

# REVISTA OT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE TEXAS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

VOL 36 NO. 1 / Winter 2023 EDITION





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## Ronnie Hindsman's 5th Annual Bowling Tournament

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Doubles, Open Bowl, Silent Auction, Raffle and fun contests!

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[skills\\_for\\_life@aol.com](mailto:skills_for_life@aol.com)



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## 2023 ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE



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A lifetime of hand care



**April 28-30, 2023**

THE WOODLANDS, TX

**[www.tsht.org](http://www.tsht.org)**

**REGISTRATION  
OPENS JANUARY  
1ST!**

# TOTA 2023 Annual Conference

Houston, Texas | November 3-4, 2023

Hyatt Regency Houston  
1200 Louisiana Street. 77002



## Call for Proposals Opens February 1

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO:

<https://www.tota.org/conference-main-page-2023>

### CE WEBINAR

## NEUROPLASTICITY AND FUNCTIONAL COGNITION

### SPEAKER

**Asha Vas, PhD, OT**

Expert in functionally relevant cognitive  
training and rehabilitation programs.

### WHEN

**January 28, 2023**

8 am - 12 pm

### REGISTER

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/seminar-tickets-491943435057>

### COST

\$60 TOTA Members

\$120 TOTA Non-Members

Dear Pei-Fen Chang,

### SPONSOR

Texas Occupational Therapy Foundation (TOTF)

<https://TexasOTF.org>

### BENEFITING

TOTF provides grants for Texas OTs to benefit clients in Texas.



## OT and PT Service Delivery in Schools: Policy, Research, and Best Practices

### 2023 Bi-Annual Conference

Friday, June 02, 2023 8:00 AM to  
Saturday, June 03, 2023 12:00 PM CST

### INCLUDED TOPICS:

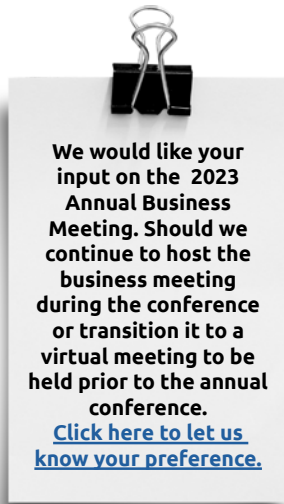
- Strategies for Contributing to School Mental Health
- Research Findings for Moving to a Workload Model
- The Relationship of Primitive Reflexes and Therapy Outcomes
- What Role Do We Play in Dysgraphia Intervention?
- Support for Interprofessional Collaborative Goals

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO



# Contents

- 5 | Letter from the President
- 6 | From the Executive Director
- 7 | Officers & Chairs
- 8 | TOTA Education Chair
- 9 | Conference Wrap Up
- 9 | State Membership Chair
- 10 | Empowering OTAs
- 11 | Award Recipients
- 13 | Conference Snapshots
- 14 | Day at the Capitol
- 16 | Call for Nominations
- 17 | Student Zone
- 19 | District Beat
- 25 | AOTF
- 26 | Save the Date!



**Click here to make a nomination!**



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

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Web: [www.tota.org](http://www.tota.org)

**REVISTA OT:** Winter Edition 2023

## THANK YOU TO OUR TOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS!

### PLATINUM



### SILVER



### TEXAS STAR



### ADDITIONAL EXHIBITORS

Accessible Systems  
Anchor Pediatric Therapy  
At Home Healthcare  
Be An Angel  
Circle of Care Pediatric Therapy Services  
Cole Health  
Ensign Affiliates  
Envision University  
E Pulse  
Evidence In Motion  
Hanger Clinic  
Harris County Department of Education  
Houston Methodist Learning Medicine  
ImageNet Consulting  
Kendra Scott  
Killeen ISD  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Med Travelers  
NBCOT  
Neuro Rehab VR  
Preston Wood Pediatrics

Rehab Synergies  
Reliable Medical  
Reliant Rehabilitation  
Shiftkey  
Small Hands Big Hearts Pediatric Therapy - A Merakey Company  
Super Duper Publications  
Synergy Care  
Texas Health & Human Services Early Childhood Intervention  
Texas Occupational Therapy Foundation  
Texas Technology Access Program  
The Genesis Group  
Thrive Skilled Pediatric Care  
TIRR Memorial Hermann  
TMC  
UT Tyler  
WPS  
VIRTUAL: TheraPeeds

# Letter from the President

Jason Stark, OT – TOTA President



Jason Stark, OT, MHA  
TOTA President

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to our 2022 conference planning committee, executive director, awards committee, state board, presenters, attendees, and vendors for a phenomenal conference. The positive energy was palpable throughout the conference, and we received positive feedback from vendors, speakers, and attendees. TOTA is already preparing for our 2023 conference that will be in Downtown Houston on November 2-3.

I absolutely loved our theme this year of “jOURney Forward” and feel that it completely embodies TOTA and our commitment to move this organization forward. TOTA has been focused on ensuring that we, as an organization, have a clear path to serving our members. Over the last year we have simplified the strategic plan and have worked to define volunteer roles and expectations at all levels of this organization.

TOTA approved the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) ad hoc committee to become a standing committee in 2022. Please applaud yourselves as we celebrate our commitment to DEI.

I am especially proud of the work that our staff and volunteers have done to make TOTA more visible. We continue to improve our digital footprint through improvements to the website and usage of the Learning Management System. We have also improved our community visibility through volunteer efforts at the district level.

The board will have its annual planning and training

retreat in January where we will develop specific action items to address our strategic initiatives along with spending time defining and training for roles within the state board.

TOTA needs to answer questions as we strive to improve membership. We must provide an answer to the question of: Why I should be a member? We must also address why students who are graduating lose their commitment to our organization as licensed professionals.

We must pursue our journey forward together. Please make a commitment to help TOTA drive its membership so that we can continue to be a sustainable organization that is committed to the future, an organization that is committed to you. If you have any answers, please share them with me.

I look forward to serving you all over the next two years and wish you all Happy Holidays. In the words of Simon Sinek, take care of yourselves, and take care of each other.

**LET'S GET CREATIVE!**

Submit your ideas for our 2023 TOTA Conference Theme  
to [judith.joseph@tota.org](mailto:judith.joseph@tota.org)

Deadline for entries: February 28, 2023

# Judith Joseph, Executive Director

## The Journey Forward Requires Listening to feedback



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

**T**he 2022 conference theme of “jOURney Forward” has been a goal for the association as well. These past years of navigating through a pandemic have forced us to recognize a need for change and flexibility. At the time of writing this article, the country is experiencing another winter in crisis with the flu, COVID-19, and RSV circulating. Many of us remain uncomfortable in large crowds and may still be working and traveling in spaces that require masking and other safety precautions. The health and safety of everyone involved in the conference was and will continue to be a high priority for the association, including the selection of conference sites that have adequate space for conference attendees and vendors.

### Event Planning

Planning a conference event begins several years in advance, including signing binding contracts to secure the venue. When selecting the venue, key factors of the decision-making process include availability, the accommodations offered, price, and location. The TOTA annual conference hosts one of the largest exhibit halls among state OT associations and finding venues with halls large enough to accommodate the number and variety of exhibitors is challenging.

### Site Selection

In 2018, the Embassy Suites and Convention Center contract was secured for the 2020 annual conference. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person events were canceled. To avoid significant financial loss for TOTA, the 2022 conference was scheduled for the Embassy Suites location in Denton. The 2021 annual conference was contracted at the Houston Marriott Sugar Land until COVID-19 required TOTA to find a larger venue with adequate space for social distancing. There were very few facilities available at short notice that were able to accommodate our space requirements. But with the help of Angela Feinstein, a meeting procurement and site selection expert, we were able to secure the Hyatt Regency Downtown Houston.

During this period, the travel and hospitality industry sustained a devastating financial hit which resulted

in a reduction in our negotiating power. As a result, it was more fiscally responsible for TOTA, like many other organizations trying to find event venues, to sign a two-year contract with the location rather than the typical one-year contract. For this reason, we are returning to the Hyatt Regency Downtown Houston for our 2023 conference but since under contract, it will still be at the lower 2021 rates.

The planning for the 2024 conference has already begun and at the time of the writing of this article, we have submitted more than eleven requests to event venues and have yet to be successful in securing a location. The search included regions around McAllen, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. Because so many organizations were required to sign multi-year contracts to host their event with the same venue in 2020 & 2021 that availability for 2024 is extremely limited and even our first choice of venue could only offer us November 22-23. I promise to keep you updated.

### Program

We reviewed your feedback from the conference and the committee is considering the requests for more short courses, a student-focused track, and the ability to identify if the presenter is a student or a practitioner. We have also had conversations with our members who work in academia and student members regarding the poster sessions which have been virtual for the most recent conferences. We plan to offer the option for in-person poster presentations again for those wanting that experience, but with smaller poster sizes.

### Price

Conferences are expensive and it is not just the rental of the space and technology that must be considered. TOTA also takes the cost of the hotel rooms, event food and beverage minimums, and technology fees for a venue into consideration during the process. Most conference attendees do not realize that all conference venues require minimum food and beverage spending amounts ranging from \$26,000 to \$50,000 for the event. The price of coffee and water for hot tea can range from \$65 to \$100 per gallon. TOTA's conference has a tradition of

## 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:	OPEN
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	Katrina Herrera (OT) Yvette Jimenez (OTA)
Newsletter	
Editor:	Rachelle Elliot
Design and Production:	Justine Boyer
Executive Director	Judith Joseph
Association Management System Admin	Frederick Smith
Office and Social Media Assistant	Cadi Boyer
Vendor Services	Kami Lusson
Continuing Education Services	Kami Lusson
Legislative Advisor	Denise Rose Kate Goodrich
Legal Advisor	Richard Cheng

including a boxed lunch with an average cost of \$32. Snack items and sodas that might cost \$1 at the grocery store can cost from \$4.50 - \$6.00 at a conference. Fortunately, some of these costs are covered by our many wonderful vendors who agree to sponsor the cost of coffee, conference bags, refreshments, lanyards, and even part of the boxed lunches. So, the next time you are in the exhibition hall, be sure to thank them for their generosity.

What you will see in 2023 is a "cost-based" conference fee. Cost-based pricing means we will review the overall cost of producing or hosting the conference, which includes marketing, printing, food & beverage, technology needs, professional fees, exhibit hall set/up, and many other necessary expenses to host a conference. Essentially there will be a price for members and a higher price for non-members. Students and practitioners will pay the same price. Discounts will be available for volunteers, board members, committee members, and presenters, including our students. Early bird registration will remain in place.

## Business Meeting

We are considering hosting the TOTA Annual Business Meeting virtually before the conference to make more spots available for educational courses. If you have not yet responded to the poll, please do so by January 31. <https://tota.memberclicks.net/2023-business-meeting>

## 2023 Conference Timelines

The Call for Proposals of courses and posters for the 2023 annual conference will open on February 1. The call to nominate a practitioner or student for one of the 2023 awards will coincide with the Call for Proposals

## Important Dates

Call for Proposals Opens	February 1
Call for Proposals Closes	May 14
Committee Decisions Emailed	July 7
Accepted Presenter Contracts Emailed	July 10
Early Bird Registration	Sept. 8 - Oct.15
Regular Registration (no onsite)	October 16-29
Hotel Room Book Deadline	October 11
Handouts Due	October 19
Conference	November 3-4

You can expect a return of the practice forums, a student-focused course track, the opportunity to present posters in person, and more short courses.

## Thank You

Finally, thank you to all the call for proposal reviewers, the conference committee, presenters, volunteers, vendors, sponsors, attendees, and most of all, to my ace in the hole, Kami Lusson. The conference does not happen without you.

Judi

# TOTA Education Chair Report

Megan Taylor, OTR, OTD



Megan Taylor, OTR,  
OTD

During the months leading up to the conference, one of the primary focuses of the Education Chair is to support the Conference Committee and any conference preparations. The 2022 Annual TOTA Conference in Denton was a success due to the dedication and work of TOTA Executive Director Judi Joseph, Continuing Education Coordinator Kami Lusson, and the Conference Committee, as well as all the members of the Continuing Education Review Committee, the outstanding presenters, and the OT students and practitioners who attended and made the conference a great gathering of professionals. Planning for the 2023 Annual TOTA Conference in Houston has already begun, and important dates can be found on the TOTA website at <https://www.tota.org/conference-main-page-2023>.

2023 will bring you, the members, access to more live and recorded TOTA-approved continuing education courses which 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>.

My goal as the Education Chair is for OT students and practitioners in Texas to access and support the educational opportunities provided by TOTA. This is how:

- **Submit a proposal for the 2023 Annual TOTA Conference (Opens Feb 1st)**
- **Submit a proposal for statewide or district wide presentations (Ongoing)**
- **Apply to be a member of the Continuing Education Review Committee**
- **Utilize the TOTA Learning Management System**

Let's work together to advance our professional development and the continuing education of Texas OTs!





# 2023 Conference Wrap Up

Layman Darnell Miller, OTA



Layman Darnell Miller,  
TOTA State OTA  
Representative

What a TOTA conference we had last month in Denton! Did anyone else experience a jolt of excitement during those two days? Whether attending informative sessions, hanging out with your conference buddies (you know, the people you only see at conferences but who feel like old friends), or physically meeting your Zoom colleagues, this conference felt special.

The conference theme, “jOURney forward”, encouraged movement from the holding pattern we found ourselves in during the past two years. It feels like we are starting anew — not returning to how we once were but navigating new terrains.

Nowhere was this idea more apparent than during the OTA Forum. The three topics addressed during the Forum — OTA Empowerment, pursuing Specialty Certifications, and Mentoring — struck a chord with those in attendance and resulted in heartfelt conversation.

Some participants expressed the desire for increased mentoring — both clinically and for professional growth, some participants expressed concerns regarding how legislation may affect future employment and others expressed frustration that they are seen as “just a COTA.” The challenges of being a COTA are apparent for some, but all expressed pride, joy, and love of the job.

OTA entrepreneurship drew some of the biggest conversations. Many in attendance expressed the desire to start a private business, but not knowing how to start, which OT services to provide or if they could even provide said services as an OTA were some of the obstacles mentioned.

The OTA Forum is a platform to share knowledge, voice concerns, and collaborate on the “jOURney forward” for OTAs. Using these discussions as a starting point, the goals for 2023 are to find traditional and innovative ways to address these ideas. Another goal is to establish an active OTA community across the state. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is increasing OTA membership from the approximately 150 members currently registered. Imagine if each of us were to recruit one OT practitioner to become a member. To quote Dr. Seuss, “Oh, the places [we’ll] go.”

Each one, Reach one. Sounds like a future call to action.

## State Membership Chair

Patricia Bowyer



Patricia Bowyer,  
TOTA State  
Membership Chair

Greetings TOTA members. I am Patricia Bowyer and I look forward to serving TOTA as the state Membership Chair. My appointment began in November 2022 and while I have been learning a lot about this role, I know that as 2023 progresses I will gain even more insights into ways in which TOTA can continue to maintain current service levels while further enhancing the benefits to the member to that end, I plan to work with the Board and specifically each District Chair and District Membership Chair to improve the member experience. Feel free to contact me with any ideas or suggestions you have in relation to being a member or membership services.

# Empowering OTAs by Networking at the TOTA Conference

Rachel Perez, COTA and Vicki Thomas, COTA, CDP



Rachel Perez, COTA

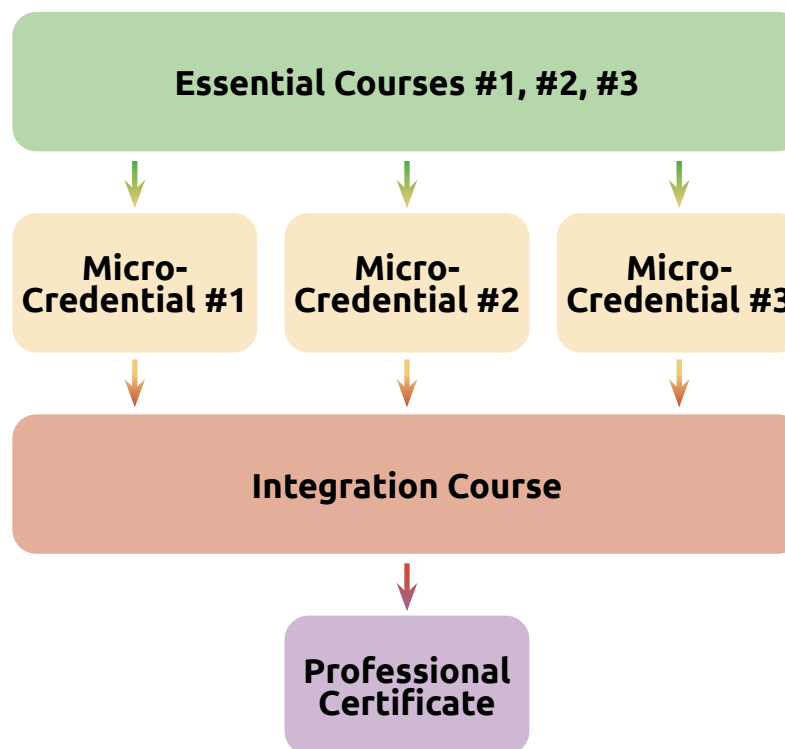


Vicki Thomas, COTA, CDP

We had an amazing opportunity to collaborate with OTA practitioners and students at the OTA Forum at TOTA's conference in Denton.

At conference we presented on the value of Micro Credentialing particularly for OTAs. AOTA supports the benefits of Micro Credentialing for OTAs because it allows practitioners the ability to share learning

achievements with peers and potential employers, help achieve professional development goals and improve client outcomes. We looked at micro credentialing options from AOTA including "Home Modifications and Fall Prevention Micro-Credential Course Bundle." Under this bundle the practitioner would complete a series of courses and upon completion receive a professional certificate. (See model below from AOTA.org)



We also discussed other available credentials outside of AOTA, available for OTAs, including Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) and Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS).

The response of the group was positive and well-received. Participants described micro-credentialing as a positive alternative for those not interested in returning to a college/university for a post-graduate degree and a way to further their skills in a desired specialty area. At the end of the Forum, the committee and participants

had the opportunity to network and brainstorm for future OTA forums.

We welcome OTAs who are interested in increasing their involvement with the association. OTAs are eligible to serve either as a committee member/chair or executive role including the President! Please join us as our voice is truly valued with TOTA, but there are only a handful of us speaking for all of us. We invite you to become a part of TOTA's vision and mission to increase our membership and leadership. Be the change you're seeking!



# 2022 Annual Conference Award Recipients



*Occupational Therapist of the Year*

Lynda Jennings, OTR, RAC-CT, CDP



*Occupational Therapy Assistant of the Year*

Vicki Lee Thomas, COTA



**Roster  
of Merit**

Terra Ruppert,  
PhD, OTR



**Roster  
of Merit**

William Sit,  
Ph.D., OTR



**Roster  
of Merit**

Patricia Tully,  
OTR, ATP



**Honorary Life  
Membership**

Mary Leary  
Hennigan, OTR,  
MBA



**Honorary Life  
Membership**

Terri Powers, OTR



**Letter of  
Appreciation**

Esther Bell, MA,  
OTR, FAOTA



**Letter of  
Appreciation**

Jaclyn F Low,  
OTR, PhD (Ret)



**Academic  
Educator of the  
Year Award**

Alicia Lohmann,  
OTD, OTR, CBIS



**Clinical Educator  
of the Year Award**

Matt Wymore,  
OTD, OTR, CHT,  
COMT



**Horizon  
Award**

Brittney Burton,  
OTR, MOT, CSRS



**Student  
Leadership Award**

Marcelo Peña



**Clinical Excellence  
Award**

Gloria Brown,  
OTR, MS, CHT

*Continued on next page*

# 2022 Annual Conference Award Recipients

AWARDS... Continued from previous page

## Service Awards

### State Board

Elizabeth Holland, COTA - Membership Committee Chair  
Brittney Burton, OTR, MOT - Social Media Adhoc Committee Chair  
Susan Nickelson, OTR, OTD - Education Committee Chair

### Alamo South District

Jennifer Sanchez Morales, OTR, OTD – State OT Student Rep

### Capital Centax District

Giuli Krug, OTR, PhD, CLA– CC District Chair  
Megan Frazier, OTR, MOT, DRS – CC – District Secretary  
Carol Zaricor, OTD, OTR, C/NDT - Vice Chair  
Kimberly Evatt, OTR, MOT, OTD - Treasurer

### Gulf Coast East District

Sue Ram, OTR, OTD – Development Committee Chair  
Dulce Parades, COTA – State OTA Student Rep

### Trinity North District

Emilie Klingman, OTR, MOT – TN District vice chair  
Alissa Young, OTR, MOT- TN District Secretary

### Rio Grande District

Ursel Lovett, OTR, MOT – Rio Grande District Treasurer

### Great Plains West District

Mathew Wymore, OTD, OTR, CHT, COMT – GPW District Chair  
Chris Lasek, OTR - GPW Treasurer  
Megan Taylor, OTD, OTR, CLT - Education Committee Chair  
Jarrod Maddox, OTR, CHT - Education Committee Chair  
Ye Re Yoon - Texas tech rep  
Rondie Rueckert - student rep ACU  
Rebecca Crossland, OTR, MOT - Membership Committee Chair

## Special Thanks

### 2022 Awards Committee

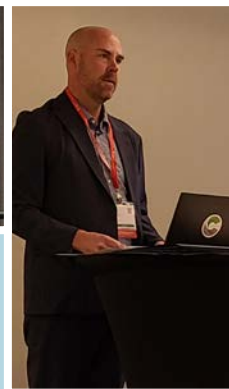
Regina Campbell, Chair  
Judy Skarbek  
Angela Duell  
Katherine Lawson  
Purnananda Kar  
Helen Wan

### TOTA State Board Members

*TOTA Congratulates the 2022 Annual Conference Award Recipients  
for their dedication to service, the OT profession and to TOTA.*



# 2022 Annual Conference Snapshots



# Day at the Capitol: More than professional “responsibility,” it’s your profession’s “response-ability” (Minkler, 1999).

John Luna, OTR, OTD



John Luna,  
OTR, OTD

The date is Tuesday, May 29th, 2023, the day after Texas’ 88th Legislature’s regular session ends. As you pour your first cup of coffee, you wonder what laws have passed that will impact the job you are getting dressed to go to, the clients you serve, and your profession. No one knows the answer to this question since we are still in January 2023. However, as you pour that first cup of coffee on May 29th, 2023, you can know that your voice was heard, and you advocated for your patients, profession, and future.

Advocacy is a simple concept; we speak up or work on behalf of other individuals, groups, or causes (Jacobs and McCormack, 2019). Advocacy aligns with our profession’s core values, such as equality and justice (AOTA, 2020). This spring, there are many opportunities to transform our values into action including Day at the Capitol. Day at the Capitol is a TOTA-sponsored event where practitioners and students from across Texas travel to Austin to meet with their elected officials and advocate for their profession. Participants are organized into small groups and receive specific talking points, pre-event orientation, and additional resources to ensure a successful meeting. If this is your first meeting with an elected official, TOTA will pair you with someone to facilitate your discussion and help you advocate for our profession.

Your participation in Day at the Capitol plays a pivotal role in TOTA’s success in this legislative session.

While everyone’s voice carries an important message to their single elected official, this message becomes amplified when delivered by a group of practitioners and students delivering the same message, to numerous legislators, on the same day. We need to leave a lasting impression upon Texas legislators that OT is **the** solution in this legislative session.

During this upcoming session, TOTA plans to focus our advocacy efforts on Mental Health. Across the state in the past year, a spotlight has been cast on how the

State can best support Texans’ mental and behavioral health. Whether this is through creating new programs, new facilities, or increasing funding and/or utilization of existing State programs, as a profession we want to be: (1) recognized in legislation that supports mental and behavioral health, (2) included in an interdisciplinary approach to meet the needs of Texans, and (3) reimbursed at a rate that reflects the tangible outcomes attributed to OT. Registration for Day at the Capitol is easy. Follow the link here <https://www.tota.org/day-at-the-capitol>. Make sure to register individually, even if you are attending as a group. Individual registration allows us to identify your specific legislator to schedule your meeting. Your advocacy efforts over the next 140 days can help support policy impacting your practice for years to come. Advocacy is a part of a process, and it is impossible to know the outcome of our collective efforts. However, on May 29th, as we take the first sip of coffee, I want you to raise your mug, knowing that your continued advocacy helped shape policy and practice this year for the clients we serve, the profession we love, and our future. See you in Austin.

## References

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- Minkler M. (1999). Personal responsibility for health? A review of the arguments and the evidence at century’s end. *Health Education & Behavior*, 26, 121–140. doi:10.1177/109019819902600110 [Cross ref.](#) [PubMed](#).



JOIN US - GOAL: 500+ OT Practitioners and students educating and advocating for occupational therapy practice and our role in mental health settings.



**Tuesday, February 7, 2023**  
**8:00 AM - 5:00 PM CST**

**Texas Capitol | 1100 Congress Ave | Austin, Texas 78701**

It is important that you complete the registration form with the address at which you are registered to vote, if it is different from the address on your membership profile. We encourage you to update your TOTA profiles and complete the registration form at least two weeks prior to this event. This allows us to better organize our group and schedule legislative visits.

**Attire:** Professional dress/business attire  
with comfortable shoes

**Virtual Orientation:** January 31, 2023  
7:00 pm -8:00 pm CST

[CLICK TO REGISTER FOR VIRTUAL TRAINING](#)

**REGISTER TODAY**

# TOTA 2023 Call for State and District Board of Directors Nominations



## 2023 TOTA Elections

### State Board:

President Elect  
Vice Chair  
Secretary

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

### District Positions:

Alamo South	Capital Centex	Great Plains West	Gulf Coast East	Rio Grande	Trinity North
Vice Chair	Chair	Vice Chair	Chair	Vice Chair	Chair
Secretary		Secretary		Secretary	

TOTA invites all members to submit nominations for the 2023-2024 leadership positions to be elected. Occupational therapy assistants are encouraged to run for elected office and are eligible to be nominated for all positions. Self-Nominations are allowed. Refer to the [website](#) for eligibility requirements.

**The following table is an overview of important dates regarding nominations and voting.**

January/February	Call for Nominations will be posted on the TOTA website and printed in Revista. The chair of the Nomination Committee will be selected by the committee.
April	Deadline for submission of all names to state and district nomination committees.
June	Ballots will be live on the TOTA website. Deadline is June 30.
July	Election results will be announced to the membership on July 5th.
November	New Officer orientation. All elected state officers and district officers shall assume office upon adjournment of the annual business meeting at which their election has been announced.

## Upcoming Events

**January 22, 2023**

State Board of Directors Meeting

**January 28, 2023**

Virtual CE Webinar  
Neuroplasticity and Functional Cognition

**January 31, 2023**

Day at the Capitol Virtual Online Training

**February 1, 2023**

Call for Proposals Opens

**February 7, 2023**

Day at the Capitol

**February 16, 2023**

Virtual CE Webinar  
Accessible Home Modifications Across the Age-Span: Strategies to Prepare for Success in the Future as an OTP in Texas

**April 30, 2023**

Deadline for State and District Position Nominations

**May 14, 2023**

Call for Proposals Closes

**June 30, 2023**

Deadline for State and District Position Ballots

**July 5, 2023**

Election results announced

**November 4-5, 2023**

TOTA Annual Conference

For up-to-date calendar of events, please visit the TOTA website at: [www.tota.org](http://www.tota.org)

**Thank you to our members for helping make TOTA great!**



## Recap of Student Events at 2022 TOTA Annual Conference

**Katrina Herrera,**  
TOTA State Student OT Rep.



Katrina Herrera,  
OT Student Rep



Yvette Jimenez,  
OTA Student Rep

Visiting Denton, TX this past November for the 2022 Texas Occupational Therapy Association Conference was both exciting and informative for me as a student and future practitioner. I serve as the State Student OT Representative, and with my partner, Yvette Jimenez, who serves as the State Student OTA Representative. During the conference, we hosted the student and first-year practitioner networking event on Friday night, and the Saturday session titled, *What's Next, Student and First-Year Practitioner* seminar. This event included six presentations from occupational therapy providers who practice in various clinical and academic backgrounds across Texas. These colleagues shared their wisdom and answered questions that ranged from preparing for fieldwork experiences and interviewing for jobs, to a typical day in the life of an OTP within different practice settings. I received great feedback from students and speakers who attended this event and hope to see this seminar continued at future conferences.

Although we were busy attending conference sessions for the two days of the conference, we found time to explore and shop the exhibit hall. I loved the creativity

coming from the different SOTA organizations and wanted to buy everything they made! I enjoyed networking with many other students, as we shared our OT and OTA school experiences during these booth visits.

I am having a wonderful experience as the State Student OT Representative and encourage anyone interested in these volunteer positions, State Student OT and OTA Representatives, to apply. Through my experience, I have received mentoring about how to coordinate student events and now can add conference planning and session moderator to my resume. The best part of my position is that I feel that can provide a voice for OT and OTA students across Texas and can share our unique experiences as students with the TOTA Board of Directors. Each of these volunteer positions does have a two-year commitment. The first year is spent serving as the State Student OT and OTA Representatives, and the second year is providing mentorship to the new, incoming State Student Representatives. I am available for any questions prospective students may have about the roles and can be reached at [txotstudentrep@tota.org](mailto:txotstudentrep@tota.org).

# TOTA Capstone Students

Congratulations to Amanda and Jason!



This project will address airline travel equity for wheeled mobility users by utilizing an adapted multi-tiered system of support intervention approach that focuses on education and influencing the culture around air travel.

Much of the responsibility to protect wheelchairs and scooters while traveling via aircraft is placed on the end user. While educating the end user is undeniably an important factor, educating airlines, airports, and practitioners, as well as advocating for more unified standards would create a sense of accountability that the air travel industry is currently lacking. Educating baggage handlers on what is at stake for this population when their mobility equipment is mishandled, coupled with a plan to disburse to practitioners on how to best advocate for their clients, will bring awareness to the lack of protective regulations in the industry. The percentage of wheelchairs and scooters that are being mishandled is remaining constant, even as the overall number of wheelchairs and scooters that are being enplaned is increasing as more people begin to travel since restrictions put in place during the Covid 19 pandemic are being lifted. With supply chain issues causing difficulties across industries and a lack of awareness of the stakes for the end users in the air travel industry, wheelchair users simply do not feel comfortable risking traveling via airlines creating inequitable access to air travel.

This project will educate stakeholders in the airline industry, creating awareness and starting conversations about how to address the current barriers identified by end users. Using an approach that will facilitate education and advocacy at multiple levels of stakeholders will create a holistic understanding of issues and how to best address them moving forward. Understanding how barriers are formed and perceived by all stakeholders allows for a more meaningful conversation about how to adapt or modify these barriers to promote equitable access and participation in air travel.

Amanda Swofford,  
Texas Woman's University, Houston Texas



Work with TOTA Board of Director's strategic goal to enhance interactions with the membership through virtual events, corporate relationships, and social media as evidenced by 5% increase in overall licensee membership.

Jason Perez  
OTD Class of 2023  
UT Health San Antonio



# New Energy in Alamo South

Monica S. Clark, OTR, OTD  
Alamo South District Chair



**A**lamo South has had many challenges since the pandemic; however, we are now entering a period of growth and renewed energy. We have new members, officers, student representatives, and fresh ideas to gain momentum into 2023 and beyond.

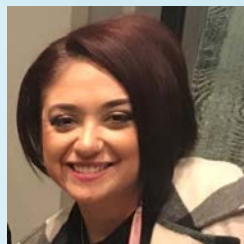
## New Officers



**Marcie Campbell** is our Legislative and Political Affairs Committee Chair. She moved from the Trinity North District and is now the Director of Research & Grants at the University of the Incarnate Word in the OTD program. Her favorite occupation is playing, and she loves to shop at thrift stores.



Our new Development Chair is **Terri Grundy**, an Assistant Professor at St. Catherine University. She has numerous ideas for how to involve more OTA students in TOTA events and how to increase the overall membership. Her favorite occupations are crafting, sewing, and refinishing or upcycling furniture – any opportunity to be creative. Currently, she and her husband are rehabbing a 1976 Argosy Airstream!



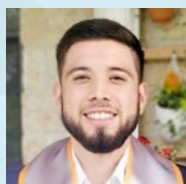
**Lorinda Harris** from Laredo Community College is now the liaison for the Laredo area. She is an avid animal lover and enjoys dogs – she has four! She also likes watching movies and gaming. Lorinda has been an OTR for only 4 months, but she was a COTA for 16 years before growing her career. Congratulations!

## Student Reps



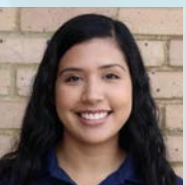
The St. Philips College OTA student representative is **Rachel Peterson**. When looking for a field of study, she was most interested in providing advocacy and

mental health awareness, taking after her mom, a social worker. Seeking a hands-on job, she found occupational therapy and is excited about the holistic perspective it takes in terms of empowerment and independence. Her goal is to spread this knowledge as she takes her own journey of independence into the field.



From The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio **Vincent Vento**. His favorite occupation is to participate and co-host a football podcast with

two of his lifelong friends. A close second is playing with his dogs and taking them on walks on a nice fresh day!



**Melissa Mendoza** is our student representative from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Her favorite OT quote is "Occupational Therapy. Hopelessness into hope. Can't into can. Impossible into possible." – Valeri Peña, OTR.

We are still seeking student representatives from Del Mar College, Medical Education & Training Campus, South Texas College, & UT Rio Grande Valley.

*Alamo South continued on next page*

# BEAT DISTRICT SID



## Strategic Plan

Our hope is to better serve the Alamo South District members through professional development, informational needs, and educational requirements as well as advancing and improving the practice of occupational therapy. Therefore, the current board members met at the end of the year to discuss our plan for 2023. Our key objectives for the coming year are three-fold.

1. Increase knowledge and comfort of mentorship for area occupational therapy practitioners through education.

2. Pair area mentors with new graduates &/or students to provide support for the first few years of practice and build the occupational therapy community.
3. Provide space, time, & resources for career opportunities (resume content, qualities desired from area healthcare settings, advice from hiring managers, etc.) for both hiring entities and OTPs looking for the right fit.

To meet these objectives, we have multiple activities planned:

ACTIVITY	OUTCOME	DATE
Career Day/Night	A variety of settings and locations with job postings are available. Advice for creating a resume & skills needed for each setting/location. A panel of hiring managers.	Apr 15
Mentorship Workshop	Provide method, structure, and information for mentorship.	July 15
Mentor Matching (local)	Match local mentors with student/new grad occupational therapy practitioners.	July 15
Fall CEU at the general meeting	Targeted education to the needs of the district (topic TBD)	Sept 5

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, we still have several vacant positions in our district: OTA representative, Education, Membership, area representatives from Fredericksburg,

and Corpus Christi, and student reps for every school in our district. We would love to have you serve with us! If you are interested in being a mentor, please contact me at [mstarko@gmail.com](mailto:mstarko@gmail.com).

# DISTRICT BEAT

## Capital Centex

**Lacey Spark,  
District Chair**



In 2022 the Capital Centex district has seen growth and changes, and we are looking forward to ongoing involvement in the community in 2023! We appreciate and want to recognize the hard work of the board members who have moved on from their positions this year: Giuli Krug, Carol Zaricor, Kimberly Evatt, Micha McDaniel, Megan Frazier, and Tiffany Pfluger. Their contributions and efforts have been greatly appreciated and will be carried forward by the current board.

Capital Centex has a new Chair (Lacey Spark), Vice-Chair (Beth Lambert), Secretary (Kelli Easley), OTA representative (Natalie Spencer), and Education Chair (Crystal Mandudi). Heather Doreck remains our representative for the Committee on Development. The district board will meet again at the beginning of 2023 to plan events for the upcoming year to bring our community together both in-person and virtually to serve occupational therapy practitioners in the Capital Centex region, give back to the people we serve, and advocate for the profession.



This fall, members of the board participated in the Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas' BuddyWalk and we hope to participate in more community events in the future with fellow OTPs in the district.

We are excited

about finding more ways to serve the membership and the community in the Capital Centex region for 2023. Feel free to reach out to any of the board members if you have ideas or want to get involved!

## Trinity North

**Keegan McKay,  
Trinity North  
District Chair**



Members of the Trinity North District enjoyed spending time at the TOTA conference in Denton and were there to support the many achievements of our district members. Congratulations to Mary Hennigan for becoming a TOTA Honorary Life Member for her contributions as the former TOTA Executive Director, and for the many other ways she has supported the OT community. Additional congratulations go to William Sit, former Trinity North District Chair, who was awarded the Roster of Merit at this year's Awards Ceremony.

At the business meeting, the district's new Vice Chair and Secretary, Julie Hebert, and Ashley Harrell were sworn in and are currently settling into their new roles. A special thanks go to Emilie Klingman and Alissa Young, the outgoing Vice Chair and Secretary, for all their hard work and dedication to this district. Emilie and Alissa have played a pivotal role in the planning and implementation of district activities for several years.

The Trinity North District board will be meeting early in January to plan events for 2023, including a continuing education workshop: An Anatomy Refresher using Anatomage Tables, presented by DeAn Sellmann, Trinity North Development Chair and faculty member at the University of St. Augustine Health Sciences. This event will be occurring around April with a date to be confirmed soon. We will also be planning more in-person events, including volunteer and outreach activities. Information on these activities will become available early in the New Year. TOTA website will be posted once available.

The Trinity North District board looks forward to serving our members in 2023 with fun activities and opportunities to participate in various events.



# DISTRICT BEAT



# Gulf Coast East

Kira Beal, Ed.D, OTR, OTD  
GCE District Chair

## Greetings!

The Gulf Coast East District had a productive and successful year in 2022 and ready to bring on more exciting CEU, social, and volunteer events in 2023! From CEU events in both the spring and late fall to collecting toiletries and packaging meals to feed those less fortunate, we have served our OT community and district community well. Please be on the lookout for 2023 OT Month events and other events in general for both OT Practitioners and students. We hope that we can continue to serve all in many ways as a district for the Texas Occupational Therapy Association.

## We Are All OT Practitioners!

How do you introduce yourself to patients, family, and friends? Are you an OT Practitioner? Do you say I work in the field of OT? You may not sit and think about how you have introduced yourself to others. In school, a lot of information is learned but not a lot of emphasis is always placed on titles. Students are taught about the field of occupational therapy and told to make sure to introduce who they are and that they are with "occupational therapy" to clients and/or patients. But the translation of our titles sometimes becomes miss construed. As we are still the unknown and not always understood profession.

I have heard individuals outside of the OT profession say they do not understand why we are not just OTs and OTAs. And then an explanation must ensue. We all know as graduates from OT and OTA programs and upon passing their board exams we are given a credential from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT). This is where the confusion begins. Occupational

Gulf Coast East District  
Recap of 2022



therapist have been provided the "R" credential providing them with the title "OTR" and Occupational therapy assistants with the "C" credential upon passing the board exam. However, this is not a credential needed to practice (at least in the state of Texas). There are OT practitioners who do not renew their NBCOT credentials. This is another reason it is important to spread the message to all to utilize saying, I am an OT practitioner or specifically an OT or OTA. As I recently read an OT practitioner write on a social media post, why would we want to walk around calling OTs "otters" and OTAs "kotas". We are just confusing society and each other. Never assume an individual has kept their credentials from NBCOT. Proudly keep your respective credential but make attempts to refrain from saying "OTR" or COTA" when acknowledging yourself or other colleagues. There is a domino effect when utilizing those terms as prospective students are asking to be admitted to "OTR" and "COTA" programs. Education and modeling the correct terminology is key!

As we continue to move the profession forward, let us first remember to acknowledge ourselves as OT Practitioners! We have to be an example to ourselves for others to understand and recognize the genuine capacity of the occupational therapy profession. That begins with us utilizing the correct titles as OT Practitioners.

# DISTRICT BEAT



## Rio Grande

Kaleigh Stevens, OTD, OTR  
Rio Grande District Chair



### It's a new day for mental health!

On October 8th, occupational therapy practitioners, students, and their families came out to support the TOTA Rio Grande District at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Awareness Walk. The Rio Grande District raised \$1,295 for NAMI El Paso. Our walkers and volunteers also took the opportunity to advocate for our profession and educate our community on the role OT has in mental health.

Occupational therapists do not need to be mental health specialists to promote mental health. Mental illnesses are often associated with functional impairments and can be found among any population. Depression and anxiety disorders have been linked to diagnoses such as stroke, Parkinson's disease, and spinal cord injury to name a few. General practitioners can play a role in supporting the mental health of their patients and NAMI offers resources to help practitioners working with any individual at risk for mental illness.

The NAMI website offers tips on identifying warning signs that someone might be suffering from a mental illness. Signs to look for include:

- Intensifying worries or fears
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feeling moody or sad for more than 2 weeks
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Withdrawing from others
- Decreased desire to participate in daily life activities

If any of these signs are noted, OTs can play a role in asking patients questions to start a conversation about mental illness. NAMI suggests using "I" statements to get the conversation started. Example statements include:

- "I noticed you have been eating less (sleeping more, etc.). Is everything ok?"
- "I've heard your family say you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?"
- "I sense you are going through something and I want you to know you are not alone. The team and I are here to help."

Use active listening when discussing mental health issues with a patient and validate feelings before offering solutions. Remember that people don't care how much we know until they know how much we care. From there we can address any mental health issues through education on coping strategies and promotion re-engagement in meaningful occupations. We can also make recommendations for further treatment, such as an evaluation from a psychologist.

Other helpful tips include:

- Check back in with the individual to see how they are doing.
- Learn more about the mental health condition and share that information with the individual.
- Avoid using dismissive language, like "It's not all that bad", or "You'll get over it."

And finally, don't forget that your mental health is important too! Take time for yourself to step away from the responsibilities of caring for others.

National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Tips for how to help a person with mental illness [Fact sheet]. <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness>

# DISTRICT BEAT





# Great Plains West

Chris Lasek, OTR  
Great Plains West District Chair  
[Lasekc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:Lasekc2003@yahoo.com)



The Great Plains West district held our 4th annual Bubba Klostermann CEU event on Oct 1st, 2022 at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock, TX. It was an all-day CEU event with topics covering functional cognition, kinesiotaping, splinting, mental health for SCI patients, and autism. We had about 20 people in attendance with OT students from both Texas Tech and ACU volunteering. Thanks to everyone who attended and to all our presenters!



*Bubba Klostermann CEU event at TTUHSC on Oct 1st, 2022*

Our district also hosted networking / social mixers in both San Angelo and Abilene this past spring and fall. These mixers were well attended by both OT practitioners and students and were a fun way to meet and connect with other practitioners in the area.



*San Angelo Mixer / Social Event on May 20th, 2022*

As 2023 approaches, I'm looking forward to being your GPW's next district chair! I'm hoping to help grow our membership and active involvement in our district by putting together some more CEU events, social / networking opportunities, as well as community service projects. For anyone that has any ideas or wants to get more involved, please email me at [lasekc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:lasekc2003@yahoo.com).

BEAT  
DISTRICT  
SID

# AOTF

Lawrence Liff,  
Chief Development Officer, AOTF  
[lliff@aotf.org](mailto:lliff@aotf.org)



Lawrence Liff, AOTF

**T**he American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF) is the only national nonprofit organization investing exclusively in new occupational therapy (OT) research and the future OT workforce. Quality, data-driven evidence is essential to delivering quality care to your clients, securing reimbursements, and strengthening the value of your profession. The AOTF mission, “to advance the science of occupational therapy”, is working for you by building evidence in demand, supporting OT students with scholarships, and providing the profession with informative, CEU-eligible programming that elevates occupational therapy as an evidence-based health care practice.

## How can TOTA members benefit from AOTF and why support AOTF?

First, AOTF has resources for OTs throughout their careers. From scholarships for OT, OTD, OTA, and PhD students, to CEU-eligible programs (both in-person and virtual) to our peer-reviewed journal, OTRJ, and free monthly newsletter, AOTF is providing the OT community with valuable information, financial assistance, and research resources. Did you know that TOTA has a scholarship with AOTF that supports 2 OT students in Texas each year? In addition, AOTF offers over 50 scholarships to OT students based on merit, need, career interest, volunteer leadership, and diversity representation.

Second, AOTF’s research mission is addressing two critical needs for OT: the need for more evidence and the need for more OT researchers. We know that having the best, most recent, and more relevant OT evidence can improve their delivery of care as well as address issues that plague healthcare systems and health service environments. More OT evidence from AOTF funded studies can help TOTA advocate for current priorities, telehealth, mental health and school-based practitioner activities. Above all, it helps demonstrate that OT interventions meet the criteria for evidence-based practice.

AOTF is supporting OT researchers with three robust

research grant programs that fill a critical gap in OT research; funding for early-stage studies. No other organization is helping OTs with new and novel ideas collect pilot data and build proof of concept like AOTF. What also makes our grants special is that each researcher receives mentorship from senior-level investigators.

## 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.

Furthermore, AOTF is investing in researcher training programs to build the future leaders we need in OT departments across the country.

TOTA members should support AOTF so we can continue to generate scientific evidence to support OT practices. 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 central to our profession.

TOTA members can also support their alma mater in the annual, student-led fundraising competition, St. Catherine Challenge. This year Texas Tech Health Science Center, Texas Woman’s University, and 55 other schools are helping raise money for new OT research through this friendly competition. Winners will be announced at the AOTA Conference in April 2023.

If you want to learn more about the essential work of AOTF, how you can strengthen evidence for practice, and get access to our research resources visit us at [www.aotf.org](http://www.aotf.org).



# SAVE <sup>the</sup> DATE

NOVEMBER  
3-4  
2023

**TOTA 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**Houston, Texas | November 3-4, 2023**  
**Hyatt Regency Houston**  
**1200 Louisiana Street. 77002**

