational therapy was the only form of rehabilitation that I received treatment for, and now I am excited to be able to share my journey with future patients and give encouragement to those who feel the recovery process may be difficult at times.

TOTA Involvement:

Previous San Jacinto TOTA Representative

Where are you currently in your academic process? (fieldwork, capstone)? Level 2b rotation, Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

Interests/Professional Goals:

I am interested in neurology and neuropsychology, and I aspire to attain my doctorate in neuropsychology so that I may be able to help the field of occupational therapy with research and evidence-based practice to further advance the recovery of brain injuries.



Name: Theresa Bautista

Institution: University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

Anticipated Graduation Date: August 2022

TOTA Involvement:

TOTA member since 2020

Where are you currently in your academic process? (fieldwork, capstone)? I am currently in my last semester working on implementing a life skills and resilience program for foster care youth as my capstone project.

Interests/Professional Goals:

I am interested in working with children and youth with disabilities. I am also very interested in exploring the role of occupational therapy in mental health and research.



Advocacy = Opportunity

John Luna, OTR, OTD – TOTA Chair of Legislative and Political Affairs



John Luna,
OTR, OTD

Imagine waking up tomorrow morning to see a closet full of neon green scrubs for work. Your breakfast consists of shredded wheat cereal and your 65-minute commute to your job at the rehab clinic is already input into your navigation system. For some, this may represent an ideal scenario. For others such as myself, this is not a situation I consider ideal. I don't look good in neon green, I'm lactose intolerant, and adding two hours to my workday will not help me achieve a healthy work-life balance. Don't get me wrong. If this is my only opportunity. I would rock those neon scrubs, find some audiobooks to download for my commute, and plan an extended vacation once a year to make up for my long work week. How can I avoid those neon green scrubs? How can we expand our available opportunities? Many opportunities within our profession are afforded to us through advocacy.

Advocacy created opportunities for practitioners and consumers alike. For consumers, advocacy helps sustain opportunities to access necessary services. For example, a close relative recently slipped and fell on the porch when



watering plants. My relative suffered a shoulder sprain which required outpatient therapy services. Because my relative is covered by Medicare, I was not concerned about opportunities to access needed services in an outpatient setting as the annual therapy cap was replaced by annual thresholds and KX modifiers in 2018.

In the same way, advocacy created opportunities for practitioners. For example, during the 115th federal legislative session, HR 2810's passage recognized occupational therapy assistants as providers under the TRICARE program. This recognition created opportunities for practitioners to meet the needs of individuals and families they previously could not treat and be reimbursed for services rendered.

Other opportunities for practitioners and consumers came about during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, some clients' access to therapy services was limited by facility and school closure. However, waivers facilitating service delivery and reimbursement using telehealth connected OT practitioners with clients despite barriers imposed by a global pandemic. Additional waivers permitted OTs to perform initial and comprehensive assessments required to open Medicare home health cases. These waivers became permanent with the passage of provisions within the Home Health Flexibility Act, which was included in the Consolidated appropriation act of 2021.

None of these opportunities happened by chance. They would not have been possible without the advocacy of dedicated practitioners and students such as yourself, and clients. These are just a few examples of how persistence in advocacy facilitated meaningful policy changes that opened the door to opportunities for our profession and consumers. TOTA is preparing for Texas' 88th legislative session. Our goals are to preserve existing opportunities and facilitate new ones through advocacy. Please mark your calendars for February 7th, 2023, our Day at the Capitol in Austin, Texas. We invite you to lend your time, talent, and voice to these collective efforts and advocate today for tomorrow's opportunities.



OTA Representative

Layman Darnell Miller, TOTA OTA Rep



Layman Darnell Miller
TOTA OTA Rep

Why these surveys and why now?

These surveys come at a time when legislative changes regarding reimbursement are causing concerns for some OTAs. As mentioned in a previous article, the Medicare Part B differential reduces reimbursement by 15% when therapy services are provided by an occupational therapy assistant. It comes as the reality of employment, sufficient working hours, and sufficient compensation have changed. Low wages were mentioned as a major concern by 20 of the 26 practitioner respondents. It is also the time when many OTA students are completing their academic programs and readying themselves for entrance into the workforce. The number one question being asked: "Will there be jobs when I graduate?"

Years of experience	Respondents
OTA Practitioner	
1-3	7
4-6	3
7-10	2
10-15	3
15-20	4
20-30	2
30+	3
OTA Student	
1st Year Students	20
2nd Year Students	23

The Plan

On June 1, the OTA Forum committee met to discuss the results of both surveys and begin the process of formulating topics to be presented during the conference. The topics are listed below with a brief description of their selection.

1. OTA empowerment.

Underutilization of the OTA in clinical practice was mentioned as a concern by several respondents. According to TBOTE Rule 372.1 Provision of Services, occupational therapy practitioners (meaning both OTs and OTAs) are able to perform the screening process prior to the evaluation. The rule also states the OTA is able to complete the data collection portion of an evaluation. The roles and abilities of the OTA can sometimes be misunderstood, which can result in not realizing the full potential of the OTA practitioner.

2. Specialty Certification

Identifying avenues for increased professional development whereby OTAs can receive specialized training, pursue emerging practice opportunities or move into non-traditional settings.

3. Mentorship

Mentoring is a collaborative process promoting the development of occupational therapy skills by a mentee under the guidance of a mentor skilled in a particular occupational therapy area. How to establish a mentoring relationship and the benefits to both the mentee and the mentor will be addressed. Hopefully, some mentoring relationships will be established by the end of the session.

4. Job Search

In the past, many OT jobs were found by word of mouth. A friend would report a vacancy and recommend applying. Applicants were frequently offered the position the same day or soon after. Those days are long gone. The job search process can be daunting for both the new graduate and the seasoned professional. Even with a strong résumé and good interviewing skills, there are issues of job availability and recognizing that even though the company is looking for an OT, the job description might be perfect for the OTA. Navigating through the differences between full-time, contract, and PRN employment can also be challenging for many OTAs.

Thank you to the OTA practitioners and students who participated in these surveys. Your responses spurred great discussion amongst committee members in the development of these topics. Hope to see you in November.

A Follow-Up to Texas Education Agency Initiative

Vicki Thomas, COTA TOTA Secretary



Vicki Thomas, COTA
TOTA Secretary



In the previous Revista, I reported on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) initiative to develop occupational therapy courses in secondary education. The committee provided a proposal for two courses, Occupational Therapy I and Occupational Therapy II, to provide skills necessary for high school students who desired to work either as a tech in an OT setting or advance to a higher level of learning at an OT or OTA program. The final proposal was submitted for review in January. Dale Fowler, the statewide CTE Coordinator at TEA, reports that the approval process should be completed by July 2022. He also reported that TEA has a new CTE specialist for this career track, Ms. Juanita Soto.

Committee member Kesli Coffelt, OTR, MOT, OTD, reported that her district, Shallowater ISD, is already

preparing to offer the program once it is approved. The district has prerequisites in place and several students are ready to enroll in the courses. Kesli plans to teach the courses.

We look forward to seeing more from this initiative and thank TEA for their work in bringing occupational therapy into secondary education in Texas.

TOTA NEWS >

TOTA Members Advocating for You

TOTA members Claudette Fette, Judi Joseph and Anjali Parti, waited 7.5 hours to speak to Texas senators about OT being the answer to the mental workforce shortage in Texas. Thanks to Judi Joseph, John Luna, Denise Rose, and Kate Goodrich for all the prep work.



Welcome to TOTA

Meet our new TOTA office team member Cadi Boyer. Cadi is a graduate of Texas Tech University, with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies. She has experience in team leadership, mentorship, counseling, athletic training, coaching, and volunteerism. Cadi is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree at the University of Denver in Healthcare Management with a certificate in Global Health Management.

Cadi is the office and social media assistant and will begin working remotely on July 18 on a PRN basis.

In the Eye of a Storm.... Let There Be Benevolence

Reggie Michael Campbell, OT, MS, FAOTA



Reggie Michael
Campbell
OT, MS, FAOTA

August 25, 2022, marks the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Harvey; a Category 4 storm that devastated the Gulf Coast of Texas. To date, Harvey is documented as the second most costly hurricane to hit the US mainland since 1900, causing \$125 billion in damages. The storm dumped more than 27 trillion gallons of rain over Texas, making Harvey the wettest Atlantic hurricane ever measured. Community organizations throughout the state and country mobilized to respond to the needs of some 246,000 people.

The Texas Occupational Therapy Association Board, under the leadership of Robin Clearman, initiated a *"benevolent response"* to explore ways to serve occupational therapy practitioners affected by the storm and support the delivery of occupational therapy services. TOTA Board's appointment of 2017 TOTA Hurricane Harvey Ad Hoc Committee led to the 2018 establishment of a separate and independent 501 C3) not for profit Texas Occupational Therapy Benevolence Endowment (OTBE).

Disaster Preparedness

As we approach hurricane season, with predictions by Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of "another above normal Atlantic hurricane season in 2022 with 14-21 named storms," we ask if we are prepared.

The answers are "yes," "no," and "yes." Yes: In 2022, Texas OT practitioners are better prepared to support the delivery of OT services following natural disasters and other catastrophic life events with the establishment of the Occupational Therapy Benevolence Endowment Foundation. No: We can gather recommended hurricane preparedness supplies, create evacuation plans, and believe we are prepared to manage significant life challenges. Yet we can never be fully prepared for losses of property, life, health, or emotional trauma resulting from a major storm. Yes: With the establishment of Occupational Therapy Benevolence Endowment and the benevolent gifts of Texas OT practitioners and friends and the OTBE Benevolence Grants. Today we are better prepared as a community to support our Texas OT colleagues and the delivery of occupational therapy services following a life disaster.

OTBE Benevolence Grants

The OTBE grant program provides up to \$500 including, but not limited to, obtaining and renewing TBOTE license, continuing education registration and/or travel, and other costs related to the delivery of occupational therapy services. If you or a colleague have a catastrophic life crisis affecting your ability to deliver OT services, visit otbe.org to learn about Occupational Therapy Benevolence Grant opportunities.

To sustain OTBE's mission to support benevolence as a professional value and the OTBE Grant program, Texas OT practitioners' gifts of servant leadership and fiscal support are essential. If you, colleagues, employers, and/or OT vendors wish to support the mission of OTBE, visit otbe.org and click the donate button. If you have questions or would like to learn about available leadership opportunities in service to the mission of OTBE, email the OTBE Board at txotbe@gmail.com.

Be it a natural disaster or other significant life-altering circumstances, a benevolent response in times of disaster can serve to support health and well-being and engagement in occupations of meaning. Bardi and Schwartz 2003) proposed:

"Benevolence is a trait thought to be among the most important attributes to have in most societies as such could play a critical role toward endorsing social harmony and predicting pro-social behaviors, which could enhance well-being." (Bardi and Schwartz 2003)



continued on next page



The American Occupational Therapy Foundation Summer Letter

AOTF.org

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF) is the nation's leading non-profit investing in new OT research and the future OT workforce. For almost 60 years the philanthropic generosity of the OT community has enabled AOTF to advance the science of occupational therapy and strengthen our profession. AOTF is also a prime resource for all OTs to obtain evidence for practice, financial support for OT degrees and CEUs.

All Texas OTs should know.....

The AOTF Research Grant Programs (Intervention Research Grant, Health Services Research Grant and Implementation Research Grant) will open for applications in August. Each of these unique grant programs provides funding for early-stage research, vital to building new evidence for practice. Submit a proposal or join a research team to help build OT evidence in demand. <https://www.aotf.org/Grants>

Student scholarships open for applications in August. All OT students (OT, OTA, and OTD) can apply for a variety of scholarships including the Texas OT Association Scholarship just for Texas OT students! www.aotf.org/Scholarships

AOTF has research resources and CEU webinars available for FREE! Stay current on news, events, new evidence, and hot topics in OT by subscribing to our [newsletter](#) and following us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

The AOTF [YouTube](#) has videos from leading OT researchers, AOR inductees, award winners, and past symposiums.

AOTF's STRIDE (Standing Together for Research Inclusion, Diversity and Equity) Committee will be presenting a number of webinars this fall on equity and research,

including topics on ethical collaboration, promotion of DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) in research proposals and equity effectiveness in community engagement. Dates and times will be posted at www.aotf.org

You can volunteer with AOTF and help support our mission. AOTF has 10 standing committees that carry out essential aspects of our work. Many have openings for the 2023 calendar year, including the scholarship committee. If you would like to help AOTF, especially in the review and selection of students for the 50+ scholarships we award each year, please submit your application to <https://www.aotf.org/About-AOTF/Volunteer>

Nominations for [AOTF Awards](#) are open. Do you know an outstanding OT, researcher or clinician, who is committed to evidence-based practice and/or conducting valuable research? AOTF recognizes outstanding OT talent at all levels with a number of awards each year. Submit names to be honored at the next AOTA Conference by September 1.

Every year the grants, scholarships, awards and programs given by AOTF are made possible through the philanthropic generosity of a community of donors. If you share our belief that OT evidence is critical to improving practice, changing policy and strengthening our profession please make a philanthropic gift to support OT.

We invite you to support the [IRG](#), your alma mater in the [St. Catherine's Challenge](#), the [Texas OT Scholarship](#) or the overall mission of [AOTF](#).

Your gift is greatly important to us and will enable AOTF to continue to advance the science of occupational therapy.

Thank you.

How to Navigate Your Career When a Great Mentor Leaves

Brittany Rose, OTR/L



Brittany Rose, OTR/L

I will never forget my first job as an occupational therapist. In retrospect, it probably influenced my career more than I realized at the time. All I knew then was that I felt intimidated and stressed by the responsibilities of helping patients relearn to live their lives after great trauma. I was on the inpatient spinal cord team of one of the top rehabilitation hospitals in the nation. I remember asking myself many times, "How did I get here?" While the answer is complex, the main reason I embraced such a challenging role immediately out of OT school was due to great mentors, many of whom I had learned from during my student mentorship at that facility. They taught me how to treat a patient on a ventilator and how to evaluate seating and mobility for wheelchair users. More than that, their unwavering dedication to their patients inspired me every day.

The problem with great mentors is that, just as we are all in motion through our own career journeys, so are they. They move on, they move up, and they are sometimes let go for reasons we cannot comprehend, but they rarely stay in one place forever. When my first great mentor left the rehabilitation hospital, my sense of sure-footedness left too. It felt as though it had been replaced by an ice-skating rink. I vividly remember that day. Instead of eating lunch, I put my head down on the table and cried in front of my co-workers, our management, and anyone around. How was I supposed to go forward when one of the main reasons I was there was this person?

Now, more than a decade into my career, I have witnessed many great mentors pursue new ventures. My sadness is real each time. I still feel an inner gut punch and want to put my head down on the table and cry the same way I did when my first mentor left. But now, more and more, I feel that something else follows that sadness, responsibility. I've learned that, when a great mentor leaves, it becomes our small job within our bigger job to carry on that mentor's legacy. We must learn to replicate their skill sets and the traits that made working with them so great. Of course,

we cannot replace a great mentor, but I believe we can find small ways to carry forth the light they brought to us, the patients we serve, and our workplace. And, if that mentor was a big reason you took that role in the first place, it may also be a good opportunity to question your own fit with the role and environment. Maybe you'll be surprised to find how much you've grown as a clinician and that you can fulfill that role you were afraid of in the first place.

About the Author:

Brittany Rose, OTR/L

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Brittany spent many years as an occupational therapist treating both adults and children with neurological diagnoses. She now works for Bioventus as a territory manager helping to facilitate sales and support rehab technology to improve patient outcomes. (Licensed in Louisiana)



Getting to Know Your Student Reps



WHERE ARE YOU ATTENDING SCHOOL?

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in Austin Texas. I am in the flex program and currently a tri 4 student.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT OT?

Definitely combining science with creativity.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AS AN OT PRACTITIONER?

I am interested in OT through the army.

FUN TAKES

Describe yourself in one word: Genuine

Favorite movie quote? "I feel the need, the need for speed." — Maverick (I recently watched TopGun)

Favorite sport, pastime, or hobby? I enjoy reading, self-care activities, watching tv, and going to the movies (this was something I really missed during the pandemic).

What Disney character are you? I can't decide they are all so great!

Marvel or DC? I've only seen a handful of superhero movies. Most recently, I saw Wonder Woman and enjoyed it!

Starbucks or a local coffee house? Local coffee house! I recently discovered The Hive in Austin and I absolutely love it!

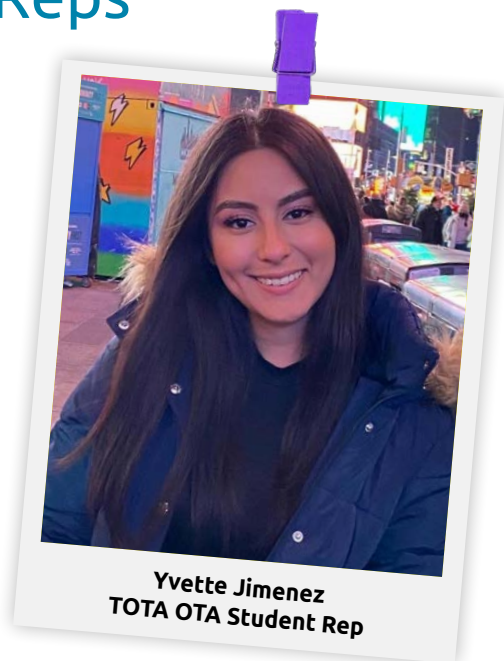
Favorite Social Media? I really enjoy watching Tik-Toks and can lose track of time doing it.

Spotify or Pandora? Apple Music!

Do you have a pet? Yes! 3 mini-Dachshunds

If you could redesign the food pyramid without health consequences, how would it look?

I would probably put dairy and carbs on the bottom!



WHERE ARE YOU ATTENDING SCHOOL?

I am attending school at South Texas College in McAllen, TX. I have to drive an hour to and from school and these gas prices are not making it fun. lol

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT OT?

I am a total yogi and love that OT looks at patients in a holistic manner. Mind, body, soul. That was important to me during my journey to finding OT.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH AS AN OT PRACTITIONER?

I really want to challenge myself to try to be the best, knowledgeable practitioner I can be for my patients. My dream would be to open a life-skills facility for individuals with special needs. I think I've only told two people about this, so saying it "out loud" is scary. One day...

FUN TAKES

Describe yourself in one word: Easygoing

Favorite movie quote? I don't have a favorite movie quote, but I love going to the movies with my husband. It's our favorite thing to do together.

Favorite sport, pastime, or hobby? Besides going to the movies, I love going to yoga. My favorite sport would be volleyball.

What Disney character are you? Oh gosh, this is a hard one! I had really long, dark hair growing up and swore I looked like Pocahontas so maybe Pocahontas?

Starbucks or a local coffee house? Local coffee house all the way! Starbucks was canceled a long time ago for me.

Favorite Social Media? Pinterest!

Spotify or Pandora? Spotify

Do you have a pet?

I am a dog mommy to my cocker spaniel, Sunny. She's the cutest!

If you could redesign the food pyramid without health consequences, what would it look like?

Carbs and bread are my weakness. That would be on top of the food pyramid for me.

GCE District

Kira Beal, OTR, EdD, OTD, CLT
GCE District Chair
GCEDTOTA@gmail.com



Greetings to All!

Gulf Coast East District celebrated OT Month with various events. We thank all of you who participated. The CEU event went well and generated great discussion. Painting with a Twist was enjoyed by all participants and brought out our creative skills as practitioners. Most importantly, we ended the month with a student challenge consisting of a toiletry drive. It was very successful. Detailed information was provided in the May 27th Tidbits as well as posted under News and Announcements on the GCED page of the TOTA website.

Our district board members will be working on more events, including CEU, social, and service projects. As it is rather hot in our district and gas is high, we are mindful of activities within the district. If you have suggestions, please contact us at GCEDTOTA@gmail.com.

On another note, I would like to see greater use of the word "OT Practitioners." We should remember to be inclusive and equitable within our own profession. Often times in academia as well as the clinical world, we haphazardly state, "the OT or the OTs" and forget our OTAs who are treasured in our profession. Both OTs and OTAs should be recognized as OT practitioners. Be a voice for the OTA who is often forgotten and overlooked. All OT practitioners are valuable and, per AOTA, "occupational therapy practitioners make a difference in people's lives" (2022).

Stay cool and safe!



Capital Centex



Carol Zaricor
Capital Centex District Chair

New Officers in the Capital Centex District

Carol Zaricor is serving out the remainder district chair position previously held by Giuli Krug until October 2023. Carol became the district chair officially on June 17th and appointed Lacy Spark as Vice-Chair.

Carol Zaricor:

I held the position of vice-chair for the Capital Centex District for the past two years, I have been a member of TOTA for over 10 years.

As the District Chair for the Capital Centex district, I will support the organization with time and effort. My experience in education and practice brings leadership to serve both practitioner and student members. My belief in the value of occupational therapy drives me to give back. I will work with the team to grow our membership. Informing and educating the practitioners in the field and the students in the classroom will be a priority. Given the chance, I will help bring the community of occupational therapy practitioners together to advocate for our profession and the clients who need us.

I look forward to serving our district.

Lacy Spark:

I am deeply committed and to building a sense of community for the Capital Centex region and throughout the state. I want to bring together occupational therapists to share experience, wisdom, trials, and tribulations so we can understand ourselves and healthcare environment. I believe that our collective efforts can make great things happen in Texas for our profession and those that we serve. I hope to support the vision and mission of TOTA and AOTA through my role as Vice-Chair of the Capital Centex district.

Check out what your local district is doing >
www.tota.org

DISTRICT BEAT

Trinity North



**Emilie Klingman, OTR, MOT,
Trinity North District Vice Chair**

Trinity North District Launching Weekend Anatomy Refresher CE Series

The Trinity North District board and members have been in discussion and planning phases for continuing education (CE) and volunteer events to meet the interests and needs of our members. Our next virtual district meeting is July 12, 2022. All district members are invited to attend. Upcoming CE topics include an anatomy refresher, guidance for conducting doctoral capstone projects, and personal-professional development. The first in a series of anatomy refresher courses will be a half-day weekend course in October. More details to come.

Community service events include partnering with The Texas Ramp Project and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). The Texas Ramp Project "builds wheelchair ramps for older adults and others with mobility issues," who experience economic challenges (<https://www.texasramps.org/>). The district's first of multiple ramp building volunteer events will be September 17th.

TRINITY NORTH
DISTRICT



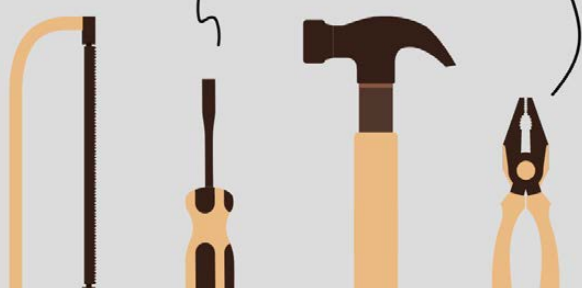
TEXAS RAMP
PROJECT

Building
ramps

Volunteer
Sign-Up:

September
17th

Info coming!



The Trinity North District will also support local CASAs with a winter clothing drive. CASA provides resources and services for children who have been removed from their homes and placed in protective care (<https://www.dallascasa.org/>). Those wishing to attend the October anatomy refresher will be asked to make a donation to the CASA clothing drive. Those who are unable to attend the CE are also encouraged to donate to the CASA clothing drive. Stay tuned via tota.org, district communications, and our state social media sites for dates and details of our upcoming CE and community service events.

Rio Grande District



**Kaleigh Stevens, OTR, OTD, CBIS
kwarn187@gmail.com**

So far 2022 has been an exciting year for the Rio Grande District. In April, our dedicated student representatives, Marcelo Pena and Crystal Salazar, with assistance from student advisor Andy Gonzalez, organized and led a student outreach event. There were over 30 people in attendance, including several practicing OT and OTA volunteers who spoke on OT/OTA relationship. A huge thank you to everyone involved.



In May, the Rio Grande district offered its first continuing education event of the year. Cecilia Fierro, Jesus Delgado, and Noah Munoz shared their expertise on splinting basics during an application-filled presentation. They also offered participants real-time demonstrations of splint fabrication—not an easy feat via Zoom. Thank you to our presenters and to Carmen Estrada for setting up this CE.

Currently, the board is in the process of organizing a CE event for the late summer/early fall that focuses on the pediatric population. We are also organizing a group to represent TOTA at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk in the fall. If interested in joining, please send an email to kwarn187@gmail.com.



Get involved
with your local
district >
www.tota.org

DISTRICT
BEAT