

SPRING 2023

Accolades

UNIVERSITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE FOR HEALTH SCIENCES MAGAZINE

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University and
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Alumni spotlights

Class Notes





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Registration - A \$100 non-refundable deposit must accompany your registration form. A 50% non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is required for Certification. Balance is due 30 days prior to start date of the seminar. Balance can be transferred or refunded with two week written notice. Notice received after that time subject to only 50% refund. No refunds or transfers will be issued after the seminar begins. Team Discount - Two (2) or more colleagues registering for the same seminar at the same time receive a 10% discount. (Advanced notice and full payment is required; does not apply after the first day of a seminar.) Multiple Seminar Discount - Register and pay in full for two or more seminars at the same time and receive a 10% discount. (May not be combined with any other discounts or previous registrations.) Audit Seminar Discount - Register and pay for a seminar previously attended/completed and receive a 50% discount. Seminar dates, locations, and tuition are subject to change; please call before making any non-refundable reservations.

In This Issue

SPRING 2023



On the cover: The Pediatric Neuroplasticity Program is part of the University's pro bono clinical experiences and treats children with non-progressive neurological diagnoses. Integrated into the DPT curriculum on the Austin, TX campus, the intensive, innovative program provides students with an interprofessional, collaborative experience.

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Professional and personal updates from USAHS alumni

Dear University Community,



Hello fellow alumni! Hope all are doing well in 2023. Your USAHS Alumni Advisory Board continues to stay active. I wanted to take a moment to update you on recent activities and accomplishments. The Alumni Advisory Board recently added eight new members who will serve on the following committees:

The **Governance Committee**, under the leadership of Vice President **Stephen Elam, PT, DPT, EdD**, completed the 2022 self-evaluation. This evaluation provided great insight, allowing us to reflect on the board's accomplishments and assess areas for future growth.

The **Advocacy Committee**, under the leadership of Vice President **Rebekah Jarrar, OTD, MA, MOT, OTR/L**, continues to add groups with which to monitor and focus their attention on growing relationships with the University. The committee's efforts continue to be a vital part of our mission and to expand our reach with local, regional and national professional organizations.

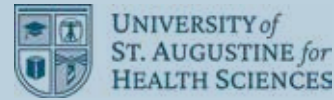
Recently, the busiest group has been the **Alumni Engagement Committee**. The geographic mentor program continues to grow, and we are so excited! The program launched for the 2022 Spring Term, and to date, **372 students** have been matched with **306 alumni mentors**. Matching students with geographic mentors takes place every term, so lots of geographic mentors are still needed. Please reach out to **Polly Crabtree**, Director of Alumni Engagement, or me at alumni@usa.edu if you are interested.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!!! We are extremely excited to announce the inaugural **Alumni Reunion and Family Weekend, September 15-17** on the St. Augustine campus. There will be continuing education courses, networking events, fun family activities and lots of opportunities to connect with students, faculty and fellow alumni. We are all looking forward to this!

Thank you to those who are serving on the Alumni Advisory Board. We welcome any alumni interested in this wonderful opportunity to give back to USAHS and its success and growth.

Professionally,

Stephen R. Weyandt, PT, DPT (MPT '00, tDPT '04)
President, USAHS Alumni Association Advisory Board



Accolades | SPRING 2023

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Polly Crabtree
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Editorial and Design

Suzanne Harbison
DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

Ric Mattison
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

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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.

Network with Your Fellow Alumni on Social Media



Join private alumni groups on Facebook and LinkedIn to connect, network, learn, share ideas and build community. Plus, it's a fun way to stay informed on accomplishments and events at USAHS!

We encourage USAHS alumni to share job postings, accomplishments and information of interest to the community at large on these pages.

You must be a USAHS alum to join your specific alumni Facebook group page. All alumni are invited to join the LinkedIn group.

- **PT Alumni Group:** www.facebook.com/groups/usahsptalumni
- **OT Alumni Group:** www.facebook.com/groups/usahsotalumni
- **SLP Alumni Group:** www.facebook.com/groups/usahsmsslpalumni
- **Nursing Alumni Group:** www.facebook.com/groups/usahsnursingalumni
- **LinkedIn Alumni Group:** www.linkedin.com/groups/12645146/

The LinkedIn and Facebook groups are private. If your member request has not been approved within 48 hours, please contact alumni@usa.edu. We look forward to sharing and engaging with you!

In addition, be sure to follow USAHS on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. Find us by searching for University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. Tag us in your post-graduation endeavors, so we can celebrate with you!

YOU'RE INVITED! 2023 ALUMNI REUNION AND FAMILY WEEKEND

Save the date for the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences **Alumni Reunion and Family Weekend!** All USAHS alumni and their families, plus students, faculty and staff, are invited to attend this three-day event, to be held **September 15-17, 2023**, on the St. Augustine campus.

Many amazing activities are planned for the weekend, including continuing education courses, a family barbecue, an alumni/faculty reception, volunteer activities and much more! Block your calendar now, watch for more details and plan to join us in September.



STAY CONNECTED Does USAHS Have Your Correct Contact Info?

The USAHS Alumni Association provides opportunities for alumni to engage with the University to create meaningful relationships. In addition to *Accolades*, which is published and mailed twice a year, USAHS alumni can stay engaged through *Accolades Insider*. This alumni e-newsletter is emailed monthly to all USAHS alumni

To receive *Accolades*, *Accolades Insider* and other communications from the University, it is important to keep your contact information up to date. If you have had a recent change, please visit www.usa.edu/about/alumni/helpful-related-links/ to complete the *Update Your Contact Information* quick form. This allows you to easily inform the Alumni Association of changes to your mailing address, email address, phone number, employer information or a name change.

In addition, the Alumni Engagement office will email USAHS alumni when networking opportunities arise, but if you have opted out of alumni emails, or have an incorrect email on file, you will not receive these notifications. (Opted out of USAHS alumni emails and wish to resubscribe? Send your name, student ID number and email address to alumni@usa.edu.)





Force for Good Award Recipients Exemplify Integrity, Innovation, Support and Advocacy

Demonstrating the University's commitment to social impact and its communities, the

Force for Good Award is presented to alumni or community partners who possess characteristics embodying the University's mission and core values.

Specifically, Force for Good recipients enhance improved student access to the field of healthcare and show a commitment to community service, while embracing innovation to improve our society's wellness and lives.

The 2022 Summer and Fall Term Force for Good Award recipients include community and clinical partners, as well as the following five USAHS alumni.

Force for Good Award Recipients Summer and Fall 2022

(community and clinical partners):

- **Sandra Dosaiguas, OTR/L**
- **Meredith Kapchinski, PT, DPT**, Executive Director, Fortis Therapy Center
- **Alice Kraus, MEd, OTR/L**, Manager, Brooks Rehab Adaptive Sports & Recreation, Brooks Rehabilitation
- **Karen Roy, LCSW**, Brand Ambassador, Numotion



Jonathan Edenfield, OTD
(MOT '00, OTD '16)

OWNER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GREAT STRIDES REHABILITATION

Dr. Jon Edenfield has been an occupational therapist for 22 years, focusing on pediatric rehabilitation with an emphasis on children with Autism.

As an advocate, Dr. Edenfield gives of his time in many ways, including as an Autism consultant to corporate employee assistance programs, as co-founder and a board member for the Florida Pediatric Therapy Alliance, and as president of the non-profit Great Strides for Children Special Needs Opportunity Fund.

He brings vested community members together to seek resolutions. This includes raising awareness and funding to bring anti-drowning safety kits to fruition and initiating sensory summer camps for children with special needs.

To ensure no child in need of therapy services goes without, Dr. Edenfield and his team seek creative ways to assist families, children and adolescents in obtaining services. By living in the community, serving community members and seeking out area partners, Dr. Edenfield has increased the network that is willing to help children with special needs receive the valuable therapy services they deserve.



John J. Fraser, PT, DPT, PhD, FACSM
(tDPT '18)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONAL READINESS AND HEALTH AT NAVAL HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER

A recipient of the Department of Defense Humanitarian Service Medal, **Commander John J. Fraser** is the Navy Wounded Warrior, Department of Defense Warrior Games Team Physical Therapist. His commitment to service is exemplified in the military and healthcare communities as Commander in the Medical Service Corp U.S. Navy.

Commander Fraser's work and research includes tactical athletics, which involve an innovative approach and unique physical training of individuals in the military or rescue professions. This population requires rehabilitation strategies aimed at optimizing occupational physical performance or combat readiness.

Innovation and service to the profession and military are further demonstrated through his medical research on improving warfighter performance and readiness through science and partnership. He serves on multiple military and professional committees chartered to prevent neuromusculoskeletal injury and optimize treatment during recovery. As a lifelong learner, he completed his post-professional Doctor of Physical Therapy from USAHS during his off-duty time in 2018.



Yousef Ghandour, PT, DPT
(tDPT '21)

CO-OWNER AND DIRECTOR AT PRN LA JOLLA; VICE PRESIDENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR ALL

Dr. Yousef Ghandour co-founded the non-profit organization, Physical Therapy for All, which provides PT services and medical equipment to underserved individuals with financial hardship. This organization has helped hundreds of patients improve their quality of life.

With extensive advocacy for the PT profession, Dr. Ghandour volunteers his time on numerous boards and organizations. This includes philanthropic work on the National Arab American Medical Association, a nonpolitical, educational and humanitarian organization of medical and dental professionals of Arab descent.

As a mentor, leader and innovator, he has developed and trademarked a therapeutic exercise pulley system that fills the need for a quality, cost-effective device to perform exercises outside the clinic, contributing to a swift and complete recovery.

Being a lifelong learner, he received his doctoral degree, summa cum laude, in Physical Therapy with emphasis on executive leadership from USAHS in 2021.



Guillermo Paiz, PT, DPT, CSCS
(DPT '19)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, TESORO PROJECT

Born in Miami, **Dr. Guillermo Paiz** grew up in Guatemala. He returned to the U.S. to pursue his undergraduate and graduate degrees, including his doctorate in physical therapy from USAHS in 2019. Since his first trimester as a student, he participated in the Tesoro Project medical mission trips, returning to Guatemala City annually to provide interprofessional rehabilitation service for the villagers who live next to the largest garbage dump in Central America. The non-profit organization services Guatemalans without access to physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy.

Dr. Paiz stays active in the Tesoro Project's mission of bringing USAHS interprofessional students to this unique service-learning experience in Guatemala City bi-annually. He offers a unique perspective of his own culture and connects students to their personal mission of promoting wellness and healthcare access to underserved communities. Dr. Paiz also uses his reach in the local community and sees that gaps in the provision of services are met.



Kelly Dawn Twichel
(MOT '17)

CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF ACCESS TRAX

Kelly Twichel entered health care with a desire to help people do the things they love. As a fourth-term occupational therapy (OT) student, she was inspired to help adaptive surfers cross the beach in their wheelchairs without struggling through the sand. What began as a class project and an attempt to increase access and independence for these athletes evolved into much more.

Experiencing firsthand how a simple solution changed the level of participation and sense of belonging for people, Twichel used her passion to advocate for global accessibility and has obtained three trademarks related to Access Trax branding and a U.S. design patent for the product.

With less than one-fifth of U.S. patents given to female inventors, Twichel has demonstrated creativity, perseverance and a focus toward advocacy for all.

Twichel defines herself as a social impact entrepreneur and an OT who is passionate about solving problems, advocating for inclusion, connecting with others and inspiring future generations to change the world for good.



Nominate an extraordinary USAHS alum who demonstrates the characteristics required to continue the University's mission of being a Force for Good.



JESSECA SAMANIEGO, OTD '21

OT Alum Launches Career in Adaptive Scuba Diving

“I never once thought, coming to USAHS that I would be working for a scuba diving company as an occupational therapist. Never once did I think I would get to travel the world and interact with so many amazing people who have so many challenges and so many experiences—and be part of something so life-changing.”

So says **Jessica Samaniego, OTD '21**, who focused her capstone project on how to help people with disabilities learn to dive. This project has turned into a consulting job with Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI).

Dr. Samaniego grew up in Oceanside, CA, where she swam competitively, played water polo and surfed. At 15, her dad introduced her to scuba diving. “A whole new world opened up to me. I personally felt the benefits of scuba diving—the adventure and the peace of being underwater,” she says. “I loved diving and OT, and I thought there must be a way to connect my passion for both.”

For her capstone project, Dr. Samaniego surveyed adaptive

scuba divers and diving instructors with the goal of identifying barriers to participation and how occupational therapy can remove those barriers. Several noted in her research that a principal barrier is access to instructors who are trained to work with people with disabilities. Another barrier is perception.

“I see the mindset in someone who might think, ‘I’m stuck in a wheelchair—I could never do that. I can’t get on a boat; I can’t jump into the water.’ And then you watch them jump into the water,” says Dr. Samaniego. “You watch them take that leap of faith. A whole new world opens up to them. They realize they can do it, and you realize you made that possible for them.”

Her capstone research lends more evidence to support existing adaptive diving programs, such as PADI’s. In her consulting work, Dr. Samaniego is using an OT lens to analyze PADI’s general training programs for students and instructors.

With PADI, any diver who can pass the exam becomes certified, which

means they can dive anywhere without a support team and/or instructors present, just like any able-bodied scuba diver. They also may dive at any dive site throughout the world and earn advanced certifications. “They will be treated equal to any diver regardless of disability, since they have shown they can complete the necessary skills to dive,” Dr. Samaniego explains.

In addition to her work at PADI, Dr. Samaniego is creating a webinar about OT’s role in diving, which she plans to present to dive shops and dive instructors internationally. Her goal is to create more awareness in the diving world about occupational therapy and its expanding role, and also to inspire more occupational therapists to enter the diving field as instructors, consultants and educators “because we are experts in task analysis.”

“I never thought my capstone project would open so many possibilities,” she says. “I’m getting more people to dive, and also growing the OT profession. But this is just in the beginning stages. I anticipate more throughout my career.”

JULIE FRYMYER, DPT (DPT '12)

Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes Recognizes USAHS Alum

After winning the AFC Championship game that put the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LVII, star quarterback Patrick Mahomes gave a social media shoutout to University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences alum **Julie Frymyer, DPT (DPT '12)**. Dr. Frymyer is the Chiefs’ Assistant Athletic Trainer and Physical Therapist.

“Julie WAS the reason I was the guy I was on the field today! It takes everyone but she led the charge all week,” Mahomes tweeted after the Chiefs’ AFC title game win over the Cincinnati Bengals, which advanced the team to the Super Bowl final.

The 2020 Super Bowl MVP suffered a high-ankle sprain in an earlier playoff game against the Jacksonville Jaguars, leaving him unsure if he would be able to continue playing through the post-season. It was Dr. Frymyer who designed and executed the critical rehabilitation on Mahomes’ ankle following that game.

The injury could have benched him for weeks. However, after just one week of physical therapy under Dr. Frymyer’s close guidance and care, Mahomes was able to play against the Cincinnati

Bengals. He then went on to clinch his second and the Chief’s third Super Bowl championship against the Philadelphia Eagles!

This is not the first time the team has recognized Dr. Frymyer’s contribution to its game. In a video released by the Kansas City Chiefs, the team’s Vice President of Sports Medicine and Performance Rick Burkholder praised her high level of education and said:

“I will say this on the record, she’s the single best clinician I’ve ever been around.”

Julie Frymyer received her Doctor of Physical Therapy from USAHS in 2012 and worked primarily in college sports before joining the Kansas City Chiefs as Assistant Athletic Trainer/Physical Therapist in 2018. Before studying for her DPT at USAHS, she earned a bachelor’s degree in athletic training and a Master of Science in exercise physiology. Before landing the job with the Chiefs, she spent three years as an assistant athletic trainer at Princeton University and prior to that worked as an athletic trainer at Towson University in Maryland and for Naples Community Hospital in Naples, FL.



The University is aware that many USAHS alumni work for professional sports teams and organizations. We would love to hear from you! Email alumni@usa.edu to share your story.

Read the full blog about Dr. Julie Frymyer:



At Your Service

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.

UNIVERSITY WIDE

University employees assembled 547 care kits and wrote 522 letters of support for veterans, first responders and active military personnel during the **2022 Week of Service**.



SAN MARCOS

SPTA hosted a 5k event at Discovery Lake and raised \$679 for **PTFORALL**. The non-profit, public charity is dedicated to helping low-income individuals with financial difficulties get access to physical therapy services.

SOTA has supported the **Fisher House** for many years. Last summer, SOTA donated two patio umbrellas to the organization.

More than 20 USAHS students and employees volunteered at a **Spinal Network-hosted adapted sports fair event** in San Diego. By offering tips on transfers and safety to event attendees, the students gained firsthand knowledge of how associations work together to support individuals with varying abilities, such as those who use wheelchairs to play bocce, basketball, pickleball and paddle boarding.



DALLAS



Doctor of Occupational Therapy students wore buttons to raise awareness for **Worldwide Pressure Injury Prevention Day** (November 17). The annual celebration is promoted by the National Pressure Injury Advisory Panel.

Under supervision from licensed and certified speech-language pathologists, Master of Science Speech-Language Pathology students completed **complimentary speech/language and hearing screenings** at Heartland Montessori. After scoring the screenings, the students counseled the parents on results and recommendations. The experience offered students the chance to administer screenings to the preschool population prior to starting their clinical placements.

MIAMI

Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program students took part in the **2022 Parkinson's Moving Day** by providing fall screenings for attendees and participating in exercise demonstrations and the event walk. In addition, SPTA created a fundraising team of more than 50 participants who raised \$2,445 for the Parkinson's Foundation.

The Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) sponsored an **adaptive beach day** on Miami Beach. Students volunteered and raised more than \$500 for the Sabrina Cohen Foundation.

Thanks to collaboration between the USAHS Miami campus SPTA, University of Miami's second-year class and Jason's Deli Community Partners, students from Florida Gulf Coast University received boxed meals during a **welcome back lunch** after Hurricane Ian caused intense damage to Southwest Florida.



AUSTIN

Student Physical Therapy Association (SPTA) members held a November canned food drive, supporting the **Central Texas Food Bank**. The students collected more than 150 non-perishable food donations, which will provide 188 meals to central Texas families in need.



ST. AUGUSTINE



Instructor **Dr. Dana Madalon** has partnered with **St. Francis House** to set up monthly meal preparations by USAHS students and employees. These volunteers are invited to prepare meals for St. Francis House's more than 50 residents and other individuals in need.

Occupational therapy (OT) students in the Psychosocial and Community Settings course collaborated with **Women Helping Recovering Mothers**, a residential facility for women in recovery, to reconstruct the facility's vegetable garden. The students received donations from a local nursery for the soil, seeds and vegetables, while the University purchased supplies to paint rocks and steppingstones.

Last summer, DPT students participated in a community outreach and service-learning experience at **St. Joseph's Academy**. Students taught preventative exercise interventions to the athletes, and later-term students conducted movement analysis.

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.



4 Cool Nursing Careers — Beyond Bedside Care

With the intensity nurses have experienced on the front lines of patient care during the past few years, many are branching out to other areas within the nursing profession. The University connected with several graduates who are accomplishing impressive things in nursing beyond providing bedside care.

Read the full blog with additional cool nursing careers...



Emergency Department Director



Elizabeth McMaster (DNP '21) is the Nurse Director of an emergency department in a large trauma center in the Northeast. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, she worked on the front lines. She would spend up to two hours in patients' rooms, using a baby monitor as a walkie-talkie to ask other nurses to get supplies she needed. To avoid infecting her companion and to shorten her commute as cases increased in her neighborhood, Dr. McMaster frequently spent the night in a motel. She would change clothes in the car, disinfect them once she got home and place them inside the front door of her house to prevent cross-contamination.

Dr. McMaster explains that she went back to school to become a nurse executive. "Earning my DNP made me a strong candidate for my new position as a hospital director." She had previously worked in management, so she knew what to expect. "You don't know how far you can push yourself until you do it," she continues.

Holistic Nurse



Dr. Deborah Lewis (DNP '21) has employed imagery and aromatherapy as effective relaxation techniques. She has also used music therapy to stimulate premature infants in the neonatal critical care unit. "They loved Kenny Rogers, Anne Murray and classical music," she exclaims.

While working as a graduate intern with the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA), Dr. Lewis completed a literature analysis and helped create an annotated bibliography for a study on holistic methods for pain management. She was appointed to a two-year term on the AHNA Practice Committee.

"My biggest draw to holistic nursing is knowing I have something positive to offer my patients besides a pill," she says. "Holistic nursing looks beyond traditional medicine and to herbal medicine and other modalities such as imagery, reiki, music, acupuncture and acupressure for treatment solutions."

Hospital CEO



Chris Schmidt (DNP '22) is a recognized hospital executive with more than 30 years of combined military/civilian healthcare expertise. A nurse practitioner, Dr. Schmidt spent more than 20 years in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps, working domestically in medical treatment facilities and abroad in combat support operations in Africa, the South Pacific and the Middle East. He retired at the rank of Commander.

Dr. Schmidt received the Innovation in Patient Care Award from the Florida Hospital Association and Clinical Nursing Excellence Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. Dr. Schmidt joined Doctors Memorial Hospital in Bonifay, FL, as Chief Executive Officer after serving as Flagler Hospital's Chief Operating Officer for seven years.

Author



Leeann Blaskowsky, DNP, APRN, NNP-BC, C-ELBW (DNP '20) authored a book chapter while pursuing her doctoral degree. "Fetal and Neonatal Marijuana Exposure" appears in the 2020 Springer publication *Cannabis and Medicine*. She did extensive research because there was a scarcity of evidence-based data.

"I had the opportunity to communicate with specialists in the subject from across the globe," says Dr. Blaskowsky. "Undoubtedly an incredible opportunity in my small world."

As a board-certified neonatal nurse practitioner, Dr. Blaskowsky cares for newborns in the pediatrics department of the University of Colorado School of Medicine in Aurora, CO. She has experience in electrophysiology and acute care, and has worked as an emergency nurse and a sexual assault nurse examiner.

OTD Alum Becomes First Occupational Therapist in Anguilla



Upon graduation, **Kniquiah Hughes, OTD, OTR/L (OTD '21)** returned to her home in the West Indies and became the first occupational therapist in Anguilla. The Caribbean island has a population of about 15,000. Then, in 2021 on World Occupational Therapy Day (October 27), she opened her own occupational therapy (OT) practice providing services to clients at home and in all schools on the island.

On May 26, 2022, **Dr. Hughes** opened an OT clinic, named Wellness Ave. As CEO and founder, Dr. Hughes says the goal of Wellness Ave. is to provide adult, adolescent and pediatric interventions. The clinic has two rooms, one for adults and one for pediatrics. She specializes in



“I give myself a lot of grace, which has become one of my favorite words.”

Autism, dementia and stroke patients.

“There is so much to learn and do,” she says. “One challenge is advocating to insurance companies and the government, which often struggle to differentiate OT with physical therapy (PT). Another is helping patients to understand the specific needs of OT and PT. I give myself a lot of grace, which has become one of my favorite words.”

In addition to her clinic work, Dr. Hughes is the Vice President of the Association of Caribbean Occupational Therapists (ACOT). She has presented at several national and international conferences, including the 2021 ACOT biennial conference, the American Occupational Therapy Association conference and the World Federation of Occupational Therapy International Congress on the topic of promoting occupational performance in adolescents with disabilities in Anguilla.

Connecting with Students

Recently Dr. Hughes spoke to students who are part of the San Marcos, CA campus COTAD chapter (Coalition of Occupational Therapy Advocates for Diversity).

“I was set on becoming a physical

therapist in school, but over three years after being denied entry into 20 PT schools and universities, I became very depressed,” she shared. “I then shadowed a cousin who is an occupational therapist, and my mind was blown! I loved the purely holistic, one-on-one interaction that OT brings, as well as the ‘let me make you happy again by showing how to maneuver challenges’ approach.”

She then applied to only one OT university—USAHS—and got an immediate response! She enrolled in the MOT program on the Miami campus in 2018 but quickly transferred to the OTD cohort. “There were only 15 of us, and we were quite a diverse group,” she remembers.

When asked how her time at USAHS prepared her for her journey, Dr. Hughes replied, “I made plenty of connections, which are still especially important to me. This helps since I don’t have all the answers. Connections are key!”

Dr. Hughes told the students that she has been incredibly grateful for her journey and that everyone’s steps do not look the same. “My advice is to listen well, tackle challenges one by one and keep pushing!”

ALL THAT JAZZ

MS-SLP Graduate Connects Music with Patient Therapy Lesson

As a graduate student clinician at Pointe Meadows Health and Rehabilitation in Lehi, UT, **Micki Allred (MS-SLP '22)** assisted with augmentative and alternative communication while providing aid to dementia patients. Upon graduation, she accepted a position with Pointe Meadows and Provo Rehab.

In her first month of full-time employment, Allred has already impacted many people’s lives, especially with one patient named Jim Ahlander.

Jim is a long-term Pointe Meadows resident with dementia and a history of cerebrovascular accident and stroke. He lost his vision late in life and became blind five years ago. He has a complex and dynamic personality with a wealth of lifetime experience. He raised five children as a single dad, ran his own business, played professionally as a jazz drummer and earned a black belt in martial arts.

Jim spent the majority of his time in bed when he was initially admitted to Pointe Meadows, resisting wheelchair assistance and not engaging in activities. On numerous occasions, Jim would state, “I have no purpose.” With hearing loss, he had a substantially lower threshold for background noise and displayed agitation in challenging settings like the dining room. Enter Micki Allred.

Speech Therapy through Music

Before obtaining her MS-SLP at University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, Allred earned a master’s in music. Through interviews and personal history questions, Allred discovered that Jim and her musician husband (John)



John and Lars performed jazz music while demonstrating improvisation, melody and musical dynamics.

have common connections. John’s friend, Lars Yorgason, who is a well-known bassist from the ‘60s, played in the same band as Jim!

Allred set to work to make speech therapy relevant for Jim and many

other Pointe Meadows residents. John and Lars performed jazz music while demonstrating the topics Allred taught regarding improvisation, melody and musical dynamics. Thirty patients and residents gave the group their undivided attention.

Jim sat in the front row for the entire 50-minute session, stayed for an hour to visit with other residents and then ate lunch in the dining room. He had plenty of energy afterward and a willingness to engage in occupational therapy after lunch.



Making an Impact in Underserved Communities

What started in 2018 with a few individuals taking part in a local fundraiser has turned into a national grassroots initiative that involves and supports hundreds annually.

Known as **PT in the Community**, this project was formed by University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) Assistant Professor and alum **F Scott Feil, PT, DPT, EdD (DPT '13, EdD '18)** and alum **Patrick Berner (DPT '16)** after attending the Combined Sections Meeting (CSM) five years ago.

PT in the Community's mission is to



positively impact local, underserved and disadvantaged communities that are visited for physical therapy conferences. Traditionally, efforts have emphasized school-aged children and the homeless population.

An Idea Is Born in New Orleans

"The idea of PT in the Community came in New Orleans during the 2018 CSM. A few of us decided to leave the conference center and went to a local school fundraiser. We spent time with them and donated to their cause," says Dr. Feil. "We then realized something that most of us already knew, but thought little about—that thousands of us, upwards of 17,000, descend upon a city for a few days but do little for the folks who live there. Yes, there have been events geared toward donating money to a local cause, but nothing that facilitated face-to-face interactions."

For the 2019 CSM in Washington, D.C., Dr. Feil says the passion was lit. "A handful of us pitched in and got supplies to distribute to the homeless." Together, they assembled and delivered 36 care packages containing soap, toilet paper, socks, gloves, protein bars, peanuts, sanitary wipes, fruit and water.

Each year since then, PT in the Community continues to grow and make a significant impact. In 2020, the group raised more than \$7,000, secured equipment for 11 Denver public schools and provided educational sessions on health, physical activity and physical therapy. Volunteers served several hundred meals and put together 320 care packages that went to multiple shelters around Denver.

"Even though CSM 2021 was entirely virtual, we kept things going," says Dr. Feil. "The PT in the Community Challenge was born, and local communities across the country were provided financial assistance."

A Force for Good

At the 2022 Combined Sections Meeting, PT in the Community focused on helping underserved schools within

the San Antonio Independent School District and discriminated populations of San Antonio.

Activities included fundraising efforts and volunteer opportunities. Volunteers visited five local schools during the days of CSM to educate young students on health and wellness, and the profession of physical therapy (PT). Funding supported schools with equipment and supply needs, connecting items to PT.

Volunteers also had opportunities to promote health in mind, body and spirit with individuals facing housing challenges.

"We spent three mornings with participants of Street2Feet, a local organization that facilitates 5k training of individuals experiencing homelessness," says Dr. Feil. Volunteers educated participants on various strengthening and recovery techniques.

With 75 participants, PT in the Community was able to donate \$13,900 in goods and services, including:

- \$1,500+ in equipment to support Street2Feet
- Almost 400 care packages to support Thrive Youth Center, Haven for Hope, SAMMinistries and Youth Center of Texas
- \$4,000 in equipment to support local schools
- \$800 donation to San Antonio Food Bank to provide 5,700+ meals
- Apparel and comforters to warm 50 people
- Thousands of diapers, wipes and items to support A New Life for a New Generation

"The numbers are still early for 2023 in San Diego, but it looks like we're reaching over \$24,000 in donations," says Dr. Feil. "I am encouraged by my colleagues and so many others who get involved and show communities across the country all that physical therapy has to offer by advocating for the profession."



To learn more about PT in the Community, visit www.orthopt.org/content/membership/pt-in-the-community





MS-SLP Program Earns Initial Accreditation



The Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) has voted to award initial accreditation to the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS-SLP) program at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) for a five-year period, the maximum period allowed for a program's initial accreditation.

The accreditation decision signifies the program is in good standing, meeting all standards for graduate education, with USAHS MS-SLP graduates achieving the outcomes of program completion, Praxis exam pass rates and employment in the profession.

"The MS-SLP program receiving initial accreditation is a testament to the high quality of the program's leadership, faculty, staff and students, and it demonstrates the national reach of the program and the outstanding outcomes and achievements of the program's students and faculty," says President and Chief Academic Officer **Brian Goldstein, PhD, CCC-SLP**.

In more good news about the program, a summer term start date has been added at both the Austin, TX and Dallas, TX campuses. Beginning this May, USAHS will offer three start dates for the MS-SLP program: September, January and May. The addition expands the choices for prospective students, allowing them to start at a time that fits best with their life plans and providing more access for students in this high-demand and competitive field.

MS-SLP Program Journey

The MS-SLP program launched in Fall 2018 on the Austin, TX campus, and in Fall 2019, the program launched a satellite location on the Dallas, TX campus. Until July 2022, the program on both campuses had been a candidate for initial accreditation from CAA, making satisfactory progress toward compliance with accreditation criteria.

"We have a cadre of wonderful faculty, clinical educators and staff supporting the program to provide innovative

and quality graduate education training for future SLPs! Our program develops well-rounded clinicians who can identify and manage a full range of communication and swallowing conditions across the lifespan," says MS-SLP Program Director and Associate Professor **Meghan Savage, PhD, CCC-SLP**. "Our academic and clinical experiences prepare our graduates to guide, lead and elevate the profession."

"We have students and alumni from 26 states serving a diverse range of clients and patients in communities across the country. Our students obtain SLP licenses, are employed in the profession and earn ASHA certification," Dr. Savage continues. "We are excited and passionate to continue to deliver our graduate education program in speech-language pathology at USAHS!"

College of Health Sciences Launches Graduate Certificates

Alumni can now earn graduate-level certificates on an accelerated timeline. The University's new **Graduate Certificates** are focused pathways for healthcare leaders and managers to expand their expertise.

The Graduate Certificates align with the Master of Healthcare Administration (MHA) program specializations in **Executive Leadership, Interprofessional Education and Business Intelligence**. There will be more coming! Participants can elect to earn a certificate to advance their careers or fill a knowledge gap.

"Our courses are aligned to the American College of Healthcare Executives competencies, and most are interprofessional where administrators and clinicians can learn from, and with, students from various areas of healthcare," says Program Director, MHA Program **Kathy Wood, PhD**.

To learn more, visit usa.edu/graduate-certificates/.



LIBRARY LAUNCHES INNOVATION AND CREATION HUBS

The Library team has introduced Library Innovation and Creation Hubs on each campus. The hubs, which have two Meta Quest virtual reality headsets and a 3D printer, share clinical uses of cutting-edge technology and increase accessibility to these technologies with students and employees.



USAHS RECEIVES SERVICE LEADER AWARD



In August 2022, Building Impact recognized USAHS employees for contributing more than 100 hours of volunteer time to the community in 2021.

The University received the organization's 2021 Service Leader Impact Award, which recognizes a commitment to volunteerism and supporting nonprofit organizations addressing critical social issue areas. This marks the second year that the University has been honored with this service award.

During USAHS' 2021 Week of Service, 240 employees volunteered and engaged in supporting veteran, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) education and mental health non-profit organizations.

Through combined efforts, these faculty and staff enabled five local organizations to provide the resources, advocacy and support to individuals and families in greatest need.

USAHS IS ON TIK TOK



In 2022, the University launched its official USAHS TikTok account. Videos showcase the authentic experiences of USAHS students, from the classroom to the community.

Follow [@uofstaug](https://www.tiktok.com/@uofstaug) on TikTok. Look at these videos to get started:



A Day in the Life of OT



Physical Therapy Success Story



USAHS Relocates Dallas Campus

Ribbon-cutting Ceremony and Clinical Innovation Showcase Celebrate the Expansion

University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS) has relocated and expanded its Dallas campus to 55,050 square feet of classroom, laboratory and administrative space. The new, expanded campus at 901 West Walnut Hill Lane in Irving, TX is 3.5 miles northwest of USAHS' previous 33,869 square-foot location at Riverside Commons, which opened in 2019.

The campus includes USAHS' signature Center for Innovative Clinical Practice (CICP). The state-of-the-art simulation laboratory helps students practice patient interactions in simulated hospital and home environments. Other leading-edge EdTech tools on campus include 3D printers, rehabilitation/exercise machines, driving simulators, robotics and anatomage tables, which are the world's first and only virtual dissection tables.

"At USAHS, we pride ourselves on innovating and responding to the ever-changing needs of today's health care practitioners," says Chancellor **Vivian A. Sanchez**. "We were founded over 40 years ago to transform health

sciences and the lives of everyone we serve, and today our more than 13,000 exceptional alumni are the top clinicians in the country. We will provide a strong pipeline of talented workforce for the biggest hospitals and health care facilities in Dallas-Fort Worth for a long time. The health care professionals who graduate from USAHS' innovative programs are ready to serve the health care industry needs of today and into the future."

USAHS has been a Certified B Corp since 2015. This prestigious designation shows the University's social

responsibility and commitment to the environment. The Dallas campus uses materials with recycled content, including carpet, high-efficiency HVAC systems, LED lights, water bottle refill stations, daylight harvesting, motion light sensors, low-flow toilets and xeriscape landscaping.

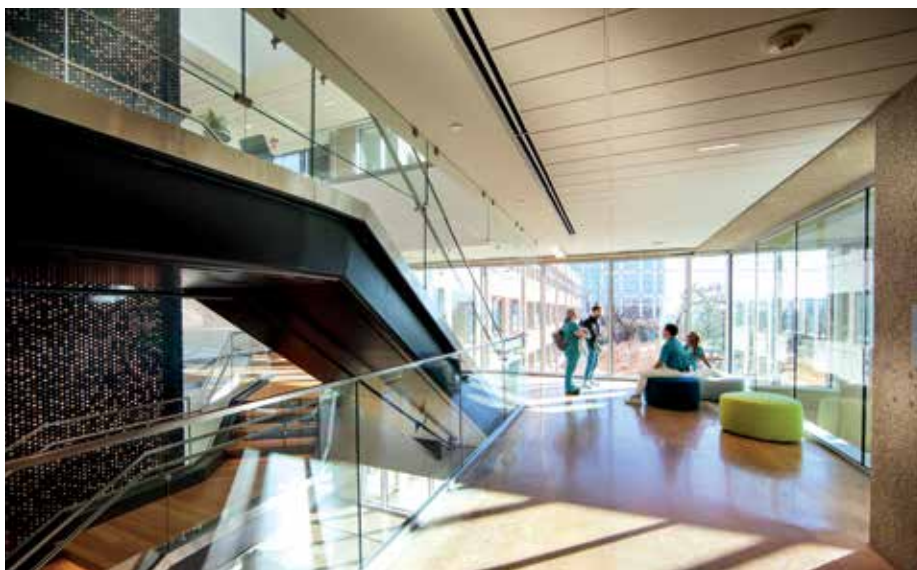
Celebratory Ribbon-cutting Ceremony and Clinical Innovation Showcase

Faculty and staff welcomed approximately 165 students to the new Dallas campus January 9 for the start of the 2023 Spring Term.

The campus opening was marked with a momentous ribbon-cutting ceremony and campus tours held January 25. More than 85 attendees, including civic leaders, community and clinical partners, along with University leadership, faculty, staff and alumni, came together for this eventful showcase.

Irving Mayor Rick Stopfer spoke to the high demand for health care services in Texas. "We're thrilled that the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is making a bigger footprint here," he said.

Following the reception and ribbon cutting, participants were encouraged to take part in a clinical innovation showcase. The showcase tours included more than a dozen professors, staff and students who presented many of the University's state-of-the-art technologies and specialties, including the CICP, Library Innovation and Creation Hub, and Pediatric Learning Studio.





Lori Klees (DPT '01) is the new Director of Physical Rehabilitation at Lake Norman Regional Medical Center, where

she has been a physical therapist since 2018. Dr. Klees specializes in dry needling and vestibular rehabilitation, working in the inpatient and outpatient therapy departments.



Arkena Dailey (DPT '03) has been Governor-appointed to the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Physical Therapy

since 2015. She served as the President and Vice President from 2016-2020 and was re-elected to serve as Vice President for 2022-2023. Dr. Dailey also serves on committees for the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy.



Chris Wilson (DPT '05) authored a book published by Elsevier. Dr. Wilson's co-edited work is titled "Cancer Rehabilitation: A Comprehensive Guidebook for Clinicians." Dr. Wilson was also elected as the President-Elect of the Academy of Oncologic Physical Therapy of the American Physical Therapy Association.



Nickolas Hetherington (MOT '15) began his career in pediatrics as a therapist, later transitioning to a clinic director. In 2017, he started Hetherington

Therapy, a homecare, school and community-based company in Brevard County, FL. Hetherington Therapy houses 15 therapists, receiving more than 1,300 visits a month and covering occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology services.



ATI Physical Therapy presented Clinic Director **Bree Wickey (DPT '15)** the Clinic Director Leader of the Year Award for achieving productivity and business targets while displaying quality leadership skills. ATI Physical Therapy has more than 900 locations in 24 states. Says ATI Chief Executive Officer **Sharon Vitti**. "Leader of the Year winners exemplify the ATI Way and ensure our patients stay or get back to their best self."



Hiral Khatri (OTD '17) is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of OT Park in Morgan Hill, CA. Launched in April 2021, OT Park caters to children with Autism and special needs who are challenged in their sensory processing and sensory modulation abilities. In addition, in October, Dr. Khatri received the Susan J. Harris OT Entrepreneur Award from the Occupational Therapy Association of California.

Shana Carter (DPT '18) completed her Orthopedic Clinical Specialist certification in 2021 and Dry Needling certification in 2022. Dr. Carter opened a concierge/cash-based practice, Home Safe Mobility Solutions in 2021. The company was founded on the need for mobility assistance and design ideas to improve client safety.



Co-Founder of the Esports Health and Performance Institute **Elliot Smithson (DPT '19)** co-presented at the Research Development Workshop Series at the

Esports Research Network Conference (ERN) in Jönköping, Sweden. The abstract was titled "Experiences of Professional Esports Athletes in Healthcare and Physical Therapy for Injury Management."



Sha'Rose Erion (DPT '20) is the owner and CEO of her own pelvic health physical therapy practice in Huntsville, AL. Rose Pelvic

Physiotherapy treats all conditions of the hips, back, abdomen, chest and pelvic floor. Dr. Erion founded the company to provide an affirming, safe and caring environment for disenfranchised groups.



Kevin Greer (DPT '20) has been promoted to Clinic Director of Longevity Physical Therapy clinic at the Los Coches Village Medical Center in Carlsbad, CA.

Previously, Greer served as the clinic's Assistant Director at the Bressi Ranch location.



Christina D. Howard (EdD '20) earned the 2022 F.A. Davis Award for Outstanding Physical Therapist Assistant Educator from the American Physical Therapy Association.



Mirely Murcio (OTD '21) received the Gold President's Volunteer Service Award for more than 500 hours of service from Blue Star Families and

the Intern Achievement Award from Operation Homefront in recognition of outstanding contributions to the furtherance of Operation Homefront's mission. Operation Homefront and Blue Star Families are organizations that serve military-connected families.



Peyton Dooley (OTD '22) presented "Parkinson's Friendly Changes for the Home: An Occupational Therapist's Perspective" at the 10th Annual

Louisiana Parkinson's Conference. Dr. Dooley's topic and presentation were a direct result of her work with individuals with Parkinson's Disease during her capstone experience.

Samantha Low (OTD '22) was co-published in the Spring 2022 *American Society of Hand Therapists (ASHT) Times* Volume 29, Issue 2. The collaborative work was titled "Telehealth Evaluation: Objective Measures Are Possible."

Alumni may submit updates about their professional or personal lives to share with fellow USAHS alumni. Use the Class Notes form on www.usa.edu/about/alumni/.



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