FOCUS
Official Newsletter of the FOTA

2012

MESSAGES| IN THIS ISSUE!

Read A Letter from the President

Fall Conference a Huge Success:
Student Poster Winners Announced!

Catch the Governmental Affairs Update!

Join a Special Interest Section Committee

FOTA: Who are we, where are we, and what are our interests?

The Latest from FLOTEC

Evolution of an OT: A letter from a New Grad

Save the Date: Fall Conference 2012:
NOVA Tampa November 2 & 3
As I’m sure many of you know, the Florida Occupational Therapy Association (FOTA) held its annual meeting recently. It was appropriate that we gathered in historic St. Augustine, as the road to the Centennial Vision is coming closer. This was a historic event for many reasons. First and foremost, FOTA has been in existence since the late 60’s and has never been hosted in by the University of St. Augustine. Secondly, it was such a well attended conference. Thirdly, the membership drive leading up to the conference resulted in an impressive response. Oh and by the way, the conference was GREAT. It was a delightful occasion, bringing together students, researchers, and practitioners from many specialties. This occasion facilitated our ability to showcase a variety of experts in the field of OT, via invited pre-conference institutes as well as great presentations. One of the most impressive aspects of the meeting was how many quality presentations current students did during the poster session. It was a wonderful opportunity for current students and local practitioners to be exposed to a broad array of relevant topic areas. In addition, the keynote speaker was none other than legendary performer and Tony Award winning entertainer Ben Vereen. Ben gave a moving speech about the “Art of Occupational Therapy” and touched us all when describing how he credits OT for his recovery though a traumatic accident some years ago. All in all, it was a unique opportunity for all to be exposed to innovative approaches to therapy, exploring new ideas, meeting colleagues, and renewing friendships.

On behalf of the Florida Occupational Therapy Association, I’d like to wish everyone a happy holiday season. As for any New Year’s resolutions: mine is to continue to advocate for our profession and to spread the OT Cheer. Here’s to “Living Life to its Fullest in Florida”

Best,
Kurt K. Hubbard kkhubbard55@gmail.com
FOTA President

Thank You to All FOTA Conference Attendees!

See You in Tampa at NOVA Tampa November 2nd & 3rd 2012

Conference Student Poster Winners!

OTS winner:
Title: The Rainbow of Recovery: Supporting Community Reintegration of Women with Substance Addictions
Students: Brianna Smyth, Samantha Willis, Erin Hillock, Jenny Hopson, and Meagan Widner
Faculty: Tina Gelpi, Florida Gulf Coast University

OTAS winner:
Title: "Exploring the Linkages between Occupational Therapy and Urban Planning"
Student: Kristin Mixell
Faculty: Mary Beth Craig-Oatley
Daytona State College

A Special thanks to our Poster Competition Judges:
Elise Bloch, Carol Gwin, Anjali Parti, Cathy Peirce, Marsha Shuford, Maribel Valdez

Have an article for FOCUS: Newsletter for the FOTA? Please send your article to FOCUS Newsletter Editor Brent Cheyne OTR/L via e-mail brentcheyne@yahoo.com Next deadline March 15th, 2012
Congratulations to the almost 400 practitioners and students who were part of the most recent FOTA conference held November 4&5 at the University of St. Augustine (USA), School of Health Sciences in St. Augustine, Florida. Attendance records were broken as we were able to “Live Life to its Fullest in Florida” and earn up to 15.5 CEUs in the process.

First up Friday morning were two high quality, four hour institutes presented concurrently. Karen Howell, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA used the USA brain lab to engage the audience in a hands-on neuro-anatomy class. Anne Hull, MS, MA, OT/L provided a plethora of evidenced based information on hot topic autism. Both institutes proved to be a great way to start our weekend of learning!

On Friday afternoon, attendees were able to choose from several excellent one hour short courses or two hour workshops, including Laws and Rules. Once the educational sessions were completed late Friday afternoon, yummy tapas were available for all at the President’s Reception. The two hour poster session was next on the agenda and another record was broken! 33 student posters from both OTA and graduate programs and three professional posters were showcased. Student poster winners: (see page left) The student poster judges worked hard to select winners from so many awesome entries. Thanks to judges: Marsha Shuford, Carol Gwinn, Cathy Peirce, Maribel Valdez and Anjali Parti, Friday night was topped off by a FLOTEC reception and student mixer for OT faculty and invited guests. The chocolate fountain and dessert bar were a gastric delight and a wonderful way to end the day.

Educational sessions started up the next morning, Saturday November 4, at 8am sharp. Once again, a variety of short courses and workshops were available to attendees and covered all practice areas. An “Ortho Track”, consisting of four consecutive short courses related to orthopedic services, was very popular. The license mandated “Prevention of Medical Errors” also drew a big crowd. Saturday at noon, a delicious box lunch was provided to attendees as part of the conference package. The FOTA business meeting was held shortly after lunch on Saturday and included reports by President Kurt Hubbard, VP Elena Vizvary, Treasurer Deb Murphy-Fischer, Sara-Jane Crowley, AOTA Rep. and Deb Oliveira, Government Affairs Chair. Jerry Coverdale, OT, CHT, current President of the American Hand Society, informed the audience about the changing semantics in orthotics and how we must as profession, be aware of the terminology we must now use.

Our Exhibitor Hall was busy during all conference hours especially during three unopposed time slots. There were a record 33 exhibitors covering recruitment and many products. FOTA and AOTA were also represented. The Exhibitor Hall served as the backdrop for the Silent Auction displays. The Silent Auction, spearheaded by Sara-Jane Crowley and David Clark, raised money for the Suze Dudley marketing award.

The final conference event was “The Art of Occupational Therapy” presentation by our keynote speaker, Tony Award winner Ben Vereen. Mr. Vereen wowed and thrilled everyone in the audience. He spoke to us with reverence and respect. He sang, answered our questions, challenged and inspired us. How special we all felt by the end of his presentation! We were almost able to float home on the stories he shared.

A successful FOTA conference is only possible because of all the volunteer hours and behind the scenes activities that occur. A HUGE thank you to Local Conference Chair, Bonnie Decker, who put in an enormous amount of time and work both before and during this conference. What a remarkable problem solver she is!! Additional thank yous are in order to: Conference Convener Pam Levan, webmaster Brent Cheyne, Exhibitor Chair Gissel Calderon-Rodmon, Student poster coordinator Cathy Peirce, FOTA President Kurt Hubbard, the rest of the FOTA board, and several University of St. Augustine students.

So now that we have this conference and its records behind us, it’s time to start planning for the next year’s conference. Mark your calendars now: Friday and Saturday, November 2&3, 2012. Venue: NOVA Tampa. Get ready to “Gear Up for 2017”. Keep your eye out for conference news and events, the call for proposals, and hotel accommodation information at www.flota.org. Contact me if you’d like to be a volunteer. There’s a place for your talents and energy!!

See you in Tampa in November 2012!
Elena Vizvary, MS, LOT FOTA VP and Education Chair vizvaryot@gmail.com
Where are the FOTA Members?

Region 1: Northwest
Bay, Escambia, Holmes, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Washington counties.
FOTA members 20

Region 2 Capitol
Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla counties
FOTA members 9

Region 3 North Central
FOTA members 44

Region 4 North East
Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. John’s, Union
FOTA members 96

Region 5 Central East
Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Sumter, Volusia counties
FOTA members 93

Region 6 South East
Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Okeechobee counties.
FOTA members 11

Region 7 Southwest
Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach
FOTA Members 193

Region 8 South West
Collier, Charlotte, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Manatee, Sarasota counties
FOTA members 83

Region 9 Central West
Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties
FOTA members 83

Undesignated: some 78 members have chosen not to designate their location on their FOTA profile.

Out of State FOTA members include profiles from Ohio, South Carolina, New York, Alabama, Georgia, New Jersey, California, Washington, and Kansas!

FOTA Members in number by Region

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 716
Many of you have been following our email blasts regarding the developments of changes in Medicaid reimbursement in Florida. The two most important changes are the initiation of a preauthorization system for Medicaid clients receiving therapy services. EQHealth has been contracted by the state to handle the authorization process. This system went into effect November 1, 2011. Many therapists providing services to Medicaid clients, who are primarily children, were required to submit all of their documentation through the EQHealth system. There has been concern that the new system placed an undo amount of work for therapists providing services. Providers also needed to obtain training in order to access the system and follow the procedures.

In October, there was a conference call organized by Larry Gonzalez, our lobbyist, myself, and representatives of the Florida Physical Therapy Association, and the Florida Speech and Hearing Association with a representative from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Medicaid division to voice our concerns and ask for an extension of the November enactment date. We received a response that this was not feasible and the November date stood.

There was a meeting at ACHA December 9, 2011 for therapy providers. Mr. Gonzalez and I attended this meeting. Representatives from EQHealth were present and stated they have been listening to the providers! Some of the redundancy has been, or will be eliminated from the online submission website. I encourage all of you who are having difficulties with the authorization process to contact your EQHealth representative or Medicaid representative for your district. The website lists all the important links for you to contact the appropriate people.

The website is: http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/childhealthservices/therapyserv/index.shtml

The other significant change is the privatization of Medicaid. Florida implemented a five county managed care program prior to legislation to expand this program to all of Florida. The Florida Occupational Therapy Association had concerns regarding the access of occupational therapy services to clients and how this may impact clients in skilled nursing facilities, many who have Medicaid as a secondary provider to Medicare. FOTA, along with one hundred organizations, through Florida CHAIN Community Health Information Action Network, sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) voicing concern regarding the impact of these changes on vulnerable populations. Below is the most recent news from CMS as related by Florida CHAIN:

**Thanks to advocates’ efforts, Florida must reform Medicaid Reform**

After more than a year of negotiations, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is ready to finalize a three-year extension of Florida’s Medicaid Reform Pilot. Thanks to the tireless efforts of consumers and advocates, however, CMS is requiring Florida to correct some of the failed experiment’s worst problems and reduce the power it gave to managed care plans.

For a more detailed explanation of the changes, read [The Extension of Florida’s Medicaid Reform Experiment, Explained](http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/childhealthservices/therapyserv/index.shtml).

Insiders knew the extension of the Reform Pilot was inevitable. The key elements of the experiment will remain in place. The only question was whether CMS would require Florida to reduce the harm of its most dangerous aspects. In that context, the fact that Florida must make some significant changes should be viewed as a victory for advocates fighting to protect access to health care for our most vulnerable patients.

CMS’ required changes will benefit Medicaid patients, not only in the five Medicaid Reform Pilot counties but throughout Florida, since these new requirements would also apply to the proposed statewide expansion of Medicaid managed care passed by the Florida Legislature earlier this year. State officials have already had to make changes to their expansion plans because they conflict with the now-amended requirements for the Reform experiment.

In July, over 100 Florida organizations signed Florida CHAIN’s letter requesting that CMS reject Florida’s request to continue the Medicaid Reform experiment. We’d like to thank all those organizations for their hard work in holding the State accountable.

The legislation sessions for 2012 will continue to be a busy one for Government Affairs. There are also preliminary changes to the OT practice act coming up. Please contact me if you wish to assist in following important issues for occupational therapy or volunteer in any way. We appreciate your opinions, support, and advocacy!

You can contact me at debora.oliveira@famu.edu or call the FOTA at 954-840-FOTA (3682).

Debora Oliveira
During the Fall Conference at the University of St. Augustine, I accepted the invitation from the FOTA Board to serve as **Coordinator of the Practice Standing Committee**. Our Standard Operating Procedures, (last reviewed October 2005) describes my role to, “coordinate the communication and act as liaison between the Board, the SIS sections, and other committees as assigned.” I accepted the challenge, knowing that I can rely on membership to step up to create a dynamic and productive group of Special Interest (SIS) Section Chairs who in turn can mobilize member participation. The first item in my duties and responsibilities is to appoint SIS Committee Chairs. Right now, we have 13 special interest sections (in alpha order): Developmental Disabilities, Education, Fieldwork Education, Gerontology, Health Promotion and Wellness, Mental Health, Physical Dysfunction, School Systems, Sensory Integration, Technology, Administration and Management, and Work Programs. I hope to see a Standing Committee comprised of a positive, motivated, dedicated mix of practitioners and educators who can create a distinct presence and voice in the FOTA.

Because of new responsibilities in the Association, starting with our President Kurt Hubbard, or career and life transitions, some current SIS Chairs had to relinquish their involvement. So I need some people with interest, leadership and/or expertise to serve as Special Interest Chairs. Your qualifications, duties and responsibilities are simple, achievable, and straightforward, and I will not ask for more; these are:

- Be an active FOTA member
- Be a member of AOTA and the AOTA SIS that you are representing
- Collaborate with the Practice Coordinator prior to a scheduled Executive Board Meeting. SIS Chairs are encouraged to attend the EB meetings.
- Initiate and post on listserv discussions information of interest and importance to SIS members
- Respond to SIS member’s questions/inquiries by answering e-mails and referring to EB members in a timely fashion
- Annually submit an article for the FOCUS concerning issues pertinent to your SIS area
- Attend the annual FOTA Conference meeting
- Facilitate SIS roundtable sessions at the annual FOTA conference

For more information contact me at 813-574-5429 or e-mail at rc1265@nova.edu.

Ricardo C. Carrasco, PhD. OTR/L, FAOTA is Chair and Professor of the entry level hybrid Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at Nova Southeastern University, Tampa.
By the Numbers—Who are we and what are our interests?

FOTA Membership Profiles
715 members

FOTA Professional Designation by Members
- Hon. 10 Honorary members
- Student, 181
- OTA, 94
- OT, 382

Members Designated Volunteer Interests
- Represent FOTA to other groups: 17
- New Forum: 6
- I would be interested in Mentoring: 3
- Host board meeting: 7
- FOCUS Article: 38
- Conference: 79
- Board position: 8
- Ad hoc SIS: 5
- Ad hoc Membership: 4
- Ad hoc fundraising: 5
- Ad hoc committee for Government: 8
- Ad Hoc Committee for Education: 8

Members 1st Choice in Special Interest Designation
- Work Programs: 11
- Technology: 13
- Sensory Integration: 67
- School Systems: 64
- Physical Disabilities: 113
- Mental Health: 36
- Home and Community Health: 43
- Health Promotion and Wellness: 38
- Gerontology: 94
- Fieldwork: 21
- Education: 52
- DevelopmentalDis: 78
- Admin and Mgmt: 42

Fall 2011 Conference Survey Feedback
Overall Satisfaction with the Fall conference
- Very satisfied: 42
- Satisfied: 44
- Total: 86

Item Enjoyed the Most at Conference
- (blank)
- Seeing old friends
- Professional socialization
- Presidential Reception
- Pre conference workshop
- Poster Presentation
- Mixer
- Keynote Address
- Home health Session
- Exhibit Hall
- Educational Sessions
- the institutes

Members 2nd Choice for Special Interest Designation
- Work Programs: 2
- Technology: 9
- Sensory Integration: 18
- School Systems: 51
- Physical Disabilities: 10
- Mental Health: 21
- Home and Community Health: 25
- Health Promotion and Wellness: 36
- Gerontology: 10
- Fieldwork: 7
- Education: 24
- DevelopmentalDis: 28
- Admin and Mgmt: 28

Fall Conference Numbers
- Registrants: 387
- Presenters: 30
- Exhibitors: 33
- Student Poster Presenters: 100
- Institutes: 64
Looking for a CEU Course that helps you and the next generation of OT practitioners? Consider this educational seminar provided by FLOTEC.

Fieldwork Educators are the key to the education of every occupational therapist and occupational therapy assistant.

Your decision to be a part of the select community of fieldwork educators in occupational therapy is appreciated by the Florida Occupational Therapy Educational Consortium (FLOTEC) and the students you supervise.

Without your willingness to provide clinical instruction, OT and OTA programs would be unable to fulfill the goals of their curricula. More importantly, because of your efforts as fieldwork educators, OT and OTA students in Florida have a solid foundation for their professional development.

Please use these suggestions as you plan for your student and work with your student during their internship.

### Enhancing Your Effectiveness

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Share your expectations of the student early in the internship.</strong></td>
<td>The student wants to know what he/she should be doing to be a successful clinician in our facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask your student what their internship goals and expectations are on</strong></td>
<td>The first day. This will give you the opportunity to incorporate them into your expectations of the student.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Set aside the time to give your student feedback.</strong></td>
<td>Even 15 minutes each day will foster healthy communication between you and your student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Write down what the student is doing well as well as what needs to be</strong></td>
<td>Work with your student. Record how they responded to the feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plan for your student’s project or presentation early.</strong></td>
<td>Be sure that it meets your department’s needs. This provides for a relevant project or presentation for the department or facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When filling out the CPI, write down your comments first.</strong></td>
<td>This will give you a clearer picture of where you should be placing a hash mark on the VAS.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Expect your student to come in everyday with a written plan for each of the patients that will be seen that day. Be sure that you express this to the student and ask them what they have planned to do.

For the student to become well-rounded clinicians, they need to experience administrative responsibilities such as scheduling, marketing and quality assurance. Create opportunities for your students to develop these skills. Let the student know how important these skills are.

Call the ACOTE if you have any questions or concerns. The ACOTE is especially trained to assist you with any concerns or challenges you are facing with your student.

### Mission Statement

**To Promote, Encourage, and Foster Quality Fieldwork Education in collaboration with Fieldwork Educators for the benefit of all Occupational Therapy Students in the State of Florida.**

**Interested in Attending a Fieldwork Educator Workshop? Visit the FLOTEC Website or contact us**

- **Chairperson**, Saritza Guzman-Sardina - sguzman-sardina@polk.edu
- **Secretary**, Robin Richmond - rrichmond@polk.edu
- **Treasurer**, Tammy J. LeSage—tilesage@usa.edu

**459 OT Practitioners (and some PTs) have completed our Fieldwork Educator Certification Workshop**
On Saturday September 24, 2011, Karen Dickerhoof, Executive Director of CIL, Assistant Professor Pam Kasyan, MS, OTR/L and three MOT students from NSU, provided multiple sensitivity training and safe handling sessions at the South Florida Citizen Corps Conference. The participants were citizen volunteers committed to being a part of the emergency preparedness teams in South Florida. The National Citizen Corps Organization is a volunteer based organization coordinated nationally by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with the mission of making communities safer, stronger, and better-prepared to respond to disaster situations. The Corps coordinates and provides opportunities for all people to participate in making their families, homes, and communities safer from threats of crime, terrorism, or any other disaster. Firmly believing that having citizens involved as first responders is key to having safer communities.

Nova Southeastern University was invited to participate in providing hands on training by Karen Dickerhoof, the Executive Director, for the Center for Independent Living of Broward (CILB). The Center offers assistance to people with disabilities. Their mission is to help fulfill goals of independence and self-sufficiency. They help with employment, independent living skills, assistive technology, and finding housing. Ms. Dickerhoof has been an energetic advocate for all individuals with disabilities, to ensure that all people have access to the emergency response services created by the community.

Notably, Ms. Dickerhoof, was disappointed by the response to 2005 Hurricane Wilma, when the recovery team providing emergency food stamps required that individuals wait in line at a tent to complete an application. Arranging for transportation, finding the tents, and waiting in line for extended periods of time, without any regard for seating or accessible parking was not adequate to meet the needs for many individuals with disabilities. Ms. Dickerhoof noted several other issues were overlooked regarding the disability community, and through ongoing advocacy efforts, ensured that current response planning includes what FEMA refers to as Functional Needs Support Services.

In the Disability Sensitivity Training course, the Center for Independent Living of Broward presented a summary of sensitivity training for a first responder, and Professor Kasyan, MS, OTR/L, CHT and three MOT students presented on safe handling of individuals during crisis. The students, Erin Holland, MOTS, Jennifer Swayman, MOTS; Pam Kasyan, MS, OTR/L and Jocelyn Shea, MOTS were given the opportunity to participate, as a service learning experience.

They were excited to be a part of an event for such dedicated citizens. Recognizing their knowledge on body mechanics and proper transfer techniques, the students trained community members to safely handle individuals with disabilities during crisis.

The National Citizen Corps Organization was a collaboration between the Center for Independent Living of Broward, Nova Southeastern University, and the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT). Other presentations offered at the conference included courses on various topics regarding disaster response, such as Human Diversity, Leadership Skills/Organizational Management, Community Policing, Hazmat Awareness, Crisis Communications in Social Media, American Red Cross Emergency Disaster Relief, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Disability Sensitivity Training and Pet Rescue.

Occupational therapy provided information and hands on training to meet increased occupational needs and provide assistance to individuals with disabilities during a disaster. Educating and allowing willing participants to demonstrate the necessary steps and precautions involved in dependent transfers. The goals of educating on this topic were to train the first responders to recognize and identify a client’s level of transfers and to impart the ability to train others to perform a dependent transfer using ergonomic principles and disability sensitive communications. As one participant noted, “Now that I know what to do, this is easier than I expected!”

The faculty at Nova Southeastern University hopes service learning experiences such as the Citizens Corps Conference will enable Occupational Therapists to recognize their abilities and seek leadership roles in the area of hazard preparedness in their communities. Future plans are being made for extended versions of this presentation to be provided at upcoming trainings to confidently and competently meet crisis needs for individuals with disabilities.

Authors:

Pam Kasyan, MS, OTR/L; Karen Dickerhoof, Jennifer Swayman, MOTS; Erin Holland, MOTS, and Jocelyn Shea, MOTS
News from Region 8:

EYE FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Magnifiers for the Visually Impaired
Eye Focus Technology is a low vision technology company providing a complete line of electronic products for visually impaired patients. We have a wide selection of Video Magnifiers for use at home, work, school, while running errands or for travel:

Desktop  Handheld
Portable  Computer Compatible

If your patients have Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy, Glaucoma, Cataracts, or other causes of low vision, call Eye Focus Technology.

Free Product Demonstrations  Low Vision Seminars
Reseller Opportunities  In-Service Training
Staff Workshops

http://eyefocus.com/links.html

The OT South Bay Forum held their Annual Meeting and elections Tuesday, January 10th at Consulate Healthcare in Sarasota. Over 30 members joined the forum which offers 1 hour CEUs 4 times per year and local professional networking and support.

The local forum which serves OT professionals primarily from Manatee and Sarasota counties held its annual election of a new organizing committee. Outgoing President Brent Cheyne, Treasurer Melissa Berry, and Secretary Lora May Swart thank Tammie Gursky who served as CEU coordinator and liaison with FOTA to provide low cost CEUs to members in the area.

The 1 hour CEU Course Title: Low Vision: Technology Tools for an Emerging OT Practice: Providing Independence Through Technology, Course Speaker: RICHARD CHRISTIANA, JR., FOUNDER & PRESIDENT Eye Focus Technology. The speaker provided an introduction to the state of the art in Low Vision Tools and Technology including his interaction with OT low vision specialists, the low vision practice area and explored the current challenges and opportunities in this area of practice. Eye Focus Technology is a low vision technology company providing a complete line of electronic products for visually impaired patients.
I recently celebrated my one year “anniversary” as graduate from OT school. Following the Fall 2011 FOTA conference, I took time to reflect about some of my experiences as a new therapist. First, the excitement about having survived OT school, getting my Master’s degree, the eagerness to be a “professional”, having to study for the boards (ah!), and most important, just don’t trip and fall when I get up to receive my diploma! Most of these were easily combined into my overall thrill of joining a field to which I was truly proud to be a part of.

I had the privilege of attending the FOTA conference this past November in St. Augustine. This being my first conference as an OTR/L and not an MOTS, I couldn’t help but notice how I was like a “kid-in-a-candy-store” excited about being surrounded by so many peers and fellow professionals with the same fondness for the field of Occupational Therapy. There was an underlying eagerness that was seeping out of me with the thoughts of learning new ideas/concepts, listening to new presentations, and just meeting new people.

After an exciting and information-filled two days, the conference concluded with the Keynote speaker, the famous entertainer, Ben Vereen. The story of how Ben Vereen and the field of OT were introduced to one another wasn’t necessarily something we haven’t heard before as therapists. However, the manner in which he delicately described the nature of his experiences with OT personalized what we do, and also held a glowing light under our profession. He touched on so many areas of OT and discussed various methods of treatment. He vividly retold accounts of everything from regaining use of his hands, to aspects of treatments that are sometimes seen as conservative, bringing out the humor in the repetitive use of cones and clothes pins. Having said that, it was enlightening to hear the true purpose of OT from his perspective. It appeared that Ben’s experience as a patient provided him with the ability to regain his functional independence and to improve his quality of life. His sincerity and overall appreciation of our field was apparent while he discussed his slow and rigorous journey through intensive therapy. His body language and occasional bouts of song also glorified Occupational Therapy in a harmonious and genuine fashion.

The closing words of the conference were profoundly inspirational, even to a novice OT like me. It was refreshing to hear the ways in which our profession was promoted. I found the entire experience to be motivating, encouraging, and truly enjoyable. I can easily say after working for almost a year, that being an OT has become even more gratifying and rewarding every day, and is a true symbolization of the career and lifestyles we have chosen as Occupational Therapists.

From: Lindsay Brenner, MOT, OTR/L – Graduate of the University of St. Augustine, 2010
AN EASY WAY TO JOIN FOTA!

Now membership in FOTA is easier than ever! On the payment page of the Membership Application or Renewal form, choose “Sustaining Membership” and your credit or debit card will be charged just $7 a month for OT and $4.50 a month for OTA membership.

We hope this makes membership more affordable and you never have to worry about renewing! Of course you may stop your membership at any time, but you won’t want to miss out on all the great benefits of FOTA Membership!

What does the FOTA do for you?

Here are just a few reasons for becoming an FOTA member as FOTA:

- Advocates and promotes the growth of occupational therapy in FL
- Safeguards practice
- Pays a lobbyist for legislative issues
- Offers the FOTA Website, Listserv & Bulletin Board
- Sends FOCUS Newsletters
- Sanctions Continuing Education courses
- Discounts on conferences and offers continuing education
- Updates your clinical skills
- Provides access to exhibitors and vendors
- Membership looks good on your resume
- Offers the opportunity to take required courses for licensure
- Membership in Special Interest Sections
- Attendance at OT Regional Meetings
- Offers professional contacts and networking
- Recognizes people who have contributed to the profession
- Provides a liaison to AOTA
- Supports students with Leadership Funds

Shopping for Gifts Online?

Go to FOTA’s website, www.flota.org, scroll down & click on the Amazon link, and more Amazon will donate some of the proceeds of your order to FOTA. Amazon sells more than just books, so get your gift list ready!