Ann Yoshida ‘17 shakes hands with President Obama, when he addressed the Olympic and Paralympic athletes who competed in Rio this summer 2016.

My extraordinary journey started in the ocean, pushing my abilities on a daily basis. I realized I could invent my life as I chose with support, time and equipment. Normal, in my life, would have meant living in the confines of a wheelchair, listening to people telling me that I could not surf, get an education, create ceramics, live out of country, travel, compete as a paddler, or participate in a myriad of other adventures.

After a car accident left me paralyzed in 2000, I came home not knowing what to do. I took it as an opportunity to really get to know myself and reinvent my life. A unique feature of trauma is that I had an excuse to change the path of my life and make it more authentic to my belief in life balance. I determined to build a community in which to play, learn, serve, and support while striving for balance. I quickly learned that doing things with others is a great way to build relationships and find balance in life. I think the social stigma associated with a disability worked to my advantage. People were cheering me on even though they did not know it: If they supported me, I took that to fuel my actions and invite them along my path; if they doubted me, I used that energy to fuel my drive.

As a Hawaiian, the ocean is a huge part of my life—there I feel the perfect healing vibration of equality. As one of the founding athletes of AccesSurf, I have experienced the transformation that occurs upon finding a sport that resonates with my soul, not only as I went out in the ocean for the first time but also as I continue to get out in the ocean today.
Ann Yoshida  AccesSurf’s Up  Story continued

One remarkable aspect of surfing is that once in the water, people don't treat me differently in the lineup in the North, South, East or West shores. It is not until getting out or in the water that anyone actually realizes I am paralyzed and use a wheelchair. To momentarily feel the privilege of equality is a rare experience for a person with a visible disability. It boosts a person's confidence and morale to live an extraordinary life.

Water is more than a place to relax, exercise, or compete; I like to think of water as a vein that connects me to my home. Water is neither made nor destroyed but is recycled by a continuous circular process of evaporation and falling rain. I like to think of this as wherever I am in the world -- knowing that the water I am in could very well be water from my home waters in the Islands.

Research has confirmed that people with disabilities prefer water and natural environments in which to recreate, yet these environments are the very places that are not accessible to all.

AccesSurf has enormous meaning in my life. It would be a misstatement to say that I picked a single sport because of the organization. There is so much more to the transformative process that began in 2005 and continues to this day. Not only is access provided on the steep, soft, sandy beaches that are unique to the Hawaiian healing ocean, but also a platform is made available for me to give back to the community.

With my affiliation innovating adaptive surfing, some friends asked me to be on the Pure Light racing team. I became an outrigger canoe paddler at the International Va’a Federation (IVF) World Championships in 2012. I started as a team paddler and quickly moved into the one-man canoe (va’a), and a year and a half ago, I also added the kayak. The Va’a represents more than just a competitive sport, but rather a cultural experience that has taken me on a journey across the world learning cultural connections to outrigger, Va’a, and voyaging pursuits.

In my case, I am paralyzed from the chest down making a sport that is heavily weighted in the legs, hips and torso very difficult for me to learn. I worked with experts to design and build equipment that would work for me. Five years later, I have paddled throughout the world. I still have many lessons to learn as I carve a path in the world of ocean/water sports. Again, both water and the Va’a connect me to my home wherever I may be in the world.

Pacific University has played a huge role in my success as they have allowed me to take time off and rearrange my schedule to finish school. Professors have changed their due dates to accommodate my successful completion of the OTD program.

This year I went to Rio as part of the first US Paralympic kayaking team represented there. As the current VL1 World Champion and first Hawaiian Paralympian kayaker, I have not gotten here alone. In order to paddle, I needed adaptive equipment to support training, dedicated volunteers help me drop my boat in the water, paddle with me, assist my participation in races, helps seek sponsorship, legislation and policy change, education, and so much more that is immeasurable. Pacific University, AccesSurf, Purelight racing, sponsors, family friends and community all have had a hand in my success. It took a world of villages to get me to this point.

I believe that mental and spiritual training is just as important for preparing for the games. I regularly attend church as well as implement meditation techniques such as evocative visualization, mindfulness, positive self-talk and prayer. This has had a huge impact on my performance as my faith has brought me the comfort and power of fearless living. The real magic happens outside your comfort zone. That comfort zone is a place without challenge and difficulty so no growth is cultivated.

Alumni News

Dear OT Family,

I just wanted to share with you all about the arrival of our sweet baby boy! **Grayson Douglas Werner** was born October 12, 2016, 1:10 p.m. He weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces and was 19 3/4 inches long. We feel so blessed and are enjoying having this sweet little guy in our lives!

Kasey ’16, Caleb, and Grayson Werner

Please share your alumni news to ot@pacificu.edu
Go Baby Go was started over a decade ago by Dr. Cole Galloway, PT, PhD at the University of Delaware as a way to provide power mobility to infants and kids with disabilities. After spending two years as a post-doctoral fellow with Dr. Galloway, Dr. Sam Logan brought the Go Baby Go to Oregon State University in 2014. Since then, Go Baby Go Oregon has formed an equal partnership between Dr. Logan at OSU, Dr. Bethany Sloane at Oregon Health and Sciences University, and Dr. Crystal Bridges at Pacific University. They receive significant contributions from an established Go Baby Go Oregon committee.

The Occupational Therapy program at Pacific University is now joining forces with Go Baby Go to educate students on its power to promote functional mobility. There are no commercially available mobility devices for very young children with disabilities. Go Baby Go rewires motorized cars that children without disabilities use, so that kids with disabilities can operate them with the push of a button. It costs about $200 to adapt a Go Baby Go car and include electric switches and other modifications.

Research has shown that independent mobility promotes cognitive, social, motor, and language development in young children. Children with motor and cognitive impairments are typically restricted to passively being pushed in a stroller or being carried from place to place. This is fundamentally different from having active control over one’s own exploration.

Drs. Bridges & Sloane serve as the organizers for the Portland area Go Baby Go and create opportunities to adapt these cars. These opportunities are called ‘builds’. Along with their Physical Therapy peers, Occupational Therapy students will have the opportunity to build and deliver these cars to children. Additionally, third year OTD student Bethany McNeil will be working with faculty member Dr. Sandra Rogers, Dr. Kate Stribling, and the Go Baby Go Oregon team to create a car that can be easily adapted for young children in China.

They are enlisting the help of the award-winning high school robotics team at Glencoe High School, The Shockwave, to make these adaptations to cars in China as reliable and as easy to adapt as the cars in the United States. Alumna Julia Damon, OTD ’16, will be working closely with the team to facilitate adaptations that better suit the cars to children with impaired postural control. Dr. Damon completed her doctoral experiential internship at Adapative Design Association in New York City this past summer and brings her expertise to the Go Baby Go team here in Oregon and for the cars being adapted for China.

Bethany McNeil and Dr. Damon hope to ensure easy, accessible mobility for children, as the OT program seeks to inspire our OTD students to vigorously create and pursue occupational justice in our world.

http://health.oregonstate.edu/gobabygo.
A Word from the Director

All of us in Occupational Therapy have reason to celebrate 2017 as it marks the 100th anniversary of our profession in the U.S. with the inception of the American Occupational Therapy Association. Actually, in 1917, our professional organization was founded as the National Society for the Promotion of Occupation Therapy. Then as now, our profession recognizes the rehabilitative values of purposeful activity. Occupational therapy remains vital to the health and human services team. We facilitate independent living through meaningful, purposeful, and goal-directed activities. Our objective is to provide clients with the necessary skills and knowledge so that they can remain active in those “occupations.” We seek balance by complementing meaningful and goal-directed occupations with activities that support and enhance our daily lives. We work towards making these daily life activities meaningful.

For over 30 years, Pacific University has trained occupational therapists. Our School of Occupational Therapy offered a Bachelor of Science in OT degree from 1984-1996. We moved to a Master of Occupational Therapy degree from 1997-2012. Today we offer an entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree (OTD).

We know that individuals possess vast resources for personal growth, development, and self-understanding. Our students value their role of helping others to uncover these resources and providing them opportunities for daily life activities to reach optimum performance. Our students value human capacity and drive for growth and self-understanding and, because of this, show clients how intrinsically motivating activities can improve their health and environment. Our students believe that engaging or re-engaging in productivity, self-care, and creative activities promote personal growth, meaning, and self-identity.

Happy Birthday Occupational Therapy. May we celebrate Pacific University School of Occupational Therapy’s contribution to the profession and carefully consider how we might advance its role over the next hundred years.

International News

Occupational therapy: A global profession

Nancy Krusen, Associate Professor and Steve Park, Associate Professor were presenters at the Congress of the Council of Occupational Therapists in European Countries - European Network of Occupational Therapists in Higher Education (COTEC-ENOTE) in Galway, Ireland, in June 2016. This was the first joint Congress of the two organizations with 1,000 practitioners in attendance from approximately 50 different countries. Nancy presented two platform papers: Determining learner engagement through learning analytics and the Intersection of exemplar accreditation standards and Quality Matters Rubric standards for best practice in distance education. Nancy also presented a symposium of three papers with colleague Jane Hibberd of the University of East Anglia, addressing Insiders’ perspectives regarding student clinical placement. Steve presented the Qu.E.S.T. (Quality of Experience Spending Time): Field-testing a self-report assessment, completed in conjunction with Anita Bundy and Lindy Clemson, colleagues from Sydney, Australia. U.S. and British politics were hot topics during the Congress with the American election and the Brexit vote on everyone’s mind. Nancy and Steve also shared many common professional topics of conversation during this Congress. COTEC-ENOTHE will hold another joint Congress in 2020 in Prague.