

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

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*School of Occupational Therapy*

# OT NEWS

## A Word from the Director

Spring | 2016



*Greg Wintz, Program Director*

New perspectives in Occupational Therapy Education

Frequently, I find myself looking for important objects: documents, passports, coins, glasses, pictures, and lost jewelry. I scan areas where the objects were last seen, but grow frustrated when memory nudges me to look in a familiar spot and yet I cannot uncover it, surveying the area over and over again. I must walk away, gain a new perspective, and, too often, return to locate the object, bright, clear, and

noticeable. How could I have missed the object the first time?

Similarly, in noticing an art piece, landscape, or new beauty in my world, I too often admit that I have indeed seen it multiple times, but only now, after a few viewings, appreciate its beauty.

I see this as a new perspective?

During this transition to Pacific University at Hillsboro campus, I am gaining new perspective of disciplines I have inhabited for over 25 years: occupational therapy, interprofessional care, Centennial Vision, and occupational therapy education. Specifically, during one of my contacts with a focus group of 2016 Doctors of Occupational Therapy, I added a new dimension of understand-

ing to my knowledge of occupational therapy.

“Knowledge Translation” (KT), a term coined in 2000 by the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), occurs when one moves new knowledge gained from research journals, presentations, and the classroom, to the arena of practical use, most often among the health professions: medicine, physician assistants, dental assistants, dental science, pharmaceuticals, occupational, physical, and speech therapy and public health. I witnessed KT with our third-year OT students during a class discussion where they advanced a concept learned in class to sharing its success during practical application. The experience invigorated the students, and me. I look forward to many more similarly stimulating moments as a member of the Occupational Therapy Doctorate program here at Pacific University and the Portland health care community. Through continued interprofessional and international education, research, and practice, I anticipate new opportunities to participate in and affect health care reform, now influenced from a new perspective from the Occupation Therapy Doctoral Program at Pacific University.

Gregory Wintz PhD OTR/L  
Program Director and Associate Professor  
Pacific University  
School of Occupational Therapy

# Level IA Fieldwork Adventures Abroad

## Claiming the Territory Between Inspiration and Medication

**Sean Roush** | Associate Professor

In January 2016 I had the privilege of travelling to York, UK with seven OTD1 students, Staci Bielenberg, Kaitlyn Blair, Mackenzie Gamble, Angela Lopez Lopez, Kebra Rogers, Katie Smith, and Michelle Weidner, for Level IA Fieldwork. We were hosted by Nick Rowe in the Arts Department and Fiona Howlett and Caroline Wolverson in the OT Department at our sister school, York St. John University, and had the opportunity to explore many areas of OT practice in the UK as well as innovative ways in which York St. John is engaging local mental health service users as university students through the

Converge Project (<http://www.yorks.ac.uk/converge/converge.aspx>). Converge seeks to create a “healing campus” by creating courses in which individuals living with mental illness in the local community can explore higher education by taking classes alongside traditional university students.

Converge began with theatre classes but has now expanded to include other creative arts; such as dance, choir, and writing, as well as many sports classes. In addition to the increasing number of courses, a non-profit charity theatre troupe, “Out of Character” (<http://outofcharactertheatre.squarespace.com/>) has emerged from the Converge project. On their website, members of Out of

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# Divya Ragala-Brooks

**Hannah Kolehmainen '02** | Editor

An overstuffed red purse, black backpack, and brown riding boots are her signature wardrobe. You’ll regularly catch sight of her at Shutes Recreation Center, not to mention frozen yogurt and Pho joints.

Divya Ragala-Brooks, a 1<sup>st</sup> year Doctor of Occupational Therapy student at Pacific University, was born in Andhra Pradesh, India where she lived until she moved to Atlanta, Georgia at the age of 12. She earned a Master of Public Health degree and worked for the Health promotion and Disease Prevention sector of the Georgia Public Health Department before starting OT school.

“Occupational Therapy drew me because it combines my passion for both art and science, allowing me to be physical, logical, creative, and intuitive while I help people to be as independent as possible in their daily life,” says Divya.

“Aside from marrying my husband after 3 months of dating, deciding to attend Pacific University for my Doctorate is the second best decision I have made in my life.” She reiterates that the faculty, the director and the staff of the Occupational therapy department at Pacific University have “passion and heart!” She marvels at how passionate, experienced and kind both the staff and her cohort have been.

Integrative medicine and robotic rehabilitation fascinate Divya. She aspires to be an ambassador for the advancement of occupational therapy combined with integrative medicine, providing leadership through policy, education, and clinical practice.

An avid tennis player, Zumba instructor, and an outdoor enthusiast, she also loves baking, crocheting, and wood working.



*Divya Ragala-Brooks, OTD1 Student*

This past November she was elected President for the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). She takes office on the Executive board in February, 2016. She aims to increase social nights with all graduate health programs, promote the field of occupational therapy through high school visits, incorporate nature trips as part of OT community network events, and initiate monthly arts and crafts night for stress relief.

# Mark Loomis

**Hannah Kolehmainen '02** | Editor

My grandfather earned his doctor of optometry at Pacific University after serving in the Navy during WWII. My Father was a Vietnam era Coast Guard officer born in Hillsboro. My Mother was a dental hygienist from Phoenix. I was her Valentine's Day present in Arizona in 1984. I spent a wonderful childhood riding motorcycles with my dad and older sister, swimming in our pool, hunting, and golfing year round. I won state in golf my sophomore year of high school and was being recruited to golf at the university level.

Then, during my senior year, 9/11 happened! I felt the pull to continue my family's tradition of military service. Instead of golfing I joined the Navy after high school in 2002 and volunteered for the understaffed position of helicopter rescue swimmer/crew chief. My first duty station was in Guam at Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 25.

A month after I arrived I flew my high school sweetheart Lucy from Tucson to Guam and we eloped. After completing 14 months of deployment in the Middle East in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, I had accrued almost 1,000 flight hours and flown numerous missions including tactical support, logistics support, medical evacuations, and a dramatic three-man lifesaving open-ocean rescue. I was also a first responder aboard the USS Essex to the survivors of the Asian Tsunami of 2004. We flew for weeks in Sumatra, Indonesia providing lifesaving humanitarian aid and disaster relief. Looking at my medals and ribbons, my favorite memories are of saving lives and helping people when they needed it the most.

After completing my orders in Guam, I was selected to be an MH-60S Helicopter Aircrew Instructor in San Diego. As a Navy Instructor and Master Training Specialist I helped train and graduate over a hundred students, qualifying them to fly in real missions overseas. Notably, I used my military education benefits to complete my bachelor's degree in education during this tour. I was preparing myself to exit the Navy and pursue a less hazardous civilian career focused exclusively on



*Guam return from deployment*

## *Story continued*

helping others. I wanted a fulfilling career that would allow me to spend more time with my wife Lucy, my daughter Sarah, and my son Elijah who was on the way.

Before my discharge from the Navy in 2013 I spent a lot of time researching careers and asking friends and family for guidance. My Mom and Grandmother both told me that I should look into occupational therapy (OT). They had extensive work experience with OT and thought that I would make a great therapist, especially for veterans. After talking to a Navy friend who had OT for a brain injury and a hand injury, I became excited about occupational therapy as a career, particularly with veterans. To top it off, my son Elijah was born 10 weeks premature and received occupational therapy services in the NICU. This opened my eyes to the importance of occupational therapy in helping people across the lifespan and in different settings.

Set on occupational therapy, I decided to apply to my legacy school, Pacific University where my grandfather received his doctor of optometry after serving in the Navy during WWII. I flew from sunny San Diego into a blizzard in Portland in February of 2014 for interview day. It was very cold outside, but the warmth of the people inside the Health Professions Campus made me know that I was in the right place. I went on to accept the invitation to join the class of 2017, and I am now well into my second year. Looking back, it has been tough transitioning from an "all military" culture to being the lone veteran in class, but it helps me anticipate working with veteran populations after I graduate. In addition, the relationships with staff and classmates have been amazing. They help me through this journey. Overall, I am excited about the possibilities that a long career in OT may hold for me and my family. I am also grateful that I am in the right school and the right program. I am looking forward to joining the alumni of Pacific's OT program and serving our country's veterans as a veteran and as an occupational therapist.

## Alumni News



**Irépani Lino McGraw**  
Victoria born May 1,  
2015 to Jody Victoria,  
'07 and Cat McGraw

# Level IA Fieldwork Adventures Abroad (cont.)

Character identify: “We make challenging work for inquisitive audiences with the aim of transcending the boundaries of modern theatre and your perceptions of mental health, claiming the territory between inspiration and medication.”

Spending time in Converge classes and with the members of Out of Character was an incredibly inspirational learning opportunity for all of us and truly captured the transformational nature of OT education at Pacific University.

In addition to working with Converge and Out of Character, we were able to learn much about the UK’s National Health Service as it applies to OT practice by visiting a variety of settings and meeting with OTs working throughout the York area. One of the most moving site visits was going to the York Retreat, which was opened in 1796 by William Tuke for the Society of Friends (Quakers) when one of their members was found to have received very poor treatment for mental illness in the asylums of the day (<http://www.theretreatyork.org.uk/history/>). The method of treatment developed at The Retreat, Moral Treatment, laid the groundwork for the development of the occupational therapy profession so we all felt very close to our roots as we walked the grounds and learned about services at the modern day York Retreat.

Other sites we visited included the William Merritt Assessment & Equipment Centre in Leeds, where individuals can come be assessed for and try out adaptive equipment prior to getting it from the National Health Service or purchasing it. At William Merritt, students had the opportunity to try out equipment designed to help individuals with all aspects of life, from mobility and play/leisure pursuits to self-care and airline travel.

York People First (<http://www.yorkpeoplefirst.co.uk/>), an advocacy group made up of individuals living with learning difficulty (typically termed developmental disabilities in the US), taught us about the discrimination that takes place against individuals with learning difficulty and shared ways in which we can help to advocate as OT professionals. At the Humber Centre we learned about life in a locked psychiatric facility in the UK and the application of the Model of Human Occupation. Lastly, through a visit with an OT at York St. John we learned about the role of OT in UK emergency departments. It’s amazing how much we managed to do in the short 2-week visit.

Kaitlyn Blair summed up our experience well: “One of the reasons that I chose Pacific University was because of their international fieldwork opportunities. When England was mentioned as a potential site for our January fieldwork during orientation, I was elated but when I found out that the site was centered on a theater program, I was a bit hesitant. My observation and volunteer experience during the application process lacked any mental health work. I was a little apprehensive to sign up for this trip, but following Sean’s assurance that we did not need any experience, I was all in. After all, doesn’t some of the best learning come from being outside our comfort zone:

I had no idea what to expect my first day



*Visiting the roots of the OT profession at the York Retreat, the birthplace of Moral Treatment!*

or any of the days following, but having completed those two weeks, I can now say that I am extremely grateful to have participated in this experience. Not only did we visit a variety of facilities and meet numerous occupational therapists working within multiple settings, we were also part of an amazing program, Converge. With the support of York St. John University students and staff, Converge classes allow for artistic expression through dance, song, music, writing, and performance. Since diagnosis and treatment are not the focus of Converge, those issues are only discovered through connecting with others, attending the classes, and storytelling. The safe environment that they have created makes anyone who walks through the theater door feel comfortable, accepted, and valued. I felt no pressure to be anyone other than who I am and thoroughly enjoyed being involved in all aspects of the program. You don’t need to be an actor, singer, dancer, or writer to be a part of Converge. All you need is a story, and somewhere inside each and every one of us, we have one to share.

In closing, Converge is about creating a place for people with mental illnesses to be valued members of society where they feel comfortable enough to share their stories and experiences; and recover through doing, being, belonging, and becoming. The power of this program is very difficult to explain in words. Having seen and heard the overwhelming success stories, I now understand the power of Converge and I hope we can discover a way to bring it to the US.

I learned so much about myself and the power of community while meeting some truly inspiring people. The hospitality and concern for our experience the entire time was over and above my expectations.

Plans are already underway for the next round of students to take part in level I fieldwork in York and we hope to make this a yearly option. Our partnership with York St. John University has created this wonderful opportunity and all of us who traveled would like to extend a huge “thank you” to Nick, Fiona, Caroline, the Converge students and Out of Character members, and all the members of the York St. John community who welcomed us with open hearts and made this fieldwork an experience that will positively influence us for the rest of our lives.