

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY OTAC IN THE COMMUNITY

OTAC Participates in 6th Annual Disability Capitol Action Day 2009

Approximately 2,000 people with disabilities and their allies gathered in Sacramento on May 27, 2009 for the 6th Annual Disability Capitol Action Day at the State Capitol. This year's event marked the 10th anniversary of the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision, which affirmed the right of people with disabilities to the services and supports needed to live in the community rather than in segregated institutions such as nursing homes.

The Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) and the Psychiatric Occupational Therapy Action Coalition (POTAC), represented by Jane Dressler and Lynne Andonian (faculty of San Jose State University), and Elaine Hobday (an OTA student from Sacramento City College) were there to be supportive advocates. We hosted a table at the events' Health Resource Fair with OTAC's varied hand-outs on topics from Autism to tips for managing chronic fatigue which were highly appreciated and valued by the events' participants.

The tone of the event was both jubilant and somber. Jubilant as people banded together determined to live life to its fullest and somber as proposed budget cuts to vital programs such as In-Home Support Services, Supplemental Security Income and Medi-Cal were imminent.

Several participants stopped by our table to tell us that OTs were "the greatest" as we were practical, client-centered and understood "how things really work." One stroke survivor of 20 years told us that her occupational therapist from 20 years ago told her that "you now know enough to figure it out for yourself." The woman at the time resented this message, although she admitted that the OT was right as despite being in a wheel chair and having limited use of her left arm she sees herself today as completely independent. This is food for thought in terms of our OT 'bedside manner' -- what we say and how we say it to our clients.

In addition to having a wonderful time, conversing with many people, providing helpful information and promoting occupational therapy, we promised to continue our advocacy efforts on behalf of our disabled population.

It was a pleasure and an honor to attend and represent OTAC at this event.

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VISION STATEMENT:

A world where all people
participate in meaningful
occupations to optimize their
life experience.

MISSION STATEMENT:

OTAC is the collective voice that
serves, promotes, and supports
the profession of occupational
therapy and its practitioners.



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