



CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Michele Berro, CFOT President



CFOT CELEBRATES 45 YEARS!

In 1981 a group of visionary OTs created the California Foundation for Occupational Therapy to promote scholarship, research and practice in our state. They are referred to affectionately as our founding mothers. 45 years later we honor and celebrate this milestone with a profound sense of gratitude for their legacy. Over our 45 years CFOT has realized tremendous growth thanks to the commitment of our volunteer leaders and the generosity of our amazing donors.

Today we find ourselves in a remarkable position to not only sustain, but to increase our support of OT students and OT practitioners within California through scholarship and research. We have taken stock of our achievements and embraced our growth with a steady focus on our mission to give back and

strengthen the profession.

To ensure the foundation continues a positive trajectory that both balances and builds on our 45-year legacy, we are engaged in critically appraising and refining our strategic priorities, refreshing our workflows and processes, and realigning our essential work to meet the ever-changing needs of the profession. Our efforts include enhancing efficiencies for accessing and completing scholarship and research applications, prioritizing funding to students and practitioners who will make an impact on the profession and those we serve, and increasing donor engagement and recognition.

It is with a renewed sense of confidence and purpose that we double down in this milestone 45th year on our commitment to fulfill our promise and do the important work of the CFOT to secure its future for the generations to come. We look forward to celebrating our 45th anniversary at the CFOT Annual Awards Luncheon & Symposium at the OTAC 2026 Annual Conference & Innovation Expo on November 6. I hope you will join us there!

Warmly, Michele Berro
CFOT President



CFOT Annual

Awards Luncheon & Symposium

AT THE OTAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE
(EARN .5 PDU's)

Friday, November 6
11:30am – 1:00pm

TICKETS ARE \$85

REGISTER TODAY

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CFOT ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON & SYMPOSIUM



The California Foundation for Occupational Therapy (CFOT) looks forward to seeing YOU at the OTAC 2026 Annual Conference & Innovation Expo this fall. We are a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) public benefit foundation whose mission is to advance the science and practice of occupational therapy to enhance health, well-being, and participation in life activities for all individuals, communities, and populations through supporting and promoting occupational therapy research, education, and public awareness. We will have a table in the conference registration area and in the Expo Hall where you will find everything you always wanted to know about CFOT and have the opportunity to make a donation to support the future of Occupational Therapy in California.

CFOT is proud of our 45 years of furthering the professional growth of California Occupational Therapy, which will be highlighted in our signature **CFOT Annual Awards Luncheon & Symposium on Friday, November 6, from 11:30am - 1:00pm**, during the OTAC Conference. Please join us as we: present our 2026 Scholarship, Traineeship, Research Grant and Seed Money awards to students, practitioners, and researchers; become inspired by our 2026 Honored Lecturer Bryant Edwards, OTD, MA, OTR/L, BCP, MPH, FAOTA (earn .5 PDU's); and celebrate our 2026 Humanitarian Awardee Stephanie Moon, OTD, OTR/L.

Tickets for this elegant lunch are \$85 per person. Gallery seating for students (no lunch) is \$10 per person. Purchase your tickets now through OTAC's Conference Registration.

To register for just the CFOT Luncheon you will select the Special Activities Attendee Type when registering. For questions on registering, please contact OTAC Staff at staff@otaonline.org.

REGISTER TODAY

Plan ahead to attend!



CFOT Annual **Awards Luncheon & Symposium**

AT THE OTAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE
(EARN .5 PDU's)

Friday, November 6
11:30am – 1:00pm

TICKETS ARE \$85



announcing the
2026

HONORED
LECTURER



Bryant
Edwards

OTD, MA, OTR/L, BCP, MPH, FAOTA

*The Kaleidoscope of Occupational Therapy: How Your
Authenticity Can Fuel the Profession (.5 PDU's)*



announcing the
2026

HUMANITARIAN AWARDEE



Stephanie
Moon

OTD, OTR/L





CFOT Annual Awards Luncheon & Symposium

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

AT THE 2026 OTAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

HILTON PASADENA, NOVEMBER 6

We are eagerly anticipating this year's signature event, the CFOT Awards Luncheon & Symposium, where we will also celebrate our **45TH ANNIVERSARY!** We are pleased to offer the following sponsorship opportunities:

	RESTORE \$3,500	LEGACY \$2,500	VISION \$1,500	THRIVE \$1,000	IMPACT \$500
PACKAGE INCLUDES					
Recognition in all Promotional Materials	X	X	X	X	X
Luncheon Tickets with Table Signage	ONE FULL TABLE (10 TICKETS)	ONE FULL TABLE (10 TICKETS)	8 TICKETS	6 TICKETS	4 TICKETS
Invitation to VIP Reception	X	X	X		
Logo Displayed in Event Communications	X	X			
Acknowledgment on CFOT Website	X	X			
Half Page Ad in Luncheon Program and CFOT Newsletter	X				
Recognition as a Major CFOT Luncheon Sponsor in all Conference and Luncheon Materials	X				

Individuals and groups may also purchase luncheon tickets separately. Individual tickets help cover the cost of the meal and event overhead, with any surplus funds going directly to support CFOT's mission.

Thank you for your continued generosity and unwavering support of the California Foundation for Occupational Therapy. Your contribution helps strengthen the future of occupational therapy practice in California.

We look forward to celebrating this milestone anniversary with you in Pasadena!

To discuss this opportunity or answer any questions, please contact Rachel Myers:
(916) 932-1910 OR
RACHELM@4ARC.COM

CFOT SCHOLARSHIP & TRAINEESHIP COMMITTEE NEWS



By Winifred Schultz-Krohn and Gigi Smith, CFOT Scholarship Chairs

The CFOT Scholarship and Traineeship Committee has been very busy!

We are privileged to award scholarships and traineeships to support the next generation of occupational therapy practitioners. Traineeships support occupational therapy assistant students completing their fieldwork requirements, and **we were able to award six this spring!** Scholarships support occupational therapy students completing an entry-level degree, either at the master or doctoral level, and students seeking post-professional degrees such as a PhD, EdD, etc. We had 57 applications this year, our highest total ever. **CFOT is proud to award 17 designated CFOT scholarships!**

The scholarship selection process could not be completed without the amazing volunteers who reviewed the applications. We are extremely grateful to the following individuals who volunteered their time and expertise: Luis Arabit, Deborah Bolding, Sue Bowles, Cindy Burt, Choi Chio, Lisa Deshaies, Marianne Estournes, Alison George, Elizabeth Gomes, Yvonne Golembeski, Heather Javaherian, Joe Juse, Morgan Kam, Sheama Krishnagiri, Kristen Krumanaker, Grace Lopez Donovan, Bonnie Nakasuji, Emily Ochi, Kay Simmons, Shohei Takatani, Andy Whalley, Laura Weiss, and Kathryn Wise.

PLEASE CONSIDER...

We are looking for additional scholarship application reviewers for next year. If you are interested, please contact us at scholarships@cfot.org. As a scholarship reviewer, you will only need to review a small group of applications, and the review process is well organized. Your help will be a great support to students seeking scholarship funding.

If you would like to create a scholarship or traineeship to support the next generation of occupational therapy practitioners, please email us at scholarships@cfot.org or Michele Berro at president@cfot.org. We will gladly talk with you about options to support occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students. We gratefully accept your donations!

THANK YOU!

CFOT RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWS

A GROWING INVESTMENT IN OT RESEARCH



By Deborah Bolding and Jean Koketsu, CFOT Research Advisory Chairs

Interest in CFOT research funding is stronger than ever! Grant applications increased dramatically compared with previous years, reflecting growing enthusiasm among students and practitioners for advancing occupational therapy and occupational science. In response, the Research Committee is exploring additional ways to support pilot programs, emerging researchers, and high-quality studies that strengthen the profession.

During the first half of 2026, CFOT awarded **29 Seed Money Grants totaling \$6,001** - 16 in the first quarter and 13 in the second quarter. In addition, eight investigators received 2026 Research Grants totaling **\$40,051**. These grant recipients will be honored at the **CFOT Annual Awards Luncheon & Symposium on November 6, 2026**.

We would like to thank our team of dedicated reviewers: Lynne Andonian, Luis Arabit, Marci Baptista, Courtney Boitano, Terry Peralta Catipon, Dominique Embry, Kate Hayner, Melisa Kay, Janice Kichi-Chow, Kitsum Li, Sharon Pavlovich, Bobbi Pineda, Sheryl Ryan, Julia Wilbarger, and Robin Wu. If you are interested in joining them please email us at research@cfot.org.

We also gratefully acknowledge our donors. Did you know that you can fund a research grant named in someone's honor, and designate it for a particular research topic? To discuss options, please contact Michele Berro at president@cfot.org.

RESEARCH TAKES CENTER STAGE

The **2nd Annual OTAC/CFOT Research Symposium**, held on July 11, 2026, brought together researchers, practitioners, students, and recent graduates for a day of learning and collaboration.

Keynote speaker **Sheryl Ryan, PhD**, presented "Making Research Matter: Partnership and Participation." Additional presentations were delivered by **Aaron Bonsall, PhD; Amber Angell, PhD; Dani Florindez, MPH; Tavia Lawson; and Melanie Guzman, BA**.

The symposium also featured a lively lightning round highlighting the work of students and recent graduates. Presenters included **Sahar Ghahramani, MSOT, PhD Candidate; Naomi Sosa, OTD Candidate; Natalie Gomez, OTD; Clarissa Reynolds; Allie Schachter and Jordan Segal; Justina Nocola, OTD; and Katie Siri-Ngammuang, OTR/L**.

STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD RECOGNIZES ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS PROJECT

Alyanna Kayla Paulino, OTD, received the **\$250 CFOT Student Research Award** for her capstone project, *"Assessing Playground Accessibility for Parents with Disabilities."*

Paulino was a student at **California State University Dominguez Hills**, and her work has also been selected for a poster presentation at the OTAC 2026 Annual Conference & Innovation Expo. Her project demonstrates how occupational therapy research can promote accessibility, participation, and inclusion in everyday community spaces.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
Transforming lives through individualized, innovative strategies for everyday living.

CFOT is looking *for you!*

We are looking for volunteers to take on tasks large and small. Maybe you are available once a month, or just once a year. We need everyone's help to grow CFOT and support OT students, clinicians and researchers in California. We would love for you to join the CFOT team!



CFOT.ORG

DO YOU HAVE SPECIAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

- ☐ **FUNDRAISING**
- ☐ **DONOR OUTREACH**
- ☐ **MARKETING**
- ☐ **SOCIAL MEDIA**
- ☐ **PROMOTING OT**
- ☐ **OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS**
- ☐ **PHOTOGRAPHY**
- ☐ **WRITING ARTICLES**
- ☐ **PROOFREADING/EDITING**
- ☐ **RESEARCH GRANT REVIEW**
- ☐ **SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW**

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

For more information please contact
PRESIDENT@CFOT.ORG

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the good work that
CFOT is doing!



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MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Occupational Therapy transforms lives through individualized, innovative strategies for everyday living. You can help to ensure the future of our profession and benefit those we serve through your donations to CFOT.

Every gift counts! A donation to CFOT is an investment in the future of Occupational Therapy students, practitioners, and researchers.

Make a difference
and donate today!

DONATE TODAY!

[CLICK HERE](#)

Click on the donate button above or
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