



CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Michele Berro, CFOT President



FEELING AT HOME

Dear Colleagues & Friends,

Perhaps it's the recent completion of my home renovation project or my season in life but I must say I enjoy feeling "at home"; the familiarity of my surroundings, the warmth and comfort of my routines, the small accomplishments that bring me joy. Rancho Los Amigos has been my place of work for the

last 32 years where I also feel very much "at home" providing rehabilitation services to the most vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County. I have been a part of the California Foundation for Occupational Therapy for the last 13 years, first as a strategic planning consultant, later as Secretary, and now in my current role.

This past year we witnessed increases in our scholarship, traineeship, research grant, and seed money awards; the tireless work of our committees; the welcoming and mentoring of incoming Board Members; the honoring of departing Board Members who served diligently for decades; the steady growth of our endowment; the heartfelt message of our CFOT Honored Lecturer; and the humility of our CFOT Humanitarian Awardee, all of which unfolded in a reliable rhythm that make me feel "at home".

I am proud to report that 2025 was a tremendous year of growth for the Foundation! Close to 120 people attended our signature event, the CFOT Awards Luncheon & Symposium, at the OTAC Conference this past November where we celebrated all our awardees. I am thrilled to announce that we awarded an unprecedented total of \$75,195 dollars to worthy recipients, our largest sum ever! We recognized our generous donors including five newly endowed donors who have given to CFOT at the \$25,000 level: Bonita Kraft, Linda Florey, Susan Knox, Evelyn Jaffe, and Julie Shaperman. These remarkable OTs joined previously recognized endowed donors Michele Berro, Maureen Cunningham Herwood, Janice Matsutsuyu, and Lisa Test.

This year's CFOT Honored Lecturer, Jean Koketsu, OTD, OTR/L, delivered an inspiring lecture titled "Ask Yourself 'WHY Not?': Answer and Activate!". Her talk was perfectly woven from start to finish with stories of meaning related to faith, family and the work we do. Jean made a permanent imprint on my OT heart. We also honored Esther Yejin Suh Kwon, MA, OT/L, with the CFOT Humanitarian Award for her work in trauma informed care and anti-human trafficking. Lastly, we recognized our outgoing Board Members Judith Palladino, Heidi McHugh

Pendleton, and Laura Weiss with the Meritorious Service Award for their dedicated years of service to the Foundation.

Throughout conference, our Board of Directors actively engaged in promoting and fundraising for CFOT with their presence in the registration area and expo hall. We set a bold fundraising goal of raising \$15,000 at conference, which we exceeded!

I would like to extend a warm welcome to incoming Board Members Heather Javaherian-Dysinger as Conference Co-chair, Jerilyn (Gigi) Smith as Scholarships Co-chair, as well as Deborah Bolding and Jean Koketsu as Research Advisory Co- chairs. We are very much looking forward to working with these committed individuals who bring years of OT and volunteer experience to the CFOT Board.

I feel certain that in this, our 45th year, we will find new opportunities to fulfill our mission, expand our reach, celebrate our accomplishments, enhance the impact of our work on the profession and those we serve, and truly feel "at home" as we engage in these endeavors.

Warmest wishes to you and yours in the new year!
Michele

IN THIS ISSUE

CFOT Endowed Donors	2
CFOT Legacy Circle	3
CFOT Donors	4
Where Do Your Contributions Go?	5
Scholarship Opportunities	6
Traineeship Opportunities	7
Research Grant or Seed Money Opportunities	8
CFOT Volunteer Application	9
CFOT Highlights at the Annual OTAC Conference ..	10
CFOT 2025 Scholarship Awardees	12
CFOT Traineeship Awardees	13
CFOT 2025 Research & Seed Money Awardees	14
CFOT 2025 Meritorious Service Awards	18
CFOT Humanitarian Awards	19
CFOT 2025 Honored Lecturer	21
CFOT 2026 Honored Lecturer	21
CFOT 2026 Luncheon Sponsorship Opportunities ..	23
In Memoriam	24
Meet Our New Board Members	26
CFOT Board of Directors	28
Donate Today	28

CFOT ENDOWED DONORS

(DONATION OF
\$25,000 OR MORE)



MICHELE BERRO

LINDA FLOREY

**MAUREEN
CUNNINGHAM
HERWOOD**

EVELYN JAFFE

SUSAN KNOX

BONITA KRAFT

**JANICE
MATSUTSUYU**

**JULIE
SHAPERMAN**

LISA TEST



MICHELE BERRO



LINDA FLOREY



**MAUREEN CUNNINGHAM
HERWOOD**



EVELYN JAFFE



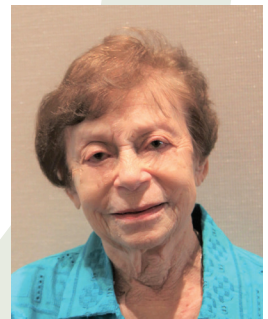
SUSAN KNOX



BONITA KRAFT



JANICE MATSUTSUYU



JULIE SHAPERMAN



LISA TEST

CFOT Legacy Circle

The Legacy Circle is an endowment fund that was established in 2016 to ensure that CFOT can continue to provide scholarships and research grants to support OT students and practitioners in California with the goal of advancing the profession of occupational therapy into the future.

To be a member of the CFOT Legacy Circle, you must make a cumulative donation of \$2,500. Once the full donation has been made, you will be recognized as a member of the CFOT Legacy Circle.
Current members are displayed.

*Laura
Weiss*

*Michele
Berro*

*Lisa
Deshaies*

*Linda
Floreys*

*Joyce
Fries*

*John
Goodfellow*

*Ada
Boone
Hoerl*

*Evelyn
Jaffe*

*Lisa
Kanazawa*

*Susan
Knox*

*Bonita
Kraft*

*Patricia
Nagaishi*

*Bonnie
Nakasuji*

*Judi
Palladino*

*Heidi
McHugh
Pendleton*

*Shawn
Phipps*

*Winifred
Schultz-
Krohn*

*Julie
Shaperman*



*Donate to CFOT today and support
occupational therapy students
and clinicians to advance practice
for those that we serve!*

CFOT.ORG



CFOT Donors

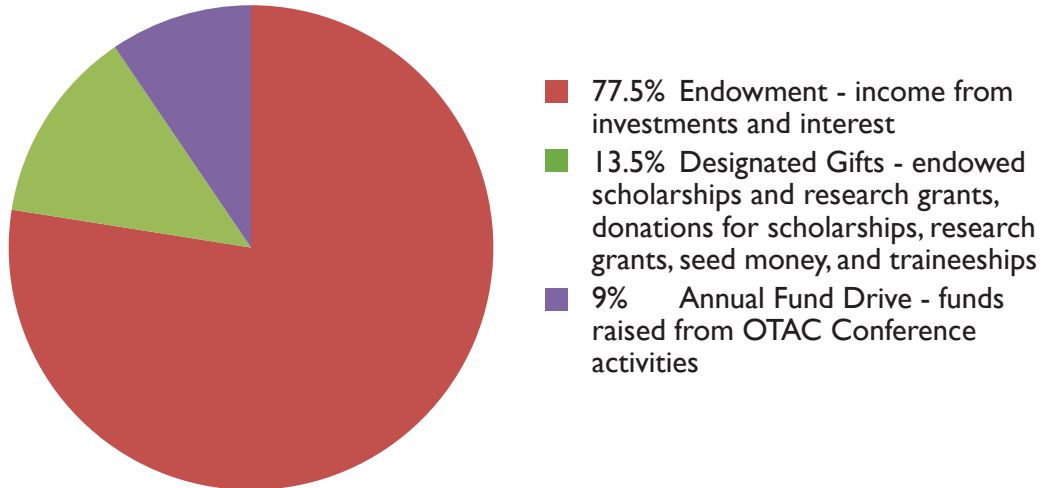
JANUARY, 2025 – DECEMBER, 2025

CFOT MAJOR DONORS				
DIAMOND (\$25,000)	PLATINUM (\$20,000 - \$24,999)	GOLD (\$10,000 - \$19,999)	SILVER (\$5,000 - \$9,999)	BRONZE (\$2,500 - \$4,999)
		Bonita Kraft	Swati Shah Julie Shaperman	Ada Boone Hoerl Evelyn Jaffe Michael & Lisa Kanazawa Susan Knox Patricia Nagaishi Laura Weiss

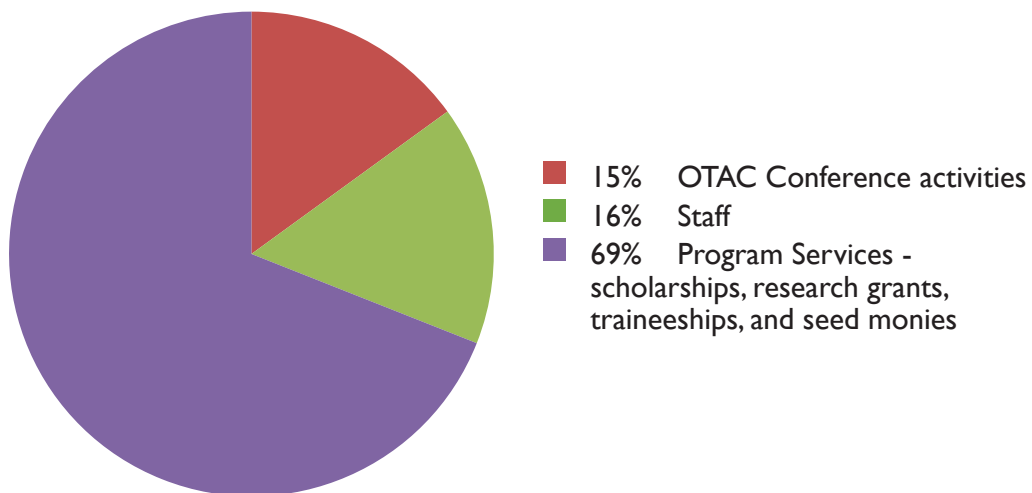
CFOT DONORS			
BENEFACTOR (\$250 - \$2,499)			
Luis Arabit Michele Berro Sarah Bream Sharon Cermak Michelle Clark Lisa Deshaies	Bryant Edwards Mary Everet John Goodfellow Jean Koketsu Mary Lawlor	Stephen Lofy Heidi McHugh Pendleton Karen Polastri Samia Rafeedie Winifred Schultz-Krohn	Jerilyn (Gigi) Smith Diana Su-Erickson Betty Tanaka Gina Tucker-Roghi Yuriko Lynn Yasuda
PATRON (\$100 - \$249)		DONOR (\$5 - \$99)	
Michal Atkins Deborah Bolding Gordon Giles Kathleen Gross Kathryn Gundersen Kate Hayner Joseph Juse	Diane Laszlo Jackie Mardrossian Lauren Newhouse Danny Pavlovich Jhennylyn Rivera Elizabeth Russel Katheryn Wise	Alaura Aviles Kelsey Bowles Theresa Chase Gaurisha Chauhan Salvador Chavez Cindy Garcia Florence Gold	Michael Heaton Heather Javaherian Gracy Perry Susan Spitzer Guadalupe Viramontes

Where Do Your CFOT Contributions Go?

REVENUE



EXPENSES



These two charts show our revenue and expenses for 2024-2025. Our Board of Directors and members are all volunteers. They give generously of their time, money, and effort to support the development of the profession, the education of students, and cutting-edge research.

We appreciate your support through your time, contributions, and gifts. THANK YOU!



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

COULD YOU BE ONE OF CFOT'S *Scholarship Recipients?*

CFOT IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR
more than 15 available scholarships
UP TO \$3,000 EACH

California Foundation for Occupational Therapy is offering scholarships to assist students who are pursuing either of the following degrees:

ENTRY-LEVEL DEGREES

Students enrolled in entry-level graduate degree OT program leading to a Master's degree in OT or Doctor of OT degree.

POST-PROFESSIONAL GRADUATE DEGREES

Occupational therapy practitioners seeking graduate education beyond entry-level degree with goals of furthering service, education or research in OT.

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT:
MARCH 31

APPLY NOW!





OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Transforming lives through individualized, innovative strategies for everyday living.

COULD YOU BE ONE OF CFOT'S
*Occupational Therapy Assistant
Student Traineeship Recipients?*

**CFOT IS AWARDING TRAINEESHIPS TO
OTA STUDENTS TO SUPPORT THEM DURING
THEIR LEVEL II FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES
\$1,000 EACH**

***1 Traineeship is Allocated for Each
OTA Program in California***

Nominations are submitted by the program director where the student is enrolled.

*For more information, visit [cfot.org/
scholarships-traineeships/traineeships](https://cfot.org/scholarships-traineeships/traineeships)*

MORE INFO



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

COULD YOU BE ONE OF CFOT'S *Research Grant or Seed Money Recipients?*

CFOT IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING PROPOSALS FOR
more than 10 available Research Grants
RANGING FROM \$1,000-\$10,000
and Seed Money
UP TO \$300

California Foundation for Occupational Therapy is offering
Research Grants and Seed Money to OT Practitioners, Faculty and Students:

RESEARCH GRANTS

GENERAL FUND GRANTS

- ☐ Up to \$10,000 each
- ☐ Reviewed and funded annually
- ☐ OT outcome studies are a priority

SPECIALLY FUNDED GRANTS

- ☐ \$1,000 - \$3,000 each
- ☐ For research in areas of Women's Health, Physical Dysfunction, Mental Health, Pediatrics, Occupation-Centered Practice, Fieldwork, and more

SEED MONEY

- ☐ Up to \$300 each
- ☐ For research or project/program development
- ☐ Can be submitted throughout the year and will be funded quarterly



TO SUBMIT, VISIT:
cfot.org/research/
or scan the QR Code

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT:
MAY 1





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

CFOT HIGHLIGHTS AT THE ANNUAL OTAC CONFERENCE



By Stephen Lofy and Danielle Meglio, CFOT Development Chairs

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our committee and board members for helping CFOT achieve such a successful presence at the 2025 OTAC Conference. CFOT gained tremendous exposure through our many activities, growing social media followers with incentives and fun selfies, hosting a well-attended Annual CFOT Awards Luncheon & Symposium, and connecting with hundreds of attendees in the registration area, expo hall booth, and during the luncheon event.

We were thrilled to engage with a wide range of practitioners, from students to those nearing retirement, and to share information about CFOT's mission, ways to donate, volunteer opportunities, and how to follow us on social media to continue growing our impact and visibility.

Our new CFOT-branded cutting boards and water bottles served as great incentives for \$100 donors. These and other giveaways helped us make meaningful connections with current and prospective donors. We are proud to report that by the end of the conference, the CFOT donation thermometer reached **\$15,000**.

Thanks to our generous donors, CFOT was able to award significant funding in 2025 including:

- **20 scholarships**
- **4 traineeships**
- **9 research grants**
- **20 seed money awards**

This brings the total funding awarded by CFOT in 2025 to \$75,195, supporting students, practitioners, and researchers in the field of occupational therapy!

Thank you again to everyone who played a role in making CFOT's presence at the OTAC Conference such a success. Together, we are advancing occupational therapy education, research, and professional growth.

CFOT AT THE 2025 OTAC CONFERENCE



CFOT had a strong focus on enhancing visibility and conference attendees' awareness of CFOT and what we have to offer...

- We held our annual CFOT Awards Luncheon & Symposium event
- We joined OTAC as a co-sponsor of the conference VIP reception
- We joined USC's Chan Division of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy as a co-sponsor of the conference Saturday keynote event
- We joined OTAC as a co-sponsor of the official conference bag and lanyards
- We inserted a full page flyer inside each conference bag
- We staffed an information table in the registration area
- We staffed a booth in the Expo Hall
- We gave out hundreds of handouts, pens, and decals
- We wore our signature teal pashminas to clearly identify ourselves and welcome spontaneous conversations
- We conducted a campaign to double our followers on Social Media by offering a chance drawing ticket to those who follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or X

You can help us broaden our reach by sharing this newsletter and encouraging others to follow us on Social Media as well!



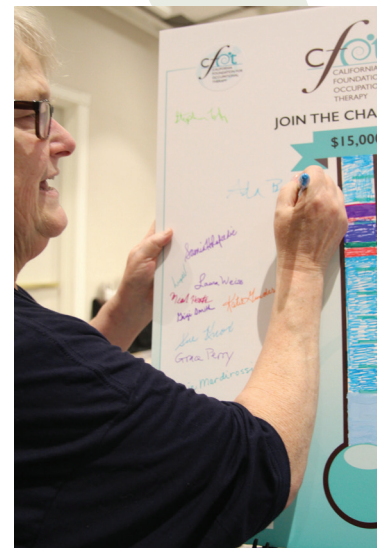
CFOT AT THE 2025 OTAC CONFERENCE



2025 Scholarship and Traineeship Awardees



2025 CFOT Board Members Raising Awareness and Donations



2025 CFOT Fundraising Goal Met



2025 Research Grant Awardees



2025 Humanitarian and Honored Lecturer Awardees

2025 CFOT Scholarships

SCHOLARSHIPS

Ascend's Future OT Leaders Scholarship

*Sheridan Lopez, California State University
Dominguez Hills*

Ascend's OT Excellence Scholarship

Georgia Crowe, Samuel Merritt University

Michele Berro Scholarship

(in memory of Mary Ann Epstein)

Morgan Kam, San Jose State University

Frank J. Biehl Scholarship

*Dominique Soriano, California State University
Dominguez Hills*

Ardith Breton Scholarship

Jacob Lopez, Loma Linda University

CFOT In Memoriam Scholarship

Erin Kim, California State University Dominguez Hills

Linda Florey Scholarship

Victoria Rioflorido, San Jose State University

Maureen Cunningham Herwood Scholarship

Sophie Perez, University of Southern California

Evelyn Jaffe Scholarship

*Tracy Nguyen, California State University
Dominguez Hills*

Susan Knox-Hirsch Scholarship

Brittany Trevino, University of Southern California

Janice Matsutsuyu Scholarship

*Madeline Meadows, University of St. Augustine
Jhennylyn Rivera-Villano, University of Southern
California*

Guy McCormack Scholarship

Mariah Plaza, Samuel Merritt University

Jayne Taguchi Meyer Scholarship

Kimberly Nguyen, San Jose State University

Margaret (Meg) Mitani Moss & Gaylord E. Moss Scholarship

Emily Suk, Loma Linda University

Fred Sammons Scholarship

*Giselle Santos, California State University
Dominguez Hills*

Chuck Strauch Scholarship

*Rekha Todker-Sulkar, Southern California University
of Health Sciences*

Lisa Test Scholarship

Peri Hernandez, Dominican University of California

Wilma West Scholarship

Antonio Johnson, University of St. Augustine

Dorothy (Dottie) Wilson Scholarship

Lydia Hong, University of Southern California

2025 REVIEWERS

Thank you to our Scholarship Reviewers!

Deborah Bolding

Sue Bowles

Sarah Bream

Cindy Burt

Marianne Estournes

Stephanie Foster

Heather Javaherian-Dysinger

Kristen Krumanaker

Katrina Long

Grace Lopez

Bonnie Nakasuji

Harold Neuendorff

Wendy Nitsche

Andy Whalley

Kathryn Wise

Kit Wolins

2025 CFOT Traineeships

TRAINEESHIPS

CFOT Traineeship

Kendra Mitchell, Santa Ana College

Maureen Cunningham Herwood Traineeship

Kelsey Bowles, Sacramento City College

Janice Matsutsuyu Traineeship

Angelou Dimson, CBD College

Jayne Taguchi Meyer Traineeship

Kevin Eldridge, Clovis Community College

2025 CFOT Research Awards

We are very grateful to
all those individuals who
have established grants
to support the research
of practicing occupational
therapists, academicians,
and post-entry level
students engaged in
independent advanced
practice, doctoral level,
or post-doctoral level
research.

RESEARCH AWARDS

Elisa Adams, OTS: Creating Pathways: Building Community Through Art

California State University Dominguez Hills

Sheryl Ryan, PhD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor

*Funding provided by the Bonita Kraft Research
Grant and the CFOT General Research Fund*

Cesar Arada, OTD: Use of Remote Artificial Intelligence in the Rehabilitation of Hand Orthopedic Conditions in Clinical Settings

San Jose State University

*Funding provided by the CFOT General
Research Fund*

Kalavanya Dhruva, OTS: Programming Aquatic Occupational Therapy for POTS

California State University Dominguez Hills

Tracy Becerra-Culqui, PhD, Faculty Advisor

Bianca Callier, OTD, Site Mentor

*Funding provided by the CFOT General
Research Fund*

Heather Javaherian-Dysinger, OTD: Occupational Therapy Programming for Adults who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

Loma Linda University

*Funding provided by the Lisa Test Research Grant
and the Dr. Robert B. Jaffe, MD Research Grant*

Kristin Jones, PhD: An Early-Career Occupational Therapy Mentorship Program for Occupational-Based Practice: A Feasibility Study

Dominican University of California

*Funding provided by the CFOT Legacy
Circle Fund*

Melisa Kaye, EdD: Project RISE-UP: Advancing Graduate Student Success in Healthcare Pathways

San Jose State University

*Funding provided by the CFOT General
Research Fund*

2025 CFOT Research Awards

Ann E. McDonald, PhD: Creation of a Health, Occupational Engagement and Lifestyle Impact (HOELI) Scale

Keck Graduate Institute

*Funding provided by the Dorothy (Dottie)
Wilson Research Grant*

Lauren N. Newhouse, OTD & Sheryl J. Ryan, PhD: Enhancing Well-Being Through Mental Health Metrics: Can Therapeutic Self-Monitoring Improve Graduate Student Wellness?

California State University Dominguez Hills

*Funding provided by the CFOT General
Research Fund*

Graham Teaford, OTD: Development of a Vietnamese Version of the Revised Self-Report Assessment of Functional Visual Performance (R-SRAFP)

San Jose State University

*Funding provided by the Margaret (Meg) Mitani &
Gaylord E. Moss Research Grant, the Julie Shaperman
Research Grant in Memory of Dr. Martin Shaperman,
and the CFOT General Research Fund*

2025 REVIEWERS

Thank you to our Research Grant Reviewers!

Lynne Andonian

Courtney Boitano

Deborah Bolding

Christy Bullock

Megan Chang

Dominique Embrey

Chiao-Ju Fang

Kate Hayner

Michael Heaton

Jean Koketsu

Donna Lashgari

Kitsum Li

Stephanie Moon

Bonnie Nakasuji

Sharon Pavlovich

Terry Peralta-Catipon

Bobbi Pineda

Sheryl Ryan

Winifred Schultz-Krohn

Michelle Tipton-Burton

Robyn Wu

2025 CFOT Seed Money Awards

Seed monies of up to \$300 are awarded to occupational therapy practitioners, faculty, and entry-level occupational therapy students (individually or in groups) for pilot studies, needs assessments, or developing new interventions, client education programs, or projects.

SEED MONEY AWARDS

Edith Alba, Molly Hargon, & Jasmine Henley, OT Students

- *Commensality Groups as a Form of Resilience Programming for Occupational Therapy Graduate Students*
- Caroline Umeda, OTR/L, PhD, Faculty Advisor
- Dominican University of California

Kimberley Ancheta, Elizabeth Abarca, Roshini Gammanpila, & Melissa Huynh, OT Students

- *Building Perspectives: A Pilot Study of Stakeholder Insights, Learning Needs, and Preferences on Exoskeleton Use for Adults with Disabilities*
- Chiao-Ju Fang, PhD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Rachel Kuai Baumbach, OT Student

- *Occupational Therapy Staff Training Program for Improved Engagement for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Adult Day Centers*
- Guy Reavis, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- University of Southern California

Monique Afram Baumer, OTR/L & Kaila Osborn, OTR/L

- Sensory Room
- Hillmont Psychiatric Center

Jordan Bellamy, OT Student

- *Mindful Moves: OT and Yoga-Based Pathways to Educational Participation*
- Eric Hwang, Amber Borchert, Sheryl Ryan, & Abbie Bryant, Faculty Advisors
- California State University Dominguez Hills

Emily Canigiula, OT Student

- *Family-Level Impacts of Equine-Assisted Therapy for Children with Disabilities: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Pilot Study*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L & Graham Teaford, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisors
- San Jose State University

2025 CFOT Seed Money Awards

Julia Cheng & Kevin Vu, OT Students

- *Exploring Identity Through Occupation: A Multicultural-Based Engagement Program for Older Adults*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Erin Chung, OT Student

- *A Sensory-Friendly Waiting Area at Momentum Pediatric Therapy Network*
- Winny Soenaryo, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- University of Southern California

Katherine Francisco, Jillian Barallon, Issac Lee, & Jennifer Ng, OT Students

- *Understanding Occupational Therapy Practitioners Perspectives on Mentorship*
- Arezou Salamat, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- Loma Linda University

Samantha Hammer & Elin Lennox, OT Students

- *Stories Through the Seasons*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Sharon Han, OT Student

- *Implementing Outcome Measures to Assess Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy Intervention in Community-Based Pediatric Mental Health*
- Janis Yue, OTD, OTR/L & Stephani Gharehptian, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisors
- University of Southern California

Travis Joyner & Francis Balanon, OT Students

- *Developing Social Skills with Transitional Aged Youth Experiencing Homelessness*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Shelley Kellogg & Glen Ilagan, OT Students

- *Animal Assisted Happiness Program*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Pirathahini Mahalingam & Gabriela Canotal, OT Students

- *Self-Regulation Empowerment for Unhoused Children & Families*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Leticia Martinez, OT Student

- *Co-Creating a Manual for Sustainable Artistic Employment: A Summer Pilot Program at Painted Brain*
- Sarah Bream, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- University of Southern California

Francisco Mora, OT Student

- *Oral Hygiene Among Persons who Have a Spinal Cord Injury: Multiple Perspectives*
- Heather Javaherian, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- Loma Linda University

Eriza Navarro, OT Student

- *Skill Builders: Your Toolkit for Everyday Success*
- Graham Teaford, OTD, OTR/L & Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisors
- San Jose State University

Kimberly Nguyen & Twila-Skye Tran, OT Students

- *Brewing Confidence: Coffee & Career Training*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Tanny Tani, Anamaria Chavarria, & Kimberly Lucas, OT Students

- *Growing Together at the Parent Lounge (GTPL)*
- Courtney Boitano, OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

Alexis Wells, OT Student

- *Evaluating the Efficacy of Project RISE-UP: Advancing Graduate Student Success in Healthcare Pathways*
- Melissa Kaye, EdD, OTR/L, Faculty Advisor
- San Jose State University

2025 CFOT Meritorious Service Awards

JUDI PALLADINO AND HEIDI MCHUGH PENDLETON

CFOT is pleased to honor Judi and Heidi for their many years of service to the CFOT Board as co-chairs of the Research Advisory Committee. In their roles for more than a decade, they have raised awareness of the importance of research for the advancement of OT practice. Judi and Heidi have also championed increasing the amount of research and seed money dollars awarded to OT students, residents, and clinicians to fund worthy proposals that ultimately benefit the lives of those occupational therapy practitioners serve.



LAURA WEISS

CFOT is pleased to honor Laura for her 15 years of service to the CFOT Board as co-chair of the Scholarship Committee. Laura has been primarily responsible for receiving and vetting scholarship applications, recruiting scholarship reviewers, organizing the rating and selection process, and notifying recipients. She has overseen tremendous growth in the number of annual scholarship applicants from 6 to 62 and the number of scholarships available from 3 to 20!

2025 CFOT Humanitarian Award

Esther Yejin Suh Kwon, MA, OT/L



Esther Yejin Suh Kwon, MA, OT/L, is a trauma-informed occupational designer (occupational therapy practitioner + cosmetologist) with a focus on community-based and mental health practice, leading the field of occupational therapy (OT) service provision in anti-human trafficking and pro-human thriving work. Through her unique OT and beauty industry lens, Esther is using her experiences to uplift and create opportunities for women who have experienced oppression and institutional dependency to transition into inspired independent living. In 2015, she co-founded the first occupational therapy-based non-profit, Dwelle Collaborative - Qualified, serving survivors of human trafficking and restoring occupational justice in the areas of wellness, life/job skills, and community integration. Esther believes that when survivors are empowered to use their choices and voice to navigate their own recovery and thriving occupational journey, their achievements are limitless and success unstoppable.

For more information contact Esther at estherskwon@dwellcollaborative.com.

CFOT Humanitarian Award

Purpose: To honor individuals or groups who, through their humanitarian activities, have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the philosophical principles of occupational therapy and to the mission and goals of CFOT.

HUMANITARIAN AWARDEES

Frank and Lori Biehl	1993
Fred Sammons	1994
Aerial Gilbert and her guide dog, DeeAnn	1997
Patsy and Hal Hollister	2000
Barbara Phillips	2001
Dr. Ernie Bodai.....	2002
Tom Hale.....	2003
Nancy Somerville	2004
Foster N. Anderson	2005
Debra Uhles Tanaka	2006
Judith Gail Rodgers.....	2008
Bonnie Nakasuji.....	2009
Fr. Gregory J. Boyle	2010
Joan Surfus	2011
Diane Mayfield	2013
Heather Javaherian-Dysinger.....	2014
Michelle Craft	2015
John Hwang	2016
Winifred Schultz-Krohn.....	2017
Vijay Gupta	2018
Elyse Gordon	2019
Steven Rubin.....	2020
Laguna Beach Assistance League.....	2023
Rancho Works Café & Gift Shop.....	2024
Esther Yejin Suh Kwon	2025

CFOT 2025 HONORED LECTURER



Jean Koketsu

OTD, MS, OTR/L



ASK YOURSELF, “WHY NOT?”: ANSWER AND ACTIVATE!

Jean Koketsu describes herself as an average, hard-working “risk-averse-front-line-bread and butter-generalist-OT” who left the safety net of a traditional healthcare setting after a dozen years to say “yes” to untested options. Jean described how answering “Why not?” to opportunities opened doors to experiences and impacts beyond what she originally imagined. In this presentation, Jean also shared insights on how to survive and thrive in challenging healthcare climates.



Announcing the 2026 Honored Lecturer

Bryant Edwards

OTD, OTR/L, BCP, MPH, FAOTA



CFOT Honored Lecturers

HONORED LECTURERS

Elizabeth Yerxa, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1983	Marcia Goodman-Lavey, Esq, OTR/L.....	2005
Lois Barber, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1984	Marti Southam, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2006
Lela Llorens, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1985	Y. Lynn Yasuda, MSED, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2007
Florence Cromwell, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1986	Kathleen Barker Schwartz, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2008
Florence Clark, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1987	Bonnie Nakasuji, OTD, OTR/L.....	2009
Mary Reilly, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1988	Mary Lawlor, ScD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2010
Claudia Allen, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1989	Pam Richardson, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2011
Elizabeth Yerxa, EdD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1990	Winifred Schultz-Krohn, PhD, OTR/L, BCP, FAOTA.....	2012
Evelyn Jaffe, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1991	Erna Imperatore Blanche, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2013
Linda Florey, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1992	Heather Javaherian-Dysinger, OTD, OTR/L.....	2014
Carlotta Welles, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1993	Deborah Bolding, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2015
Mary Foto, OT/L, FAOTA.....	1994	Lela Llorens, PhD, OTR/Ret., FAOTA.....	2016
Diane Parham, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1995	Ada Boone Hoerl, MA, COTA/L.....	2017
Ruth Zemke, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1996	Jerilyn (Gigi) Smith, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2018
Susan Knox, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1997	Shawn Phipps, PhD, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2019
Sandra Greene, MA, OTR/L.....	1998	Luis Arabit, OTD, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2020
Heidi Pendleton, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	1999	John Goodfellow, OTD, OTR/L.....	2021
Dorothy Wilson, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2000	Christy Billock, PhD, OTR/L, DipACLM.....	2022
Guy McCormack, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2001	Lisa Deshaies, OTR/L, CHT.....	2023
Gordon Giles, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2001	Heather J. Kitching, OTD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2024
Evelyn Jaffe, MPH, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2001	Jean Koketsu, OTD, OTR/L.....	2025
Gordon Giles, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2002		
Diane Hendricks, MA, OTR/L, FAOTA.....	2003		
Mary Margaret Evert, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA ...	2004		

CFOT LUNCHEON SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES

We are eagerly anticipating the 2026 OTAC Annual Conference in Pasadena CA November 5-8, 2026, where we will have the opportunity to celebrate, support, and inspire occupational therapy professionals in California and beyond.

Our annual CFOT Awards Luncheon and Symposium has grown into a crucial fundraising event. For this year's luncheon on November 7, 2026, we are formalizing the sponsorship process to enhance its impact. In previous years, many of you have generously sponsored tables through donations or by purchasing individual lunch tickets to gather your colleagues together.

To express our gratitude and recognize our dedicated sponsors, we are offering two levels of sponsorship this year: The deadline for these opportunities is **October 1, 2026**.

RESTORE

Event Sponsor at \$3,500

This sponsorship includes recognition as one of the major CFOT luncheon sponsors in both general conference and luncheon materials. Additionally, the sponsor will receive ten luncheon tickets.

VISION

Sponsors at \$1,500 per table

Sponsors at this level will receive six meal tickets, acknowledgment displayed on their table, and inclusion in the promotional materials for the luncheon.

Individuals interested in purchasing groups of tickets can reserve seating for their group. Individual tickets will cover the cost of the meal and overhead, with any surplus funds donated directly back to CFOT.

Thank you for your unwavering support and generosity. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the field of occupational therapy.

PLEASE CONTACT

Rachel Myers

(916) 567-7000

rachelm@4arc.com



IN MEMORIAM

*Please
join us in
honoring the
remarkable
contributions
and enduring
legacy of
this dedicated
individual.*

FRED SAMMONS, PhD (Hon), OT, FAOTA



CFOT is deeply saddened by the passing of Fred Sammons on November 17, 2025, at the age of 97. Fred was recognized by the American Occupational Therapy Association as one of the 100 Most Influential People of Occupational Therapy. In addition to his legendary and extraordinary contributions to the profession of OT, Fred was a dear friend of CFOT who donated generously and was honored with the CFOT Humanitarian Award in 1994. Fred's legacy will live on through his named CFOT Fred Sammons Scholarship.

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



California Foundation
for Occupational
Therapy - CFOT



@cal_fot



@ca_fot

Follow, like and forward
our posts to spread
the good work that
CFOT is doing!



MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



HEATHER JAVERHERIAN-DYSINGER
CFOT CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

I have been an OT for almost 30 years, and I have enjoyed all of it. I graduated from D'Youville College and after working as a traveling therapist I went back to school at Creighton University for my doctorate. I am currently a full professor of Occupational Therapy and the Program Director of the Entry-level EOTD program at Loma Linda University. Being a part of Loma Linda, I developed a strong interest in health and wellness and became a board certified Health & Wellness coach. I am working on launching my coaching business called Walking the Journey with Heather, focused on health, end of life, and overcoming domestic violence.

I enjoy research and continue to engage in clinical practice areas in intimate partner violence, end of life, ergonomics, health and wellness coaching, health management for people who are unhoused, and home health. I have presented at regional, state, and national levels and have had

the opportunity to author several publications on intimate partner violence, end of life, lifestyle medicine, and other topics. In April 2019, I was named to the Roster of Fellows of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

On the personal side, I like to lead a simple life and try to have balance - it is a work in progress! I have been blessed with two amazing children who have grown up so quickly. One is in college, and the other will leave for college next year. I enjoy going to the gym with my kids, practicing yoga, and spending time with my family, friends, and especially with my dog and two cats. I love to craft and though I am not great, I macrame, crochet, and sew. More recently I have started line dancing and find it so freeing and fun. I even see my students out dancing sometimes.

Over the past several years I enjoyed serving on the OTAC Executive Board as secretary and vice president. I worked with amazing leaders in our profession. Now I look forward to the opportunity to continue to give back to the profession by serving on CFOT. It is an honor to be part of an organization with such a beautiful legacy of giving and supporting students, clinicians, and researchers.



DEBORAH BOLDING
CFOT RESEARCH ADVISORY CO-CHAIR

I am an OT with extensive clinical experience working with children and adults with injury and illness in settings ranging from acute care, rehabilitation, home health, and outpatient (with an emphasis on trauma and neurological problems). I currently practice in a community-based fall prevention program for older adults. I am also an Associate Professor at San José State University.

I received my undergraduate degree in OT from the University of Florida, my master's degree from Boston University, my post-master's certificate in Health Professions Education from Simmons College, and my PhD in Education from Capella University. I have authored, co-authored, and presented related to juvenile arthritis, functional mobility, splinting, habilitation, fieldwork education, evidence-based practice, motor control, and obstructive sleep apnea. I was thrilled to be selected to AOTA's Roster of Fellows in 2014 and as CFOT's Honored Lecturer in 2015.

I have two current primary research interests: aging on the go (inclusive of safety and mobility in the home, local, and global communities), and professional development of occupational therapy students and practitioners. I feel strongly that we must demonstrate the efficacy of occupational therapy interventions for our profession to thrive. I am proud of CFOT's long history of support for research and look forward to my new role as part of CFOT's present and future!

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



JEAN KOKETSU
CFOT RESEARCH ADVISORY CO-CHAIR

I was born and raised in Los Angeles in the Westside/Venice area. I received my undergraduate degree at UCLA, MS in OT at San Jose State University (SJSU), and my OTD at Eastern Kentucky University. I have over 30 years of experience in OT traditional healthcare settings in acute care, inpatient rehab, outpatient hand therapy, and in community settings. I currently work as an OT in a community setting with older adults and have a private practice as a sleep coach with national and international clients.

I have been a lecturer at SJSU since 2009 and have taught on a variety of topics. I have presented on the topic of sleep and sleep routines at OTAC conferences, at the Society for the Study of Occupation conference, at SJSU special events, and with community-dwelling older adults. Most recently I was selected as the Honored Lecturer at CFOT's Annual Awards Luncheon and

Symposium in 2025.

My interest in sleep started in 2009 when I worked as an OT in a home health setting and all my clients had sleep issues. This started me on a path to research the topic of sleep. I have authored or co-authored chapters on sleep and rest and ADL in three editions of a physical disabilities textbook and co-authored a chapter on sleep in a pediatric occupational therapy textbook. I also coauthored an article on sleep routines in the Journal of Occupational Science in 2023, based on research that CFOT supported!

As a previous recipient of CFOT grant funding, I understand the importance of supporting researchers in OT and am honored to take on this new role!

CFOT BOARD OF DIRECTORS



PRESIDENT

Michele Berro, president@cfot.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Bonita Kraft, vicepresident@cfot.org

SECRETARY

Lora Woo, secretary@cfot.org

TREASURER

John Goodfellow, treasurer@cfot.org

AWARDS/RECOGNITION CHAIR

Diana Su-Erickson, awards@cfot.org

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

Lisa Deshaies, communications@cfot.org

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Kathryn Gundersen, conference@cfot.org

Heather Javaherian-Dysinger, conference@cfot.org

DEVELOPMENT CHAIRS

Stephen Lofy, development@cfot.org

Danielle Meglio, development@cfot.org

RESEARCH ADVISORY CHAIRS

Deborah Bolding, research@cfot.org

Jean Koketsu, research@cfot.org

SCHOLARSHIPS CHAIRS

Winifred Schultz-Krohn, scholarships@cfot.org

Jerilyn (Gigi) Smith, scholarships@cfot.org

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Linda Florey

Patricia Nagaishi

Judi Palladino

Heidi McHugh Pendleton

Julie Shaperman

Laura Weiss

Yuriko Lynn Yasuda

PRESIDENT EMERITUS

Evelyn Jaffe

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
mail your donation to

CFOT

3620 American River Drive, Suite 230
Sacramento, CA 95864

MISSION STATEMENT: The California Foundation for Occupational Therapy is 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

