

## Welcome

Happy holidays, everyone!

As you are all aware, the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences Department of Occupational Therapy has a long and proud history of support for mental health practice in occupational therapy. Our students complete both Level I and Level II fieldwork in mental health at facilities across several states, and the foundation of mental health finds renewal in our OT students following the great experiences they have working with many of you! For this issue of OT News, we would like to share new and exciting opportunities students are experiencing in community-based placements in our Grand Forks and Casper, Wyo., sites.

These fieldwork placements are providing exposure to new settings, and new client populations, that are making a strong impact on both students and those they are helping!

We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season, and are thankful for the relationships we have with so many of you who provide support and outstanding educational experiences for our program!

The UND OT Department

## Footprints



- Dr. Janet Jedlicka was promoted to full professor this year, and Dr. Cindy Janssen was promoted to associate professor, as well. Congratulations, Janet and Cindy!
- Nicole Harris, MOT, OTR/L and OT faculty member in Casper, Wyo., was selected as November OT of the Month by the [Wyoming Occupational Therapy Association](#). She was cited for her dedication to OT and the state association through coordination of extensive "behind the scenes" work in conference planning, WyOTA administrative roles, and collaboration with colleagues in OT and other disciplines.
- Matthew Cappetta, MOT '10, rehabilitation director at [Holy Spirit Retirement Community](#) in Sioux City, Iowa, has been assisting resident Anne Monnig in a "Walk Across America." With the support of staff at the facility and under Matt's direction, the walk through the halls that started as a "walk across Iowa" transitioned into a more ambitious project. Monnig tracks her five to six miles a day on a wall map in the hallway, and anticipates that she will complete the project in approximately five years.
- Amos Hartsell, MOT '10, has opened a private hand-therapy clinic, [Alexandria Rehabilitation](#), in his hometown of Alexandria, Minn. Amos received advanced orthopedic training in Baltimore and Seattle, and worked with several orthopedic surgeons in Minneapolis/St. Paul before setting up his own practice, which opened in September.

- Katrina Kotta (OT Class of 2016) was selected as the 2015 Outstanding Occupational Therapy Student by the [North Dakota Occupational Therapy Association](#) (NDOTA). Shawna Wing, Farwest District chair for the NDOTA, presented the award.



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# OT students pair with Global Friends Coalition to assist new Americans program



Historically, Level I mental health fieldwork placements have occurred in area medical centers, where our students have completed two different placements over the semester with area mental health therapists for a one-week period of time. We appreciate the dedication of those of you who have supervised students following this format for many years! While we will continue this model for one block placement per semester, we have recently had the opportunity to

provide our students a Level I mental health fieldwork in the local community, where students have the opportunity to work with a client or client group over the entire semester. I would like to share with you how this opportunity unfolded on our Grand Forks campus, the specific structure of the learning experience, the benefits to student learning and future plans for implementation on our campus in Casper, Wyo.

Our partnership in the Grand Forks community is with Global Friends Coalition (<http://www.gfcoalition.org>). The Global Friends Coalition has three primary goals: 1) support refugees (new Americans) to become more fluent in English; 2) support new Americans to become more connected, engaged and contributing members of their new communities; and 3) support the greater Grand Forks community to actively embrace its new American residents (2015, para. 5).

Our involvement with this organization began as a volunteer option for extended cultural contact for some of our students registered in coursework exploring multiculturalism (OT 451 Multiculturalism in OT). Since finding an adequate number of Level I mental health sites has been a perennial problem due to the low percentages of OT practitioners in this area of practice, I began to explore the feasibility of establishing a Level I partnership with Global Friends.

I discovered that the needs of the clients accessing services from this organization were consistent with the course objectives for Level I fieldwork. As a population of individuals, recent refugees have often experienced occupational deprivation and injustice. Working collaboratively with Sarah Nielsen, PhD, who also teaches coursework related to Level I mental health fieldwork,

we agreed that these individuals were at risk of engaging in problematic behavior and/or development of mental health challenges. "Refugees experience higher levels of emotional, psychological and physical distress than the general migrant population during settlement in a new country" (Campbell & Turpin, 2010, p. 1).

After several meetings with representatives from Global Friends, Cynthia Shabb and Jennifer Norton, we were able to establish that the goals of the organization were consistent with the learning goals of our coursework. We then put into place practical structures to support student learning, such as relevant articles related to occupational therapy and refugees, occupational deprivation and occupational justice. We added more guest speakers related to services for new Americans as well as working with those who are English language learners. We structured the assignments to focus more on community-based therapy incorporating aspects of the public health tiers.

In fall 2014, we piloted this alternative community-based format in Grand Forks, and continued the pilot over the spring semester. The structure of the placement involved assigning students to work in pairs with an assigned participant and family. The work with their assigned clients occurred over the entire semester, and students eventually completed 30 to 35 hours of direct contact. To evaluate this experience, we conducted focus groups both in the fall 2014 and spring 2015 semesters to identify challenges and benefits. Based on this formative data, we adjusted the course accordingly. There were various challenges that can be expected when implementing something new, but the benefits far outweighed the challenges.

"Refugees in Grand Forks are faced with a new culture, new language and a need to learn new skills in order to become self-sufficient," Shabb said. "OT students can help new Americans gain daily living skills to succeed in their new community. Grand Forks is receiving approximately 100 new Americans each year, and this does not include the large number of secondary refugees moving here on their own. We are seeing so many needs among new Americans and, without OT students, we would not nearly be able to keep up with the requests for assistance."

Speaking from my own perspective, it has been exhilarating to develop and implement a Level I program for students that is community-based. I have learned so much, and I appreciate the time and efforts given to this initiative by our community partners!

Dr. LaVonne Fox

# Student perspectives on community partnerships



“Working with refugees this semester has been a unique experience for me because I was once a new American as well. It is humbling to know that each week I get to use the occupational therapy skills I have attained thus far in order to pay it forward and give back to a population that I was once a part of. What is even more amazing is that I get to integrate my love for this profession into an area that I have

always desired to work in. Integrating vulnerable populations, such as refugees, into the community in a healthy and supportive way is the true essence of occupational therapy. Through this community fieldwork, I have also gained a new appreciation for the struggles that refugees face in our community, and how we as occupational therapy students can be a vital resource in assisting refugees in order for them to be successful community-dwelling citizens.”

—Esada Mujcic, Occupational Therapy Class of 2017



“Global Friends Coalition provided me with an incredible opportunity to engage with a refugee family from Nepal. The family had been in the United States for approximately three months when I began working with them, and they spoke very little English. Throughout the nine months I worked with this family, I focused on building a relationship with them, integrating them into the community and developing

their English skills through conversation, reading and writing. The experience taught me more about the occupational therapy process than I ever could have imagined. The process began by building rapport and developing trust. Next was developing goals based on the family’s current needs. Creating client-centered interventions was the next step, and the last step was to evaluate the progress toward the current goals. Completing this process was extremely helpful before completing my Level II fieldwork because it allowed me to see firsthand the importance of client-centeredness. Also, it taught me the importance of learning about another culture’s values and beliefs. The process increased my ability to be culturally competent, which I was also able to transfer to my Level II fieldwork experience.”

—Kamela Kelsch, Occupational Therapy Class of 2016



“As a whole, working with refugees has had a positive impact on my educational experience. I believe it has allowed me to apply various aspects of my learning to real people with real problems. I was able to apply the OT process of evaluation, intervention and discharge as well as truly practice therapeutic use of self with real people in the natural context. I believe this experience is truly what OT is all about.

Almost everything we did was occupation-based intervention, which is often hard to see in the clinic due to time and budget constraints. Additionally, this experience allowed me a hands-on practice of my skills that can be applied to a variety of settings as a future clinician.”

—Jordan Adolf, Occupational Therapy Class of 2016

# Casper-based community partnerships begin fall 2015.

Based on what we learned in Grand Forks, we began the process of identifying community agencies that would be interested in working with our students in Casper. We began with a list of community contacts provided by Professors Nicole Harris and Suzanna Morrison, Wyoming-based faculty and Dr. Deb Hanson visited potential community sites in early February 2015 to gather data as to the clientele served, the services provided and the fit of agency goals to student learning needs. Four sites were identified as feasible Level I fieldwork sites that could provide a community-based learning experience consistent with the learning experience available to students on the Grand Forks campus. In early August, we were able to meet for a luncheon with our Casper community partners to set in motion structures to prepare for students to begin their Level I experience in the fall 2015 semester. The partner sites for the Wyoming are:

- [Seton House](#) providing transitional housing and support services for homeless single parents and their children. The goal of Seton House is to facilitate independence and self-sufficiency.
- [Life Steps Campus/Transitional Housing](#), providing transitional housing for families, as well as support and skill building for self-sufficient, non-subsidized living.
- [Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation](#), providing individuals with severe disabilities with the opportunity for personal independence through personalized services.
- [The Youth Crisis Center](#), providing emergency shelter and crisis intervention to children and families.

## Upcoming Events

### UND Occupational Therapy Spring Conference

February 19, 2016

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (approx.)

University of North Dakota Memorial Union, Grand Forks, N.D.

Speaker: Christina Metzler, AOTA chief public affairs officer

Topic: Primary Care

North Dakota will complete Chris’ visits to all 50 states. Be part of her visit to the great state of North Dakota! More information pending.

### AOTA Annual Conference and Expo

April 7-10, 2016

Chicago, Ill.

Information about the UND OT Alumni and Friends Reception will be forthcoming.



## Parting Shots



The largest group of faculty and students in Casper, Wyo., since the satellite program's inception.



OT students on the Grand Forks campus participated in the UND Homecoming Parade in October.