

# PACE OT NEWSLETTER

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## WHAT IS PACE OT?

Pace University's Occupational Therapy Program offers a hybrid learning approach for aspiring Occupational Therapists. The curriculum integrates clinical reasoning and evidence-based practice in order to prepare students for both traditional and non-traditional practice settings. Pace OT also provides inter-professional learning opportunities to collaborate and integrate OT with local community organizations as well as other health professions.

## OUR VISION

"The Pace University MSOT program empowers its graduates to become life-long learners and influential leaders in the profession locally, nationally, and globally."

## A WORD FROM THE CHAIR



"It is a great honor and privilege to serve the Pace OT program and greater community as the incoming Chairperson. The significance and responsibility that we hold collectively to the health of this program and the community is of utmost importance. It is essential that we work to continually evolve the program to assure that the student's learning experience is effective, engaging, and encouraging, while also contributing to the profession's need for continued scholarship and innovation."

**John Damiao, PhD, MS, OTR/L**  
Professor and Chair, Department of Occupational Therapy



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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- As part of OTH 610: Environmental Adaptations, Home Modifications and Ergonomics course, a work and ergonomic analysis and assessment will be conducted by the Class of 2024 in collaboration with Pace University's nursing program during the Fall 2023 semester.
- The Class of 2024 will be finalizing research projects during the upcoming school year, including collaborations with community partners Rehabologym and The Hali Foundation, as well as Pace University's nursing program.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



### THE RECOVERY CENTER AT PROJECT RENEWAL

Founded in 1967, Project Renewal is home to The Recovery Center (TRC), an outpatient facility that services clients who have experiences of homelessness and substance use. The Harm Reduction Model guides its clinicians in helping clients with their individual goals for recovery, which can vary from community reintegration to regaining, maintaining, and applying coping skills. During the Spring 2023 semester, Level I fieldwork students ran a session where clients were asked to identify their strengths and how their strengths are applicable to their daily lives.

### HALI FOUNDATION

The Hali Foundation strives to empower through lived-experience research and "trauma-informed practices to promote healing, prevention, self-integration and potential for fully-realized lives." This foundation provides supportive groups to children in domestic violence shelters through their Creative Arts Services Project. This project aims to help children develop a feeling-sense of their own internal states and an understanding of how they are effected by their environment, relationships and mindset. Level I fieldwork students assisted within these groups, as well, as running their own sessions throughout their time with this foundation.

<https://www.halifoundation.org/creative-arts-services-project>



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



## ECAD

Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities (ECAD) is one of Pace University's many amazing fieldwork sites for its MSOT students. This is a Level 1 site that allows students to submerge themselves in the process of training and pairing service animals with individuals in need. They work with people of all ages to pair their service animals with individuals with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges. These service animals possess a skilled range of intelligence to benefit this population.

## REHABOLOGYM

Located in Tarrytown, New York, RehabolgyM is a Neuro-Robotic rehabilitative center that utilizes state of the art technology for patient rehab. This includes the STISIM Drive, a driving simulator that mimics real driving scenarios. Pace University OT students have partnered with RehabolgyM to conduct research to assess patient outcomes from the STISIM Drive.



**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
IS  
HEALTH**



## NAMI

An affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), NAMI Westchester is an organization that is committed to advocating for individuals who are affected by mental illnesses. NAMI campaigns for continued and better access to services, treatments, and support, as well as educating the general public about mental illnesses in hopes of extinguishing the existing stigmas. Guest speaker representatives from NAMI educated Pace's OT students to explain how the need for mental health resources is constantly growing and occupational therapists can have a direct role in recognizing these illnesses and knowing how to treat them.

# A STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

## LEALANI MELENDEZ, MSOT '23:

“On May 2nd, 2023, I was given the opportunity to host a Changemakers in Healthcare event with a fellow Pace University colleague, Ian Gregory, to recognize accomplished alumni and friends in the healthcare and health services sector. These leaders exemplified the Pace ethos of success in their daily and professional lives by being at the forefront of creating opportunity for all. Trustee Chris Roker of NYCHHC Lincoln Medical, Trustee Audrey Murphy of Hackensack Meridian Health, and Stacey Petrower of NYP Hudson Valley Hospital were the individuals that were acknowledged for the impact they made in the healthcare community and opportunities they presented for the next generation of changemakers. As a student ambassador and given the opportunity to co-host an honorable event, I was able to be a physical representation and the voice of my successful program. With this being said, I aimed to build connections that could further grow myself and the newly accredited Pace Occupational Therapy program. Being the first female to graduate college and further pursue a Master’s degree in my family, this event allowed me to make deep connections and showcase that all things are possible through education and a will power to succeed.”

-Lealani Melendez, Pace University MSOT '23



Lealani Melendez (Pace University Occupational Therapy student), Stacy Petrower (NYP), Pace University President Marvin Krislov, and Ian Gregory (Nursing student)



Ian Gregory, (Pace University nursing student, Manhattan campus) and Lealani Melendez (Pace Occupational Therapy student)



## AOTA INSPIRE CONFERENCE 2023 IN KANSAS CITY, MO

The American Occupational Therapy Association conference is a nationwide event held annually for individuals within the field to gather, network, educate and learn about a variety of updates and topics surrounding the profession. The 2023 conference was held in Missouri and the 2024 conference is set to be held in Orlando Florida. Not only is this event curated for professionals already in the field but it can also be an extremely beneficial learning experience for occupational therapy students embarking on their journey as future OTs. Students from the class of 2023 attended and participated in this year's conference held in Missouri. Student attendance is exceedingly recommended for second year OT students at Pace University.

## PUBLISHED RESEARCH

The chance to conduct research gives students the opportunity to be directly involved in the entire process. This process includes writing up and submitting an IRB proposal, collecting data, analyzing the results, and presenting the research to faculty and students of various health professional programs. In 2023, three student research studies were published:

- Damiao, J., Betlow, J., Francisco, B., Kocz, L., & Moriano, K. (2023). Upright vs. Supine Shape-Capturing Comparison for Custom-Contoured Cushions. *The Journal of Tissue Viability*, 32(3), 437-441. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtv.2023.05.006>
- Damiao, J., Blair, A., Martinez, N., Reyes, R., & Mahon, B. (2023). Pressure Distribution Comparison among Standard Seating Surfaces and Strap Seating System. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 15(7) <https://doi:10.5539/gjhs.v15n7p35>
- Damiao, J., Calianese, N., Cartwright, D., Cherian, C., Lee, E., & Mucek, D. (2023). Comparison of 3D Printing and Traditional Hand Orthosis Fabrication. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v15n2p42>



## OUR IMPACT ON CAMPUS ACCESSIBILITY

Students from the Class of 2023 conducted a study on the accessibility of the Pace University campus. They presented ideas of increasing campus accessibility to Pace's Executive Team, which included representatives from the facilities, safety, and disabilities team. These students were successful in their advocacy for the campus changes. Some of the alterations they made possible were increasing time elevator doors remained open, making sure all elevators were running efficiently, paving the entrance to Leinhard creating more handicap parking spots near the entrance, and ensuring all automatic doors were operating on campus. These students made a difference to the Pace community and provided more inclusivity for all current and future students, faculty, and visitors.

