

Eastern Michigan University Occupational Therapy Alumni Network Newsletter

Inside this issue:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 75th Anniversary | 2 |
| Recapping the 2015 Spelbring | 3 |
| Alumni In Action | 5 |
| Contact Us! | 7 |

Alumni News & Events

Warmest late-winter wishes to our fellow alumni. The calendar is steadily inching toward spring, and here in Michigan large flocks of robins have been sighted; heralding the promise of warmer weather. The OT Alumni Network officers spent the fall of 2015 preparing for and co-hosting the 5th Annual Lyla M. Spelbring Lectureship and Conference. Along with the EMU OT Program, we welcomed many fellow alumni back to campus for the daylong event featuring endowed lecturer Dr. Charles Christiansen. (Be sure to read more about the event on page 3.)



Twenty-sixteen will be an exciting year for us! We are already busy helping the EMU OT Program plan its Silver Jubilee 75th anniversary celebration in September. We invite you to join us in recognizing, with pride, our educational legacy and the many alums – like you--who walked the EMU halls and contributed to our rich history. Please continue reading for information on how YOU can help us celebrate upcoming events, past achievements and alumni highlights.

EMUTM
TRUE

Celebrating 75 Years of Alums!

Upcoming Events

Come help us celebrate at the following events:

Alumni Gathering @ AOTA

Thursday April 7th following the Welcome Ceremony & Key-note Address, time and place TBA

75th Silver Jubilee Celebration

Friday September 23rd, time and place TBA

6th Annual Lyla M. Spelbring Lecture-ship & Conference

Saturday September 24th, Eastern Michigan University, featuring 2016 Endowed lecturer Dr. Glen Gillen

Send us your favorite stories, memories, photos, etc. from your OT Student experience at EMU. We will be compiling 75 years worth of memories and photos in a special 75th Anniversary newsletter.

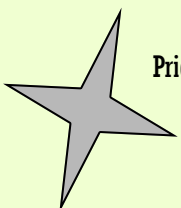
Did you know?

Occupational Therapy at Michigan State Normal College (now EMU) began in 1941 within the Special Education Department; there were 13 students under the instruction of Beatrice Wade, OTR.

The program was fully approved to be an accredited OT school by the American Medical Association in 1944, when the first class graduated.

Early curriculum included courses such as Household Mechanics, Gardening, General Bacteriology, and Advanced Arts and Crafts.

Price, A. *Occupational Therapy Comes to Michigan State Normal College 1998*. Occupational Therapy Records. Eastern Michigan University Archives.



A heartfelt testimonial about the 2015 Lyla M. Spelbring Endowed Lectureship and Conference

BY: Jim Klus-Salisbury (2000)



Jim Klus-Salisbury

Over my occupational therapy career, I've attended many conferences and training seminars

across the country. I've enjoyed and learned from each one of them. But about half way through the day, I realized that the 2015 Lyla M. Spelbring Endowed Lecture and Conference was, somehow, extra special. At first I couldn't quite put my finger on the reason. The depth of expertise and experience of the workshop presenters was the first thing I considered. The talent assembled to educate and inspire us was incredible. Dr. Charles Christiansen, who delivered the keynote address, is nothing short of a hero in my eyes, and his lecture: *Speaking of Quality: A Conversation about Occupational Therapy's Unique Value* clearly hit the mark with all those in attendance.

The event was executed flawlessly. The planning committee created a welcoming, vibrant, learning and sharing environment. The facilities were great, the presenters were well-prepared and effective and even the food was delicious. But there

was something more... "What's going on here?" I asked myself. By the time I got to the late-afternoon, student poster presentations, it suddenly dawned on me. I whipped out my program guide for a quick check of my theory and – yes, indeed-- I found it. This was the first OT event I've ever attended where 100% of the events and presenters were directly focused on occupation! I had never experienced that before. Don't get me wrong, I've learned and benefitted from a variety a subjects and research, even those without a direct occupation connection. However, the immersion in a total occupation-focused day was exhilarating and compelling! The EMU OT Program proved, again, they don't just talk the occupation talk; they walk the walk!

From the moment I sat in my very first OT class in the basement of King Hall, EMU put occupation front and center in my education and consciousness. In my current job, I travel all over the country and meet many incredible OTs doing amazing work. But every time I meet EMU alumni I always find myself in the pres-

ence of someone who clearly "gets it"; they truly understand that occupation is the key to our unique and distinct value.

Lyla would be very proud of the Lectureship and Conference named in her honor, and the dedication to occupation-centered practice manifested daily by EMU faculty, students and alumni.

It was quite an extraordinary day, and we are among a unique group of true believers and doers! I'll be attending the very special weekend event on September 23 and 24, 2016 when we celebrate the 75th Silver Jubilee anniversary of the EMU OT Program in conjunction with the 6th Annual Lyla M. Spelbring Endowed Lectureship and Conference. I hope to see you there!

2015 Lyla M. Spelbring Endowed Lecturer, Dr. Charles

Christiansen presented: *Speaking of Quality: A Conversation about Occupational Therapy's Unique Value*



2015 Spelbring Lectureship & Conference (con't.)

Many thanks to all those who helped make the 5th Annual Spelbring Lectureship & Conference a success! We appreciate the work of committee members, faculty, and students for the time and effort they put into the event. We are grateful for our community donors and corporate sponsors who help keep our costs low. We want to especially recognize our presenters for donating their time, talent, and expertise—with a special “thank you!” to our Alumni presenters: Gayle (Berk) Agar ('83) and Patrick Hoag ('05)!



For additional photos and info on this year's events:
[Click here to Follow the Spelbring on Facebook!](#)

Pictured clockwise from top right: Gayle Agar presents on driving rehabilitation. Future Alumna, Amanda Watson, presents during the Emerging Scholar Poster Presentation. “Repeat Attenders” and Alumna Tammy Przynosch (left) and Alaina Hartman enjoy breakfast before the Conference. Patrick Hoag presents on vision during a morning break-out session.

Alumni In Action: OT Alumni Story—Eva (Delsh) Dawson '01

By: Kathleen Siler ('91)

We are delighted to feature Eva Dawson, a 2001 graduate of EMU's OT Program, in this issue of our newsletter.

Eva originally hails from Perry Michigan. Following her graduation from EMU, Eva worked for the Livingston Educational Service Agency in Howell; providing school-based occupational therapy services. While there, she developed programs for teachers to improve students' reading and visual skills and increase their attention span. During that time she was invited to be the keynote speaker for the Title 1 Reading Symposium and was also a presenter at the Michigan Council for Exceptional Children.

In 2004 Eva was recruited by Grand Island Physical Therapy in Grand Island, Nebraska because of her knowledge about and experience working with children with autism. There she provided school-based and outpatient occupational therapy. She also developed sensory rooms for local area sheltered workshops.

Eva was elected to the Autism Society of Nebraska's state board from 2005-2007 making her the first occupational therapist to serve on that board.

From 2005 to 2008 Eva owned and operated a Hippo-therapy, pediatric clinic in Hastings, Nebraska. There, she managed 2 speech therapists, a physical therapist and a physical therapy assistant, an occupational therapist and 4 support staff. The group provided comprehensive outpatients services and was involved in



community education on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Eva also traveled throughout the state of Nebraska providing education and in-service training to Education Service Units on autism and behavioral strategies for the classroom.

In 2009, Eva's entrepreneurial spirit brought her back to Grand Island Physical Therapy in Grand Island, Nebraska where she is currently the Director of Women's Health. For the past five years she has worked to design, direct and oversee the building of a state of the art Women's Health and Healing Center. The center (pictured below), had its grand opening in late January. It will be staffed totally by occupational therapists, and offer an intimate, calm, spa-like environment with one-on-one, comprehensive occupational therapy. The center will provide lymphedema care, breast cancer rehab services, pre and post-natal services,

as well as sexual pain and incontinence care.

Eva feels strongly that women's health and wellness is a perfect area of practice for occupational therapy. "Our training encompasses understanding the physical as well as psychosocial issues associated with sexual expression, bowel and bladder management, loss of sexual function and the pain experienced during intimacy, the embarrassment of incontinence and the general stressors that can accompany mothering", she said. "Leisure participation is often strongly impacted by these conditions as well.

"Patients are our best teachers... we treat them with gratitude and respect."

Eva said she has many fond memories of her time at EMU; one of her favorites is the "Friends to Colleagues" dinner prior to graduation. When she's not working, Eva enjoys running, yoga, making her own balms and lotions, listening to music, going out to eat and trying new foods. Her most precious role is being a mom to her beautiful sons Henry age 5 and Jack age 3.



Alumni In Action (con't.)



Alumna Dr. Jayne Yatzcak Named EMU OT Program Director

If you missed the 2015 Spelbring, you also missed our introduction of EMU OT Alumna Dr. Jayne Yatzcak as the new EMU OT Program Director. Dr. Yatzcak is a double alumna of EMU; graduating with her B.S. in OT in 1995 and returning for her M.S. in OT in 2005. Her practice experience has included acute care, rehabilitation and inpatient geropsychiatry. Dr. "Y" joined the EMU faculty in 2008 and received her PhD in medical anthropology from Wayne State University in 2014. Her research is a convergence of anthropology and occupational therapy; and includes projects that have focused on how every day, material engagement supports the self and personhood of people with moderate to advanced dementia; and also the professional socialization of occupational therapists. In her free time, Jayne's favorite occupations include teaching Zumba, running, cooking, and knitting. One behalf of the EMU OT Alumni Network, congratulations Dr. Yatzcak on joining the long line of men and women who have helped shape 75 years of OT at EMU!



Tell us your Alumni Story!!!

Email us at EMUOTALUMNI@GMAIL.COM
and we may feature your story in our next newsletter
or on our Facebook Page!

Have you or an alumni you know reached a professional milestone/accomplishment or received an award or special recognition? We want to hear about it!!! Please help us recognize the great things our alumni are doing!

UPDATE US!

We are constantly updating our contact information databases and need your help. If you haven't recently notified us, please send us your name (first, last, maiden), year of graduation, address, employer and email address so we can update your information!

CONTACT US!

emuotalumni@gmail.com
or via Facebook Group:
"EMU OT Alumni"

We need you! Please consider the following ways to get involved:

- *Send us your photos & EMU stories*
- *Update us on alums you know*
- *Join us at an upcoming event*

[Click here](#) to visit the EMU OT Program's website.



NETWORK OFFICERS

Adrienna Bartnicki—2014
Katie MacDonald—2006
Kathleen Siler—1991



Email us your ideas for a future newsletter feature!



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