

# INmotion

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DIVISION OF BIOKINESIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

## TEAM USC

THE DYNAMIC  
PARTNERSHIP PROPELLING  
TROJAN ATHLETES AND  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
STUDENTS TO THE TOP OF  
THEIR GAMES

**PGS. 13-20**





# KNOW NO LIMITS

BY JOHN HOBBS MA '14

This summer, nearly 7,000 athletes from 177 countries competed in the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, hosted by both USC and UCLA. Both campuses were abuzz with athletes with intellectual disabilities competing in 25 different sporting events. Outside of competition, the participants — many of whom are medically underserved — were able to access free health services and examinations, including a physical therapy assessment, at the Healthy Athletes pavilion.

Inside the FUNFitness tent, 60 volunteers from the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy helped assess the physical therapy needs of nearly 2,000 individuals by testing their flexibility, strength, balance and aerobic fitness. Afterward, the sporty set was given exercises to do at home to improve their performance and offered referrals to physical therapy providers in their own countries, ensuring that long after the last medal was won in Los Angeles, these international athletes would remember the transformative power of physical therapy.





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LOS ANGELES 2015

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Photo: JOHN SKALICKY

## “IT’S ALL ABOUT THE ATHLETE”

It’s an all too familiar scene. We’re watching a football game on TV, one of the players goes down hard and doesn’t get up, the refs call time, the athletic trainers run out to the injured player, and ... the network breaks to a commercial.

If you’re at the game, however, you can watch the athletic trainers attend to the fallen athlete, and when I am at a USC game, I always watch intently. Although I never like to see a player on either team go down, I do love to watch the USC trainers at work. They have marvelous teamwork. They each know their roles, and they immediately get to work. I am most fascinated to watch the lead trainer engage with the athlete, while the others check on the injury. Often this is Russ Romano, associate athletic director for athletic medicine and adjunct instructor of clinical physical therapy here at the

division. It is no exaggeration to say that his leadership is singularly responsible for the extraordinary partnership between USC Biokinesiology and USC Athletics that is highlighted in this issue’s cover article (see pages 13–20).

I love to watch the way Russ engages with an injured athlete on the field. He leans in close, making full eye contact and clearly communicates — nonverbally — that he and his team are in control of the situation. I can’t hear him, of course, but I know that his words are helping to calm the athlete. Most of all, his total focus on the athlete communicates that at that moment in time nothing is more important than the athlete’s safety and well-being.

In the cover article, Russ Romano, associate athletic director for athletic medicine, goes to considerable lengths to highlight the important roles that physical therapists can play in prevention and rehabilitation of injuries. Let me turn the tables here. USC physical therapists, residents and DPT students have been extraordinarily lucky to be able to learn from the outstanding athletic training staff in USC’s Department of Athletic Medicine. I personally have had several opportunities to visit football practice as a guest of Russ, and while it is great fun to watch the superb athletes on the field, I always find myself more fascinated to observe the trainers and physical therapists as they attend to the athletes. What I have realized from those situations as well as in my conversations with Russ and his staff, is that to them, the athlete’s health always come first. “It’s all about the athlete,” they say.

This is a perfect example of interprofessional collaboration. Physical therapists, athletic trainers, orthopaedic surgeons and coaches are all contributing their professional expertise with one goal — to make sure the athlete stays healthy and gets back to full strength. This happens because of leaders like Russ Romano, who put the health of the athletes first.

We can all learn a lesson from the example of our colleagues in athletic medicine. “It’s all about the patient.”

Associate Dean and Chair,  
USC Division of Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy



## COVER STORY

# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS >> 13-20

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE, JOHN HOBBS MA '14  
& YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17

For more than a decade, the USC Department of Athletic Medicine has combined the talents of its world-class athletic trainers with physical therapists from the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy to keep Trojan athletes at the top of their game. Read about the partnership that's making for much stronger physical therapy graduates.

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# INmotion

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ASSOCIATE DEAN  
AND CHAIR  
JAMES GORDON

DEAN  
AVISHAI SADAN

DIRECTOR OF  
ALUMNI RELATIONS  
SARA VILLAGRAN  
PALAFOX

EDITOR  
JOHN HOBBS MA '14

DESIGN  
NEREA GUZMAN

CONTRIBUTORS  
BREANNE GRADY MCM '10  
JEANINE GUNN MS PT '93, DPT '99  
HOPE HAMASHIGE  
JOHN HOBBS MA '14  
CALEN OUELLETTE  
SARA VILLAGRAN PALAFOX  
YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17  
CHRISTOPHER POWERS PHD '96  
JAMIE WETHERBE MA '04

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER  
NATE JENSEN  
INN8CREATIVE.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY  
ASSISTANT  
ALEX DE LA HIDALGA

PHOTOGRAPHY  
ROBERT RADIFERA  
TIM RASMUSSEN  
JOHN SKALICKY

*inMotion* is published twice yearly. For questions, comments, updates or story suggestions contact Sara Villagran Palafox at [villagra@usc.edu](mailto:villagra@usc.edu) or (323) 442-1193.



USC University of  
Southern California



## FEATURES

### SUMMERTIME IN BEIJING

>> 21-24

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE

Adjunct professor Jared Vagy DPT '09 spent his summer in Beijing, treating some of China's top track-and-field athletes and blazing a trail for physical therapy into a nation that once viewed the profession with a great deal of skepticism.

### RAISING THE BAR >> 25-27

BY BREANNE GRADY MCM '10

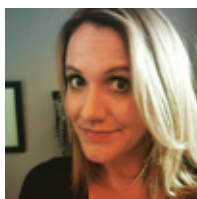
Pumping iron can take a toll on the human body — even when you're a hulking Team USA Olympic weightlifter. This is where Davis Koh MS PT '96, DPT '99, MBA '07 steps in. The division alumnus spends a portion of autumn, helping the musclebound maintain proper form to avoid injury.

### AGAINST ALL ODDS >> 10-12

BY BREANNE GRADY MCM '10

Robert Kapen went to bed one night feeling fine. Shockingly, he woke up feeling numb on his right side. His condition worsened, with doctors giving him a 1 percent chance of survival. Today, thanks in part to treatment provided by adjunct professor Manjiri Dahdul DPT '03, Robert's defying doctors' expectations and inspiring many others.

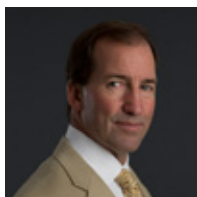
## CONTRIBUTORS



#### BREANNE GRADY MCM '10

Breanne Grady is a Midwestern-Angeleno hybrid who grew up in Indiana but has lived in L.A. for the past 13 years. She completed her undergrad degree at Indiana University and her master's degree from USC. She wrote for *Indiana Daily Student*, *Variety* and *Campus Circle* before going back to her science roots at Amgen, working in a research lab for 11 years.

When she's not busy blogging, reading or watching *Game of Thrones*, you can usually find her sweating it out at the gym or on the Santa Monica Stairs. An avid animal lover, Grady has three rescue cats named Don Corleone (aka Corly), Richie and Lily.



#### CHRISTOPHER POWERS PhD '96

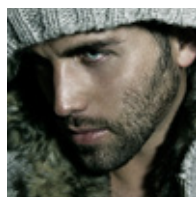
Christopher Powers is likely no stranger to many of our readers, having been a student at the division — earning his PhD in biokinesiology in 1996 — and then serving on the division's faculty — currently as a professor and the co-director of USC's Musculoskeletal Biomechanics Laboratory. Powers is also an active researcher, with more than 150 peer-reviewed journal

articles published. His research focuses on how altered kinematics, kinetics and muscular actions contribute to lower extremity injury. It's as the president of the California Physical Therapy Association that Powers writes for this issue, with a new column we're calling "Executive Suite" found on page 29.



#### JEANINE GUNN MS PT '93, DPT '99

Jeanine Gunn is the director of CareConnections, a division of Therapeutic Associates. She has worked in outpatient orthopedic practices focusing on practice management and compliance issues as well as owning her own consulting company. Gunn received her master's degree in 1993 and her doctor of physical therapy degree in 1999. She has served at both the state and national levels in the APTA and is currently serving her second term as a director on the APTA Board of Directors. She penned this issue's "My Inspiration" column, located on page 33.



#### NATE JENSEN

For more than a decade, Nate has meticulously crafted and refined a dynamic, unique style etched with detailed attention. He says his passion for photography renders him limitless potential and profound impact as one of today's creative voices. His personal and collaborative work have international visibility, with his work spanning ads for fashion labels and luxury hotels to portraits of Hollywood's A-listers. His work has appeared in a variety of publications, including *GQ*, *People* and *Vanity Fair*. Jensen is the photographer behind the stunning images accompanying this issue's cover story as well as several other features in the pages to follow. Check out Nate's work at [INN8creative.com](http://INN8creative.com).



### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Earlier this fall, Cheryl Resnik DPT '97 (not pictured above) and a group of DPT students participated in Shane's Inspiration, a 5K/10K trail run/walk and roll that supports social inclusion for children with disabilities. Resnik, associate chair and associate professor of clinical physical therapy, and the students raised \$800 for the cause and led the pre-walk stretch and warm-up.

### TV

## BUMP, SWEAT AND SPIKE

On Aug. 14, Rob Landel MS PT '84, DPT '96 appeared on a CBS2 news segment discussing one of the many blistering heat waves Southern California experienced this summer. The professor of clinical physical therapy, who was working the medical tent at the AVP Manhattan Beach Open, talked about precautions being taken to ensure the competitive volleyballers were playing safe in the searing hot sand. You can see Landel at 1:37 at [tinyurl.com/landelheat](http://tinyurl.com/landelheat)

### NEWSPAPER

## THE BALANCED LIFE

If you're reading this and you're over 40, you might be dismayed to learn that some of the complex systems keeping you upright — nerve receptors in your feet and ankles — have already begun a steep decline, making it easier for you to take a tumble. Don't despair, though: a recent *Los Angeles Times* article suggests a battery of balance exercises to improve your stability. "The more we move our bodies, the more we stimulate our balancing systems — and the more we can increase stability," says Robbin Howard DPT '02, assistant professor of clinical physical therapy, who was one of the experts quoted in the Aug. 15 article. Check it out at [tinyurl.com/stayingonyourfeet](http://tinyurl.com/stayingonyourfeet)

### WEB

## WALK THIS WAY

A recent study published in *The New Scientist* finds that humans will actually change the way we walk when our normal gait becomes difficult. In the study conducted out of Simon Fraser University, subjects were fitted with lightweight exoskeletons that exerted varying amounts of resistance, put on treadmills and then measured metabolically. The team discovered that subjects would adopt new, sometimes awkward gaits, to save even as little as 5 percent energy. This finding could have an impact on rehab for stroke and spinal injury survivors, according to assistant professor James Finley, who was quoted in the article. "If you want a patient to find a new energetically optimal behavior, you may need to force exploration," he said. Read the entire article at [tinyurl.com/finleynewscientist](http://tinyurl.com/finleynewscientist)







Photo: TIM RASMUSSEN/ESPN

## USC PT VOLUNTEERS HELP SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

BY YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17

Nearly 2,000 athletes were screened by volunteers from the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at the 2015 Special Olympics World Games on July 25 through Aug. 2.

FunFitness, the main physical therapy site at the Healthy Athletes pavilion, on USC's McCarthy Quad held screening stations for athletes to test their flexibility, strength, balance and aerobic fitness.

Sixty division volunteers, including USC faculty, students and alumni, provided guidance and evaluations for athletes at the screening stations.

"Our students gained knowledge and experience at the World Games by working with people who have intellectual disabilities," said Ginelle Amormino DPT '03, faculty volunteer and assistant professor of clinical physical therapy who led the division's efforts. "They are applying patient care skills to screen the athletes' strength, balance, flexibility and endurance."

For many of the athletes — some from developing countries — this may be their only opportunity for medical care at the hands of doctors or professionals.

More than 1,000 of the athletes requested education and techniques to better improve their balance, according to data that was collected during each individual screening by a licensed physical therapist.

Randi Richardson DPT '17 volunteered by helping the athletes fill out questionnaires at each of the stations.

"Many of these athletes had never been introduced to flexibility testing or challenged aerobically," she said. "Having the ability to inform them of areas of strengths and improvements can prevent injuries and impairments."

Alexandra Gryder DPT '18 also volunteered by helping athletes check in as they entered FunFitness and asking basic questions about the athlete's exercise and fitness routines.

"Physical therapists were able to take all of the results from each testing section within FunFitness and develop a program on how each athlete can further improve in areas like stretching and strengthening," she said.

"I think it was a perfect learning experience for these athletes from around the world, along with their families and coaches, to experience new activities and learn other ways to stay strong and healthy."

Nearly 600 of the athletes screened were provided physical therapy referrals to show doctors in their home countries. They were also given exercises they could practice on their own to enhance training and performance.

"It was extremely rewarding to educate athletes from around the world about the health benefits of exercise and its importance in improving athletic performance and injury prevention," Amormino said.

"It was equally rewarding to share in the athletes' joy, enthusiasm and sense of achievement as they proudly presented their ribbons and medals to us during their visit to the pavilion," she added.

The Healthy Athletes pavilion provided more than 5,000 athletes medical care or education during the World Games.

The Special Olympics World Games took place at both USC and UCLA campuses. Nearly 7,000 athletes from 177 countries participated in the week's events.

## IN BRIEF

### ■ KULIG RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

Professor Kornelia Kulig earned a Helen J. Hislop Award for Outstanding Contributions to Professional Literature at the 2015 APTA NEXT Conference and Exposition. The award acknowledged Kulig "for her contributions to the literature and overall field of physical therapy in the neuromechanics accompanying musculoskeletal injury," according to the APTA. It is fitting that Kulig would take home the award named after one of her mentors, the late Helen Hislop, who is credited for transforming physical therapy to a research-based science. "... Hislop inspired me to develop meaningful questions, seek the best methods to answer them and include others in the journey to discovery," Kulig said in her acknowledgment message.

### ■ DIVISION WELCOMES NEWEST CLASSES AT ANNUAL WHITE COAT CEREMONY

Nearly 130 aspiring physical therapy professionals embarked on their academic journeys by putting on their white coats for the first time and taking their professional oaths at the division's annual White Coat Ceremony and Convocation on Aug. 27. In addition to welcoming the new doctor of physical therapy, biokinesiology and residency students, division leadership celebrated the accomplishments of nearly 50 scholarship recipients and recognized the 16 neurologic, orthopedic and sports physical therapy residents, who had completed their one-year post-professional studies at the division. Jeanine Gunn MS PT '93, DPT '99 was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award for her continued professional leadership skills, including a recent re-election to the APTA Board of Directors.

### ■ SMITH'S INFANT LEG MOVEMENT STUDY FEATURED IN THE JOURNAL SENSORS

Assistant professor of research Beth Smith's study on infant leg movement and its relationship to the onset of walking was recently published in the journal *Sensors*. In the study, 12 infants (ages 1 month to 1 year old) were outfitted with sensors that counted daily leg movements. The babies were assessed three times over five months and followed until they began walking independently. Smith's study determined there is an inverse relationship between the number of leg movements and how soon an infant begins walking. The findings could one day help create early assessment and therapeutic intervention tools for children at risk for developmental delays. Assistant professor James Finley was listed as one of the study's co-authors. *Sensors* has an impact factor of 1.2.



## ■ SUM HOSTS JAPANESE UNIVERSITY BASEBALL TEAM FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY LECTURE

In August, assistant professor of clinical physical therapy Jonathan Sum '01, DPT '05 hosted 25 baseball players from Japan's Risho University for a physical therapy inspired lecture. The players, here with the Far East Baseball Exchange, took part in several exhibition games, toured USC and the Japanese American National Museum and attended a few USC lectures. It's the third consecutive year that Sum has spoken to the group about the pitching mechanics of the arm, trunk and legs, as well as risk factors related to arm injury. The Far East Baseball Exchange is a program aimed at fostering understanding between Asia and the United States through baseball.

## ■ DIVISION MAKES GLOBAL IMPACT WITH SERVICE LEARNING TRIPS

Division students gained a global perspective on physical therapy with two service-learning trips to Central and South America this year. The first trip, organized by Allen Mour DPT '14 and the student-led Physical Therapy Multicultural Leadership Alliance, took 12 physical therapy students to Costa Rica for an eight-day service learning excursion. In Costa Rica, student volunteers provided treatment to nearly 100 residents, with cases representing the entire spectrum of physical therapy. In August, a second group comprised of faculty member Nicole Irizarry, Zuleima Hidalgo DPT '15 and three current students traveled to Santo Tomas, Colombia, to provide free consultations and services to members of Santo Tomas and surrounding communities.

## ■ SCHWEIGHOFER LEADS CUTTING-EDGE SUMMER COURSE IN FRANCE

This past summer, associate professor Nicolas Schweighofer PhD '95 led the second annual European Computational Motor Control Summer School at Montpellier University in France. The week-long program, sponsored partly by the division, aims to promote the field of computational motor control in Europe. Twenty-one students — mostly PhD students and postdoctoral fellows — took part in the cutting-edge program, which trains students in Matlab, a high-level computing language and interactive environment used by engineers and scientists around the world, and exposes them to internationally renowned researchers in the field. The division's own professor Francisco Valero-Cuevas and assistant professor James Finley were two such researchers, leading lectures on neuromechanics.



Photo: ROBERT RADIFERA

# PRIVATE DONOR FUNDS ROTATOR CUFF RESEARCH

BY JOHN HOBBS MA '14

The pain was excruciating, said Barbara Fried of the time she tore her rotator cuff.

It was 2000, and she had been vacationing with her husband Mark in the Galápagos Islands. While the two were sailing through particularly rough seas, a banister slammed into Barbara's shoulder, leaving her bent over double in agony.

The then 64-year-old woman went through two surgeries to improve her shoulder's range of motion after the complete tear to her rotator cuff.

Both procedures failed—a common occurrence in older adults in which an estimated 45 percent of rotator cuff surgeries fail, according to a 2013 *Orthopaedic Practice* article written by Dr. David Luedeka and Dr. Lori Michener, a newly appointed professor of clinical physical therapy at the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy.

Luedeka and Michener have a different approach for treating patients with injured rotator cuffs, which involves having the patient go through a phased six-month strengthening program using movements to improve joint stability and decrease stress on the rotator cuff, while strengthening the shoulder muscles. Typical movements include push-ups and pull-ups, where the hand is in a fixed position.

These closed-chain exercises may protect the shoulder joint and the rotator cuff while allowing for the gradual strengthening of the remaining vulnerable cuff tissue, according to the *Orthopaedic Practice* article.

"Gravity creates compression at the shoulder joint, lessening the stress on the rotator cuff," Luedeka said. "This decreased stress allows the cuff to heal, and motion naturally restores itself as the main muscles around the shoulder get stronger."

The proof is in Fried's recovery.

"Before, I couldn't lift an arm, I couldn't do anything," said Fried, who began seeing Luedeka at age 74. "But this program brought me back to life."

Her physical therapy success story led Fried to donate \$463,066 to fund a two-year grant for Michener's continued research on a pilot study for implementing the closed-chain stabilization approach to treating rotator cuff tears.

"This gift has allowed me to jump-start my research at USC," Michener said. "I am passionate about determining the effectiveness and efficacy of treatment and sorting out those treatments that produce the most optimal outcomes for the patient with shoulder pain."

The research will take place in the Clinical Biomechanics Orthopedics and Sports Outcome Research lab, of which Michener is the director.

"This can be a game changer," Luedeka said. "This protocol has the possibility of allowing those with rotator cuff tears to have a normal life and prevent the need for total shoulder replacement."

Fried is the president of Fried Companies Inc., a real estate company that develops residential communities, office complexes and shopping centers in Virginia.

She and her husband Mark, who passed away in 2010 at the age of 78, are longtime benefactors, having given money and time to such issues as making education, housing and dentistry more accessible and affordable as well as issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities.

"I'd like other people to have the benefit of this kind of treatment because I think Lori and David can demonstrate that this is the way physical therapy should be," Fried said.



# CALENDAR

- USC/DIVISION EVENTS
- CONTINUING EDUCATION
- ALUMNI EVENTS
- PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS



## FEATURED EVENT

### **FEB 17-20** PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS **APTA COMBINED SECTIONS MEETING**

The APTA has chosen Anaheim, Calif., to serve as home base for its annual Combined Sections Meeting. The three-day meeting brings together more than 10,000 physical therapy professionals from all over the United States for educational programming, networking opportunities and exhibit-hall gazing. The division's alumni reception takes place Feb. 18 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the convention center. DETAILS >> Anaheim Convention Center, 800 W. Katella Ave. More info: [apta.org/CSM](http://apta.org/CSM)

### **JAN 9- OCT 2** CONTINUING EDUCATION **USC ORTHOPEDIC BOOT CAMP IN LOS ANGELES**

This course series allows orthopedic physical therapists to improve proficiency in manual examination and treatment for common musculoskeletal conditions. It will also help practitioners refine their skills in assessment, treatment and therapy and is designed to assist individuals in preparation for the OCS exam. Check the schedule for each week's module topic. DETAILS >> Instructors: Drs. Daniel Kirages & Sean Johnson. CEUs: 1.5 per two-day module or 12 for 16-day series. Location: USC Clinical Training Center, 8830 S. Sepulveda Blvd., 2nd Floor, L.A. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **JAN 30- JAN 31** CONTINUING EDUCATION **UPDATE ON LUMBAR SPINE**

This course will combine discussion, case presentation and application of treatment and evaluation to provide biomechanical and motor control framework for a rehabilitation program for patients with low back disorders. DETAILS >> Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shirley Sahrman. CEUs: 1.4. Location: USC Health Sciences Campus, 1540 Alcazar St., CHP 155, L.A. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **FEB 25- MAR 1** CONTINUING EDUCATION **SPINE REHABILITATION SEMINAR SERIES: SESSION 1**

This series is designed for clinical fellowships in spine rehabilitation and continuing professional education participants. The sessions are geared towards highly skilled practitioners dedicated to advancing their clinical reasoning, examination skills and treatment skills for patients with low and middle back and neck pain. DETAILS >> Instructors:

### **FEB 27** CONTINUING EDUCATION **PHYSICAL THERAPY MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS WITH TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT DISORDER**

Joe Godges & Michael Wong. CEUs: 1.5 per two-day module. Location: USC Clinical Training Center, 8830 S. Sepulveda Blvd., L.A. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

This series is designed for practitioners who treat patients with temporomandibular joint disorder. It will guide these professionals through primary treatment strategies and second-line treatment options. DETAILS >> Instructors: Various. CEUs: .7 per module. USC Clinical Training Center, 8830 S. Sepulveda Blvd., L.A. >> More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **MAR 11- MAR 13** CONTINUING EDUCATION **ESSENTIALS OF SPINAL MANIPULATION**

This fast-paced course will allow participants to observe best evidence relating to use of High Velocity Low Amplitude thrust techniques as well as enhanced proficiency in spinal positioning in cervical, thoracic, lumbar and sacroiliac regions. DETAILS >> Instructors: Drs. Philip Tehan & Peter Gibbons. CEUs: 1.8. Location: USC Health Sciences Campus, 1540 Alcazar St., CHP 155, L.A. >> More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **APR 14** USC/DIVISION **JACQUELIN PERRY RESEARCH DAY**

Join us as we celebrate the breadth and depth of the research that is being conducted within the labs and clinics of USC's Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. This day, dedicated to scientific inquiry was named in memory of former faculty member (1977-1991) and physical therapy pioneer Dr. Jacquelin

### **ON GOING** CONTINUING EDUCATION **INTRODUCTION TO MALE PELVIC HEALTH: URINARY INCONTINENCE**

This online course is designed for physical therapists looking for first exposure or knowledge enhancement in evaluating and treating men with pelvic floor muscle dysfunctions resulting in urinary incontinence. With one out of 10 men suffering from involuntary bladder control loss, it is imperative that their needs are addressed. DETAILS >> CEUs: .2. Location: Online only. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **ON GOING** CONTINUING EDUCATION **ESSENTIALS FOR APPRAISING EVIDENCE**

This four-part online course helps physical therapists gain skills in understanding and applying clinical practice guidelines in clinical practice. DETAILS >> Instructors: Drs. Linda Fethers & Julie Tilson. CEUs: 2. Location: Online only. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)

### **ON GOING** CONTINUING EDUCATION **VALUE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO BRANDING YOURSELF AS A PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

Follow me, like me, favorite me. What does it all mean? Find out how to create an online community for your practice with this day-long course. DETAILS >> Instructor: Jennifer Bandich. CEUs: .1. Location: Online only. More: [pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation](http://pt.usc.edu/continuingeducation)




# AGAINST ALL ODDS

MEET ROBERT KAPEN, A DETERMINED YOUNG MAN WHO'S BEATING A GRIM PROGNOSIS THANKS IN PART TO THE DEDICATION OF HIS TROJAN PHYSICAL THERAPIST.

BY BREANNE GRADY MCM '10





A photograph of a man and a woman. The man, Robert Kapen, is seated in a black motorized wheelchair. He has short dark hair, a beard, and is wearing a dark blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and khaki shorts. He is smiling and looking down at a smartphone held in his hands. The woman, with long dark hair, is wearing a red patterned sweater and is sitting on the floor next to the wheelchair, also smiling and looking at the phone. The background is a plain, light gray.

**“I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AN OUTGOING  
ACTIVE SOUL, AND WHEN I GOT  
SICK THAT DIDN’T CHANGE, EVEN  
THOUGH MY ABILITY DID.”**

**—ROBERT KAPEN**

Photo: NATE JENSEN

Torrance–native Robert Kapen knows what it’s like to defy impossible odds. ¶

In June 2011, Kapen was working at a Young Life Camp in Williams, Ariz., when one night, he went to bed feeling fine. The next morning, though, he woke up feeling numbness on his right side. ¶

His symptoms grew worse. The then 23-year-old was transferred from an emergency hospital in Flagstaff, Ariz., to the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix. ¶

After suffering a seizure and being placed in a medically-induced coma, he underwent a tracheotomy and was put on a ventilator. ¶



Kapen was given a battery of diagnostic tests, ranging from West Nile Virus to Lyme disease, but his diagnosis remained inconclusive. When he came out of the coma, he was given a 1 percent chance of living. The athletic man with a background in sports was quadriplegic and mute, only able to communicate with his eyes.

After several months of intensive treatment at UCLA Medical Center and Long Beach Memorial, he was sent home to continue his recovery. Currently, Kapen receives ongoing treatment three times a week at Precision Rehabilitation in Long Beach where division alumna Manjiri Dahdul DPT '03 is his primary physical therapist.

Dahdul, co-founder and owner at Precision, specializes in working with patients with neurologic diagnoses such as stroke, spinal cord injury, brain injury and Parkinson's disease. She has been working with Kapen for more than two years. It was ultimately determined, Dahdul explains, that Kapen suffered a bilateral pontine stroke. "His entire body has suffered some paralysis," she explains, adding that patients typically have a stroke on one side of the brain, but that Kapen had suffered two strokes — one on each side.

Since their first appointment in April 2013, Dahdul has seen much progress in Kapen.

"There are many changes that he's made in a lot of different areas because he has a lot of goals," she says. "I have definitely seen him make improvements in his ability to walk with less assistance, in walking faster and in being able to manage himself and move his body — like by adjusting his arms and legs or scooting his wheelchair."

Dahdul stresses that Kapen is still the same young athletic man he was prior to the stroke, and she treats him as such.

"He wants to be challenged, to be pushed to the limit, to be re-tested and break records," she says. "Every time I tell him we're going to do a test again, his numbers are just off the charts."

Dahdul describes her clinical practice as "highly-individualized and patient-centric." With Kapen, she works on a wide variety of activities based on his specific requests and goals.

Kapen's treatment includes walking on a body-weight supported treadmill, dynamic and static standing balance, standing balance inside

and outside parallel bars, strengthening lower extremities and trunk muscles, postural stability, functional/bed/sit-to-stand mobility as well as wheelchair propulsion.

Dahdul believes that her USC education and connections have strongly benefited her professional aptitude.

"USC gave me a very strong foundation to work with a wide variety of patients," she says. "I learned how to provide evidence-based interventions, how to challenge myself on a consistent basis and to take on leadership roles in my profession."

She adds, "Right now, I'm an adjunct clinical faculty member at USC, which has given me the ability to refine my skills both in academia and in the clinic with patients. I've been invited to complete two clinical research projects onsite at Precision, working with USC faculty members and researchers."

Kapen himself recognizes the significant gains he has made over the course of his work with Dahdul.

"While using the treadmill with Lite Gait, I've noticed more stamina and more of a fluidness in my body motions," he says, by way of a Notes smart phone app that he uses to type out what

He says he highly values the camaraderie of the physical therapy environment.

"A secondary reward is healing emotionally because you're able to talk with patients who can empathize with your situation, so you don't feel alone," he says.

Kapen's optimism and dedication are an inspiration to all at the clinic. To Dahdul, a few things stand out in particular that make him very special.

"He is just a very motivated, driven and tenacious young man," she says. "To watch him come in on a regular basis with a big smile; he is always just prepared and ready to go."

She points out that while he is working on improving his speech, he is 100 percent cognitively intact and maintains a great sense of humor.

"Given all these circumstances, it is remarkable," she marvels. "He cracks jokes left and right, and all of us in the clinic are laughing so hard. His sense of humor and smile is contagious, which makes it so enjoyable to work with him."

When asked to describe what motivates his passion for improvement, Kapen is humble and thoughtful about his character.

"I have always been an outgoing active soul, and when I got sick that didn't change, even though

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**"USC gave me a very strong foundation to work with a wide variety of patients. I learned how to provide evidence-based interventions, how to challenge myself on a consistent basis and to take on leadership roles in my profession."**

—Manjiri Dahdul DPT '03

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he's thinking. "My independence has grown also — things I would have just written off and asked for help in the past, I now try doing first."

Kapen's speech has begun to improve as well, with the young man able to speak words, phrases and even short sentences.

my ability did," he explains. "Also, the biggest thing to me is my faith. During the whirlwind of my illness, that was the only thing I could really grasp on to, and it has helped keep me together as I figure out where I go now."



# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

**USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy students get clinical experience second to none, working with top-ranked athletes, thanks to a unique partnership with USC Athletic Medicine.**

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE

PHOTOS BY NATE JENSEN

ATHLETE VIGNETTES BY YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17







**CODY KESSLER | FOOTBALL**

"I throw a lot of footballs throughout the week so I come in for physical therapy to keep my shoulders loose and stretched out. I notice the exercises help me maintain my full range of motion." Throwing more than 6,800 yards during his USC career, Kessler works with Drew Morcos DPT '07 four times a week to prevent injury and pain.





### CONNOR FARREN | TENNIS

After back-to-back matches, Farren uses NormaTec PULSE Recovery System to help circulate blood in his legs as suggested by Morcos. “I have done physical therapy for five or six years,” Farren says. “Here at USC, Drew works with me to help me recover between matches and keep me fresh.”

The first time that Russ Romano, associate athletic director for athletic medicine, asked Stephen Reischl MS ’97, DPT ’97 to come look at one of his athletes was in 1999.

One of the Trojan football players had been benched with a bad ankle, and Reischl, adjunct associate professor for clinical physical therapy at the division, specializes in disorders of the foot and ankle.

Reischl found that the player had significant dysfunction in his ankle. Teaming up with Romano, they developed a new training regimen that kept the player out of the operating room and got him back on the field for his entire senior year. Romano and Reischl cheered their combined effort when that player went on to play with the NFL.

Reischl went back several times to look at other athletes, and eventually Romano asked other faculty members from biokinesiology and physical therapy to consult on a difficult problem

with one of their athletes. What started as a one-time consultation has since grown into a lasting partnership.

For more than a decade, the USC Athletic Medicine Department has combined the talents of its world-class athletic trainers with physical therapists from the nation’s top-rated physical therapy school, the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, to keep the athletes performing at their peak.

“USC is a special place and one of the ways it is special is there are smart people in many departments who can help us provide the absolute best health care for the student athletes,” Romano says.

Reischl now serves as a permanent liaison between the two departments, and Romano has since hired four graduates — three of whom are also division faculty members — from the division’s doctor of physical therapy program (John Meyer DPT ’98, Drew Morcos DPT ’07, Stephanie Hong

DPT ’12 and Lisa Noceti-DeWit DPT ’03) to help keep USC’s athletes healthy. Meyer was recently promoted to associate athletic director for sports science and performance.

Treating athletic injuries has evolved in recent years as has the practice of physical therapy. Morcos, rehabilitation coordinator for the John McKay Center, says athletic injuries in the past were often treated with ice and rest. Treating injuries in that fashion not only takes longer than necessary, but also it often doesn’t fix whatever problem led to the injury in the first place.

These days, the physical therapy team at USC is squarely focused on preventing injury so that these athletes don’t ever get sidelined.

At tennis practice, you’ll find both the coaches and Morcos studying the athletes’ movements. While the coaches are watching their players serve to see how much spin they can put on a ball or how fast they can get the ball over the net, Morcos is reading the way they move and



**TEMI FAGBENLE |  
BASKETBALL**

Fagbenle runs on the underwater treadmill to rehab her bilateral patella tendonitis. "I am still able to play, but I have been doing physical therapy since August to strengthen the muscles surrounding my knees. So far it's helped quite a bit. I can even see the muscles defining around my knees."





## FAST TRACK

## FELLOWSHIP IN SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY DIVISION 1 ATHLETICS

This year, the division — alongside USC Athletic Medicine — launched a new fellowship program that gives licensed physical therapists an exciting post-professional experience on the field and in the training room with some of collegiate sports' top athletes.

The year-long fellowship — inaugurally held by Sophia Gonzalez, who just finished her sports residency earlier this year — aims to graduate advanced practitioners of sports physical therapy who can demonstrate excellence in clinical skills, conduct and publish clinical research and make a lasting impression on their local and professional community.

"It's an opportunity to take your skills and clinical reasoning and push them to the next level," says Gonzalez of the fellowship. "Working with the entire sports medicine team is helping me to get mentorship from those all around me, to refine my technique and to work with colleagues in various disciplines."

A typical week includes 20 hours of clinical practice, four hours of mentored clinical practice and three to six hours of onfield experience.

Notably, the program also pairs the fellow with sports medicine physicians three hours a week as they treat USC athletes, giving the fellow an unprecedented holistic perspective of the athlete's physical condition. —J.H.



### EVE ETTINGER | VOLLEYBALL

Just three weeks after ACL surgery, Ettinger performs physical therapy exercises to get her back on the court. "Expected recovery after ACL surgery is about six to eight months. I have been coming in for physical therapy five days a week, and I am feeling really optimistic about my recovery ahead."

determining whether they are doing anything that could cause injury.

Morcus points out that many injuries are the result of moving in a way that, if repeated for a long time, can cause damage. The first thing Trojan athletes must do before each new season is report for a lengthy pre-season screening. Trainers want to make sure nobody is returning with lingering muscle strain or with pain in one of their joints. They also go through testing to evaluate each athlete for problems in mobility, strength and flexibility. If they find that an athlete is weak in one set of muscles or lacks flexibility in another, the trainer might tailor a program to help them deal with these problems before they lead to an injury.

Having physical therapists incorporated

into the athletic training staff has become more common, Reischl said, but not every university has the ability to do so since they don't all have physical therapy schools they can tap for insights and information on the latest research.

One research-based project that's held promise for preventing injury has been in women's basketball.

Basketball is one of those sports that can be really tough on players. Historically, female college basketball players have had higher rates of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears than other athletes.

For the past three years, the USC women's basketball squad has undergone motion analysis in the division's human performance laboratory,





**SOPHIA RACETTE | CROSS  
COUNTRY AND TRACK & FIELD**

After a microfracture in her knee this past summer, Racette receives physical therapy four to five days a week in preparation for her medical clearance over the next month. Racette uses the AlterG, an anti-gravity treadmill that allows the physical therapist to adjust the amount of weight that the runner bares to protect their lower extremities from high impact.





### AMALIE IUEL | TRACK & FIELD

Iuel works on side planks to build up her core strength. The USC hurdler was sidelined by a hamstring injury. After physical therapy five days a week, Iuel recently received medical clearance to return to the track, but continues physical therapy exercises as suggested by Morcos on her own.

which does research on the prevention and rehabilitation of knee injuries in athletes. The research has informed the way the players train and, for the past three years, the team has not had knee problems.

The partnership with USC Athletics is mutually beneficial, with the experience benefiting students like Brian Lee DPT '16, who is the first division student to do a third-year full-time clinical affiliation at USC Athletic Medicine.

Lee says sports has always been his passion. In fact, it was through his love of sports that he was first introduced to the idea of pursuing a career in physical therapy.

This fall, he landed a plum placement, getting the opportunity to treat some of the top Trojan athletes during his 16-week clinical affiliation.

He came by the placement after suggesting it to Todd Schroeder PhD '00, with whom he works in the Clinical Exercise Research Center. Schroeder

talked to Romano and Morcos about the idea and, in July, Lee got the exciting news that he'd be spending the semester at the USC McKay Center.

"No classroom or textbook could replicate the real-life, hands-on experience I have been getting during this clerkship," says Lee, who plans to do a sports residency after completing his doctor of physical therapy degree. "With every patient interaction an opportunity for learning and self-assessment, there is no better place to start to become an expert in sports rehabilitation than at USC Athletic Medicine." *See sidebar on page 20 for more on Lee's clinical affiliation.*

Sophia Gonzalez has also benefited from the partnership. Gonzalez, who appeared in last issue's cover story on residencies, completed her sports residency program earlier this year.

Like Lee, she developed a passion for sports early on and says her dream job would be to work in college athletics. This year, she took one step

closer to her dream job by becoming the first Trojan physical therapist to do a fellowship with USC Athletic Medicine.

*See sidebar on page 17 for more on Gonzalez's fellowship.*

Having the ability to work with USC athletes has also helped fortify much of the research being done by division faculty.

Kornelia Kulig, professor of biokinesiology and physical therapy, for example, has advanced the understanding of patellar tendinitis, or jumper's knee, through the research she has done working with USC volleyball players.

Those athletes' trainers and coaches, in turn, have access to one of the leading experts on that problem.

"I am really proud of the relationship we have built with the division," Romano says, "and it has been beneficial to all of us."





## LIVING THE DREAM

**THIS FALL, BRIAN LEE DPT '16 BLAZES A TRAIL AS THE FIRST STUDENT TO COMPLETE HIS THIRD-YEAR CLERKSHIP WITH USC ATHLETIC MEDICINE.**

### **WHAT'S A TYPICAL DAY LIKE ON SITE?**

A typical day is an atypical day in athletic medicine. The thing I learned about athletic medicine — and one of the things I especially love about it — is that you have to be flexible and ready to take on anyone who comes to see you. On my previous rotations, I had been used to preparing for my patients; in this setting, you never know who's coming in.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST-GRADUATION?**

USC Athletics has really solidified in my mind that working with athletes is what I want to ultimately do. I plan to continue to grow the knowledge and skills that I have learned during my time in this setting by pursuing a sports clinical specialty certification through a residency.

### **WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF THIS CLERKSHIP?**

I came into this with an open mind to any and all experiences because I knew what a unique environment it would be. But I guess I'd like to better understand the role of the physical therapist in athletic medicine, demonstrate what a physical therapist has to offer in this setting and help continue to grow the relationship between our department and Athletic Medicine.

—J.H.







# SUMMERTIME IN BEIJING

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE

*Adjunct instructor Jared Vagy DPT '09 spent this past summer rehabilitating some of China's top track-and-field athletes to prepare them for the 2015 World Championships.*





**T**he first time Jared Vagy DPT '09 met Zhang Wenxiu, a sports icon in China, he admits it was both enthralling and a little intimidating.

"She is to China what Usain Bolt is to Jamaica — a huge star," explains Vagy, adjunct instructor of clinical physical therapy at the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. Wenxiu, a three-time Olympic hammer thrower, was just one of many of China's top track-and-field athletes that Vagy encountered this past summer after being invited to Beijing by China's track and field team to prepare them for the 2015 World Championships.

Wenxiu had been sidelined, unable to finish a practice because of intense pain in her lower back, Vagy explains. Failing to get her back on

her feet was not an option, so Vagy went to work using "everything in the tool box."

Working with a name-brand athlete and being carefully watched by China's coaches and trainers was a pressure cooker situation, Vagy admits, but one that he had been well prepared for by his training at USC.

"My DPT degree from USC gave me a strong foundation in clinical reasoning, my residency training solidified my manual skills and my movement science fellowship improved my ability to analyze and treat complex movement patterns such as those in Olympic sport," Vagy explains.

To come up with a plan for Wenxiu, Vagy videotaped her at practice and reviewed the tapes in slow motion to analyze her movement. Vagy was able to zero in on one key weakness — her oblique

muscles — that was causing the trouble in her back. Once he identified that problem, Vagy was able to provide Wenxiu with the tools necessary to start firing those muscles to relieve the strain on her back. She went on to compete and took home a silver medal for China.

## EAST MEETS WEST

Vagy knows firsthand that competitive athletes can often push themselves and their bodies a little too hard.

A serious rock climber, Vagy tore a rotator cuff and a ligament in one of his fingers while he was working on his degree at USC.

The injury got him thinking about his own training and how to prevent rock climbing inju-



LEFT: Vagy, flanked by China's long jump team (from left): Jianan Wang, Li Jinzhe, Huang Changzhou & Gai Xinglong.



RIGHT: Vagy teaches oblique muscle activation to Zhang Wenxiu, who went on to win silver in hammer throwing at the World Championships.

*"... [W]e had tremendous treatment results, built strong relationships and continued positive momentum in the attempt to educate China on the benefits of physical therapy."*

—Jared Vagy DPT '09





Vagy prepares to perform a muscle energy technique on Jianan Wang who went on to become the first Asian athlete to win a medal in the men's long jump at the World Championships.

ries. He wrote several articles on the subject as well as a book and started to gain a following and a clientele, which includes some of the top professional climbers in the world.

Though their sports are very different, there are similarities between elite rock climbers and world-class track athletes. Specifically, poor training or over-training can lead to serious injuries that can keep them out of their game.

Chinese trainers and coaches have, until recently, treated their athletes with traditional therapies like acupuncture and massage and have been skeptical of physical therapy as a way to restore their athletes to good health.

Vagy knew that the practice of physical therapy was relatively new in China, and he had heard that some athletes and coaches might be slightly resistant to his methods. But, he says, he was pleasantly surprised by how open they were to his help.

"I heard that it was a challenge for them to accept Western physical therapy," Vagy says. "But my experience was very different. I feel that those

who came before me have helped pave the way to having easier interactions."

Several other USC-affiliated physical therapists have worked with Chinese athletes in recent years, and Vagy says the results they delivered have increased both awareness and acceptance of physical therapy.

The fact that he was allowed to work with top athletes speaks to new attitudes in China about physical therapy.

## UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

Another of the athletes Vagy worked with was Jianan Wang, an 18-year-old long jumper with a torn hamstring. Prior to his hamstring injury, the team had high expectations for Wang, who had been a junior world champion.

Vagy had just three weeks to prepare Wang for competition.

"It was a really condensed time frame, so I had to work with him twice a day for an hour to

90 minutes," Vagy says.

Wang was ready by the World Championships and managed to jump his way to a bronze medal, making him the youngest long jumper in history, as well as the first Asian athlete to win a long jump medal at a World Championship.

On top of handling tough cases in a high-stakes intense environment, Vagy also thought it was important to try to build relationships with the athletes across a tough language barrier.

He used emoticons on his phone to congratulate them on a good workout, cheered them on at all their practices and taught them secret handshakes to add an element of fun.

"At times it was exhausting, both emotionally and physically," Vagy says. "But we had tremendous treatment results, built strong relationships and continued positive momentum in the attempt to educate China on the benefits of physical therapy."



# RAISING THE BAR

*Davis Koh MS PT '96, DPT '99, MBA '07 helps competitive weightlifters deal with the inevitable aches and pains that come from doing seemingly superhuman tasks.*

BY BREANNE GRADY MCM '10



Davis Koh MS PT '96, DPT '99, MBA '07

**D**avis Koh believes very strongly in helping others.

This passion was born in Koh during his undergraduate years at UCLA and has only grown stronger in his nearly two decades-long career as a physical therapist.

"I realized by senior year that I had narrowed down things about myself," he says reflectively. "I knew I wanted to help people, and help them medically, but also to help them through a process and to help as many different areas of the body and as many different injuries."

His desire to serve others extends to his work with many professional athletes, including a number of Team USA Olympic athletes. He has been working as part of the medical team for a variety of Olympic events — weightlifting, volleyball, bobsled and skeleton, gymnastics and sailing — since the Beijing games in 2008.

"You do feel like you're helping your country," he says of the work. "There is a sense of national pride when we wear the USA medical team clothing, a sense of representation and responsibility when we go out."

Koh first started working with Team USA Weightlifting in 2008 at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Soon thereafter, the United States Olympic Committee invited Koh to be a part of their medical team, where he's been serving ever since.

Since being assigned to the medical team, he has been invited to work at various national and international weightlifting championships.

Later this fall, Koh will be part of the medical team for the International Weightlifting Federation World Weightlifting Championships, taking place Nov. 20–28 in Houston. The competition is a qualifying event for American athletes to represent Team USA Weightlifting in Rio De Janeiro 2016.

"In a typical day, there are some medical practitioners out on the floor to watch over the

athletes who are actually in competition," he says. "There will be other athletes in the back coming in prior to the event needing to get some work done such as magnotherapy, some taping, some stretching an hour or two before their lift."

If an athlete remains in competition, Koh will often perform post-treatments after their lifts.

"It's manual treatment," he explains. "You might be working out rotator cuff strain or on knee pain or something in the lower back to get them as ready as possible with taping, manual techniques or soft tissue mobilizations."

In general, Koh says his job is to help the athletes simply get through the event, to help treat them enough to get them on the floor or advise them not to compete.

"If they get enough points, they get to go to Rio next year," he says. "So they will do anything they can to make sure they get through the event."

If an athlete is injured during competition, Koh and the other practitioners will determine the best form of care.

"They'll get more in-depth treatment to repair any lingering issues from that event or things they've been dealing with from the past that they are just trying to get healed up as much as possible before the next event," he says.

Koh notes that the benefits of competitive weightlifting, if done properly, can outweigh the risks. He explains that weightlifters have tremendous cardiac strength.

"The reason for that is when they are lifting heavy weight, hundreds and hundreds of pounds, over their head, there is an amount of force and muscle tension required to do that," he explains. "The heart has to push past that resistance to get the blood flowing through."

Despite the cardiac benefits, Koh recognizes that aspects of the sport can be very taxing on the body and even result in serious injuries.

"There's no room for margin of error because the weight is so heavy that it can easily snap an





During a clean-and-jerk lift (pictured here), a misplaced bar can pinch the carotid artery, causing the lifter to faint. Koh and his colleagues would pay close attention to make sure the weightlifter didn't seem lightheaded.



elbow, tear through a side or cause knee problems,” he says. “It’s either a very easy day or a tragic day when they’re almost there and they are trying to maintain their form and their elbow snaps off.”

Without a doubt, Koh believes his work with Team USA Weightlifting is incredibly rewarding.

“A lot of the weightlifters are just very hard-working, down-to-earth people that work just as hard as other athletes in other sports who are getting paid millions of dollars,” he explains.

Despite his high-profile Olympic involvement, Koh’s clinical practice in Orange County, helps him stay well-rounded with a variety of cases.

“There is still the 86-year-old stroke patient coming in, the NBA player leaving, the 16-year-old Junior Olympic soccer player coming in and the 47-year-old knee replacement patient going out,” he says.

Koh believes his education at the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy provided state-of-the-art training and connections that have served him throughout his career.

“USC created a very strong foundation with manual skills, with the latest research and with professors who are respected nationally and internationally, so you know you’re getting the

latest research and the latest techniques that a new physical therapist can absorb,” he says.

He has a sense of pride for the USC brand — he currently serves as president of the USC Physical Therapy Alumni Association — and emphasizes the alumni connections and the sense of family that comes into play for Trojan physical therapists.

“You can’t quantify it in money, but you can quantify it in terms of opportunities,” he says.

“The guidance I’ve received from other alumni has been invaluable, and you have a confidence in knowing you have them as your own personal direct line.”

During this lift, Koh says he’d focus on any past or current injuries. “If the female had a recent left knee injury, for example, I’d focus on the mechanics around the knee. I’d also look for asymmetries in mechanics that could lead to back or shoulder injury,” Koh adds.





## MENTORSHIP

# CLINICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

**SHAWN MEAD DPT '13****Clinical Manager****Southland Physical Therapy-Costa Mesa**

BY YASMINE PEZESHKPOUR MCM '17

As clinical manager at Southland Physical Therapy, Shawn Mead DPT '13 splits his time between delivering superior patient care and mentoring novice clinicians through the division's Clinical Education Program. As a former student of the program, Mead used to contact clinics and hospitals to set up affiliation agreements and potential opportunities for fellow classmates. Now in his role at Southland Physical Therapy, he strives to make these opportunities as valuable as possible for future physical therapists.

**What made you want to go into physical therapy as a career?**

I grew up very close to my grandmother, who received extensive physical therapy treatment throughout her later years due to neck and low back surgeries. What her physical therapists did for her forever changed her life. I wanted to do the same thing for others.

**Who were your mentors during physical therapy school?**

One specific mentor of mine was Daniel Kirages ['94, DPT '99]. Had it not been for him, I may not be where I am today. I remember one specific conversation I had with him regarding my struggles during the first semester in managing my personal life with school life. I was close to considering another path in life due to a

personal conflict, but his encouraging and realistic attitude helped me work through it. In general, USC provided mentors who would go out of their way to see their students flourish.

**Why do you think the Clinical Education Program is beneficial to students?**

Skills are only learned and mastered as much as you practice them. Our professors can only teach us so much in the classroom, and there just isn't enough time to master those skills in that setting. Incorporating hands-on treatment with a patient having musculoskeletal dysfunction is very different than hands-on experiences with a healthy classmate of yours.

**What have you noticed working with students from the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy?**

Due to the inherent nature of being part a challenging program, the students bring with them a sense of urgency and outstanding work ethic. They are excited and energetic to utilize the skills they have learned in the classroom and are often times more confident in treating their patients than students from other programs. It really helps to make our job easier as clinical instructors as well.

**What is the most rewarding part of working with current division students?**

I get as much out of taking on a student as they get out of learning at Southland Physical Therapy. They always bring new ideas to the table and see things with a fresh pair of eyes. I think the most rewarding part of it is being able to see a novice clinician blossom into one who thinks and acts like an experienced and mastered clinician.

To become part of the division's Clinical Education Program, visit [pt.usc.edu/clinicaleducation](http://pt.usc.edu/clinicaleducation).





Photo: NATE JENSEN

## CPTA President, Professor Christopher Powers on branding physical therapy for the masses

BY CHRISTOPHER POWERS PhD '96

**P**hysical Therapists “Improve the Way You Move” — catchy, concise and accurate.

CPTA’s new branding slogan to promote the profession says it all. We live in an age of advertising and promotion, in which slogans are used to stand out and highlight the core essence of the brand itself. A brand is not simply a name; it is a promise of potential benefits for the consumer. In the case of the profession of physical therapy, “Improve the way you move” hits at the core of physical therapy practice.

In 2013, the APTA adopted a new vision statement, “Transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.” This vision statement was subsequently adopted by CPTA at its strategic planning meeting later that same year. APTA also identified eight guiding principles to achieve the vision. Under the principle “Identity,” it is stated that: “The physical therapy profession will define and promote the movement system as the foundation for optimizing movement to improve the health of society. Recognition and validation of the movement system is essential to understand the human body’s structure, function and potential. The physical therapist will be responsible for evaluating and managing an individual’s movement system across the lifespan to promote optimal development; diagnose impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions; and provide interventions targeted at preventing or ameliorating activity limitations and participation restrictions. The movement system is the core of physical therapist practice, education and research.”

For the physical therapy profession, establishing a brand centered on the concept of “improving movement” makes sense on several levels.

First, the consumer continues to be confused by the overlap of services provided by different health care providers. For example, chiropractors,

massage therapists and acupuncturists all claim to have a solution for low back pain.

Second, the public does not have a clear picture of what a physical therapist does. In other words, what makes the physical therapist’s approach to patient care different or unique? Third, the profession lacks a unified message that clearly defines the primary role of the physical therapist in health care. Although physical therapy practice is inherently diverse and can encompass a myriad of practice settings, we all share a common perspective: We help people to move better!

In 2015, CPTA embarked on an ambitious public relations campaign to promote our branding slogan. At its December 2014 meeting, the CPTA Board of Directors approved a substantial increase in our marketing budget for 2015. However, this is just a small step towards changing the public’s perception of physical therapy. Given the high costs of print and radio advertising, our efforts using these forms of marketing will be limited. As such, we are seeking the engagement of the entire profession at the grassroots level to fully promote and advance the practice of physical therapy. This means members and prospective members alike! All physical therapists and physical therapy assistants are encouraged to use the graphic files and advertising materials developed by CPTA to get the word out.

Human health and quality of life depends on one’s ability to move efficiently. Physical therapists provide a unique perspective on health and wellness across the lifespan, based upon our distinctive knowledge and expertise in movement. Evolution requires us to continually refresh our competitive advantage in the health care market. CPTA is committed to sending a strong message to consumers about why they should see us first!





## Celebrating 10 Years

Earlier this year, the DPT Class of 2005 held its 10-year reunion, with more than 30 alumni making their way back to their alma mater. The day's events included tours to reacquaint alumni with the division's facilities, a picnic and, to keep the children happy, face painters and balloon twisters.

### 1960s

#### **NANCY (SAMUELSON) GRIEPENTROG '65**

retired several years ago. She now volunteers with CASA and has been traveling and participating in medical missions abroad. She and her husband live in rural Western Colorado.

### 1970s

**TOM EGGLETON '73, MS PT '79** has sold his practice and retired, freeing up his time to continue teaching and sharing his knowledge in physical therapy, manual therapy and craniomandibular disorders.

### 1980s

**LESLIE FREEDLE-BOREN '78, MS PT '80** sold Coast Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine in La Jolla, Calif., after 12 years and raised her son Brett. For the past 15 years, she has worked part-time relief/vacation and home health and has recently retired. Her post-retirement plans include raising puppies for Canine Companions for Independence and mentoring local high

school students about physical therapy as a profession. "This is a good vocation for those of us who are retired and want to give back to our profession," she said.

#### **SALLY (CHAN) HAGMAN MS PT '86**

received her DPT from the University of Montana in May 2015. She has a daughter in college and a son who is a high school senior. She says she looks forward to being an empty-nester and the new ministry opportunities that will bring.

### 1990s

#### **KATH ANNE (BAUMEL) WEBER MS PT '95**

continues to work in outpatient orthopaedics part time and is raising three children, Fritz, 8; Will, 5; and Katelynn, 4. She also started her own business, stretching clients using a dynamic stretch approach called Fascial Stretch Therapy.

**CHRIS SEBELSKI DPT '98** earned a PhD from Saint Louis University in July 2015. Her dissertation was entitled "Leader Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Academic and Clinical Physical Therapists."

**STEPHANIE (JONES) GREENSPAN DPT '99** began working as an assistant professor at Samuel Merritt University this fall.

#### **COMMANDER JEFFREY LAWRENCE**

**DPT '99** was recognized as the United States Public Health Therapist of the Year for 2014 at the U.S. Public Health Commissioned Officer Scientific Symposium. He was recognized for his clinical and community public health contributions impacting health care and readiness at the local and national levels. Commander Lawrence is on active duty with the U.S. Public Health Service and is presently serving on the Navajo Nation as the chief therapist and incident commander at the Pinon Health Center in Pinon, Ariz.



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## 5

Things To  
Know AboutBarbara  
Sargent

BY HOPE HAMASHIGE

**Barbara Sargent PhD '13 MS '17 joined the faculty of the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy shortly after finishing her doctor of philosophy degree. She has been a physical therapist for 25 years and, although she misses it, working at USC is her dream job. Here are five things you need to know about Barbara Sargent:**

1

**Sargent, a native of Huntington Beach, Calif., still lives a few miles from where she grew up.** Like a lot of dyed-in-the-wool Southern Californians, she has a coping mechanism to get her through the long and sometimes traffic-snarled commute from Orange County to USC's Health Sciences Campus. To pass the time, she listens to books on tape. And while she would like to listen to more "stuff about the brain," she has recently been taking in sci-fi classics like *Frankenstein* and *The Time Machine*.

2

**Sargent is the mother of two college-aged boys, both of whom are aiming for careers in the creative arts.**

One is a musician; the other, a cinematographer. In this case, Sargent says, the apples really do fall far from the tree. She and her husband, an engineer, can count on exactly two fingers how many creative types they are related to, and that's their two boys. "We have no idea where they came from," she says, with a laugh.

3

**Sargent, who was a clinical physical therapist for 25 years before getting a PhD, was inspired to seek more training because of her patients.**

She worked frequently with children with cerebral palsy and found herself wanting to find ways to improve their selective movement — not just their strength and flexibility. She returned to school with them in mind. "I wanted to contribute to research in that area so that we can optimize their outcomes," she says.

4

**Sargent is one of four USC-affiliated scholars funded by the Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute.**

The money comes with an unusual catch: It requires she get another master's degree, this time in statistics. Studying statistics was never a dream of Sargent's, but being a better translational scientist — someone who takes discoveries from the laboratory and puts them into practice — is, and she thinks this will help. "The program has been going on for six years, and previous people in that cohort went on to receive \$16.3 million in funding," Sargent says. "It has been successful in pushing people to the next level." She is pretty sure this will be her last master's degree.

5

**Part of her research tries to answer the question whether giving children physical therapy at younger ages will lead to better outcomes.**

Her current research is with infants, which poses one very serious problem: Babies do not follow directions well. In an effort to get over that hurdle, Sargent is programming a robot to mimic a child's movement to see if this "toy" will inspire them to move more.



(continued from page 30)

**JASON PARK DPT '99** says Southland Physical Therapy continues to grow, with a third location opening in 2014. He and **JAMES LEE DPT '05** have plans to open a fourth location in 2016. The vast majority of the physical therapists working at Southland Physical Therapy are USC graduates, Park says.

## 2000s

**JANIS (CAMPBELL) BROWN DPT '01** celebrated her 10th anniversary at the Martin Center for Chronic Pain and her fifth as adjunct faculty at the University of North Texas in Denton.

**KEVIN MCCLLENAHAN DPT '01** successfully renewed his orthopaedic specialist certification and will be launching a new sports physical therapy residency program based out of Los Gatos Orthopedic Sports Therapy in July 2016.

**SAM WARD PHD '03** was promoted to professor (with tenure) at the University of California – San Diego in the departments of radiology, orthopedic surgery and bioengineering and was appointed the vice chairman of research in the department of orthopaedic surgery.

**KARLA (CORDOVA) BRAVO DPT '05** is now a geriatric certified specialist and has obtained her Certified Exercise Expert for Aging Adults credential from the Academy of Geriatric PT.

**LINDSEY (FONG) TAYLOR DPT '05** married Steve Taylor in August 2014. The couple welcomed son, James Kwai Taylor, on May 12, 2015.

**WILLIAM WORKMAN DPT '05** earned his orthopaedic specialist certification and is currently a continuing education chair for the California Physical Therapy Association, representing the Golden State's northeast district.

**THAOMY (NGO) BELTRAN DPT '06** received board certification in pediatrics. Her second child, Lanna, was born last May.

**KIMIKO (YAMADA) HENG DPT '06** celebrated the first anniversary of the Adelante Move Forward Exercise Class for Cancer Survivors, which she helped start. She says she continues to enjoy encouraging cancer

survivors to learn different ways to work towards better health and wellness in survivorship.

**BRIAN WILKINSON DPT '06** was appointed assistant professor of physical therapy at Pacific University in August 2015. He dedicated his success to his former classmates and instructors who saw that he never reached his ceiling as a physical therapist.

**BETSAIDA CRUZ DPT '07** and her husband **JASON CRUZ DPT '07** had a beautiful wedding on Oct. 1 at Skylinks Golf Course in Long Beach, Calif. She said it was “an amazing wedding full of love and laughter.”

**CLARISA MARTINEZ DPT '09** is a clinical research coordinator at the division. She recently gave birth to daughter, Zoe Rose Wasiewicz.

**REBECCA SANDERS DPT '09** recently started working at Agile Physical Therapy in Palo Alto, Calif. She was recently named one of the APTA's “Emerging Leaders.” Check out the article in the October issue of the APTA's *PT in Motion*.

**MIHO URISAKA DPT '09** founded Orthopedic Movement Physical Therapy, an outpatient private practice in Manhattan, specializing in the Jones Institute Fascial Counterstrain manual therapy.

**JARED VAGY DPT '09** expanded his role of adjunct instructor of clinical physical therapy in the USC doctor of physical therapy program. He was added to the teaching faculty for Basics of Patient Management and now teaches in both the spring and fall semesters. He also made a donation to the division through Theraband of more than \$4,500 in rehabilitation tools to replace outdated equipment.

## 2010s

**CHAD BEAUCHAMP DPT '11** became a board certified sports specialist in 2013. Earlier this summer, he opened a new practice called REPAIR Sports Institute in Huntington Beach, Calif. He also co-wrote an article published in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine* about Lisfranc Injuries.

**JESSE PHILLIPS DPT '12** currently works as a sports rehabilitation supervisor at Providence

Saint John's Performance Therapy, which recently became a clinical site for the USC's sports residency — with Pepperdine University serving as the athletic site — thanks to the efforts of Phillips and **BENJAMIN BUTTS DPT '08**. Phillips also recently treated an Australian national basketball player, traveling with him to the Oceania Championships.

**ELIZABETH (GALDI) RACIOPPI '08, DPT '12** was recently promoted to clinic manager at Revolution Physical Therapy Weight Loss in Chicago, Ill.

**CHRISTINE STEINBAUGH DPT '12** received a clinical instructor certification in applied functional science and visceral manipulation.

**JASON WHITMAN DPT '12** has opened two clinics in Southern California called Positive Physical Therapy and Fitness.

**ASHLEY (WHEELER) MCLEISH DPT '13** earned a trigger point dry needling certification in applied functional science from the Gray Institute.

**DANIELLE (FENNING) BOUFADEL DPT '14** completed her neurologic residency at the USC/Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center earlier this year.

**DANIEL CARDENAS DPT '15** went on a three-week adventure to Thailand with **BINH LY DPT '15**, **ERIK NGUYEN DPT '15**, **WILL HILL DPT '15** and **DANG TON DPT '15**. He also passed his licensing exam and got hired at Scripps for outpatient orthopaedics.

**ALYSSA (PATRICK) ELDER DPT '15** has been named the first movement disorders physical therapy fellow at Re+active Physical Therapy in conjunction with UCLA's neurology department.

In addition to being a division adjunct faculty member, **RAMI HASHISH PHD '15** is currently working as a senior consultant in biomechanics at Exponent and has co-founded a footwear technology startup called JavanScience.

**LUKE PHILLIPS DPT '15** got married in July 2015.

**JACQUELINE TRUONG DPT '15** will begin her orthopaedic residency at Kaiser Permanente next year with a completion date of 2017.



**SHARE YOUR  
CLASS NOTES**

Got some exciting news to share with your fellow alumni? Tell us about your awards and grants, publications, professional developments, births and marriages at [pt.usc.edu/Stay\\_in\\_Touch](http://pt.usc.edu/Stay_in_Touch) for possible inclusion in an upcoming *inMotion*.

## *My inspiration is mentoring others to achieve great things ...*



Jeanine Gunn MS PT '93, DPT '99 was awarded the division's "Distinguished Alumna Award" at this year's White Coat Ceremony and Convocation on Aug. 27.

I am passionate today about helping others visualize their career potential because Dr. Helen Hislop saw possibilities in me before I could see them myself.

My goal is to encourage those I work with in similar ways. I want them to be fearless when pursuing innovative ideas because all it takes is one idea to transform and further develop our profession. If the idea generators inspire and engage others in their process, then we grow as a profession and will be recognized for our accomplishments and contributions to society. Dr. Hislop fostered individual and collective growth in physical therapists by identifying and promoting each individual's unique skills and abilities. She inspired me to look beyond the clinical aspects of physical therapy and recognize that my skills could be used in many ways, and there are no limits to what we can accomplish and the lives we can touch.

As I reflect back to my acceptance into the USC master's of physical therapy program, I always smile thinking about the phone call from Jo Ochoa informing me that I had been moved from the wait list and would be starting PT school in two months. At the time, I had no idea the impact this would have on my professional and personal growth, my development as a leader and my life. I had never been to California before, and I vividly remember landing at LAX and navigating the traffic and numerous freeways required to get to the Health Sciences Campus. Was this

ever different from the small towns and highways in Indiana!

On the first day of class, we gathered to meet Dr. Hislop, our department chair, and her amazing USC faculty and staff. We did not know at the time who Helen was, and it would take many years for us to clearly understand the lasting impact she has had on our profession. From day one, Helen changed my perception of what it meant to be a physical therapist, a professional and a leader. She challenged us individually, pushed us collectively and was always there to lend a helping hand whenever necessary. I was probably not the typical USC student. I was a high school teacher and coach determined to pursue my dream of becoming a physical therapist. I did not have the exceptional science background of many of my peers, but what I may have perceived as a disadvantage was seen as a strength by USC.

During the time spent earning our master's degrees, we not only learned how to become proficient, practicing clinicians, we were introduced to the professional expectations of physical therapists and inspired to become patient advocates.

Education about the skills and abilities required to 'fight' for what is best for our patients and our profession and to understand the legislative process began in our first year.

As an example, the Stark legislation was being argued at that time. We had the opportunity during class to write letters to legislators regarding

the impact on our patients of referral for profit.

This advocacy activity resulted in USC and my classmates subsequently developing and hosting a statewide symposium to demonstrate the importance of involvement in our professional association and the need for us as professionals to consistently 'give back.' We had the APTA president Marilyn Moffat and California chapter president Patsi Sinnott as our keynote speakers. Both the sponsors and attendees gained knowledge and perspective regarding the changes we can make for our patients by impacting society through involvement.

To this day, when big or small things happen in my career, I always reflect on how Helen helped to mold and shape the PT that I am. Helen's amazing intuition, insight and intellect intertwined to know when to push us, pull us up or give us a big hug. At the end of our education, we had become capable physical therapists, *and* we were all better individuals because of Helen and her leadership.

Thank you to Helen and all my mentors. I now challenge each of you to reflect on what you have learned and what has been given to you as we all need to give back to our profession and to society in any way that we can.

The opportunities are limitless — take advantage!



A young child with light brown hair, wearing a colorful striped long-sleeved shirt, is sitting at a wooden table. They have white frosting smeared on their chin and are holding a cupcake with pink frosting. Several other cupcakes are on the table. The background is a solid reddish-brown color.

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We encourage you to explore the option today by calling the Office of External Relations at the USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at (213) 740-0428 or by emailing [caleno@usc.edu](mailto:caleno@usc.edu).



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