

Your success
is important to us.
It's that simple.



That's why AOTA has created a new Corporate and Media Relations Division—to provide our corporate partners with a whole new level of customer service and tools to help you succeed.

As part of this effort, we're delighted to bring you a new resource...*The Leader's Edge: Your Connection to Issues and Opportunities Within the Occupational Therapy Profession.*

Clearly, the occupational therapy market is important to the success and growth of your business. *The Leader's Edge* is our latest communication tool to keep you up-to-date and informed about the profession.

In each issue, our goal is to communicate important opportunities and developments at AOTA and its new "awareness arm," The Fund To Promote Awareness of Occupational Therapy.

Here's what you can look for and expect

- Relevant demographic data.
- News about AOTA and future projects.
- Opportunities for visibility.
- Insights from fellow professionals.

All designed to give you....
The Leader's Edge.

In fact, we want each issue of *The Leader's Edge* to be an essential resource for your company as you choose strategies to reach the occupational therapy market.

We will need your feedback and suggestions as we move ahead on how to best accomplish that goal. Please e-mail your comments on *The Leader's Edge* to Jennifer Jones, Director of Corporate Relations, at jjones@aota.org.

In this first issue, we feature an article on The Fund, AOTA's new 501(c)(3); an interview with the head of The Rehabilitation Documentation Company, Brad Dumke; and a brief overview of selected opportunities from our corporate relations group.

So read on and enjoy!

The Leader's Edge

Your Connection
to Issues
and Opportunities
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Profession

SPRING 2004

AOTA Launches The Fund To Promote Awareness of Occupational Therapy

Charitable Arm Created in Response to Members' #1 Priority

Nancy Green

What do National Occupational Therapy Month and National School Backpack Safety Awareness Day have in common? They're both signature programs of a new 501(c)(3) charitable organization created by AOTA called The Fund To Promote Awareness of Occupational Therapy (The Fund). Designed to increase national awareness by getting AOTA members involved at the community level and educating the public about the benefits of occupational therapy at the same time, projects like Backpack Awareness Day also provide new and creative opportunities to increase your visibility as a corporate supporter. For more information about The Fund, visit www.promoteOT.org.

Fast Facts About The Fund

1. **The Fund is new!** It was created in 2002 in response to members' #1 priority—to raise awareness about occupational therapy both inside and outside the profession.
2. The Fund is a **501(c)(3) charitable organization** with the goal of building corporate funding to support projects that promote recognition and visibility for the occupational therapy profession. Contributions to The Fund are tax deductible.



3. The Fund's **3rd Annual Silent Auction** fundraiser will take place at the AOTA Annual Conference & Expo in Minneapolis, held May 20–23, 2004, and will offer more than 150 valuable items donated by AOTA members and corporate sponsors.

4. **National School Backpack Awareness Day**, scheduled this year on September 22, 2004, is an annual campaign initiated by The Fund to promote awareness of occupational therapy's role in the health and well-being of children.

5. The Fund is actively involved in **Occupational Therapy Awareness Month**, which encourages occupational therapy as a career choice and celebrates the work of practitioners in a wide variety of practice settings while highlighting their contributions to the public and to people in other health care professions.
6. The Fund is a strategic partner with **Rebuilding Together**, a national organization that works to preserve and revitalize houses and communities. The partnership highlights occupational therapy's contributions to helping individuals live independently and age in place.
7. The Fund conducts **consumer research** to ensure that AOTA is alert to society's occupational therapy perceptions and responds accordingly with targeted messages.
8. The Fund helps AOTA **craft messages** to the public through the media that increase awareness and perception of occupational therapy as a vital force in the health care arena and in society.
9. The Fund supports the **AOTA vision**: *The contributions of occupational therapy to health, wellness, productivity, and the quality of life are widely used, understood, and valued by society.* ■



Students at Mountain Brook Elementary School in Birmingham learned about backpack safety and occupational therapy from a team from the University of Alabama's Student Occupational Therapy Association during the September 2003 National School Backpack Awareness Day.

Nancy Green, CAE, is the Executive Director of The Fund To Promote Awareness of Occupational Therapy and AOTA's Associate Executive Director of Corporate and Media Relations.

 The Fund To
Promote Awareness of
Occupational Therapy
www.promoteOT.org

ReDoc's Brad Dumke On Articulating Vision and Value

Brad Dumke, President of The Rehab Documentation Company (ReDoc) speaks to **Jennifer Jones**, Director of Corporate Relations at AOTA.

Founded in 1995 and based in Nashville, ReDoc provides software applications and services designed to meet the clinical and business needs of providers of rehabilitation therapy. ReDoc has been an AOTA-endorsed company since 2002.



“Occupational therapists have to resolve, on both an individual basis and as a profession, **to step up and be vocal about articulating the value of occupational therapy in the new world order.**”

What leadership opportunities are occupational therapists missing/lacking, and what can they do about it?

Occupational therapists must articulate a clear vision and clear value. Our nation's health care delivery model is in a rapid evolution—some would say a revolution. Occupational therapists have to resolve, on both an individual basis and as a profession, to step up and be vocal about articulating the value of occupational therapy in the new world order. Most importantly, you have to do so in terms that are relevant to your specific audience at the time, whether it is patients, the families of patients, payers, other medical professionals, or prospective students. Don't communicate in terms of how you want to define the value of occupational therapy; *communicate in terms of the value of occupational therapy to your audience at that time.* What does occupational therapy mean to them?

What tips can you share on how to best to build on ReDoc's relationship with AOTA to maximize market share and product development?

Our relationship with AOTA helps ReDoc maintain close contact with both the issues that affect the profession today and those that are anticipated to be significant in the future. Any activities that improve that communication result in more relevant product enhancements for our occupational therapists in the field, which produces a win-win-win for ReDoc, AOTA, and practicing occupational therapists.

What have you learned about occupational therapy that you didn't know before you became involved with AOTA?

From a personal perspective, I've learned that occupational therapists have a quality that differentiates them from other medical providers—they are sincerely patient-focused. Most other medical professionals are focused on measuring efficacy in impersonal, tangible metrics, while occupational therapists appreciate the importance of understanding what the patient considers to be significant progress, and work toward patient defined, quality-of-life-oriented goals. The rest of medicine adds years to life. Occupational therapy adds life to years.

What was the best book you read in 2003, and why?

Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos by Robert Kaplan. Kaplan is a historian, and the book focuses on national leaders who successfully and pragmatically advanced a Judeo-Christian ethos (doing good things for humanity) within a more naturalist (survival of the fittest) world environment. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there, and it's not realistic to think that a righteous cause will prevail just because it's righteous. A leader is responsible for acknowledging the environment he or she works within, and choosing a path that has the most realistic opportunity for the ultimate success of that righteous cause.

What is ReDoc's number one priority for 2004, and what steps have you taken to prepare?

We're going to continue to enhance the ReDoc application suite and the services that we provide to therapists in the field in such a way that they will be able to use ReDoc to support iterative process improvement. We want to help our clients triangulate their performance by measuring clinical, financial, and patient satisfaction outcomes, and constantly fine-tune their clinical and business workflows to optimize those outcomes. Steps to prepare? Already done. We started in early 2003 for impact in 2004, and will continue throughout 2004 and into the future.

What do you think is the most important quality one must possess in order to lead effectively?

The ability to see things as they are, not as we'd like them to be, and to then take decisive action on less-than-perfect information.

What famous leader do you most identify with and why?

Retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni. I had the privilege of serving under him briefly a number of years ago, and since his retirement he has had several political appointments to help address the Middle East peace process. Gen. Zinni has a gift for seeing things for what they are, understanding the differences of perspective from people with different backgrounds, and telling it like it is with no sugar coating.

If you could be anywhere in the world doing anything right now, where and what would that be?

Skiing and enjoying the outdoors with my family. ■



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY is therapy based on meaningful activities of daily life (self-care skills, education, work, or social interaction), especially to enable or encourage participation in such activities despite impairments or limitations in physical or mental functioning. Source: *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*, as developed with AOTA.

THE AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION (AOTA) was founded in 1917. The historic roots of occupational therapy lay in the movement to reform mental health care at the turn of the 20th century, when it was shown that patients who engaged in “purposeful occupations” such as crafts and practical work experienced a more successful recovery. **TODAY, THE PROFESSION AND THE ASSOCIATION** remain true to their founding principles: identifying new societal needs and developing programs to promote wellness and improve quality of life at all ages. New practice areas include lifestyle redesign, backpack awareness, aging in place, low vision, assistive technology, ergonomics, older driver safety and community mobility, and industrial rehabilitation.

Balancing Branding and Benefits: Gain the Edge With AOTA

Chris Doody

In a global economy of commodities, your brand is what differentiates your product or service from those of your rivals. Well-executed brands create customer loyalty, block out competition, allow for greater profit margins, and instill confidence in stakeholders. Our professional audience of occupational therapy practitioners can view your brand by seeing one of two meanings of the word—a “cattle” brand signifying only ownership or a “flaming” brand used as a torch. The best of brands shine out as this torch, attracting and sustaining the attention of our members.

Branding is not merely the logo, some catchy tagline, or the creative pastime for the marketing department. Strong brands among occupational therapy practitioners, educators and students are not built in a day; many take years.

The Good News

You can become more distinctive to these allied health care professionals in less time. How? One proven method is to position your brand along side another brand that's established and respected. That's AOTA. Aligning your organization with an 87-year-old professional association with strong credibility is the finest form of co-branding. The cumulative effects of both brands produce astounding value that far outweighs the investment by saving precious time. The well-developed professional heritage of AOTA will foster additional legitimacy in your organization with practitioners during their decision-making process. The benefit to our members is to simplify choice, reducing risk and purchasing anxiety.

Sponsorship Opportunities at Conference

You can start right now with some great sponsorship opportunities. Annual Conference is always a focal point of our members' attention and a great place to showcase your brand. Whether the name of your organization appears on every badge holder or every napkin your support of the profession comes across to our members. Audiovisual support offers branding that lasts all day and every day of Annual Conference.

Support Continuing Education—Get Results

In a recent survey, association members ranked highest among their expectations of AOTA that it serve as the preeminent, high quality continuing education provider. In response, the association has created a series of online continuing education (CE) courses. AOTA is committed to being the leader in CE for the profession, but to achieve this requires solid support from companies whose business interests will be directly benefited from its CE financial support and contribute to a win-win situation. As occupational therapy practitioners enhance their knowledge of educational settings through these online courses, their accomplishments will be associated with those who helped them get there—your organization and AOTA, working together for their professional development.

Act Now and Reach the Next Level With AOTA

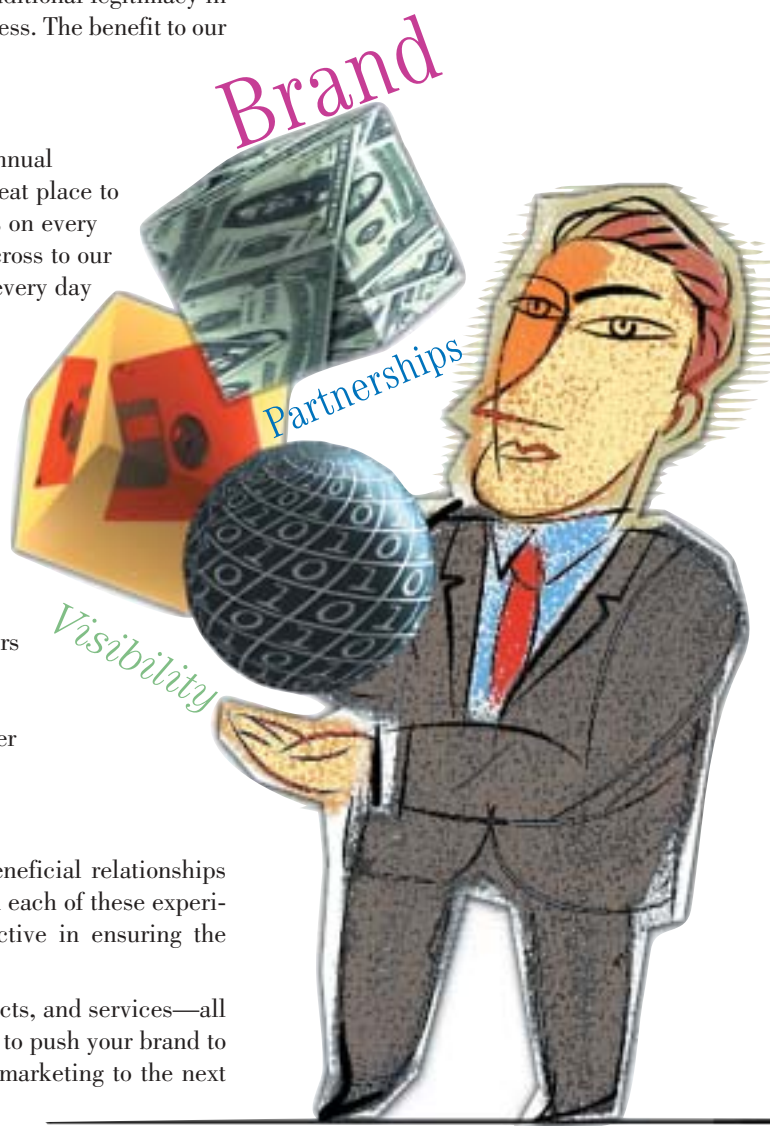
AOTA has as a strategic priority to continually develop mutually beneficial relationships that enhance your brand and ours. AOTA believes it has learned from each of these experiences what is required to be a desired strategic partner that is active in ensuring the success of the relationship.

Today in all industries there are many similar business models, products, and services—all stepping on top of each other trying to be on top. Let us work together to push your brand to the peak of a mountain of competitors. Take your allied health care marketing to the next level with AOTA. ■

Chris Doody is AOTA's Manager of Business Development. For information about sponsorship and partnership opportunities, contact Jennifer Jones, Director of Corporate Relations at 800-877-1383 or jjones@aota.org.

Visibility Vitals

“Aligning your organization with an 87-year-old professional association with strong credibility is the finest form of co-branding.”



NEARLY ONE THIRD of people employed in the profession of occupational therapy work with children, helping them master the “occupations” of childhood—learning, playing and growing. Handwriting problems are a leading reason schoolchildren are referred to occupational therapists. **THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS** calls occupational therapy one of today's fastest growing careers, pointing to growing numbers of older adults and young children who need occupational therapy services. **APPROXIMATELY 117,000** occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are licensed to practice in all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Based on the number of licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants, the five leading states are New York (11,697), Florida (7,946), Pennsylvania (7,806), California (7,632), and Texas (6,996) **THERE ARE 324 COLLEGE** or university-based educational programs for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants.



Datebook

Events and opportunities you'll want to note



April 2004

Occupational Therapy Month: An Awareness Campaign Fit to a "T"

Spring is around the corner—and so is April and Occupational Therapy Month. Looking for some great items that support and promote the occupational therapy profession? Then visit www.promoteOT.com to browse through the complete line of products that carry the “Skills for the Job of Living” theme. Do you have OT practitioners on staff? Reward them for a job well done with an OT Month T-shirt. Are you exhibiting at AOTA's Annual Conference in May? Select a sweatshirt, mug, and tote bag to pull together as a raffle prize at your booth. Did you thank your top OT clients this year? Surprise them with an Occupational Therapy Month promotional starter kit for their practice or department. Log onto www.promoteOT.com today to place your order.

Hot dates **APRIL** Occupational Therapy Month (*for information: www.promoteOT.org*) **MAY 20–23** AOTA's 84th Annual Conference & Expo in Minneapolis (*www.aota.org*) **MAY 20** The Fund's 3rd Annual Silent Auction fundraiser at AOTA's Annual Conference (*www.promoteOT.org*) **JULY 11–14** International Conference on Evidence-Based Occupational Therapy, jointly hosted by AOTA and the American Occupational Therapy Foundation (*www.aota.org* or *www.aotf.org*) **SEPTEMBER 22** 3rd Annual National School Backpack Awareness Day (*www.promoteOT.org*)

Lumina the Lightning Bug carries The Fund's backpack safety awareness message to children.



The Leader's Edge is jointly written and produced by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and The Fund To Promote Awareness of Occupational Therapy (The Fund). Its mission is to provide business professionals connected with the health care, wellness, and rehabilitation markets with useful strategies, opportunities, and information about occupational therapy and its practitioners. Please send your comments or suggestions to the address or e-mail at the right.

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