at home with Paulette Bourgeois

Occupational Therapy grad and creator of the beloved children’s character, Franklin

FACULTY NEWS
Dr. Richard Seewald adds another honour to his already impressive resumé.

HOMELESSNESS & HEALTH
Giving added support to people diagnosed with a mental illness can keep them off the streets.

SENIOR HEALTH
Innovative peer support system working wonders for seniors with osteoporosis.

The University of Western Ontario
Greetings from the Dean

It is my great pleasure to provide this greeting for our valued alumni and friends. We are proud of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Schools and Programs that make us one of the most progressive and active Faculties at Western. We are committed to providing the best student experience among Canada’s leading research-intensive universities. This is a lofty mission, but one that we feel we are delivering on.

Our academic programs have long assumed leadership positions in their respective fields. We’ve proposed new programs/areas designed to stimulate and sustain student interest. We’ve instituted new delivery vehicles designed to better prepare our students (e.g. simulated teaching and learning centres in the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building, 3-D anatomy theatre, more international student exchange programs, increased experiential learning support). We have developed new graduate programs that support and align the research specialties of our members and disciplines, as outlined in the Western Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Health Across the Lifespan concept. Exciting new programs in high demand areas coupled with an aggressive and strategic promotional campaign of our Faculty/Schools and Programs has generated incredible student interest. We are the program of choice for the best students.

We are committed to research excellence in the Faculty. Our researchers are doing exceptionally well as evidenced by our heightened level of research activity and success. Our members are also winning some of the top teaching and research awards that our campus, and respective academies offer. We have instituted a faculty mentoring program, hosted a number of research workshops, hired a FHS Research Officer and instituted a Faculty of Health Sciences Interdisciplinary Research Grant Program. We are very proud of our research accomplishments and very excited about our prospects for success.

As you’ll note from the contents of this magazine, the Faculty of Health Sciences is on a sharp, upward trend. Societal realities make our fields of study and research undeniable areas for growth and prosperity. Our largest population cohort is aging and demanding both the results of our research programs and the services of our graduates. The consequences of an inactive lifestyle, particularly within children and youth, are now being seen, and gaining both public and government attention. We have emerging strengths in this important area.

We are also working closely with our sister Faculties, especially the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Social Science. Our programs intersect on a number of fronts. The respective Deans are committed to increasing our collaborative activities. We were recently awarded a Health Canada Grant to develop an Interprofessional Education Program and establish an Office of Interprofessional Health Education and Research.

We are in a new home and era for the Faculty of Health Sciences with the creation of the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building. This building has elevated the profile of our Faculty, and provides exciting teaching and research amenities to enrich the experience for our students.

We are excited about our Faculty, and prospects for future growth and prosperity. It is clear that we have raised the bar for performance in our core areas of teaching, research and service excellence by outlining performance measures in our specific, measurable, time bound objectives. We continue to ensure that the Faculty of Health Sciences is a desired place to study, research, work, and grow.

It has been, and continues to be, a pleasure and a privilege to serve as the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. I look forward to sharing the great news from our Faculty with you and hope you enjoy the first of our Health Sciences Matters magazine.

Yours in Health Sciences,

W. James Weese, Dean
Faculty of Health Sciences
Cover Story
Interview with Paulette Bourgeois; Western graduate and author of the Franklin the Turtle series of children’s books.
BY KATHERINE LOW

Exercise and Pregnancy
Encouraging expectant mothers to make exercise and nutrition a part of their lifestyle.
BY KAREN OTTO

Psychiatric Homelessness
Surviving the challenges of mental health housing through community partnerships.
BY KAREN OTTO

Senior Health
Innovative program empowers seniors to improve their own health.
BY KAREN OTTO
Her *Franklin the Turtle* series of children’s books has sold over 50 million copies. She was made a member of the Order of Canada in 2003. And most recently she was given an honorary Doctor of Laws at The University of Western Ontario.

But it’s her degree in Occupational Therapy from Western that Paulette Bourgeois credits for helping her come out of her shell as a writer.

“People are often surprised when they find out that my undergraduate degree was in Occupational Therapy,” she said. “In fact, having been an OT and certainly learning about childhood physical and neurological development, knowing how to do case histories, knowing how to look at the world, I think, very holistically, was the best training for writing that I can imagine. Because as a writer you’re always listening, evaluating, thinking of creative ideas and in OT you’re doing the same thing.”

Bourgeois says she uses many of her OT skills in her work today. She compares the creative experience of writing to that of thinking of how to adapt tools for OT patients.

“So I think that I would much rather have taken OT as a writer than straight English literature,” she said, laughing.

Bourgeois admits that she had no idea what she wanted to do when she arrived at Western. But she was drawn to the variety that OT offered and thought she should give it a try.

“The breadth of the program was stunning and I thought, you know, I’m a really curious person and the more that I can be exposed to these university years, the better off I think I’ll be life-long,” she said. “I don’t know that I was thinking that much forward at that point but I certainly knew that any program that had all the variety that OT was offering would certainly be a really interesting couple of years at university. And absolutely it has been.”
Having been an occupational therapist and certainly learning about childhood physical and neurological development, knowing how to do case histories, knowing how to look at the world, I think, very holistically, was the best training for writing that I can imagine.
If we paid attention to what we know about brain development, particularly adolescent brain development, then we would structure our schools to fit the learning needs of the kids.

After graduating in 1974 as a member of Western’s first OT class, Bourgeois practiced OT for almost three years before realizing her true calling – writing.

“That was a really fascinating experience but it also convinced me that I really liked writing the reports more than I liked doing the actual client work,” she said. So Bourgeois followed her instincts and worked as a reporter for CBC TV as well as some magazine writing.

But it wasn’t until the birth of her first child that she even thought about writing children’s books. “It was so naïve,” she said. She thought to herself, “I am a writer and I now have a baby. Oh! Why don’t I write children’s books?”

And then along came Franklin.

Bourgeois said that while calming her newborn late one night, she turned on the TV to an episode of the 1970s medical drama, M*A*S*H. In this particular episode, the characters had to evacuate their tents and hide in a cave. But Hawkeye refused to go inside the cave – he said he was so claustrophobic that if he were a turtle, he would be afraid of his own shell.

“It was one of those light bulb moments,” said Bourgeois. “I remember looking down at this baby of mine and saying, ‘You know, Natalie, that’s a great idea for a story.’ She was right. After Franklin in the Dark was published in 1986, Bourgeois wrote 24 more books for the original award-winning Franklin series. Six seasons of a Franklin TV show followed. And then she wrote kids’ science books.

But even with so many accomplishments, Bourgeois says it’s only the beginning.

Her address suggested changes to our school system like making summer break shorter and moving high school start times to later in the day.

“If we paid attention to what we know about brain development, particularly adolescent brain development, then we would structure our schools to fit the learning needs of the kids rather than the economics of our school boards or our education ministries,” she said. “If you do delay start times for teenagers, each half hour that you delay you start to see a greater percentage of students performing academically at much higher rates.”

And as a student herself, Bourgeois can empathize – she has a thesis to finish for her master’s degree of fine arts in creative writing at the University of British Columbia, where she goes to campus in the summer and does the rest of her courses online. Her thesis involves working on a screenplay and a novel, both for adults. “Which has been a really nice change,” she said.

At 56, Bourgeois continues to look forward to new academic and professional ventures. “As we get older, we want to keep learning new things,” she said. So her advice for those wanting to learn how to become a writer? “Become an occupational therapist,” she said, laughing.
PROGRAM RESTRUCTURING

For students in the BHSc program things are changing and in a good way. The department is beginning a restructuring of the BHSc program and making changes to the curriculum that will increase the flexibility for students and focus on the strengths of the program. The goal is to enhance the program to give the students the best possible student experience while they are attending Western.

The changes include, eliminating two modules, which will give students more flexibility and options in their courses and enable them to focus on more specific areas of their respective programs.

The Rural Health module is one that is set to change. The original module will be eliminated and the courses and focus will shift to Rural Community Development. Health Information Management is being eliminated due to low enrolment which did not justify the resources. Those funds will be shifted to other areas that will better benefit the programs as a whole.

The link with Rehabilitation Sciences will be strengthened especially at the post-graduate level. The restructuring will also change the order of core courses to rationalize the order and create a better flow.

A capstone experience will be added to the honors specializations, which offer students the opportunity to take: independent study (research), practicum (placement) or a seminar course (small range of courses and topics). The 4th-year capstone experience consolidates the learning over all years.

The faculty will be hiring two new tenure track positions to reflect the changes in the program. This restructuring will bring strength to the program and offer the students new opportunities to grow and learn.

Exciting times lie ahead for the BHSc program. With record application numbers and a program that is evolving to meet the needs of students and to reflect current societal trends, the future is looking bright.

Gathered students and alumni were welcomed by Dean Jim Weese before the evening’s festivities began. If you’re familiar with the concept of speed dating, speed networking is very similar, only business cards and pearls of wisdom were exchanged.

Three to five students sat with each alumni (four Kinesiology and three BHSc program). The alumni then moved from table to table at 10 minute intervals to mingle with the students ensuring time was spent among all of the students. Career advice, business cards and general questions were flying as students peppered the alumni, not wanting to miss out on this rare opportunity. A wide spectrum of occupations were present including, an ergonomist, an occupational therapist, a health promoter and one of the alumni employed by the Ontario Government. With approximately 35 current students in attendance the event was a sell out. Although the event was free, registration was required and each participant could create business cards to be handed out at the event.

The success of 2007-2008 Speed Networking Event sets high hopes for the next iteration of this annual event. This happening not only provided students the chance to pick the brains of contemporaries in their fields, but also gave the opportunity to develop and hone networking skills. “There was a nice spectrum of alumni involved and the event was well received by the students,” said Melissa Broadfoot, Career/Academic Counsellor (BHSc Program) at The University of Western Ontario.

For further information about this event or if you wish to participate please contact Melissa Broadfoot, Career/Academic Counsellor at 519-661-2111 x80447 or mbroadfo@uwo.ca
Exercise & Pregnancy

by Karen Otto

are you fit for motherhood?
Kinesiology professor Michelle Mottola’s lab helps mothers bring exercise and nutrition together forming a healthy lifestyle

Above the hum of the treadmill, the rhythmic thud of Karyn Koopman’s footsteps fills a quiet room. Through the glass wall in front of her, she can watch her son, Cole, play with a supervisor. In this lab, Koopman walks 40 minutes a day, three or four times a week.

And she’s eight months pregnant.

With a heart monitor strapped to her wrist and the treadmill’s safety tether latched to the waistband of her pants, Koopman walks not only to keep fit but also to prevent excessive weight gain and gestational diabetes. She does this as a participant in the Nutrition and Exercise Lifestyle Intervention Program (NELIP) but Koopman has seen big results in her body.

“With Cole I gained 50 pounds and now I’ve only gained about 22 – less than half, so far. It’s pretty good. Amazing. It’s a balance of exercise and nutrition and considering I have an 18-month-old at home to take care of, I have so much energy.” And she can bring Cole to the lab while she walks and know he’s happy and supervised.

And that’s what Dr. Michelle Mottola had in mind when she designed The University of Western Ontario’s R. Samuel McLaughlin Foundation Exercise and Pregnancy Lab in the mid-1990s.

“One of the barriers (for pregnant women) being active is having kids so the way to get around it is to create an environment where they can bring the kids,” Mottola explains.

The baby book on the lab’s coffee table is testament to the 84 babies whose mothers have gone through NELIP – a program aimed at overweight and obese pregnant and post-partum women since it began in 2003. Mottola believes healthy families begin with healthy women and that motivation is no stronger than when she’s pregnant – and that’s a good thing.

“What she does during pregnancy has a huge impact on fetal growth and development and also chronic disease risk of the infant,” she says.

But NELIP is more than just a fitness routine – it’s a regime encompassing nutrition and exercise to change the expectant mother’s lifestyle. After being recommended by her doctor or midwife, each woman fills out a health screening survey then undergoes a simple metabolic test measuring her oxygen intake and carbon dioxide output. She also goes through a chemistry lab to examine her blood for glucose, insulin and lipids.

Then she starts walking.

Each woman begins the mild walking program when she is 16 to 20 weeks into her pregnancy. She starts at 25 minutes per session and increases by two minutes each week until she reaches and maintains 40 minutes. Participants commit to walk three to four times per week which can be done either at home or at the lab.

But they must come in once a week to be monitored where they have their blood pressure and blood sugar measured both before and after their workouts, says Mottola.

And the results are significant.

“Exercise is amazing at bringing down blood sugar;” says Mottola, adding that it helps keep gestational diabetes at bay. And the numbers speak for themselves.

One mom’s blood sugar was 7.7 mmol/L before walking and dropped to 4.4 post-workout. Another participant went from 6.1 to 5.5. Participants are also monitored via a fasted-glucose test taken when they first begin NELIP, again when they are 34 to 35 weeks along and three times more post-delivery.

Another factor keeping glucose levels in check is the nutritional aspect to the program. Dr. Isabelle Giroux, a registered...
Exercise & Pregnancy

Mottola's by starting at 25 minutes and gradually increasing walking time. Davenport says she wants to determine if a medium-to-fast walking pace is more beneficial for post-partum women than a normal walking pace.

“If there is no difference between the two, a lot of women who have been sedentary during pregnancy will do the low-intensity and, therefore, it will benefit more women. But we don’t know that yet," says Davenport.

But judging by the number of thank-you cards at the lab’s reception desk, it’s clear that moms appreciate the program and its results.

“I would say it encouraged women to be active throughout their pregnancy and post-partum,” Mottola says.

Mottola, who has devoted 20 years to examining exercise and pregnancy, has watched the program evolve from using stair climbers and stationary bikes to the currently-used treadmills.

And she’s gaining national and international attention as the only researcher in North America looking at pregnancy and post-partum exercise. But she says that despite the attention and the change of equipment, the program’s goals have remained the same.

“Healthy mothers equals healthy babies, equals healthy communities," she says.

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DEVELOPING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN EASTERN EUROPE

Dr. Anne Kinsella (OT) recently participated as a visiting scholar at an international educational initiative for occupational therapy students in Eastern Europe entitled *A European perspective on social inclusion of persons with disabilities: Inclusive employment*. This two-week institute sponsored by the European Network for Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE), was partially funded by ERASMUS and Socrates (two European international development programs), and was held at the Angel Kanchev University of Rousse in Bulgaria.

The director of ENOTHE, Hanneke van Bruggen, has been instrumental in developing occupational therapy in Eastern Europe. The European approach fosters a community-based vision that focuses on the social determinants of health, and social participation of persons with disabilities. This vision encompasses: community participation, social inclusion of persons with disabilities, inclusive employment, population-based interventions, and the cultivation of partnerships between local agencies, organizations and policy makers. Dr. Kinsella was inspired by her time in Bulgaria, and suggests that Canadian occupational therapists and organizations concerned with health and social care can learn from the vision of social inclusion of persons with disabilities being adopted in Eastern Europe.

Participants included twenty-five students, and nine professors from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Spain, and the Netherlands, as well Australian visiting scholar Gail Whiteford, presented on the conceptual origins of occupational deprivation. In addition, a symposium was held with community organizations, policy makers, and groups that work with persons with disabilities in Bulgaria. Meetings with the vice-rector of academic affairs, Borislav Angelov, the deputy rector of education and research, Angel Smrikarov, and the vice-rector in European integration and international co-operation were held to discuss the development of the occupational therapy program at the University of Rousse.

FACTS THAT matter

If Canadians continue on the current weight-related trajectory, by the year 2021 approximately 70% of males and nearly 50% of females will be either overweight or obese.

Dr. Jennifer Irwin, Bachelor of Health Sciences Program
A NEW TRADITION IS BORN

January 14, 2008 ushered in a new tradition for the Western-Fanshawe Collaborative BScN Program. “Nursing, a Light to the Future”, is a ceremony and new nursing tradition initiated to recognize and celebrate the students who will soon begin formal practice with patients and the impact they will have. Held in the picturesque Great Hall, this year’s pinning ceremony celebrated the class of 2011 as they move on to formal practice. The Hall was a buzz with excitement as over one hundred nursing students and faculty attended. Also helping to celebrate this momentous occasion were many special guests including President Paul Davenport (Western), President Howard W. Rundle (Fanshawe College) and Dean Jim Weese (Faculty of Health Sciences, Western) among many others.

The inaugural ceremony included many new soon-to-be traditions including a pinning ceremony and the lighting of a ceremonial candle as part of The Nightingale Declaration. The pin, representing the program crest and denoting the class graduation year, is to be worn with pride by all students.

Once pinned, all of those in attendance recited the The Nightingale Declaration pledging their commitment to a healthy world, to the nursing practice and to the goals set out by The Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH). Key strategies set out as priorities by the Initiative are:

- A grassroots-to-global Nightingale Declaration Signature Campaign;
- A proposed UN Resolution for an International Year of the Nurse in 2010, the Centennial of Florence Nightingale’s death;
- A proposed UN Resolution for a UN Decade for a Healthy World, 2011 to 2020, the Bicentennial of Nightingale’s birth, and starting in the fall of 2007, convene global consultations and regional education programs to build a worldwide collaborative NDC team.

A huge success, plans are already underway for the next ceremony celebrating the class of 2012. It is clear that a new and vibrant tradition has been started for these dedicated students and practitioners.
NURSING PhD FIRST FOR WESTERN

by Bob Klanac

Thomas Gantert must be used to being unique. Being a male in the female-dominated field of nursing is novel enough. He was also the first Western nursing student to get a PhD (received Thursday, June 7, 2007). Gantert says it seemed logical to take the field of nursing to a higher academic level.

“There is still a perception that nursing is a technical vocation rather than a profession to be fostered at a higher level,” Gantert says. “There is a body of knowledge that needs to be expanded.”

Gantert says nursing is more than just “the niceties and to hold hands”, that a firmly rooted science is behind the caring core of the field.

“I ask a lot of people about nursing and there’s not always the respect that’s forthcoming,” he says. “There’s a perception when you see a person in nursing that they’re just someone who wanted to get into medicine. But you get to work in an interdisciplinary way with other people and it’s quite rewarding.

“It’s a first for Western,” although Gantert says other Canadian universities have PhD programs in nursing, and the degree is becoming especially prevalent in the U.S.

“Nursing keeps increasing its body of knowledge,” he says. “The profession keeps on growing and developing. As a profession we need applicants at the PhD level not only for teaching but also to conduct research.”

Gantert’s PhD journey began with taking nursing at Fanshawe College. He wasn’t particularly sure it was the field for him at the beginning, but applying classroom instruction with the ability to help people took hold in him. “I began to appreciate the science behind the nursing and that was what led me to come to Western,” he says.

Western’s first PhD in Nursing Tom Gantert, pictured with Dr. Carol McWilliam

One side benefit is the example Gantert provides to other men considering nursing as a profession.

“Males might be inhibited about entering the profession,” he says. “But you can identify with someone who went into nursing, got into it and got their PhD.”

"As a profession, where you can go with it is pretty much limitless."
Stepping Out

Surviving the Challenges of Mental Health Housing

For many people suffering from a mental illness, the recovery can be just as difficult as the illness. That’s because without adequate support systems, patients must deal not only with stigma, but also a lack of financial resources. This can mean recovering in shelters or on the streets.
“People have to survive not only the illness but the system,” explains Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, a member of the School of Nursing and instigator of many projects involving mental health consumers and survivors.

Forchuk says many people who have been diagnosed with a mental illness end up homeless in shelters or on the street because of policy changes in housing, income support and mental health, creating a “collision course.”

“Canada is the only industrialized nation that doesn’t have a national public housing program,” says Forchuk.

London currently has 3,000 family units on waiting lists for spaces with only about 1,000 available each year, she says. Adding to this problem is that welfare payments were suddenly decreased by 25 per cent in the mid-1990s and were not raised until more than a decade later and then by only two per cent.
Around the same time, mental health policies were also altered so more people than ever were deinstitutionalized, leading to less housing options, less financial options and not enough support for consumers if they could find a place to live, said Forchuk.

“Even a well-run shelter is not an appropriate place to recover from mental illness,” says Forchuk. And after discovering 200 London patients were being discharged straight to shelters each year, she worked with several community and hospital partners to implement the “No Fixed Address” project.

Through research, Forchuk determined that people needed faster access to their Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program cheques in order to have first and last months’ rent available. Her initial study had 14 participants – seven received special help and seven were discharged the traditional way. Of the seven who received special help, all of them were still housed at three and six months post-discharge. But of those who did not receive extra help, six were still homeless at six months and the seventh entered the sex trade to avoid the same fate.

Forchuk says her projects have worked because of the partnerships between hospitals, mental health facilities, and various provincial and city agencies such as Ontario Works.

Due to the initial success of “No Fixed Address,” a second phase was recently introduced at the London Health Sciences Centre. There, an Ontario Works representative visits three times a week to speed up financial supports and cheque distribution, says Forchuk. A Canadian Mental Health Association housing advocate also visits three times weekly, accessing a database to show what housing is available and providing support to find appropriate housing if needed.

“People who have been diagnosed with a mental illness end up homeless in shelters or on the street because of policy changes in housing, income support and mental health.”

And independent living is the way to go, according to Forchuk.

“People who have been diagnosed with a mental illness end up homeless in shelters or on the street because of policy changes in housing, income support and mental health.”

This second phase is open to anyone who needs help and is already a huge success.

“In two months, with 30 people imminent of going to a shelter, 27 were diverted (to independent living),” says Forchuk.

Forchuk hopes the program will be tried at the regional mental health level next. “So if we work out the bugs in the two systems – acute care and long-term care – then we want to get this to be just the way you do it,” she says.

People who have been diagnosed with a mental illness end up homeless in shelters or on the street because of policy changes in housing, income support and mental health.

But regardless of the money saved, the transitional care model is helping people with mental health issues survive.

“All they (used) to get in many instances was a ticket and a phone number of a motel,” says mental health survivor Walter Osoka. Osoka is a peer support specialist with CAN-Voice (Consumer/Survivor Community Support Services) – a consumer support group working with Forchuk. He knows firsthand the isolation of living with a mental health issue.

“It’s almost like being shunned,” he says. Osoka says he always promised himself that when he came through to the other side of his issues he would try to give back and help others like him and now he’s able to do that.

“I’m one of the luckiest people when it comes to getting support and because of the support I get I am able to give support to others,” he says.

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To combat that, Forchuk, with community and hospital partners, designed a transitional care model based on a therapeutic relationship of both mental health staff and peer support. Patients are assigned a support mentor who is already living in the community. After they’re discharged, they continue with the peer support mentor and also have continued involvement with hospital staff, where they have a pre-existing and trust-based relationship.

They also have visits with the community care provider so both the community care provider and hospital staff overlap for a time. This has proven incredibly effective, says Forchuk, and in one version of the study it saved the taxpayer over 12 million dollars in reduced hospital stays.

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OUR VOLUNTEERS LEADING THE WAY

Not only are Faculty of Health Sciences students at the top of the heap scholastically, they are also leading the way in community involvement. On Saturday, February 2, 2008 the Kinesiology Student Council Winter Games were held on Western’s beautiful campus. Designed to suit the abilities of special needs children, the Games provided a special day filled with activities and friendly competition for students from all over Thames Valley that have special needs.

Working with the Thames Valley District School Board, each child was paired with a volunteer from the School of Kinesiology. The Western Cheerleaders and Marching Band kicked off the day with a miniature pep rally, which included lifting the children into the air like they do in their routines. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience for most of these children” says Leslie Witton about the event.

Travelling from station to station, the pair participated in a number of activities including tobogganing, parachute, ball games, bracelet making, and t-shirt decorating. To top it off, a pizza lunch was provided free of charge to each of the volunteers and children that participated courtesy of Scott Hitchon from Hospitality Services.

“Everything is done on a volunteer basis and for free; it’s a way for Western to give back to the community,” notes Witton. “Most of the children have medical expenses that are rather large and it’s a relief to many parents being able to allow their children to participate without having to worry about the costs associated.”

A huge success, this year’s event brought smiles to many local children and taught a valuable life-lesson about giving to the many FHS student volunteers.

Western Kinesiology students and guests from the Thames Valley District School Board celebrate the Winter Special Games
FOUNDATION HONOURS DR. SEEWALD

Dr. Richard Seewald has another honour to add to his already impressive resumé. The “Hear the World Foundation” has created the Richard Seewald Annual Award for Childhood Hearing in recognition of his contribution to pediatric audiology.

“Hear the World” is an initiative by Phonak, a group specializing in the design, development, production and worldwide distribution of technologically advanced wireless and hearing systems. The goal of the “Hear the World” initiative is to educate the general public about the importance of hearing, the social and emotional impacts and the benefits of available solutions for those with hearing loss.

Recognizing that quality of hearing significantly impacts quality of life, the foundation is committed to improving the well-being of people with hearing defects, and to advancing measures towards the prevention of hearing loss. In addition to a long-term communication program that targets opinion leaders and the general public, “Hear the World” will support charitable organizations and projects focused on helping people with hearing loss. In an effort to remain innovative, “Hear the World” partners with musicians and music events to help the public appreciate their sense of hearing and provide the most innovative hearing solutions on the market.

Known internationally for his work in developing the Desired Sensation Level (DSL) Method for pediatric hearing instrument filling, Dr. Seewald is also a Professor in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders. As well as being the Principle Investigator at the National Center for Audiology in London, Ontario, Seewald is also the chairman of the Phonak Pediatric Advisory Board.

Congratulations to Dr. Richard Seewald on this honour! For more information about “Hear the World” please visit: www.hear-the-world.com/index.htm

NORTHERN EXPOSURE FOR SLP STUDENTS

Recently, second-year Speech-Language Pathology students had the trip of a lifetime and were able to put their skills to use in the name of community service.

Organized and attended by professors Taslim Moosa and Susan Schurr, the week-long clinical education learning experience took five lucky students (Crystal Branco, Erin Cooper, Cara Cressman, Rebecca Harrison, and Meredith Taylor) to the remote northern communities of Moose Factory, Kashechewan, and Attawapiskat.

As part of the Weeneebayko Health Ahtusaywin Regional Health Authority, these remote First Nations coastal communities lie along the western Ontario shores of James Bay. While there, students, under the close guidance of their clinical educators/supervisors, conducted a wide range of speech, language, communication and swallowing assessments in communities and local schools.

Elementary students and adults received speech, language, communication and/or swallowing assessments for childhood articulation and language delay, acquired swallowing problems, and neurologically-based language and communication impairments. In addition to conducting these assessments, students also wrote individualized reports, developed programming materials and delivered in-service education for teachers, health care providers and families.

Students were also invited to present at the Medical Grand Rounds at the Weeneebayko General Hospital and followed their presentation with bedside training with nursing staff in the areas of swallowing screening and implementation of augmentative communication strategies.
The Western group was challenged to provide quality services in unique clinical education and training environments.

Data analyses are being undertaken based on outcome measurements evaluations of the effects of this new clinical education and training program. Preliminary analyses show that the group's efforts were well-received by health professionals, teachers, clients, and families. All participants are eager and committed to establishing these new clinical education and training experiences as permanent placements for Western Speech-Language Pathology students. They also hope to explore the possibility of including Western audiology students on subsequent placements. Making the placement more interprofessional by collaborating with the physiotherapist, occupational therapist, nurses, physicians, and teachers who currently work for the health authorities and school boards, is a future goal of the group.

CSD STUDENTS CHANGING LIVES AND BRINGING SMILES

A group of first year Speech-Language Pathology students, in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, is fundraising to change the lives of children in developing countries born with craniofacial disorders such as clefts of the lip, or soft and hard palates.

Fund raising has already begun to support U.S.-based “Operation Smile”. Founded in 1982 by plastic surgeon Dr. William P. Magee and his wife Kathleen, a nurse and clinical social worker, “Operation Smile” coordinates more than 30 Medical Mission sites in 26 countries annually. “Operation Smile” provides the personnel and support for the surgeries to disadvantaged children and young adults in developing countries with craniofacial abnormalities. Last year, medical volunteers provided free surgeries for 9,221 children through international and local, in-country medical missions. Not only will this medical outreach improve the smiles of many young people, but it will also provide social benefits. In many instances, children are shunned from their communities and kept home from school or hidden in their homes. By helping with their medical needs, “Operation Smile” also helps these young people to integrate into their community.

These dedicated CSD students hope to fund raise for donations from faculty members, staff and the Western community at large to support and celebrate the beauty of a child's smile. If you would like any further information about this worthy cause, “Operation Smile” or to make a donation, please contact the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders office at 519-661-2111 x88183.
In life, there are quirks and quarks – but there are also NORCs and DORCs.

NORCs are Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities while DORCs are Deliberately Occurring Retirement Communities, according to Marita Kloseck, director of The University of Western Ontario’s Aging and Community Health Research Lab funded by Canada Foundation for Innovation.

And she says that London’s Cherryhill community is one successful NORC.
“It has been suggested there’s lots we can learn from Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities,” she says. “There is tremendous potential for innovative programs in these communities.”

Kloseck’s latest innovative program involves Cherryhill seniors helping other seniors. Titled the “Points of Opportunity” to Optimize the Diagnosis and Treatment of Osteoporosis in Communities of Seniors, the program was launched in 2006.

Working in conjunction with Dr. Richard Crilly from The University of Western Ontario’s Department of Medicine, Kloseck decided on the osteoporosis project after determining there was a significant gap in the health care system when it came to the disease. She says numerous hip fractures resulting from falls significantly impacts seniors’ quality of life and are very costly for the health care system.

So Kloseck and Crilly decided to educate seniors so that they could educate their peers.

“Our focus is what communities – and specifically communities of seniors and older people – can do to optimize their health and the health system,” says Kloseck.

The project, funded by Proctor & Gamble Pharmaceuticals and Sanofi-Aventis, works by having osteoporosis experts in London teach Cherryhill senior volunteers about osteoporosis. The volunteers are then assigned peers to mentor, whom they encourage to get bone density tests. They also educate peers on osteoporosis, its early warning signs and proper nutrition.

“I think seniors working with seniors is ideal,” says peer mentor and Cherryhill resident Gretta Grant. “They have a better understanding of each other and they can sympathize with each other.”

Grant was assigned six peers over the course of six months and often called them to dispense information she had learned from the “extensive training sessions,” she said. Such information included proper calcium and Vitamin D supplementation to delay the osteoporosis process.

“Some of the women who signed up had osteoporosis and they didn’t know it so they were able to get help right away,” she says. “I know so much more and how important it is for younger people to be aware of it and I think my family will benefit from it. I’ll get them on the vitamins and get them the tests.”

Grant is now empowered to help her peers – and that’s one of Kloseck’s goals to better the health care system and learn from what seniors are telling her about their needs.

“IT’s a shared relationship. Shared responsibility. Shared decision-making. It’s empowerment and not many projects work that way,” Kloseck says.

Working within the community helped build trust, especially when participants saw that Kloseck valued what they had to say. For her part, Kloseck says that going to the source for information just makes sense: “I have always believed seniors know best what works and what doesn’t work, particularly in regards to more fragile seniors.”

And Kloseck’s work is getting noticed. After publishing an abstract in last September’s issue of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR), she was invited to give a platform presentation to the International Working Group on Patient Education and Adherence to Treatment for Osteoporosis. She will be presenting the findings at the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) World Congress on Osteoporosis in Bangkok in December and also at the ASBMR 2008 conference in Montreal.

While Kloseck is busy looking at end-of-life issues, she’s also looking to the future. She says that with an increasing senior population in upcoming years, peer mentors could be instrumental in easing the load on our health care system.

Over the next few decades there will be an increasing number of seniors who will need medical attention, thereby putting more strain than ever on the health care system.

Engaging seniors with the health care system, listening to their input and teaching them to help not only themselves but others could help the health care system enormously.

“Seniors can either be the greatest challenge to the system or the greatest resource,” says Kloseck. “You can engage them. Get them fired up. Work with them. They’re retired, have tremendous experience, and a great variety of skills.”
WELCOME TO CAMP BUCKO

On February 5, 2008, Western’s Physical Therapy students, staff and friends banded together and took to the stage in support of a great cause. Organized by the PT Student Council, this was the 14th consecutive year funds were raised for a very special organization; Camp BUCKO.

Since its creation in 1995, the camp has grown from 35 to over 70 children. Camp BUCKO (Burn Camp for Kids in Ontario) is a free program for children, aged 7 to 17, with burn injuries. Camp BUCKO provides an opportunity for children recovering from burn injuries to meet other children who share similar feelings and experiences in a safe and fun environment. In past years, campers have attended from across Ontario and even Canada (if there was not a burn camp for them to attend in their home province). BUCKO gives these children temporary freedom from the everyday challenges of being burned, and gives them a chance to share stories and bond with new friends. Most of all, the camp is a place to have fun and learn new things.

FACTS THAT matter

DID YOU KNOW MAGGOTS WERE USED TO HEAL WOUNDS LONG BEFORE PHYSIOTHERAPISTS BEGAN WOUND HEALING? IT’S TRUE!! IN FACT, SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR, MAGGOTS HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS SUPERB ‘WOUND CLEANERS’; THESE LITTLE MUNCHERS EAT ONLY DEAD, NECROTIC TISSUE, ENHANCING THE ABILITY OF THE HEALTHY TISSUE TO PROLIFERATE. PHYSIOTHERAPY HAS PROGRESSED A LONG WAY SINCE WWI AND UTILIZES MORE THAN MAGGOTS FOR WOUND HEALING. PHYSIOTHERAPISTS USE ELECTRIC CURRENT, LASER, HEAT AND ULTRASOUND AS THEIR MODERN TISSUE HEALERS.

Dr. Pamela Houghton, School of Physical Therapy

One goal of the Camp BUCKO program is to continue to provide the camp free of charge; the average cost to attend the camp is $675/child. Subsidizing the cost of attending the camp provides a great relief to parents, many of whom, sustain difficult financial burdens due to expenses incurred and loss of time from work during their child’s injury and treatment.

This year, students arranged a bake sale, raffle and silent auction in conjunction with the talent show with all raffle and auction items donated from local businesses in the community. This year the event raised around $2,622.00! The Camp BUCKO program operates solely on funds donated by services, clubs, firefighters and individuals. If you would like further information regarding Camp BUCKO or to donate please contact the School of Physical Therapy (www.uwo.ca/fhs/pt).
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR OLYMPIC STUDIES HEADS TO BEIJING

by Stephanie Sargent

A lone figure runs, surrounded by thousands of people, all pressing closer to get a better look at the burning torch that’s held high in the air. At the end of the relay, the flame is lowered as millions of viewers and fans around the world watch in anticipation, and with a hiss, the Olympic cauldron is lit to the sound of cheers and cries of joy.

Perhaps it’s the excitement of athletic competition on the world stage, or the up-swell of national pride and the fun of rooting for your home team, or maybe it is the chance to catch a glimpse inside a foreign culture, but, the Olympic Games captures the world’s attention like no other event.

The are many kinds of die-hard Olympic fans – participating athletes, armchair Olympians and those who just love the spectacle, some even study and document all things related to the games. One such Olympic enthusiast is Bob Barney, Director of the International Centre for Olympic Studies (ICOS) at The University of Western Ontario. He started working at the University in 1972 as the Director of Athletics and spent two years writing the proposal to open the International Centre for Olympic Studies. His efforts paid off and in 1989 the Centre officially opened.

Barney chose to study the games because of “the scarcity of a body of knowledge on the subject, and also to further serious knowledge on the Olympic movement.” Barney is also an avid fan.”

My favourite Olympic sport is the ski jump in the winter, but I don’t have a favourite summer sport probably because I was an athlete and participated in many of them,” says Barney.

The International Centre for Olympic Studies is located in the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building in Room 317, at The University of Western Ontario and is the only centre of its kind in the Americas. The Centre boasts an array of interesting Olympic artifacts including the 1985 Olympic Games podium, and a collection of Olympic coins and stamps. Over the years, ICOS has also collected many valuable research assets including an expanding library of films, slides, texts, journal and pamphlet publications, minutes, reports, scrapbooks, and graphic art materials. The University of Western Ontario is the only institution in the world to own two complete microfilm copies of the 150 reel historical Avery Brundage Collection. The Centre’s newest addition is the Worrall papers. James Worrall, noted Canadian Olympic athlete, flag bearer, and member of the Canadian Olympic Association (where he was president from 1961 to 1968, and member of the International Olympic Committee (1967-1989)), has donated the personal papers and records from his lifetime. The International Centre for Olympic Studies is a very active entity annually hosting three lecture series; The Annual J. Howard Crocker Olympic Studies Lecture, The Annual Ion P. Ioannides Memorial Lecture and The Annual Earle F. Zeigler Lecture. The Centre also holds an international symposium every two years, in conjunction with the Olympic Games. These symposia are used to generate research materials from professors, and educational institutes regarding Olympic related topics. ICOS publishes the proceedings of the symposium, including the research papers that the speakers and participants have written.

In past years, these symposia were held at the Centre’s headquarters at Western, but this year they’re going wheels up, and travelling to Beijing. This is only the second time in 18 years that the event will be held in a foreign location; in 2000, they went down under to Sydney, Australia.

This year, from August 5 – 7, the proceedings will be held at the Capital University of Physical Education in downtown Beijing, China. The event closes the night before the Olympic Games and as Bob Barney says, “it kills two birds with one stone; you can go to the symposium and attend the games.”

The ICOS event titled “Pathways: Critiques and Discourse in Olympic Research” is open to anyone and nine countries are currently participating: Canada, USA, China, Hong Kong, Denmark, England and Australia.

Dedicated to the research of the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement, the International Centre for Olympic Studies stands proudly as part of The Faculty of Health Sciences as a leader in its field.

For more information on the International Centre for Olympic Studies or any of its events visit the ICOS website at: www.uwo.ca/olympic/
Calling all Nursing, Kinesiology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Communication Sciences and Disorders and Bachelor of Health Sciences Alumni

Please join Dean Jim Weese at the Faculty of Health Sciences Tent located beside the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building

Saturday, October 4th, 2008
11:00 a.m.

Pre-Game BBQ luncheon and ticket to the Football Game (Western Mustangs vs. Windsor Lancers) $35 per person or BBQ luncheon only – $15 per person

Tours of the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building will be available.

For more ticket information and to RSVP go to www.uwo.ca/fhs