Temple TR Program Honored with Excellence in Education Award

The Therapeutic Recreation program, within the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, was honored with the “Excellence in Education Award” at the American Therapeutic Recreation Association’s 2012 Annual Conference in Phoenix, AZ in October. The program was acknowledged for the diverse learning experiences that are available to students and the efforts by faculty to provide educational experiences that contribute to the professional development of future recreation therapy practitioners. Faculty who teach in the TR Program are pictured below with the award that is now displayed in the main Rehabilitation Sciences office suite.

Front Row (Left to Right): Elaine Hatala, Rhonda Nelson, Gretchen Snethen, Pei-Chun Hsieh. Back Row (Left to Right): Heather Porter, Gena Bell Vargas, Ann Dolloff, Mark Salzer (Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences), Susanne Lesnik-Emas, Nannette Vliet and Kathy Coyle.

1st Annual Evidence Based Practice Day (EBPD) Conference

On Friday, April 26th, the MS RT students and the 4+1 students in the Recreation Therapy (RT) Graduate program (14 in all) will present their research to students within the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at our first annual EBPD Conference. During the spring 2013 semester, each graduate student selected a topic of interest, conducted a literature review on the topic, synthesized the literature findings, and developed a Knowledge Translation Plan (KTP) to explain how to apply the findings to Recreational Therapy practice.

The conference will additionally host eight poster sessions developed by the Graduate students related to contemporary issues within the field of RT. The conference is being held on the same day (and at the same location) as Temple’s College of Health Professions and Social Work’s (CHPSW) Research Day to highlight and support the value of research within the health professions. Conference attendees have time allocated during the EBPD conference to attend the CHPSW Research Day event.

Next year, we hope to open up the EBPD Conference to local Recreational Therapists and internship site supervisors to keep them abreast of new research and its application to clinical practice. This is a phenomenal opportunity for our students to present at a professional conference, learn from each other, and contribute to the growth of RT Evidence Based Practice.
Dr. Nelson Honored at Temple Basketball Game

Dr. Rhonda Nelson was one of three Temple faculty members honored at the December 17th men’s basketball game. Dr. Nelson, Therapeutic Recreation Program Director, along with professors Allison Reynolds from the Esther Boyer College of Music & Dance and Dana Saewitz from the School of Media & Communications were recognized for being appointed founding members of the Provost’s Undergraduate Mentors.

The Provost’s Undergraduate Mentors is a new faculty group formed to recognize faculty who have demonstrated an exceptional level of support, energy and commitment to the principals and practices of student mentoring. In order to be considered for the honor, faculty need to have completed five or more student mentorships in a five year period through the University’s Diamond Peer Teaching Program and/or Creative Arts, Research and Scholarship (CARAS) Awards.

Nannette Vliet Receives Faculty Service Award

Temple University’s Office of the Provost and Faculty Senate Steering Committee recently hosted the second annual Outstanding Faculty Service Awards at a brunch to honor 18 faculty members for their outstanding service achievements.

Nannette Vliet, EdM, CTRS, Undergraduate Coordinator for Therapeutic Recreation in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, and Scott E. Rutledge, PhD, MSW, Assistant Chair of the School of Social Work were honored as faculty representing the College of Health Professions during the event. Nannette is active in a variety of organizations serving individuals with disabilities and also makes significant contributions at Temple.

“This distinguished group of faculty members has made tremendous contributions to their departments, schools and colleges and the university,” said Interim Provost Hai-Lung Dai, during the ceremony. “Their work strengthens Temple as a vibrant institution of higher learning.”

Active Living for Persons with Aphasia Program Receives Award

On March 9, amid the hoopla of the 2nd Annual All Access Sports Auction, the Active Living for Persons with Aphasia program and its coordinator, Dr. Susanne Lesnik-Emas, were recognized as Agency of the Year. The Active Living for Persons with Aphasia program is a proud member of Access Sports, a non-profit in Philadelphia providing sports and health promotion activities, including event tickets and clinics. Through the support of Access Sports, members of the Active living group have attended college basketball games, Philly SOUL (arena football), minor league baseball, Temple football games at the Linc, and the Harlem Globetrotters extravaganza.

The Active Living for Persons with Aphasia program began in the fall of 2009 under Susanne’s direction and supports individuals living independently in the Philadelphia area in an effort to improve their social communication. The group is a psycho-social and recreation program that meets weekly and also incorporates sports and cultural outings throughout the Philadelphia area.

Several members of the Active Living for Persons with Aphasia program attended the auction and celebratory dinner along with “Dr. Sue”, Dr. Rhonda Nelson, Dr. Pei-Chun Hsieh, Dr. Gretchen Snethen and Rec4Life student club President Eric Tosti, compliments of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences.
How Did You Celebrate TR Month?

How did you celebrate TR month this year? The department celebrated with several different activities to enhance the understanding of the therapeutic value of recreation for people with disabilities.

During the month of February, we posted weekly messages on our Facebook page, sparking discussion about how therapeutic recreation can benefit different populations. Faculty members in the therapeutic program also did a mock jail photo shoot to declare our love for TR in holding our certification number in our hands.

The student club held a T-shirt slogan contest and the winning slogan was, “Don’t ‘dis’ Ability”. Finally, we held an Adaptive Sport Day that introduced several different adaptive sports and the equipment to students within and outside the department.

Have you done anything to promote TR in your agency? Share your idea with us! Also, if you have not liked our Facebook page, please do so. That way, you can continue connecting with us. We share department news and information related to TR services on Facebook regularly.

Pictured from Left to Right, Top to Bottom: Dr. Susanne Lesnik-Emas, Dr. Elaine Hatala, Dr. Heather Porter, Nannette Vliet, Dr. Gretchen Snethen, Ann Dolloff, Dr. Gena Bell Vargas, Nannette Vliet, Dr. Susanne Lesnik-Emas, Dr. Rhonda Nelson, Dr. Heather Porter, Dr. Pei-Chun Hsieh, Ann Dolloff.

Making our Mark: iPad use in Recreation Therapy

It is without question that iPad technology will be revolutionizing health care practice. A simple internet search yields pages of results on app use for augmentative communication, autism, health information management, and medical practice; however, beyond iPad technology utilization in speech therapy and special education, little organized documentation exists for iPad use within the therapy disciplines.

Throughout the past year, the Temple University Therapeutic Recreation Program, within the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, has been busy establishing an iPad program within its existing curriculum. The goal is simple: to help recreation therapists set the standard for using iPad technology within treatment interventions. The TR students have been busy learning how to repurpose apps meant for entertainment into therapy tools, while the TR faculty were designing a resource tool for practitioners to provide suggestions for the use of iPads in practice.

We invite you to take the “TRiP” with us and increase the use of technology in achieving client outcomes. The “TR iPad” blog is a space not only for sharing evaluations of apps, but also for discussion of inquiries and success stories on how TR practitioners are using iPad technology with various populations. The blog will include app reviews focused on functional outcome areas, along with resources for adaptive equipment, built in accessibility features of the iPad, and links to additional websites that provide app reviews.

Check it out at: http://tripstu.wordpress.com/. Questions? Email Nannette Vliet at nvliet@temple.edu.
Adapted Recreation Day Activities Chip Away at Stereotypes
By: Laura Kuserk, Temple Times (Reprinted with Permission)

In recognition of National Recreational Therapy month, Temple’s Therapeutic Recreation Program in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences hosted Adapted Recreation Day on February 26 in the Student Pavilion.

The goal of the event was to highlight the benefits of recreation in everyone’s lives and to expose students, faculty and staff within the university community to adapted recreational activities for individuals with various disabilities, said Nannette Vliet, an instructor in the department.

More than 80 Temple students, faculty and staff members—those with and without disabilities—participated in the day’s activities, which included wheelchair basketball, quad rugby led by the Magee Eagles Quad Rugby team, and adapted karate instruction led by Kenn Perry, an instructor at Kenpo Martial Arts.

Catherine Misczak, a junior in the Therapeutic Recreation program, participated in the quad rugby event. “After the Magee Eagles completed their demo, they allowed anyone to get in the rugby chairs and play with them,” she said. “My arms and back were pretty sore the next day.”

For Misczak, the event was a valuable learning experience because it showcased several adapted recreation activities that neither she nor her classmates had known existed, such as adapted martial arts. “The best part about the day was how much we all learned,” said Misczak. “It’s always nice to hear people saying, ‘I had no idea!’ or ‘That is so much fun to play’ as they learn about adapted recreation, and even I found myself saying it during some events.”

“I think the event has opened their eyes to seeing people with disabilities as people, too,” said Vliet of the participants without a disability. “It has changed their perspectives and has proven to them that people with disabilities can be strong people, actively engaged in life.”

The event also featured sensory activities where participants had to identify dominoes by their texture.

Therapeutic Recreation Students Educate Others at Temple University!
As part of the Health Promotion through Leisure Education class, TR undergraduate students were provided with the opportunity to teach a lesson in the HRPR 2103 Health Psychology and Human Behavior class. While students in Health Psychology were studying about stress and the health implications of stress, students in the Leisure Education course were preparing lessons on the impact of stress on college students, and how to use leisure as a means to reduce stress during the semester.

The two classes came together on Thursday, March 21 under the direction of Professors Elaine Hatala and Ann Doloff. The 40 students in the Health Psychology class were divided into small groups, and under the leadership of four Leisure Education students, participated in group discussions, deep breathing exercises, games, guided imagery and simple yoga moves to increase their awareness of stress triggers and simple, easy to do activities to help reduce the stress of college life mid-semester.

The feedback was great, and the majority of students in the Health Psychology class recommended this become part of the class every semester. One Leisure Education student actually commented that she finally understood writing behavioral goals and lesson plans as a result of leading this session!

Students Involved in Mental Health Research

This year, six students joined the TU Collaborative on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Student Lab, which is directed by Drs. Salzer, Snethen, and Vargas. This lab provides opportunities for Temple students to be engaged in research related to community inclusion of adults with psychiatric disabilities. Currently, students are engaged in three different projects:

Online Parenting Intervention
Dr. Katy Kaplan is conducting an online intervention for mothers with psychiatric disabilities. One component of this study is an online support listserv. TR students Debbie Pakstis and Ilknur Dagdeviren, both seniors in the TR program, are coding four months of messages from the listserv looking to see the types of supports the participants are either seeking or providing.

Self-Directed Care
The parent project is being conducted by the TU Collaborative, in which participants are able to use their Medicaid dollars to purchase items/services that they believe will support their recovery. The student lab developed a coding strategy to code the items or “asks” on two different levels. Seniors Brandon Snead and Paige O’Sullivan are using the ICF to code “asks,” focusing on what activity or area of participation the “ask” will facilitate for the person (i.e., gym membership facilitates participation in exercise and health maintenance). “Asks” are also coded by the relational context, as some items are purchased to facilitate the development or maintenance of a relationship.

Online Weight Loss Intervention Needs Assessment
Dr. Snethen is currently conducting a needs assessment to identify the information and resources individuals with psychiatric disabilities would like to see in an online weight loss intervention. There are 2 arms of the needs assessment, a national online survey as well as local data collection with COMHAR. Graduate student Delia Bancroft and junior Melissa Newman are coordinating with individual site managers to collect data using the department iPads. This information will be used to develop the resources for the intervention.
First Students Admitted into New 4+1 BS/MS in Recreation Therapy

Four students are now enrolled in Temple’s new accelerated MS Degree Program (also known as the 4+1 Program). This new honors program offers the opportunity for students interested in being recreation therapists to exit Temple University with an MS degree after five years of study. At the beginning of their junior year, students may apply for admission to the accelerated degree program if they have completed a minimum of 45 credits at Temple University, have met all of their Gen Ed requirements and have a minimum GPA of 3.5.

Upon admission to the program, students choose from one of the three specialization areas: pediatrics, geriatrics or physical rehabilitation. This selection then becomes the focus of their graduate work in recreation therapy. Students enrolled in this honors program begin by taking one graduate course each semester until they earn their BS in TR. They then return for one year of full-time graduate study before receiving their MS in RT. The graduate coursework is designed so that 4+1 students will also be eligible for Specialty Certification through NCTRC.

Congratulations to 4+1 students (pictured Left to Right): Morgan Ferrante, Eric Tosti, Kristen Hartman and Victoria Cooper for their admission into this new honors program!

Scholarships Now Available for MS in RT Program

The Therapeutic Recreation program is pleased to announce two scholarship opportunities for individuals seeking an MS in Recreation Therapy. We are looking for individuals who are seeking to alter their professional path by engaging in graduate education and developing skills in a new discipline, as well as seasoned CTRS credentialed individuals who are seeking to enhance their current practice and management skills, looking to achieve NCTRC Specialty Certification, and/or contemplating a future that includes college teaching. Our scholarships are designed to provide modest financial support for tuition and are awarded for a two year period of study ($3000 per year).

Eligibility requirements include a strong academic history, life experiences in health promotion and disease prevention, skills in complimentary disciplines, and a commitment to serving individuals with disabilities.

To be considered for one of these two year scholarships that will begin August 2013, potential candidates must complete a Tuition Scholarship Application no later than May 1, 2013. For more information, please contact: Jacquee Lukawski at jlukawski@temple.edu.

Congratulations to our January 2013 Graduates!

The following students received their BS in Therapeutic Recreation in January. We congratulate them on their accomplishments and success and are pleased to welcome them as alumni and colleagues.

Nicole Bryman
Laura Dean
Joanna Giasone
Kristen Granvinese
Brittany James

We also congratulate Sarah Humes, CTRS, who received her MS in Recreation Therapy in January. Sarah’s Master’s Project was titled, “Evaluating the Effects of a Decentralized Model of Activity Programming on the Mood, Behavior and Activity Participation of Skilled Nursing Residents”. The faculty mentors for her project were Dr. Rhonda Nelson and Dr. Pei-Chun Hsieh.
Publications
Journal Articles:

Abstracts:

Grants

Presentations

Trainings
Lesnik-Emas, S. (2012, December). Stimulating your Senses: Examination of our Different Senses and How They are Affected by Aging. Volunteer & Staff Training: Senior Community Services, Senior Center at Home, Folsom, PA.

Awards
**5k Run and Family Fun Walk**

JOIN ALUMNI OF TEMPLE UNIVERSITY THERAPEUTIC RECREATION AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAMS FOR THE ALUMNI WEEKEND 5K RUN AND FAMILY FUN WALK!

Bloom into spring, and join fellow Owls and their families for a healthy jog (or walk) around Main Campus. After the race, enjoy refreshments as awards are presented to the fastest adult and child (under 12), male and female runners and walkers.

All registered participants receive a free T-shirt.

**Sunday, April 21**

8:00-8:45 AM: Registration, bib and t-shirt pick-up

*Stop by the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences table near the registration area for a free Department of Rehabilitation Sciences visor and group photo!*

9:00 AM: Race time

Starting Point:
12th Street and Polett Walk, by the Founder’s Garden

*Alumni from Occupational Therapy and Therapeutic Recreation programs meet at the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences table to walk together!*

*Registration is just $5 per person!*

Visit [alumni.temple.edu](http://alumni.temple.edu) to register for the run and be sure to also RSVP for your Department of Rehabilitation Sciences visor here: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDSJYJF](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CDSJYJF).

We look forward to seeing you there!

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**Save the Date! SEPT 29 – OCT 2, 2013**

The American Therapeutic Recreation Association Annual Conference will be right in our backyard in Pittsburg, PA next fall!

Be part of strong Temple presence of faculty, students and alumni at the conference!

Go to [www.atra-online](http://www.atra-online) for details.

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**STAY IN TOUCH WITH ALUMNI FROM THE TR PROGRAM AND RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS, TRAINING, AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES!**

If your contact information has changed since you graduated from Temple, please update your information! Send an email to Jacquee Lukawski at [jlukawski@temple.edu](mailto:jlukawski@temple.edu).

**Follow us on facebook!** [www.facebook.com/CTRSOWLS](http://www.facebook.com/CTRSOWLS)

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