Welcome to the Ohio State Occupational Therapy Division Newsletter
Jane Case-Smith, Division Director

We welcome you to the inaugural edition of the OSU OT Division newsletter. The goal of our newsletter is to connect with our alumni and clinical partners by sharing news about the Ohio State OT program, students, faculty and fellow alumni.

The Division faculty has grown in the past year. In 2008, we welcomed Dr. Amy Darragh from University of Wisconsin to the faculty and this past summer (2009), we welcomed two additional faculty members, Dr. Carmen Digiovine and Monica Robinson. Dr. Darragh has expertise in work programs, injury prevention, musculoskeletal and neurological conditions in adults, qualitative and quantitative research methods. She has had over 10 years of teaching experience using problem-based learning, online methods, and traditional classroom instruction. She is teaching the Neurological conditions course and research; she is also managing two grants and a number of research projects. … Amy jumped in with both feet! (to learn more about Dr. Darragh, please go to https://pro.osu.edu/profiles/darragh.6/).

We also welcome Monica Robinson and Carmen DiGiovine. Professor Robinson was the occupational therapy executive for HRC Manor Care and has consulted throughout the country for both professional and clinical areas. She is currently the President of the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association and is a consultant for the American Occupational Therapy Association. Dr. DiGiovine is a rehabilitation engineer who was trained at the University of Pittsburgh and has been President of a private consulting company for the past 6 years. Dr. DiGiovine is also the Director of the Dodd Rehabilitation Assistive Technology Center and is an Assistant Professor for the OT Division. He is currently one of the professors facilitating the rehabilitation engineering course with occupational therapy and engineering students. (See article on page 4).

Our faculty were recognized by AOTA and OOTA this year. Professor Monica Robinson joined the roster of Fellows of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Professor Emeritus Marilyn Page was awarded an honorary membership in the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association. Dr. Amy Darragh received the OOTA Virginia Scardina Lectureship award and Dr. Meg Teaford received the OOTA Pioneer Award. We were pleased to be the recipients of these honors.

The Division currently has 120 Master of Occupational Therapy students, 44 are on fieldwork, 38 are second year students and 38 are first year students. Our students continue to be enthusiastic, bright, service oriented and professional. We continue to see our graduates become highly successful as practitioners and leaders in the community. We hope that our newsletter encourages alumni to touch base with the Division faculty, we would love to hear from you.
Backpack Safety: MOT Students Community Outreach

Backpack awareness day is part of the national AOTA Public Awareness program and is an excellent way for students to learn about injury prevention and professional advocacy. Beginning in 2004, Dr. Melinda Rybski has organized a Backpack Awareness day with the MOT students. These events have been highly successful in introducing the public school children to occupational therapy and to injury prevention through awareness of appropriate carrying and lifting of backpacks. The event has taken place in different schools throughout central Ohio. Each year, the MOT students have weighed the children and their backpacks to determine if the students’ backpacks are of appropriate weight or are too heavy. The MOT students have explained the reasons for concern about backpack weight and have demonstrated how to correctly wear a backpack.

In Autumn 2009, 93% of the MOT students participated in this event. It took place at Hilliard Station School with several classes of sixth grade students. The students explained the importance of “packing it light” and “wearing it right” and demonstrated the correct way to wear a backpack. Several of the sixth graders had backpack weights in excess of the recommendation of 15% of their body weight. The MOT students then helped the sixth graders develop strategies on not carrying so much weight and redistribution of items to lighten their loads. In addition to learning about healthy lifting, the students provided games, skits, and prizes. The event was enjoyed by all.

Faculty Updates
OSU Faculty Receive OOTA Awards

Ohio State University was honored my having three of their own receive awards at the Ohio OT Association’s 2009 Award Banquet. Marilyn Page received the Honorary Membership for distinguished service in the field of occupational therapy. Dr. Darragh, who joined our faculty in 2008, received the prestigious Virginia Scardina Lectureship Award for the development of the body of knowledge that advanced the profession. Dr. Meg Teaford received the Pioneer Award for her continued interest in OT, aging awareness and efforts in educating others about universal design.

Join us in congratulating our faculty!
Occupational and Physical Therapy Students Learn Together in the ICU

For the past two years, the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy faculty, with support from OSUMC practitioners, have developed a collaborative Intensive Care Unit experience. OT and PT students work together using standardized patients and mechanized dummies to realistically simulate the experience of working in an ICU environment.

The experiences range from identification and understanding of various tubes, equipment and life support systems often seen in the ICU environment to training family members how to position a person with severe head trauma. The “patients” are so realistic that the students forget that they are not in the actual ICU room. “Accidents” are built into the experience (such as an IV coming out during a transfer or a drastic change in some of the monitors) so that the students gain confidence in managing emergencies. Students not only gain confidence and skills in working in the ICU environment, but they also learn the roles of other disciplines and gain skills in collaboration.

MOT Student Receives Judy E. Smith Scholarship

Congratulations to Allison Rehs, second year MOT Student, who is the recipient for the 2009 Judy E. Smith Scholarship. This Scholarship was established in honor of Judy E. Smith by her family. Judy was an occupational therapist with “indomitable spirit, vibrant humor and deep empathy” for her patients. “She was a caring spirit who always went above and beyond to help her patients achieve their goals and aspiration.”

The OT faculty selected Allison for this scholarship for her enthusiasm, positive energy, willingness to serve and help, and academic success. She will receive $3000 toward her tuition.
New Faculty
Dr. Carmen DiGiovine

Carmen P. DiGiovine, PhD, ATP, RET, is a Rehabilitation Engineer and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Occupational Therapy Division-School of Allied Medical Professions at The Ohio State University. He is also the Program Director for the Assistive Technology center at Dodd Rehabilitation Hospital, The Ohio State University Medical Center.

Dr. DiGiovine is working with the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Rehabilitation Science & Technology to review, analyze and develop the Veterans Affairs (VA) Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center (PRC) Assistive Technology (AT) Labs. Dr. DiGiovine’s focus is on the evaluation of AT devices, the implementation of AT outcome measures, and the cross-pollination of a multi-disciplinary team across the service delivery model. As the Program Director of the Assistive Technology center, Dr. DiGiovine is expanding the center’s existing assistive technology and rehabilitation technology services, by developing a state-of-the-art and comprehensive program that provides assistive technology services to individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities. Emphasis on the application of evidence-based practice to provide individuals with personalized services.

In addition, Dr. DiGiovine provides continuing education courses on AT for educators and rehabilitation professionals at national and international conferences. Dr. DiGiovine is a member of many associations, including the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) / Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) committee on Wheelchair Transportation Safety, and the National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA) board of directors. Dr. DiGiovine is a certified by RESNA as an Assistive Technology Practitioner (ATP) and a Rehabilitation Engineering Technologists (RET) and is currently a member of the Professional Standards Board for RESNA.

- To learn more about Dr. DiGiovine go to: [https://pro.osu.edu/profiles/digiovine.1/](https://pro.osu.edu/profiles/digiovine.1/)

Current areas of interest include assistive technology service delivery models, evidence-based practice, and clinical guideline development.

We would like to hear from you! We would like to celebrate and acknowledge our alumni’s excellence scholarly research, leadership and clinical practice. Please forward information to Robinson.171@osu.edu.