

REVISTA OT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

VOL 36 NO. 3 / Summer 2023 EDITION

DID YOU KNOW?

TOTA is the **ONLY** professional organization that supports and advocates for occupational therapy practice in Texas

STEP 1

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the profession that supports you:
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Your career through Mentorship,
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Development & MORE!!

STEP 2

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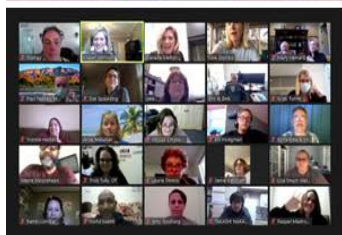
with **Patricia W. Martin, P.T., CKTI**

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Fri-Sat, November 3-4, 2023: Dallas, TX

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TOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



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REVISTA OT: Summer Edition 2023

2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXHIBITOR REGISTRATION

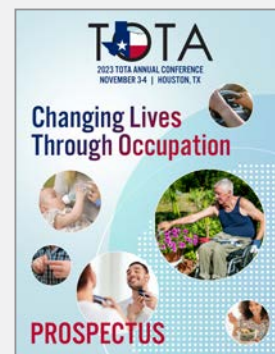
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Letter from the President

Jason Stark, OT, MHA – TOTA President



Jason Stark, OT, MHA
TOTA President

By the time our members read this we will be amid another summer. While Spring is not long in Texas, as I write this Summer has yet to begin, and I am still in Spring mode. The flowers and the trees are showing their vibrant colors and we are surrounded with new growth and a renewed energy. Mehemet Murat ildan pays homage to Spring by saying, “Spring is the best life coach: It gives you all the energy you want, all the positive thoughts you wish and all the boldness you need!”

2023 has been a year of renewed energy for TOTA. The TOTA board of directors had a very successful board retreat in January where it accomplished mountains of work in just one short weekend. We were able to walk away renewed and armed with a new strategic plan, job descriptions, and best of all a clear picture of where we are going into the new year.

The momentum kept going in February when 100’s of occupational therapy practitioners and students showed up in Austin for Day at the Capital. A direct result of this advocacy was finding another Senate sponsor for our compact bill as the previous Senate sponsor retired. If you have not checked out the Day at the Capital video, please visit the website and watch this under the Advocacy tab >> Day at the Capital.

April’s calendar was jam-packed with service opportunities, OT month celebrations, and 3 CEU events!

These activities included three walk/runs (The Spectrum Connection Walk for Autism in Abilene, Run for the Rose in Houston, and Walk for Wishes in El Paso). Thank you all for showing up for OT month!

When you read this the school-based practitioner workshop will have been completed in June.

There are many moving parts to TOTA and the above are just a few examples of hard work that our board members, executive director, and staff do for the state of Texas. I have enjoyed the renewed energy and look forward to serving you all for the rest of 2023.

Please be sure to attend our virtual Annual Business Meeting, on October 11th and I look forward to seeing you at our annual conference in Houston November 3-4.

Jason Stark

A promotional banner for the 2023 TOTA Annual Conference. On the left, the TOTA logo features a Texas state outline with a star, followed by the text "TOTA Changing Lives Through Occupation". Below this, it says "2023 TOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 3-4 HYATT REGENCY HOUSTON". On the right, there are several circular inset images showing various people: a baby, a person in a wheelchair, a man in a hard hat, a man in a lab coat, and a woman. The background is light blue with a pattern of small white dots.

Judith Joseph, Executive Director



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

A state association case study

The Texas Occupational Therapy Association (TOTA) began as an organizational meeting in 1936 and was incorporated on October 12, 1973. This fall will be TOTA's 50th year anniversary since its incorporation. The TOTA history notes the first membership list was recorded in 1937. The full history of TOTA has been compiled by Esther Bell, and Kathlyn Reed and is available on the website. The existence of TOTA for 87 years and incorporation for almost 50 years is a huge accomplishment and speaks to the dedication and commitment of occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants in Texas.

The sustainability and relevance of state occupational therapy associations have garnered a great deal of conversation recently. Why are so few licensed occupational therapy professionals not joining or being involved? TOTA, like many other state associations, struggles with low membership and decreased attendance at conferences and other association-sponsored workshops and events. We have completed multiple surveys and made shifts and adjustments to accommodate the requests of members and non-members, but the ability to consistently increase the number of members remains problematic.

TOTA is not alone in this dilemma of dwindling membership and disengagement of occupational therapy practitioners and students. During the April 18, 2023, Association of State Association Presidents (ASAP) meeting, the need for state associations to find ways to support one another was discussed. State Associations can be in a unique position to share resources and help one another. We are all doing the same things and are not in competition for the same audience.

Description of the presenting problem:

During the 2023 TOTA elections, there were twelve positions up for election and only four of those positions had dual slates. The TOTA bylaws require that if a dual slate cannot be obtained, provisions for a write-in candidate must be made. TOTA elections began June 1 -30, 2023. In 2022 only 97 members voted and out of the 97, only 12 votes were cast by student members. In one of my many conversations with Kathlyn Reed, her response to the complaint from members who state they see the same faces in leadership was: *"These are the people who raise their hand to volunteer."* She went on to say, *"It takes one raised hand to volunteer, but it takes two hands to do the work."*

The call for TOTA 2023 award recipient nominations resulted in only ten possible recipients. There are 13 different award categories and this year submissions were made for only seven categories. The awards landing page states *the Annual Awards Ceremony is that special time when we can recognize our colleagues for their contributions to our profession. Recognition is an important part of professional duty and is worth the time and effort that it takes to honor each other.*

The response to the call for proposals for the TOTA 2023 annual conference received 126 submissions. This is a record number with an average of 101 over the past five years. This response gives hope and should allow us to have a nice variety of sessions and poster presentations.

We are not sure how many current AOTA members reside in Texas; the number of Texas OT professionals that were members of AOTA as of last year was **1542 OTs and 317 OTAs**. During the AOTA 2023 elections, Lynda Jennings ran unopposed for the Texas RA #1 position. She received only 76 votes and therefore was not elected due to the requirement of AOTA to have a quorum of at least 100 votes. Lynda was appointed by AOTA on May 10 and will serve from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Treatment Plan

- Reach the everyday working practitioners and help address the problems they encounter.
- Seek out and encourage new practitioners and students to serve in elected and appointed positions.
- Ensure this is an association where everyone feels included and heard by providing a system that allows members to communicate with TOTA leadership.
- Assure the process of presenting awards is fair and equitable by creating objective policies and procedures that are clear and transparent. The history of our awards reveals many of the same people receiving awards (same name, different award).
- Continue to promote and generate non-dues revenue streams to support the administrative needs of the association.

Discussion

The TOTA Tidbit eNewsletter was created to provide information and resources to TOTA members and non-members. When members join using their school or work email addresses and leave those jobs and academic programs, they create multiple profiles in our system which results in bounced emails. The Tidbit's open rate is only 20%.

The Tidbit will now go out once a month to non-members. TOTA members will continue to receive information bi-weekly. If you opt out of the contact center, we are unable to send you information.

Conclusion

TOTA's Board of Directors and committee members will continue to seek real solutions and answers to improve the engagement of occupational therapy professionals and students. TOTA leadership is listening. If you have any questions or comments, please use the link below and mark your calendars for the 2023 Annual Business Meeting (Virtual).

<https://tota.memberclicks.net/ask-the-bod>

Officers

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| President: | Jason Stark |
| Vice President: | Laurie Stelter |
| Interim Secretary: | Rachel Perez |
| Treasurer: | Shari Felton |

District Chairpersons

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Alamo South: | Monica Starkovich Clark |
| Capital Centex: | Lacey Spark |
| Great Plains West: | Chris Lasek |
| Gulf Coast East: | Kira Beal |
| Rio Grande: | Kaleigh Stevens |
| Trinity North: | Keegan McKay |

Committee Chairs

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Conference: | Evie Harness |
| Development: | Giuli Krug |
| Education: | Megan Taylor |
| International: | Evanglina Moncayo |
| Legislative & Political Affairs: | John Luna |
| Membership Services: | Patricia Bowyer |
| Standards & Practice: | Michelle Atanu |
| Parliamentarian: | Lynda Jennings |
| AOTA Representatives | Lynda Jennings William Sit |
| OTA Representative | Layman Miller |
| Student Representatives | Natalie Pravinkumar (OT) Maygen Smith (OTA) |
| Newsletter | |
| Editor: | Rachelle Elliot |
| Design and Production: | Justine Boyer |
| Executive Director | Judith Joseph |
| Vendor Services | Kami Lusson |
| Continuing Education Services | Kami Lusson |
| Legislative Advisors | Denise Rose Kate Goodrich LaRESSA Quintana |
| Legal Advisor | Richard Cheng |

TOTA Education Chair Report

Megan Taylor, OTR, OTD
Megan.r.taylor@ttuhsc.edu



Megan Taylor,
OTR, OTD
TOTA Education Chair

I hope you have been enjoying the incredible continuing education (CE) opportunities TOTA is offering in 2023! TOTA strives to serve the interests of its 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:

- **Creating a Curriculum Vitae for OT Professionals**
– Dawndra Sechrist, OTR, PhD
- **Identifying and Understanding Microaggressions**
– Amber B. Armstead, DrPH, OTR, BCPR
- **Occupational Therapy Evaluations in the School Setting** – Molly Amlung, OTR
- **Understanding Hospice and the Unique Role of Occupational Therapists**
– Tara Patterson, PhD, MSN, RN, CNL
- **Demystifying Disability: A Holistic Approach**
– Diane M. Collins, OT, PhD
- **Airline Travel with Wheelchairs, Educating Occupational Therapy Practitioners**
– Amanda Swofford
- **Adopting a Trauma Informed Approach for Improved Patient Care** – Sue Ram, OTR, OTD
- **Accessible Home Modifications Across the Age-Span: Strategies to Prepare for Success in the Future as an OTP in Texas**
– Cameron Carter, MS ECHM, and Carly Weiner, MSOT

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 2023 TOTA Annual Conference November 3-4, 2023, in Houston for more outstanding CE events and the engaging of great minds as we continue "Changing Lives Through Occupation"!

TOTA 2023 Election Results

A record 229 TOTA members cast their votes in the TOTA 2023 elections from June 1 – June 30, 2023

Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 TOTA Elections and thank you to all who voted and ran! These candidates will assume office on October 11, 2023, following the TOTA annual business meeting (virtual).

**President-Elect
Vice - President
State Secretary**

John Luna, OTR, OTD
Keegan McKay, OTR, OTD
Laurie Stelter, OTR, PhD

Trinity District Positions
District Chair

Angela Duell, OTR, OTD

Gulf Coast East District
District Chair

Chanaé Jones OTR, MOT

Great Plains West
District Vice Chair
Secretary

Jerilyn Callen, OTR, MSOT, OTD
Donna Walls, OTR, OTD, CHT

Rio Grande District
District Vice Chair
Secretary

Grisel Contreras, OTR, OTD
Clarissa Medrano, OTR, MOT

Capital Centex District
District Chair

Lacey Spark, OTR, MOT, OTD

Alamo South
District Vice Chair
Secretary

Marcie Campbell, OTR, OTD
Alyssa Laurel, OTR, MOT



The 2023 Nominating Committee:

Cecilia Fierro - Committee Chair
Justine Faghihifar
Erik Johnson
Paula Perkins
Deshambra Sims
Cynthia Tiongco

Conference Committee Changing Lives Through Occupation

Evie Harness, OTR



Evie Harness, OTR,
TOTA State
Conference Chair

Unbelievably, we are already in the summer months. The TOTA Annual Conference will be upon us before you know it. We are looking forward to seeing everyone's smiling faces on November 3rd and 4th at the Hyatt Regency Houston. We hope you will be able to join us for the full conference because we don't want you to miss a minute of the education, celebration, and fun! Just a reminder, we will end the day on Friday with our Keynote speaker Angel Ponce who is the Director of the City of Houston Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities followed by the Annual Awards Ceremony.

We had a great response to the Call for Papers; in fact, we had a record number of submissions this year. Thanks to all of you who took the time to develop and submit a proposal. We wouldn't be able to facilitate this conference without you. The Program Committee is hard at work reviewing the submissions and developing the schedule for two great days of education. Lunches will be a little longer each day to give you the opportunity to browse and visit with our wonderful vendors in the exhibit hall. We also encourage you to visit with speakers for the posters during the designated times as these will now be live presentations again.

We hope you choose to participate in either the Practice Forums or the Student Event and tracks as the committee is in the process of developing these conference events to provide you with additional options for learning and networking.

We would greatly appreciate you registering early for the conference, if possible, as that helps us plan accordingly for any scheduled food events. Do not forget to make reservations for the hotel early as well before the room block is filled.

Enjoy your summer! We'll see you soon!

tota.org

Recapping the 88th Legislative Session

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



John Luna,
OTR, OTD

The Texas legislature meets every two years for 140 days, and 2023 was an “in-session year.” By the numbers, the 88th legislative session was busy compared to previous sessions. With 11,807 bills introduced this session, (a 12-year high for any regular session) and 3556 bills reaching completion (a more than 12-year low for any regular session), the first special sessions for the 88th has already been called. But how did we get here? In this article we recap the 88th legislative session and follow TOTA’s priority bill, The Interstate Compact Licensure Act through the legislative process.

- **January 10, 2023:** The Texas legislature gavel in to start the 88th Legislative Session



- **January 26, 2023:** HB 1683 is filed by Representative Armando Walle relating to The Interstate Licensure Compact Act. Armando Walle has been a long-time supporter of occupational therapy in the State of Texas and was the recipient of a TOTA letter of appreciation at last year’s annual conference.



- **February 7, 2023:** TOTA Day at the Capitol: More than one hundred occupational therapy students and practitioners traveled to Austin Texas and met with more than 40 elected officials and staff members from the House and the Senate. This was advocacy in action as policymakers learned about occupational therapy as a healthcare solution for Texans of all ages.



- **April 3, 2023:** HB1683 is considered for public hearing in the House Public Health Committee. Advised by our wonderful team at Jackson Walker (Denise Rose, Kate Goodrich, and LaRessa Quintana) TOTA prepared testimony to offer in favor of HB 1683 delivered by TOTA Executive Director Judith Joseph. The bill was later reported as favorable and voted out of committee by a vote of 9-0 on April 14, 2023, and sent to Calendars.



- **May 2, 2023:** HB1683 has a recorded vote and passes 141-4, with 1 member not voting. This was a big accomplishment for the legislative team, and the bill was passed along to the Senate’s Health and Human Service Committee. Despite its overwhelming support in the House, neither HB 1683 nor SB 1540 received a hearing in the Health and Human Service Committee in the Senate Chamber.



Unfortunately, this represents the end of the road for two consecutive legislative sessions for the Occupational Therapy Interstate Licensure Compact Act, as both bills were left in committees. However, the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Act was not the only license portability legislation that was left incomplete this session. The dentist/dental hygienist, PA, LPC, and Speech/Audiology licensure compacts were all left pending this session. Most notable for compact acts this session was the fate of SB 1615 (Relating to the Cosmetology Licensure Compact) which was sent to Governor Abbot’s Desk on May 8, 2023, and was vetoed by the Governor on May 19, 2023. So, what next for TOTA and Legislation? While the 88th Regular Legislative session officially closed on May 29th, TOTA works year-round for its members and the profession. TOTA will continue to monitor legislation introduced during any special called sessions of the Texas legislature. As of June 1, fifty-nine bills have already been filed for the 1st special session in the 88th Texas Legislature. TOTA will also offer public testimony and comments as part of interim charges or legislative appropriation requests which occur after the official close of the legislative session. Make sure to check out the Advocacy and Legislation Update at the annual conference in Houston this year for all the details from the TOTA legislative team. Once again, a special thanks to members of the TOTA legislative team, and all the practitioners and students who advocated for the future of the profession of occupational therapy and recipients of OT services across the great State of Texas this session.

References
Legiscan. (2023). Texas legislature 2023: 88th legislature 1st special session. Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/TX> on June 1, 2023
“Judith Joseph at the Capitol” by Texas Occupational Therapy Association (2023)
“Representative Walle and Judith Joseph” by Texas Occupational Therapy Association (2022)
“Senator Tan Parker and Emily Klingman” by Texas Occupational Therapy Association (2023)
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“TOTA Day at the Capitol” by Texas Occupational Therapy Association (2023)
“Senator Tan Parker and Emily Klingman” by Texas Occupational Therapy Association (2023)

Update: TOTA Mentorship Program

Monica S. Clark, OTR, OTD, and Kira Beal, OTR, EdD, OTD

Thank you to the mentors and mentees participating in the mentorship program. As an organization and field, it is imperative that we support each other's professional development.

Mentee

As a mentee you will have an opportunity to grow professionally in your career and advance your skills as a practitioner. Having a mentor empowers you, increases your confidence, and helps you build a network of colleagues.

Mentor

As a mentor you will have an opportunity for you to help a colleague grow professionally in their career and advance their skills as a practitioner. Having a mentee can provide fulfillment and satisfaction in helping others develop,



Monica S. Clark,
OTR, OTD



Kira Beal,
OTR, EdD, OTD

extend your network and community, and facilitate your growth as a leader.

We are currently in the process of pairing mentees and mentors. If you signed up for the program, please check your email for the next steps and complete your [online profile](#). If you have not yet signed up and would like to participate, please fill out the interest form.

UPDATED TIMELINE:

| | | |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|
| April – May | Gather interest from mentors and mentees | Completed |
| May – June | Review applications | Completed |
| June – Aug | Training for mentors and dissemination of tools to support both mentors and mentees. | In progress – will be virtual |

State Membership Chair Report

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

Greetings and welcome to an update on state membership. Since the January 2023 Board meeting progress has been made on the membership strategic goals for 2023. In May, the Great Plains West District hosted a virtual event, *Creating a Curriculum Vitae for OT Professionals*. A lunch and learn virtual event will occur in September. TOTA had a membership drive in April which did lead to an increase in new members, but overall membership renewals are down. An email list of 22 Program Directors has been compiled to allow a concerted effort to send targeted messages from TOTA to be shared with students. A student track is being offered during the 2023 TOTA conference with nine specific student sessions.



Patricia Bowyer, OTR,
Ed.D., MS, FAOTA,
SFHEA

WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY?

Occupational therapy (OT) encompasses the assessment and treatment of people with a physical, mental, or cognitive disorder- to develop, recover, or maintain the skills needed for *occupations* (meaning activities that *occupy* your time).

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROCESS



Activity Analysis

What does the activity require?



Patient Analysis

What is preventing the patient from doing the activity?



Intervention

Provide therapy to help them return to the activity.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE AREAS



Sensory Processing



Ergonomics



Vision



Daily Living Skills



Independent Living



Work Performance



Education



Mental Health



Social Interaction



Cognition



Hand Therapy



Play & Leisure

SALARY & JOB GROWTH

\$91,908

Average salary for an OT in San Antonio

2,872 TX

As of Feb 2023, there are **257** jobs available in San Antonio and **2,872** in Texas.

Texas is one of the **top five** states for the highest mean salary at \$96,100.

The profession is expected to grow by 14%, compared to 9% average growth in health care jobs overall.

14%



More Information

Contact: (210) 283-6477
otdadmissions@uiwtx.edu

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Created by: Marcie Campbell & Monica Clark

OTA Representative

Layman Darnell Miller, TOTA OTA Rep



Layman Darnell Miller
TOTA OTA Rep

Greetings everyone and happy summer.

Summer is the time to relax and unwind. While we are planning our summer getaways (SFI here I come), let us not forget that the TOTA conference is just a few months away. TOTA board members and volunteers are working hard to make this upcoming conference the best yet. (No, we are not workaholics, but we are always working for you.)

Since the 2022 TOTA conference, the OTA Forum committee has met several times to:

1. Conduct an after-action review of the 2022 OTA forum;
2. Plan for the 2023 conference

The after-action review revealed that OTA practitioners are seeking opportunities to increase their clinical skills and advance their careers. However, it also revealed a concern regarding how state and federal legislation may potentially impact practice, as well as other factors limiting the opportunity for the OTA to practice at their full potential.

The committee sent a survey to OTA members asking which topic they would want us to address at the conference. The topics were Supervision, Continuing Competency, and Treatment Interventions.

The OTA Forum committee is excited to present a dynamic and engaging workshop for this year's conference: **Creating your Treatment Playbook.**

By attending this workshop, participants will learn the process of selecting occupation-based treatment interventions by focusing on the patient problems presented (not the diagnosis). Case studies in the areas of pediatrics, stroke, mental health, and the school-based setting will be explored.

Beyond the conference, the OTA Forum Committee is looking toward the future and planning activities that address topics of interest to the OTA. Let us know of any OTA-specific topics you would like to see addressed by TOTA.

If you would like to be a part of this, or any other committee, just reach out. We would be glad to have you.

Hope you all have a wonderful summer and see you at the conference.

Creating Your Treatment Playbook.

A dynamic and engaging workshop at the 2023 TOTA Annual Conference!



Turn Center

Kelisha Murray, OTR, MOT

Director of Occupational Therapy, Turn Center – A TOTA Organization Member



Kelisha Murray,
OTR, MOT

Pediatric therapy, like all other areas of occupational therapy practice, is provided in multiple settings with a variety of service models. Inside and outside of our profession, there is confusion regarding the determination of services and intervention implementation within a school setting. School-based services can be confusing and potentially create tension among therapists treating the same child in different practice settings. Occupational therapy practitioners need to understand the differences in service models and maintain a high level of professionalism when there are conflicting recommendations.

School-based occupational therapy services in public schools are a provision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. According to IDEA Section 300.34, related services such as occupational therapy are provided to ensure a child can benefit from their special education. School-based occupational therapy services are in place to assist a student with meeting their educational goals. The primary focus for the child is education. Services must be related to the child's educational needs. We should keep in mind that an area of deficit may or may not be addressed in the school setting if it does not affect the child's ability to participate in education. It is not uncommon for a child to qualify for outpatient occupational therapy services and not qualify for school-based intervention.

School-based services do not replace a child's need for rehabilitative or outpatient intervention. Therapy provided by the school occupational therapist and intervention provided by the outpatient occupational therapist can be complementary to one another. Occupational therapy practitioners must inform parents that one does not negate the need for the other and qualifying for one does not always indicate a need for the other. Here are a few helpful tips for collaboration between outpatient therapists and school therapists:

- If in outpatient, request a copy of the child's IEP and ask what goals occupational therapy and physical therapy are working towards.
- Collaborate on a home exercise program that would benefit school and outpatient goals.
- If providing sensory/behavior/coping strategies, communicate about which strategies have proven to be effective and ineffective.

As we continue to work together to meet the needs of children and families in the state of Texas, we put ourselves and the children we serve at an advantage by collaborating and communicating. Not only do we improve communication amongst ourselves, but we also increase intervention carryover, generalization of skills, and success due to meeting the multiple needs of the child, family, and school. By working together, we can provide a more holistic and well-rounded plan of care while refraining from duplication of services.



How Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants Can Serve Historically Disadvantaged Communities and Make a Real Impact

Michelle Atanu, OTR, MOT
Standards and Practice Chair



Michelle Atanu, OTR,
MOT

Children living in historically disadvantaged communities, living in poverty, or near the poverty line tend to be underserved and do not have the same access to opportunities compared to their counterparts who do not experience the same generational impacts, environmental barriers or educational insecurities.

In a review by Silva-Laya et al. (2020), it was found that “an overview of the educational achievements and conditions of the urban poor revealed that the combination of precariousness in family, school, and neighborhood environments results in insufficient educational achievement, and showed the unequal distribution of opportunities.” Regrettably, children affected by this educational and social deficit not only face immediate academic challenges but also encounter obstacles in their social-emotional well-being and holistic development.

The extensive knowledge base and experience of occupational therapists (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistants (OTA) can often address the various aspects of the needs and challenges that historically disadvantaged communities often face. Oftentimes, these communities lack access to essential resources such as quality early childhood education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. OTs and OTAs foundational knowledge base is to help individuals meet their highest potential and achieve maximum function in everyday activities. OTs and OTAs can contribute to these underserved communities by completing research studies concerning this population to better understand the unique needs and challenges the community may be facing. Secondly, OTs and OTAs can assist in integrating their knowledge in sensory integration, activity analysis, child development, social-emotional learning, and environmental design into the academic curriculum of underserved schools through partnerships and collaboration. Lastly, OTs and OTAs can offer programs that provide education, inclusive accessibility to resources and help change the dynamic of how this population is served while being mindful and sensitive to the true cultural needs of the community.

The ultimate goal is to address systemic barriers that hold back these underserved populations from succeeding and to use our foundational knowledge base and experience as occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants to truly serve those in need.

Michelle Atanu, OTR is a pediatric occupational therapist and the Executive Director at Avilo Pediatric Wellness in Missouri City, Texas. She is also the State Board Standards and Practice Chair for the Texas Occupational Therapy Association
Aviloped.com
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Ongoing Efforts for Mental Health Advocacy in Texas

Anjali Parti, OTD, OTR, Co-Chair Mental Health Ad-Hoc Committee TOTA



Anjali Parti,
OTD, OTR

It has been a very productive time for the TOTA Mental Health Ad-Hoc Committee. As we continue to feel the impact of social isolation from the pandemic, inflation, increased rates of depression and anxiety, and overall difficulty with community re-integration, we have unique opportunities as OT practitioners to continue to advocate for what we can bring to the table in regards to OT's role in mental health. One of the highlights over the last few months has been the opportunity to attend the Senate Finance Committee hearing to advocate for role of Occupational Therapy in mental health. During this hearing, Dr. Claudette Fette and myself were able to speak to the committee discussing the labor shortage, OT's distinct role on what we can provide in these cases, educated and advocated on the need to increase salaries for OT jobs in mental health. Soon after, we scheduled a meeting with members of the Department of Health and Human Services to better explain what Occupational Therapy does and how we should be part of the intervention team for mental health cases. Additionally, we have strengthened our committee by meeting, developing co-chair positions with the TOTA board, and developing a strategic plan for this committee. We thank the members of this committee for their ongoing contributions by offering courses and advocating, as well as Judi Joseph for her energy and ability to grab advocacy opportunities when they arise.

TOTA members from all over the state of Texas got together in Fall 2022 to bring our visions together and create goals and timelines. The four main areas for the strategic plan are to focus on developing an SIS committee, collecting OT data, building roles/identity, and advocacy and awareness. We found that the profession and membership need to focus on educating one another on what our role should be within the team or as a solo practitioner in mental health and identify what is currently being taught in our academic programs regarding mental health. The committee continues to work together with the legislative affairs committee members to identify opportunities for advocacy. For those who came to the Day at the Capitol, we appreciate your efforts. We have a lot of work to do and need help. We ask for action-oriented individuals to head up sub-committees to get out into the community and provide education on the role of OT in mental health cases.

If you work in mental health and have first-hand knowledge of current practice challenges and opportunities, please contact the TOTA mental health committee at aparti@uttyler.edu.

SUMMER



THE AMERICAN
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
FOUNDATION

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation Summer Letter

Lawrence Liff, MA, Chief Development Officer

Evidence-based practice is fundamental to quality care so the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF) funds numerous research grants to build the evidence in demand by occupational therapists, their clients and caregivers. Over the last 10 years specifically, AOTF has funded 75 early-stage occupational therapy research studies covering more than 2 dozen different subjects to generate new data that both can improve the intervention process and demonstrate that these interventions meet the criteria for evidence-based practice.

AOTF is the only national non-profit with a mission “to advance the science of occupational therapy” and that means investing in essential elements our profession needs: evidence, scholarship, mentorship, and resources for practice. Across the lifespan of one’s career, AOTF has resources for you to use as well as opportunities for you to help the future of our profession.

How can TOTA members benefit from AOTF and why should you support AOTF?

First, right in Texas, AOTF has scholarships available for OT, OTA and OTD students including the Texas Occupational Therapy Association Scholarship. This TOTA scholarship provides financial aid to 2 students in Texas each year and has been for over a decade! All the funds for this scholarship come directly from the philanthropic gifts of TOTA and its members.

Second, AOTF has resources OTs and OTAs need including: CEU-eligible programs throughout the year, both virtually and in-person, a world-class peer reviewed journal OTJR: *Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*, free research resources in our monthly newsletter, and talks by OT researchers on our Youtube channel.

Third, TOTA members can benefit from AOTF’s work and resources in their own practices, education and advocacy activities. What areas of care is AOTF funding? Aging in Place, Autism, Bullying, Cancer Survivorship, Chronic Conditions and Pain, Diabetes, Early Intervention, Fall Risks, Family Issues and Caregiver Needs, Functional Cognition, Health Behaviors, Medication Management, Mental Health and Serious Mental Illness, Motor Learning, Parkinson Disease, Sleep, Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Traumatic Brain Injury, Trauma, Telehealth, Upper-Extremity Rehab and more!

Your support of AOTF enables us to generate scientific evidence to support OT practices and make further investments into the future of our profession. **The grants, scholarships and programs offered by AOTF each year are made possible solely through the generosity of philanthropic gifts. It is only with the support of our OT community that AOTF can continue to build the evidence OTs need and address the challenges critical to our profession.**

If you want to learn more about the essential work AOTF is doing, make a gift that will strengthen evidence for practice, and get access to our research resources visit us at www.aotf.org

Lawrence Liff
Chief Development Officer, AOTF
lliff@aotf.org



Ethnocentricity and Implicit Bias

Dahlia Castillo, OTR, OTD, Chair of TOTA Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

In the spirit of educating current occupational therapy practitioners and students with the goal of improved client interactions and outcomes, below are some definitions to help increase awareness of the underlying issues that often impact practice.

Ethnocentrism: Evaluating other peoples and cultures according to the standards of one's culture.

Implicit bias: unconscious favoritism toward or prejudice against people of a particular ethnicity, gender, or social group that influences one's actions or perceptions.

One way to reduce the potential for ethnocentrism and implicit bias is by engaging in self-reflection and gaining self-awareness of one's ethnocentrism and implicit biases towards those we treat. One way to complete this is to ask oneself the following questions: Am I evaluating the client on their personal factors or an expectation from my own personal factors? Am I showing any favoritism or prejudgment on the person and/or their situation? Taking a 15 second pause to self-reflect, especially if the client is different than oneself can be effective on improving client interactions and outcomes.

If you are interested in volunteering for this committee, contact the TOTA DEI Committee Chair, Dahlia Castillo at dahliacastillo3@gmail.com.



Dahlia Castillo,
OTR, OTD

References:

Banks, T.M. (2023) Implicit bias in occupational therapy practice. OT Practice Volume 28. Issue 4, pp. 10–14. AOTA Press: Bethesda. <https://www.aota.org/publications/ot-practice/ot-practice-issues/2023/dei-implicit-bias-in-occupational-therapy-practice>

Dictionary

https://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=Awrijvyl1ZknWYm96NXNyoA;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Nj?p=define+confirmation+bias&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Aw%2Cm%3Adict-sb

DEI Committee Sponsored CE webinars are available on demand in the TOTA Learning Management System.

1. Demystifying Disability: A Holistic Approach - Diane M. Collins, Ph.D., OT
2. Identifying & understanding microaggressions - Amber B. Armstead, DrPH, OTR, BCPR

Getting to Know Your TOTA Student Reps

Natalie Pravinkumar – OT Student Rep



Where do you attend school?

I am currently a student in the OTD program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

What is your favorite thing about OT?

My favorite thing about OT has to be its potential! It's so exciting that OT services can be used in such a wide variety of settings, but the field itself has an amazing potential for growth. Even within treatment planning, there is so much potential for creativity and personalization based on the patient, which is something that sets OT apart from other healthcare professions.

What do you hope to achieve as an OT practitioner?

As an OT practitioner, I want to help spread awareness for the benefits of OT – many people could gain from OT services, but they just don't know it yet! I believe there are so many possible settings for OT outside of the hospital, clinics, and schools. My personal passion is to introduce OT as standard care for emotional and physical trauma survivors, particularly survivors of human trafficking. At the core, my desire is to be an OT practitioner who can empathize with her patients and find ways to create interventions that are meaningful and beneficial given their situations.

Describe yourself in one word

Hard-working

Favorite movie quote?

It's not a movie, but here's a quote from my favorite TV show The Office:
"And I knew exactly what to do. But in a much more real sense, I had no idea what to do" – Michael Scott
 This quote is in the back of my mind every day.

Favorite sport, pastime, or hobby

In my free time, I like to go to the gym and bake. However, my favorite hobby is watercolor painting, especially painting landscapes! I learned how to paint while recovering from a knee surgery that required me to decrease my physical activity, and now painting is one of the most relaxing things for me.

What Disney character are you?

I like to think of myself as a princess, specifically Princess Jasmine. Then I took the (widely acknowledged as highly accurate) BuzzFeed quiz which revealed that I am most like Hades from Hercules. I'm not sure how I feel about that...

Marvel or DC

Probably Marvel, but I do a terrible job at keeping up with all the movies.

Starbucks or Local coffee house

Local coffee always! Shout out to Kinley's, my favorite coffee shop in El Paso and great study spot.

Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter

Instagram

Spotify or Pandora

Spotify

Do you have a pet?

Yes! I have a super adorable, three-legged dog named Petey. His favorite things to do are going on a car rides, taking naps while tucked into bed, running away from me at the park, and getting neck scratches.

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

The base of the pyramid would be fruits, with desserts as the next level. Those are the two most important parts of my modified food pyramid!

Maygen Smith – OT Student Rep



Where do you attend school?

San Jacinto College South

What is your favorite thing about OT?

My favorite thing about OT is seeing how this profession changes people's lives for the better!

What do you hope to achieve as an OT practitioner?

I would like to help our clients maintain their independence. I would also like to assist in building the research on neurological conditions.

Describe yourself in one word

Ambitious

Favorite movie quote?

"There's been trials and tribulations, you know I've had my share. But I've climbed the mountain, crossed the river And I'm almost there!" — Disney's The Princess & the Frog

Favorite sport, pastime, or hobby

Track and Field and Basketball (women and men) and favorite hobbies are cooking and writing poems.

What Disney character are you?

Stitch

Marvel or DC

Marvel

Starbucks or Local coffee house

My house

Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter

Instagram: may_the_goddess_

Facebook: Maygen L. Smith

Spotify or Pandora

Pandora

Do you have a pet?

Two dogs: a pitbull XL and a miniature schnauzer

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

I would add chocolate!!



TOTA Endowed Scholarships



TOTA 2023 Endowed Scholarship Recipient

Ashlie Fredericksen, TOTA OT Student Member

Where do you attend school?

University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB)

Where are you currently in your academic process (fieldwork, capstone)?

I am currently enrolled in my 2nd year of classes and am learning about Geriatrics, Leadership and Policy, Management and Ethics, Health and Wellness, and Interprofessional Practice. After this semester, I will begin my level 2 fieldworks for the Fall and Spring and in the Summer, I will begin my Capstone at Comprehensive Therapy Services – Richardson.

Anticipated Graduation Date:

August 2024

Interests/Professional Goals:

My professional interests include neuroscience and pediatrics, and I would love to complete continuing education units on trauma-informed care, further neurological concepts, and women's health. My primary goal currently is to complete school as a well-rounded student and become a licensed therapist. However, my long-term professional goals for myself are a little bit varied but will hopefully guide me to be the best therapist for both my clients and me. My goals are to earn a role at a hospital where I am encouraged to grow and learn, continue to pursue a second language so that I am able to better serve my clients in a more equitable manner, to encourage accessibility to skilled services by volunteering at community programs, to be mindful about being a lifelong learner, and above all else to be compassionate towards others while pursuing my ambitions. I hope to become a pediatric therapist in an in-patient setting and am excited to continue learning more about both this and other settings through my fieldwork experiences.



Ashlie Fredericksen,
TOTA OT Student
Member

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Gulf Coast East

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



OT Month Recap in the GCE District

We started the month with a CEU presentation by Sue Ram, OTR, OTD as she presented information on “Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach for Improved Patient Care”. Several individuals came out to interact with fellow OT Practitioners and students at our district’s two events for OT Month. We had a good time at the OT Month social event in Hermann Park! Despite the massive amount of people and traffic, we were able to enjoy each other and learn more about what is going on in different areas of practice. The celebration ended with participation in Run for the Rose in honor of Dr. Sophie Rydin, a long-time member of the Gulf Coast East District. The district looks forward to continuing the tradition of a mix of educational and social events to celebrate OT Month each year.



As we all navigate through the heat, we can use the energy to also focus on the needs of our profession as well as the state organization. As an organization, this year there has been focusing on what is our “why”. Collectively as OT practitioners we often are asked what occupational therapy is. Educators often tell our students to embrace their newfound profession and speak proudly about OT. Students are taught to develop an elevator speech because let’s face it, many people will only listen for a minute or two at most.

As practitioners (especially those who have practiced for years) we often must reflect on why we chose this profession when times get hard. I asked my fellow Gulf Coast East Board Members their “why” for being dedicated to TOTA.

I get to network with a ton of wonderful practitioners- both old and new.

I get to know of/participate in what is happening in the OT world!

I get to learn, learn, learn!

— Osurame Adodo, COTA

I was drawn to TOTA’s unwavering commitment to promoting advancement and improvement in the practice of occupational therapy in the state of Texas. Joining TOTA created an incredible opportunity for me to learn from, and collaborate with fellow occupational therapy practitioners, who share my passion for promoting health, wellness, and quality of life for individuals and communities. I am grateful for the chance to be a part of such a respected and reputable organization and look forward to the potential growth and opportunities that come with being a member.

— Sabrina Starks, COTA

So, I ask each of you to continue to reflect on your “why”. Not only about being a member of TOTA but why you are an OT practitioner and what differences you can make for your clients and future OT practitioners.



Upcoming Gulf Coast East District Event

Future and New Practitioner Symposium

July 22, 2023 (Saturday)
8:15a-12:30p (Free Breakfast)
San Jacinto College – South Campus (Free parking)
FREE to TOTA members, \$40 for nonmembers

This event will feature topics for OT and OTA students as well as those who are new graduates or have been practicing for a few years. You will have an opportunity to network as well as engage in 2 hours of professional development topics from various OT practitioners within the district. Click Here to register for this. We look forward to seeing you all there!

DISTRICT BEAT

Alamo South

Monica S. Clark,
OTR, OTD, MOT



OT Month

We have been busy here in Alamo South, for OT Month, Legislative Chair Marcie Campbell and I presented to psychology majors at Trinity University, Texas A&M University San Antonio, and Our Lady of the Lake University. The goal was to educate students about the field of occupational therapy and provide career options they may not have considered. Additionally, we spoke at several Health Science classes at both the University of Texas San Antonio and the University of the Incarnate Word, again to promote occupational therapy as a potential career.

Additionally, we hosted an event where students made Fiesta flowers to learn about the O.T. field. We explained how making fiesta flowers improves fine motor coordination, processing skills, mental health, and more. The students were very engaged and enjoyed making something they could use during the Fiesta celebration.

Win for Mental Health

The University of the Incarnate Word OTD program received one of only two OT mental health workforce grants from the US Department of Education. The purpose of the grant is to make systemic changes in area school systems to increase the availability of mental health services. For more details, see the press conference [here](#).

This is the first time the U.S. government has recognized O.T. practitioners as mental health providers!

Congratulations to all the graduates!

In Celebration of Occupational Therapy Month

Occupational therapy (OT) encompasses the assessment and treatment of people with a physical, mental, or cognitive disorder- to develop, recover, or maintain the skills needed for *occupations* (meaning activities that *occupy* your time).

MAKE Fiesta Flowers



New Board Members:



Dominic Jimenez is our Student Rep for the district. He attends the University of Texas Health in San Antonio as a second year OTD student. He is excited to be more involved with TOTA's new mentorship program as his favorite occupation is serving as a mentor to elementary school-aged children at his local church. His role is to serve as the liaison between student members of our district. He is the voice of the student population.



Curtis Lee is representing the Corpus Christi area to facilitate events for the OT community in the area. As our district covers a large area, it is important to bring local practitioners together to support each other and build relationships. Curtis is the current program director for Del Mar College. He has been volunteering for the Special Olympics for 20 years and was recognized in 2019 as their Volunteer of the Year. He was even on the news!

Thank you both to Dominic and Curtis for your commitment to the OTPs in our district. If you are looking to be more involved, we would love for someone from the Northwest (Fredericksburg, Kerrville) and the Southwest (Del Rio, Eagle Pass, McAllen, Harlingen) part of our district to host CEUs and facilitate networking opportunities for the area.

DISTRICT BEAT

Rio Grande

Kaleigh Stevens, OTD, OTR
Rio Grande District Chair
Kwarn187@gmail.com



The Rio Grande District has been out and about in our far West Texas community this spring, helping to bring awareness to our organization and our field.

On May 25th, TOTA was represented at the first El Paso ISD Healthcare Career Fair. Over 350 high school students from around the district came to learn about various career opportunities in healthcare, including occupational therapy. Thank you to our volunteers, Sky Estrada and Annmarie De La Rosa, for helping to get the word out about our profession.

On April 23rd, members represented the organization at the Walk for Wishes 5K event by participating in the run while helping to raise money to grant the wishes of children with critical illnesses. For more information about the Make a Wish Foundation, or to check out local events in your area, please visit www.wish.org.

We do not have to wait for a special event to be an everyday advocate for our field. The American Occupational Therapy Association offers the Everyday Advocacy Decision Guide that outlines several suggestions on how to promote OT.

Suggestions include:

- 1. **Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper:** AOTA suggests that letters should be about 250 words or less and should focus on a current topic in healthcare, like fall reduction for the elderly population.
- 2. **Share a photo or short video with a magazine, website, or local news station:** For example, you could send a photo of OT practitioners at a community event. Be sure to get permission from the subjects before submitting.
- 3. **Engage in leadership opportunities:** Look for ways to become more involved at work or in the community. Some opportunities include volunteering as an advisory board member at a local non-profit or running for a position in TOTA.

American Occupational Therapy Association (2022). Everyday advocacy decision guide. <https://www.aota.org/-/media/corporate/files/advocacy/everyday-advocacy-decision-guide.pdf>



OT students Sky Estrada and Annmarie De La Rosa volunteer at the TOTA Rio Grande booth at the EPISD Healthcare Career Fair

Trinity North

Keegan McKay, OTR, MOT, OTD
Trinity North District Chair



As the year continues to fly by at warp speed, the Trinity North District board is meeting on a regular basis to discuss plans for events in our district. One of the biggest goals for our team is to return to “in-person” district meetings along with Continuing Education presentations. The board is currently planning a potential CE event along with the district meeting in August, however, plans are not yet finalized. Stay tuned for more details! Our members have shown a lot of interest in returning to in-person meetings to improve our sense of community and get to catch up with old friends.

My term as District Chair is quickly nearing an end. It is election time, and we have two candidates for the District Chair position. If you haven’t already, make sure to vote! Our district will continue to discuss future ways to grow our Trinity North community and find ways to further meet the mission of TOTA. All ideas and input are welcome, so please feel free to email me if you have suggestions.

We hope everyone has a great summer!

Capital CenTex

Lacey Spark, OTD, MOT, OTR
Capital CenTex District Chair
lspark@usa.edu



The Capital Centex district is working hard to serve the membership in our area and is continuing to meet monthly to develop plans for moving our district forward. At the beginning of May, we received and analyzed the results of a district survey. Thank you to those that took the time to complete our survey! Thirty-three respondents indicated that they were hoping for more CEU (90.9%), social networking (69.7%), volunteering (54.5%), and mentoring (33.3%) opportunities. Therefore, our board will be focusing on putting together more events around these types of activities in response to this feedback.

To provide both CEU and social networking, we will be hosting another CEU watch party event on July 6th from 6p-8:30p with 2 hours of CEU hours available at two sites across the district: Austin Community College- Eastview campus for those in the greater Austin area and University of Mary Hardin Baylor for those in the northern part of the district. If there is anyone interested in helping host other sites in the future to reach a greater geographical area, then we want to talk to you! For this watch party, we will be meeting for a social mingle from 6-6:30, then all will engage in the “Identifying and Understanding Microaggressions” CEU from 6:30-7:30, then break out into groups who want to engage with the “Understanding Hospice and the Unique Role of the Occupational Therapist” or “Occupational Therapy Evaluations in the School Setting” from 7:30-8:30p.

We are in the process of planning more CEU, social, and volunteering events through the rest of the year and will be working on supporting the new mentoring program on the state level. As always, we are looking forward to serving our district and are open to feedback and ideas on ways to provide more support for occupational therapy practitioners in the Capital Centex region. Looking forward to future events and hope to see you soon!

Capital Centex watch party



Great Plains West

Chris Lasek, OTR
Great Plains West District Chair



The Great Plains West district celebrated OT Month in several ways. We partnered with the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) & Abilene Christian University (ACU) SOTA groups to design and sell OT Month t-shirts. A total of 40 t-shirts were sold with the money raised going to support these groups. Thanks to everyone who participated!

We also took part in an autism walk in Abilene on April 1st. We were able to support a great cause and learn about other organizations in the Abilene area supporting kids with special needs and their families.

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



Top and Right: Abilene Autism Walk on April 1st, 2023



DISTRICT BEAT

Left: San Angelo Mixer / Social Event on April 28th, 2023

To wrap up OT Month, we held a mixer / social event at a local restaurant in San Angelo. We had a good turnout, and it was fun getting to catch up with old friends and make new ones. We are hoping to have a social event every quarter.

To learn and grow our knowledge of OT, we hosted two CEUs this spring – one on how to create a Curriculum Vitae for OT Professionals and another on OT Evaluations in the School Setting. We are currently in the process of planning our annual Bubba Klostermann CEU Symposium, which will be offered both in-person on ACU's campus and online. The 5-hour CEU event will be on Saturday, Sept. 16th from 9 am-3 pm and will cover a variety of topics ranging from pediatrics, neuro, and hands as well as a special breakout session for students and FW Educator training. More information to come!

We have also had several people wanting to get more involved and join our district board. Dina Warren has volunteered to be on the Standards & Practice Committee, Haley Glover has agreed to be our Lubbock city representative, and Jerilyn Callen has joined the Social Media Committee and is running for district Vice Chair in the upcoming TOTA elections. As always, if you are interested in becoming more involved, please let me know. We can always use more help! We currently have our Membership Committee position available, the more people we have involved, the better we can be! It's been a blessing to serve you all!



**Thank you to Everyone
who made the TOTA 2023
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY &
PHYSICAL THERAPY SERVICE
DELIVERY IN SCHOOLS:
Policy, Research, and Best
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