

Accolades

SUMMER 2021

UNIVERSITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES MAGAZINE

USAHS Alumni: *A Force for Good*



PLUS: Alumni engagement initiatives underway

A salute to interprofessional collaboration

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The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is recognized by the Board of Certification, Inc. to offer continuing education for Certified Athletic Trainers.

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Dear University Community,



We are proud of our network of more than 11,000 graduates who are making a positive and lasting impact in communities across the country and abroad and who are part of a global movement of people working as a force for good. Your service and commitment as healthcare professionals and educators extends well beyond graduation, which is why the University is reinforcing its efforts to connect and deepen relations with its alumni family.

We have recently introduced an alumni engagement initiative to support our students beyond their time with us at USAHS. To coordinate this comprehensive program, we have hired a Director of Alumni Engagement with extensive experience in alumni affairs (please see page 7 for additional details). Efforts are already underway, including a complimentary alumni Continuing Professional Education series, the formation of an Alumni Association Advisory Board, the planning of networking events and class reunions, and so much more.

We will continue to share these updates each quarter in *Accolades* and *Accolades Insider*, along with celebrating your accomplishments and milestones, and informing you of the areas you have indicated you want to hear more about: innovation, technological advances, student and faculty research, career services, impact on healthcare disparity and connectivity.

I invite you to keep us informed about professional and personal achievements with a Class Notes update (see page 5) as well as sending your ideas to alumni@usa.edu, as we ramp up the Alumni Association. We hope this edition of *Accolades* keeps you informed and proud to be part of the USAHS family.

With deep appreciation for the tremendous impact you have on our University and in our communities,

Vivian A. Sanchez
Chief Executive Officer and Interim University President

The mission of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is the development of professional health care practitioners through innovative, individualized, and quality classroom, clinical and distance education.

CORE VALUES:

- Student First
- Professionalism
- Promoting excellence and innovation in education
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Health and wellness
- Responsiveness
- Creative and critical thinking

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Terry Rakosky
CHIEF EXPERIENCE OFFICER

Polly Crabtree
DIRECTOR, ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Editorial and Design

Suzanne Harbison
DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY
COMMUNICATIONS

Taylor Clayton
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Simone Tieber
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Contributors

Allison Eatough

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Inquiries

www.usa.edu/about/alumni/
alumni@usa.edu
800-241-1027

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USAHS is proud to be a Certified B Corp Institution, joining a global movement of people working as a force for good. USAHS has been a Certified B Corp since 2015.

CONTINUING EDUCATION:

You Are Invited to Attend Complimentary Alumni CPE Series

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) is launching an online Continuing Professional Education (CPE) learning series for alumni, by alumni. Attendees can earn continuing education units that they may be able to apply toward the licensure requirements in their profession.

Designed with alumni in mind, the complimentary* series will be taught by alumni or USAHS faculty who have been identified as being influential in the careers of many of our alumni. The series includes:



JULY 9:

“A Graded Motor Imagery Approach for Patients with Chronic Pain”
instructed by
Dr. Matt Daugherty
(MOT '06, DPT '07)



AUGUST 5:

“PT Management of Cervicogenic Headaches: Examination and Treatment” instructed by
Dr. Jim Viti
(MScPT '97, tDPT '02)



SEPTEMBER 9:

“Musculoskeletal Ultrasound” instructed by
Dr. Eric Krell
(tDPT '11)

For more information on USAHS' Continuing Professional Education, please visit <https://www.usa.edu/continuing-professional-education/>.

*To obtain free attendance to any of these Alumni Series CPE live webcasts, USAHS alumni must **register for each webcast separately** and use the coupon code **AlumniWeb2021** at checkout at <https://usa-cpe.edubrite.com/oltpublish/site/cms.do>. This website also provides full seminar descriptions, who can attend and learning objectives. The coupon code is valid to **USAHS alumni only** and **only for the webcasts designated in the series, as listed above**. The standard 20% alumni discount is available for all other USAHS CPE seminars.



INTRODUCING CLASS NOTES

Alumni— We Want to Hear from You!

More than 11,000 University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences alumni can be found across the world; we help connect our alumni through **Class Notes**. Alumni may submit updates about their professional or personal lives to share with fellow USAHS alumni. You may also report the death of an alum using this form.

Share a short note using the **Class Notes Form** on www.usa.edu/about/alumni/ if you:

- 👍 Have a new job or been promoted
- 🏆 Received a prestigious award
- 🎯 Celebrated a career milestone or achievement
- 💍 Are recently married
- 👶 Had a baby or adopted a child
- 🌐 Transferred or moved to a new city

Class Notes submissions will be included in an upcoming edition of *Accolades* magazine, the University's biannual alumni publication. *Accolades* also welcomes photos with your Class Note. We look forward to sharing your accomplishments and successes with your fellow alumni!

POSITIVE IMPACT

2020 Board Excellence Awards Distinguished Alumni Recipient: Dr. Dawn Andalon

To celebrate the momentous achievements displayed by the University community, the annual **University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences Board Excellence Awards** recognize faculty, staff and alumni who have been nominated by their peers. The **Distinguished Alumni Award** celebrates the accomplishments of alumni whose success exemplifies the University spirit and vision.

The 2020 award recipient, **Dr. Dawn Andalon**, DPT '03, is a physical therapist, educator, author and co-founder of LEVEL4 PT & Wellness. She is a leading spine and women's health specialist in the San Diego area.

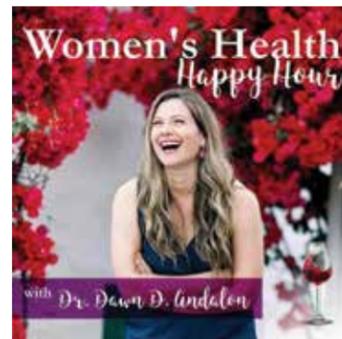
"I was surprised to receive the 2020 award," Dr. Andalon said. "It is important to represent the field of women's health in physical therapy, and I am honored to do so."

Prior to living in Carlsbad, CA, she worked in Portland, OR, with NIKE headquarters as a physical therapist and consultant. Dr. Andalon completed certification through Polestar Pilates and implemented Pilates-based rehab with elite and Olympic athletes, surfers, golf pros and weekend warriors to enhance their chosen sport and to rehab spinal injuries. She is trained in pelvic floor rehab, holds a Manual Therapy Certification from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) and has special training with the female athlete population.

Realizing that people need long-term management of chronic aches and pains—not just a physical therapy plan of care—she opened a wellness center with

her husband four years ago in Encinitas, CA. Now with a team of seven, the center offers physical therapy, Pilates, Yoga and massage to help people 40 and beyond enjoy their active lifestyles.

Dr. Andalon has a passion for postnatal care. Finding a lack of guidance for new moms with childbirth-related injuries led her to write the 2019 best-selling book, "Beyond Nine Months." She released her second book in 2020, "Thrive, Not Survive Over 40," co-authored with her husband, **Oscar Andalon**, DPT '04. In the past year, she



"I now know I am not alone in what I am experiencing, and I realize there is help for me! That type of feedback has shown us we can make a much bigger impact for women across the globe."



started a podcast, "Women's Health Happy Hour," where she interviews women in other holistic healing fields.

"Owning a holistic wellness practice with the focus on women's care has been very rewarding to see the impact on the community we have created," Dr. Andalon said. "We realize we can impact so many more lives as business owners with a team of people instead of us treating one-on-one patients."

She continued, "Women tell me they are thankful and say, 'I now know I am not alone in what I am experiencing, and I realize there is help for me!' That type of feedback has shown us we can make a much bigger impact for women across the globe."

Dr. Andalon is working on her next women's health book, which will be for women over 40 who are dealing with physical issues they might be embarrassed or frustrated with, but are not sure where to turn for advice.

In addition to her goal to publish this book this year, she said that she wants to create more virtual options for women to learn, too.

"And, in my personal life, I love living our beach lifestyle with my husband and two daughters in San Diego. We have built a business to support the lifestyle we always wanted. We also would love to go on another family vacation as well!"

If you or someone you know should be nominated for a Board Excellence Award, please contact alumni@usa.edu.

i Learn more: <https://www.level4pt.com/>

IMPORTANT ALUMNI UPDATES

What's Coming as Part of the New Alumni Engagement Strategy

To support its vital and growing alumni community, the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences has recently launched an alumni engagement program designed to provide meaningful opportunities for volunteerism, service and partnership, as well as continuing professional education and personal development.



Director of Alumni Engagement **Polly Crabtree** (alumni@usa.edu) joined USAHS this spring and has several alumni

engagement initiatives already in the works, including an alumni records data append, alumni outreach focus groups and a forthcoming alumni directory/oral history project.

"One of our goals is to provide opportunities for alumni to engage with the University to create meaningful relationships," says Crabtree. "We also

want to build a pathway for alumni to volunteer easily to assist students."

Also, part of the alumni engagement strategy:

- **Work with the Clinical Education program** to design a pilot for alumni-led clinical partnerships
- **Work with Career Services** to provide a path for alumni who want to hire USAHS students and graduates
- **Explore solutions** for creating mentoring opportunities between alumni and current students
- **Hold alumni networking events** that provide alumni with the opportunity to interact with one another and key faculty/staff from the University
- **Partner with key campus units** to create a partner rewards program for alumni who volunteer or provide services to the University
- **Explore the formation** of an Alumni Association Advisory Board (see related article at right)

i Stay tuned to *Accolades* magazine and *Accolades Insider* e-newsletter, as we share details on all these exciting programs and resources.

ALUMNI DIRECTORY UPDATE

Starting in July 2021, USAHS is partnering with *Publishing Concepts, Inc.* to complete an alumni directory. Contact will be made via email, direct mail and phone. Once you respond, you will be removed from further communication attempts.

This contact is legitimate, and although you will be offered the opportunity to purchase the completed directory, you are under no obligation to buy. We do hope you will participate. Thank you!

Please direct any questions related to the Alumni Directory project to alumni@usa.edu.

ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

The University is seeking volunteers to fill 20 positions on a new **USAHS Alumni Association Advisory Board**, representing all degree programs, campuses and the broad range of graduation years of our alumni. The Board's purpose is to provide valuable insight on how the University can support and engage with its alumni. Alumni volunteers will help share the new alumni engagement initiative to strengthen the University in pursuit of its mission to develop professional healthcare practitioners.

Board meetings will most likely be held twice a year and will rotate among the five USAHS campuses, with both in-person and virtual attendee options. In addition to attending these meetings, Board members may be asked to help with special alumni projects, which would require up to five hours monthly, depending on the Board member role (leadership positions might require more time).

If you are interested in becoming one of our inaugural Advisory Board members, please complete the quick application at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P3375Q6>. The submission deadline is **July 31, 2021**. If you have questions or would like more details, please contact Director, Alumni Engagement Polly Crabtree at alumni@usa.edu.

Q&A with Dr. Kathleen Polley-Payne



Dr. Kathleen Polley-Payne joined the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences in December 2020 as the Executive Director, School of Nursing. Leveraging educational technology, Dr. Polley-Payne's interest lies in creating strategic partnerships that enhance patient outcomes with attention to interprofessional collaboration.

“There’s a big place for nursing in health promotion. It’s not just about diagnosing the problem. It’s about educating the public and preventing disease.”

How did you get involved in nursing education?

For the first 25 years of my career, I was in direct patient care as a pediatric bedside nurse and nurse manager. Acute care included pediatrics ICU, general pediatrics and pediatric oncology bone marrow transplant. I moved from California to New England and enrolled in a nurse practitioner program at Simmons University in Boston. I didn’t necessarily want to work in the outpatient area, but I wanted to understand the difference between acute care and outpatient. I had an amazing experience in pediatrics and worked at a clinic in Boston with a diverse patient population.

In graduate school as a nurse practitioner, I saw nursing as the unique discipline that it is. The nurse brings to the environment the intimate knowledge of the patient. I started teaching about health promotions in clinical, and I just loved it! The UMass Boston researchers I worked with to the diverse student population was just a wonderful experience. I have now been in nursing education for 18 years.

What made you excited to join the nursing program at USAHS?

I had been at an incredible organization in Boston and had achieved the goals I had set forth. When USAHS contacted me, I was impressed by the interprofessional focus. The gaps we see in healthcare come from conversations that don’t happen that should. I think they don’t happen because we don’t have a good understanding of each profession’s role. We have expectations and assumptions that are incorrect. I thought this was a good place to come and help. USAHS started the nursing program, and it looked quite good. Now we need to make it scalable, and that’s what made me excited to come here.

What sets the nursing programs at USAHS apart from other programs?

There are three things. **One is the focus on interprofessional education.** Sometimes people get confused between interprofessional education and interdisciplinary education. Interdisciplinary you may have students in the same room, and they learn different perspectives. However, interprofessional is how the professions work together. What do they add to the patient?

We have an incredible opportunity at USAHS with the simulation lab and the Center for Innovative Clinical Practice. We develop our own simulations that are specific to the major issues our students face in our disciplines, which makes us unique.

Second, we have two intensives. The students have a chance to see each other. They’re here over a weekend for three days, and it’s an amazing experience.

The third is we offer an immersion. Students can spend two full days, virtually or in-person, working with a faculty member in small groups and finish a course in 10 weeks instead of 15. If you don’t want to do the immersion, then you can do the full 15 weeks. I think that’s very entrepreneurial and fits a lot of students’ schedules and lifestyle. It really respects that students have lives.

How has nursing changed since USAHS launched its program in 2017?

Nursing continues to change in many ways. I think the focus on evidence-based practice and what that means for nursing continues to grow, change and develop. Telehealth, including associated ethical issues, is another change.

There’s been a big place for nursing in health promotion recently. It’s not just about diagnosing the problem. It’s about educating the public and preventing disease. We want to stop people from

getting ill, because it’s more costly once they get ill. There also is a major initiative in nursing to have more nurses on boards of trustees in hospitals and to become active in policy. Nurses can give the perspective and a voice to the patient.

What are your goals for the Nursing program?

I feel that students need to have a voice in program development decisions, so I’m getting them involved more. Eight student representatives are on the curriculum committee and give feedback about changes we’re thinking about and how it will impact the student.

I also have monthly town halls with students. We started a student mentoring program and have a separate orientation for technology for working professionals. Students are not always technology fluent, so we help them before they get to class. It’s also about making the program student-centered, by understanding the population and helping them to be successful.

“The nurse brings to the environment the intimate knowledge of the patient.”



Community outreach is an important part of the University's mission, and service learning is a key component of our programs as a **Certified B Corp Institution**. The following is just a snapshot of some of the community service activities that have occurred across our campuses.

AUSTIN

Student Physical Therapy Association (SPTA) members at the Austin, TX campus organized a donation drive during the holidays for **Operation Keep Austin Warm**. They received donations from students, staff, faculty, family and friends to help bring the holiday cheer to the homeless population in South Austin. The group also provided gift bags with blankets, handwarmers, gloves and hygiene products.



DALLAS

Students in the Occupational Therapists Methods - Assistive Technology course at the Dallas, TX campus participated in a toy adaptation lab, in which they adapted toys to be switch activated. They then donated the seven adapted toys to two area elementary schools. Dallas faculty partnered with **FairPlay** (www.fairplaylibraries.org) to establish the toy libraries and sites.



SAN MARCOS



Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) members on the San Marcos, CA campus celebrated Occupational Therapy (OT) Month in April by donating funds to several organizations within the community:

- **Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity (COTAD)**
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**
- **Meals on Wheels of San Diego**
- **Stop Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Hate**
- **Urban Street Angels (San Diego)**

SOTA funds were raised through a variety of fundraisers throughout the year. In addition, SOTA regularly supports the **Fisher House of San Diego** with various activities and donations to benefit the families and service members of the local military community at Balboa Medical Center.

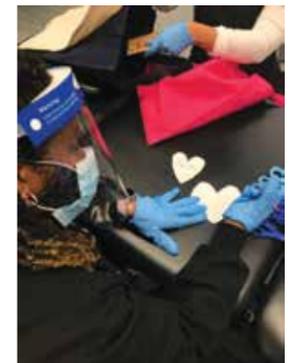
ST. AUGUSTINE

Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) members at the St. Augustine, FL campus gathered donations for the **Betty Griffin Center**, which provides protection and services for victims and families of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse in St. John's County. The month-long donation drive in March was a tremendous success with participation from students, faculty and staff. Items donated included snacks, gift cards, blankets and towels.



MIAMI

This spring, Miami Flex Doctor of Physical Therapy students prepared supplies for the **Virtual Empower Program** for an assisted living community in New Jersey. Students wrote encouraging notes to foster hope, connection and health for those isolated during the difficult time of the pandemic.



If you have an idea for a service event or have participated in community outreach efforts that *Accolades* can highlight, please email details and photos to alumni@usa.edu.

Treating Tennis Elbow and More

Physical therapist Mauricio Elizondo helps weekend warriors and professional athletes improve performance

BY ALLISON EATOUGH



As a physiotherapist for the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP), **Dr. Mauricio Elizondo**, DPT '16 travels around the world to top-tier tennis tournaments.

But he rarely gets to watch the professionals play.

That is because on any given tournament day, the Florida resident treats up to 20 athletes in the tournament's physiotherapy room or out on the court.

"You get right to work when you arrive," Dr. Elizondo said. "Some days, I'm there 10 in the morning until 10 at night."

Dr. Elizondo began his career as an athletic trainer for the Boston Red Sox. While he enjoyed working with professional baseball players, he also wanted to advance his career and become a physical therapist. The University of St. Augustine's *Flex Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)* program was the perfect fit, as it allowed him to take classes and work at the same time, he shared.

"I was able to practice what I was learning in school right away in the patient setting, which was great," Dr. Elizondo continued.

After completing his Manual Therapy Certificate in 2017, Dr. Elizondo worked as an assistant rehabilitation coordinator for the Toronto Blue Jays' minor league baseball team in Florida. Then

in 2018, he joined ATP as one of its 20 physiotherapists.

He recalled working with an ATP athlete who recently recovered from COVID-19.

"He had not trained for a couple of weeks, and he sustained a forearm injury during his warm-up practices before the Miami Open tournament," Dr. Elizondo said.

After sending the athlete for imaging, Dr. Elizondo learned he had intersection syndrome (an overuse disorder). For treatment, he drew upon the manual therapy skills he learned at USAHS.

"The manual background we have is important in the tennis world, because we're in different training rooms every tournament," he said. "Some tournaments are in the middle of nowhere, and there's not a lot of



"The only thing you can trust you're going to have is your hands and your ability to use what you learned in school."

equipment you can use. The only thing you can trust you're going to have is your hands and your ability to use what you learned in school."

With Dr. Elizondo's help, the athlete made his game three days later.

When he is not traveling, Dr. Elizondo is providing physical therapy through Performance Sport Physio, the clinic he opened in 2019.

"I'm able to help somebody who wants to walk outside to grab the mail but can't because their knee hurts or a professional athlete playing a match in the next hour for \$200,000," he said. "That variety of skills and being able to help people are what keeps me going."



Learn more: <https://www.performancesportphysio.com>.

DIVERSITY IN HEALTHCARE

The Importance of Representation

In the United States today, there is a persistent lack of diversity among health-care professionals.* It is critical that healthcare organizations improve diversity to ensure that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and genders are represented in the healthcare workforce. Doing so has a positive impact on organizations as well as individual patients and wider communities.

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is committed to creating a more inclusive University environment. In a 2019 student survey, 49% of our students identified as white, 15% as Hispanic (of any race), 13% as Asian and 7% as Black; 68% of students were women. The University's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Committee works to advance equity and build a long-term strategy where all students, faculty and staff feel a sense of belonging.

"USAHS seeks to be a force for good in our communities and in the field of health sciences," said **Ryan W. Davis**, EdD, co-chair of IDEA. "One way the IDEA Committee is doing this is by ensuring that topics of inclusion, diversity, equity and access are included in faculty, student and staff training. By providing educational opportunities on these fundamental topics, we are preparing our students to be exemplary future practitioners."

IDEA co-chair **Keisa Boykin**, OTR/L, DHSc, MBA/HCM, added, "It is a privilege to teach the next generation of healthcare providers. Education must replicate the world as closely as possible to best prepare our students for clinical practice. It should include equitably working with diverse populations and developing an awareness of cultural differences. As an educator and occupational therapist, I want to know that our students are prepared to provide quality inclusive treatment without disrespecting who our clients are and the experiences they bring with them."

Advantages of Increased Representation in Healthcare

 Increased Comfort Levels	 Boosted Creativity	 Enhanced Understanding
 More Innovation	 Increased Trust	 Higher Retention
 Improved Communication	 Reduced Health Disparities	 Increased Engagement

*SOURCE, INCLUDING INFOGRAPHIC: [HTTPS://WWW.USA.EDU/BLOG/DIVERSITY-IN-HEALTHCARE/](https://www.usa.edu/blog/diversity-in-healthcare/)

"It is a privilege to teach the next generation of healthcare providers. Education must replicate the world as closely as possible to best prepare our students for clinical practice."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Using Robot Technology, OT Students Work with Seniors

The University prides itself on a culture of innovation. During the 2020 Fall Term, Assistant Professor **Dr. Jennie DiGrado** led occupational therapy (OT) students in a pilot project that used robotics to connect virtually with patients.

In normal times, students in the Clinical Applications in Gerontology course do onsite fieldwork at locations including La Fuente, a skilled nursing facility in Vista, CA. When COVID-19 shutdowns meant students could not enter the facility, Dr. DiGrado wanted to continue engaging with the residents to ease their sense of isolation and worked with the University's *Innovation Steering Committee* to make it happen.

Easing Isolation Through Group Creative Activities

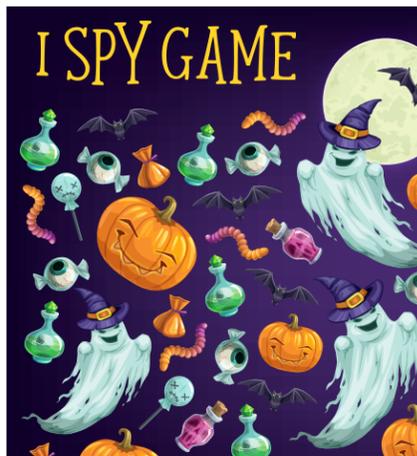
All USAHS campuses are equipped with one telepresence robot from Double Robotics. The *Double robots* enable a remote healthcare worker to communicate with a patient through a moveable robot equipped with an iPad. In this case, the OT students maneuvered the robot to interact with individual residents of La Fuente.

As part of their fieldwork experience, students planned a group activity for the residents, determined how to grade the activity for participants with varying levels of cognitive abilities and used the Double robot technology to facilitate the session. In the process, students also practiced communicating with the interprofessional team at La Fuente.

OTD student **Cortney Yap** led an activity where participants shared their favorite Halloween memories. Her group of five students guided participants in playing "I Spy" and making skeleton masks. "Working with the Double robot



"With the robot, you can be right next to the client. You can look over their shoulder at their art and move between each person. It feels like you're there."



was really cool," Yap said. "It was more personal being able to move ourselves [via the robot] throughout the room instead of relying on a worker to position a computer screen." In other sessions, participants danced to Michael Jackson's "Thriller," painted pumpkins, made holiday-themed crafts and played games.

Since the pandemic began, La Fuente's residents have had limited ability to leave their rooms and engage in activities that would normally be scheduled at the facility. "They were grateful for this connection," Dr. DiGrado said. "And the students said it was an extremely valuable experience."

There is potential for continued growth of using the Double robot post-pandemic. For example, the robot could go into clients' homes, so students could gain insight into the living environment and make suggestions about improvements. Students could also use the Double robot to conduct occupational profiles with clients in other facilities and to collaborate with facility staff.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Virtual Simulation Success: Prospective and Current Students Learn in Immersive Experience

This spring, the Center for Innovative Clinical Practice (CICP) faculty and staff hosted a virtual simulation (VSIM) event, "Enhancing Interprofessional Pre- and Post-Operative Assessment Skills when Working with Patients/Clients with Orthopedic Conditions." CICPs are immersive learning laboratories that simulate a variety of clinical spaces and home settings—down to the smallest details.

During this virtual simulation experience, current and prospective Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology and Nursing students interacted with unpredictable scenarios when assessing and treating patients before and after a total hip arthroplasty. This immersive learning opportunity allowed students to use current didactic knowledge in a clinical practice within a controlled learning environment using 360, Google Earth and telehealth technology. Students gained insightful perspectives on appropriate clinical practice when considering a patient's functional status, therapy goals, medical history and visualization of the home environment. These scenarios aimed to improve student confidence with clinical decision-making by using clinical reasoning and interprofessional collaboration (IPC).

One student stated, "I learned that it is important to make sure the healthcare team is all talking. In a situation where you are going to have multiple disciplines, it's important to all be on the same page." Another expressed, "An integrated and collaborative treatment is so beneficial to the patient—I learned why it is so important to be communicating with all members of the treatment team, considering the overlap between disciplines."



"I learned that it is important to make sure the healthcare team is all talking."



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Changing Gears: PT Alumnus Michael Mann

BY ALLISON EATOUGH

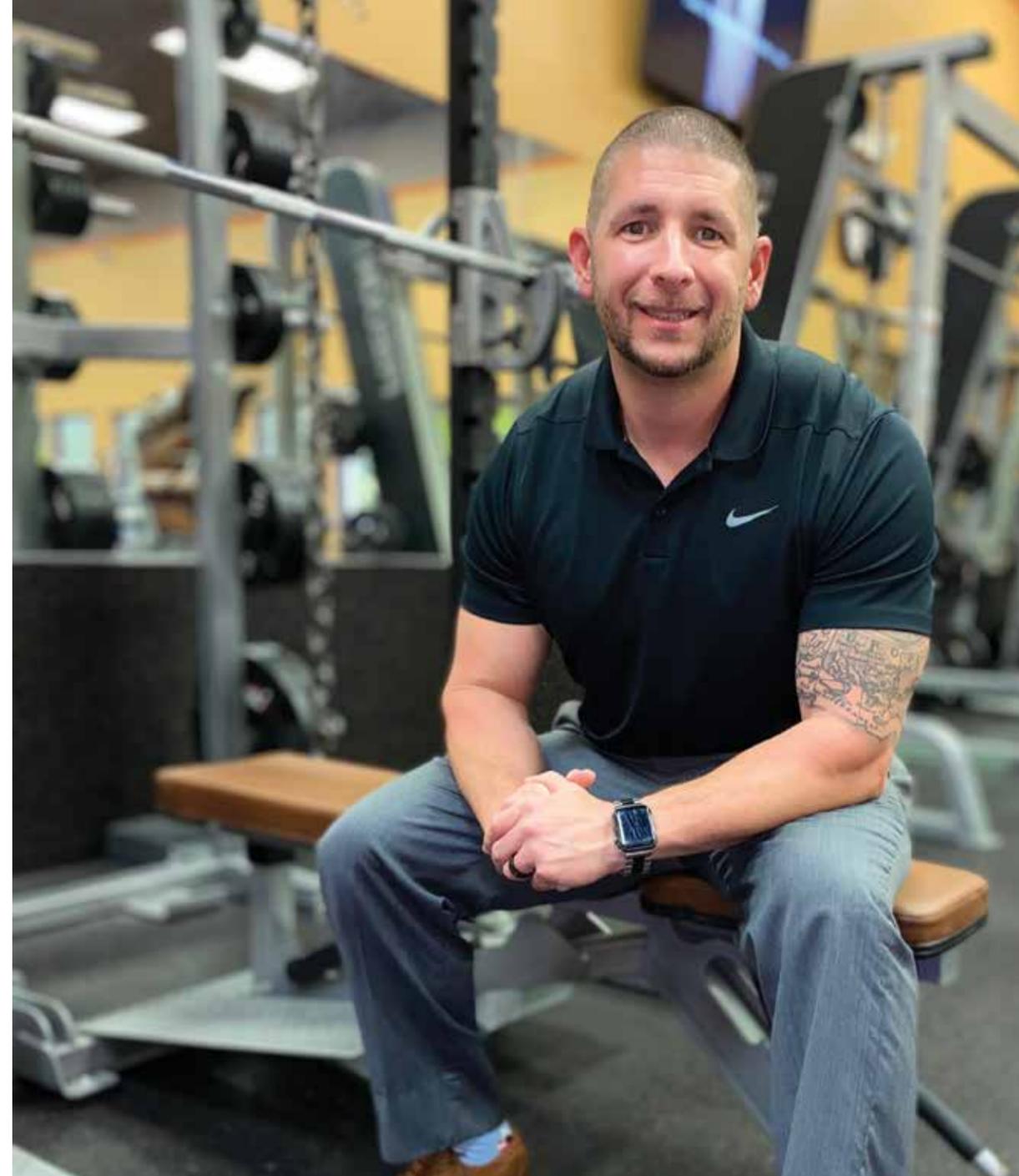
Physical therapist **Dr. Michael Mann, DPT '18** is no stranger to change.

In five years, the former police officer has gone from stopping illegal drugs from moving across Florida to opening his own mobile physical therapy business, where he treats everyone from grandmothers to professional athletes.

"Hands down, this is the greatest job ever," Dr. Mann said. "I'm fixing people and helping them get better. It is not just, 'Here's some medication...' This is a long-lasting relief to make you feel good."

Still, the path to his current success was not easy.

A longtime advocate of health and wellness, Dr. Mann wanted a career that incorporated his interests and allowed more time with his family. So, in 2016, he left the police force and enrolled in the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences' (USAHS) *Doctor of Physical Therapy* program.



While at USAHS' San Marcos, CA campus, Dr. Mann learned clinical skills and how to practice physical therapy that supports cooperative relationships with patients. He also discovered he had attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia.

"I had a professor who realized it during ortho classes," he recalled. "He looked at my handwriting, and it looked like his son's. His son is dyslexic."

The information changed the way Dr. Mann learned—and his academic performance.

"I was able to take tests in a nice, quiet library, with no distractions," he said. "My grades went dramatically up after that."

Life after Graduation

Dr. Mann graduated in 2018 and went on to complete certifications in *manual therapy* and *dry needling* through USAHS and an Applied Functional Science fellowship at the Gray Institute.

Then in December 2019, he opened *Improved Motions Advanced Physical Therapy and Performance*, his physical therapy clinic in southeastern Florida. Yet, another change was around the corner.

"When COVID-19 hit, I couldn't afford to keep the business open," he said. "It was closed by April."

Luckily, Dr. Mann had a part-time job performing physical therapy at the nearby Cleveland Clinic Family Health Center.

"Honestly, it was a blessing," he said. "I was actually able to still work and have money for my family."

To continue his business, Dr. Mann's wife, Rachel, suggested mobile physical therapy. "She said, 'You have these skills and talent, and you have the truck and all the equipment. Figure it out,'" he recalled.

And figure it out he did.

In August 2020, the father of two loaded his truck with weights, balance boards, uneven steps and kinesiology tape, and began providing physical therapy in patients' homes.

During each visit, Dr. Mann reviews patients' eating and sleeping patterns, asks how symptoms are impacting their lives and discusses care goals. Then, he gets to work.

"I tell patients, 'I'm sure you've been to physical therapy before, but what we're about to do is very different,'" he said. "We're going to push the envelope a little bit because you should be challenged when you're at physical therapy."

"I had one patient who was a grandmother, and she had frozen shoulder," Dr. Mann said. "Her goal was to pick up her grandson."

Using functional movement and resistance techniques, he helped the patient improve her strength and range of motion. In less than a month, she was able to hold her grandson—and to lift him out of his crib and car seat.

Dr. Mann also works with professional athletes to prevent injuries and manage back and knee pain. On average, he treats about 25 patients a week.

"Patients love the mobile service," he said. "I'm actually looking to hire another therapist right now to start shadowing me and then start providing more of the in-home care."

This fall, Dr. Mann plans to expand his business by opening another brick-and-mortar location. But this time, it will be a comprehensive sports complex, filled with physical therapy, nutrition and exercise services.

"We're going to treat the patients as a whole, mind, body and spirit," he said.

Looking back, Dr. Mann said he is grateful to USAHS faculty for laying the foundation for his success and teaching him the many benefits of the field.

"If you want to get people better, then this job is for you," he said. "No risk of harmful pain medication, non-addictive, no harmful side effects, no surgery. That is why I love this job. It is truly a blessing to be able to do what I do."

"Hands down, this is the greatest job ever. I'm fixing people and helping them get better."



Learn more:
<https://www.improvedmotions.com>

PASSION FOR PRACTICE

USAHS Master of Occupational Therapy Alumna Draws on Dynamic Foundation in Daily Practice

Laura Janusz, MOT '99, is an occupational therapist first. She highlights how her Occupational Therapy (OT) education catalyzes positive change for her clients. Janusz is a graduate of the first Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) class at the St. Augustine, FL campus.

“My instructors provided me with excellent foundational skills and emphasized the importance of professionalism. When I started working, people could not believe I was a recent graduate,” said Janusz.

Currently, she provides school-based and outpatient pediatric OT at her clinic, Brandywine Occupational, LLC in Wilmington, DE.

One innovative treatment that she incorporates into her practice is hippotherapy. The American Hippotherapy Association, Inc. (AHA, Inc.) describes it as how occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech-language pathologists “use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a therapy tool.”

Hippotherapy is an active process. A horse moves rhythmically and symmetrically. This movement translates—the person sitting on the horse’s back feels the transition and adjusts their body with every step. This process facilitates a focus on core strength, attention skills, crossing the midline and overall postural stability.

“My families come to my clinic for the skills we offer as therapists, and then for the horses. It’s the therapists that make the difference,” said Janusz.



“Remain flexible and never stop taking advantage of the wealth of opportunities available to you.”

A Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist® (HPCS), Janusz currently serves as President of AHA, Inc. and highlights the importance of training. For therapists who want to integrate hippotherapy into their plan of care, AHA, Inc. offers courses in treatment principles. She continues to learn and broaden her horizons by working in different practice settings—something she learned at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences.

Janusz’s best advice for future occupational therapists? “Remain flexible and never stop taking advantage of the wealth of opportunities available to you,” she said.



PHOTO BY MARK J. PYLE

 Learn more: <https://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org/>



SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY TELETHERAPY CLINIC



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Launching a Virtual Pro-Bono Clinic during a Pandemic

The Master of Science Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP) program faculty are constantly evolving curriculum to stay in the forefront of technology and virtual learning. They had already conceived the idea of creating a virtual SLP clinic in which students would provide speech-language services to a wide variety of clients as a community service. Clinical educators from the onsite settings would mentor students alone or in pairs, guiding them as they worked with each client online.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the need for student clinical hours accelerated the virtual clinic’s debut, thanks to SLP faculty who quickly adapted and developed an early start to the clinic using teletherapy delivery.

The clinic mainly supports underserved populations of clients who live in rural areas of Texas, have difficulty traveling to the Austin or Dallas campuses, or lack insurance coverage for SLP treatments.

As a **Certified B Corp Institution**, the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) is recognized for its commitment to social impact, so providing the pro-bono treatments for the under-served communities in Texas is a benefit for everyone—the students, faculty and clients in the community. It also helps create relationships for the students as they finish their coursework and graduate on-time during the pandemic, reinforcing the University’s unwavering commitment to its students’ education.

The virtual pro-bono clinic is yet another innovation where USAHS leads in its field, allowing students to practice treating patients via a healthcare delivery mechanism that is the wave of the present—and the future. Students gain experience working with clients while also practicing how to provide services through telehealth technologies.

Because it improves client access, the MS-SLP program plans to continue the virtual clinic post-pandemic.

 For more information, or if you know of someone in Texas who could benefit from the SLP pro-bono clinic, please email probono.austin@usa.edu or probono.dallas@usa.edu.



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