

# GW SOTA Newsletter

The George Washington University's Student Occupational Therapy Association

January 2024 Issue

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS, SOTA!

Written by Jenny Kim

Wow! Can you believe how fast the fall semester has gone by? Great job to all our graduate students for finishing fall courses! The two cohorts have been working so hard in their classes and fieldwork. We are also proud of our members for their commitment to SOTA this past fall semester.

We hope everyone enjoys the new year and gets some much-needed rest and relaxation during break. Want to see what others in the program have been up to? Check out our faculty and student interviews on pages 6-9 and some self-care tips on pages 3-4!

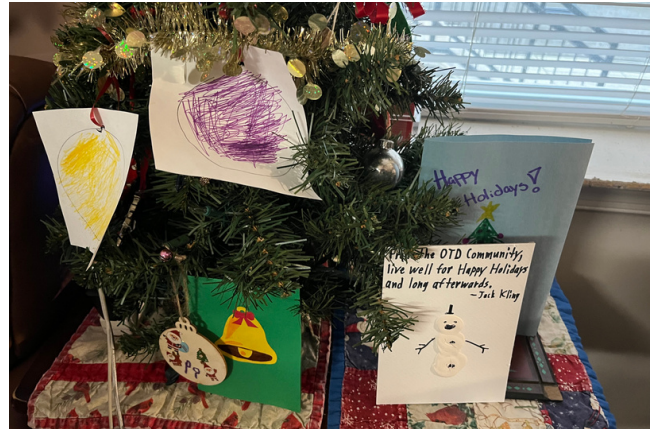
We look forward to seeing you all again towards the end of the month at our next SOTA meeting on January 24th. Happy New Year!

# HOLIDAY CARDS EVENT

Written by Celia Accardi

The community service chairs, Marina and Justine, enjoyed watching D1 and D2 participate in the holiday cards event. Cards were created and donated to two facilities: a non-local senior living facility and a local residential home for those with intellectual disabilities. The non-local organization, Rosener House, is a home run by Peninsula Volunteers Inc. (PVI) that houses seniors with chronic and cognitive challenges. Marina was first introduced to the PVI organization in 2020, which allowed for seamless communication to get the holiday card event started. Similarly, Justine formed ties with the local organization, L'Arche, in 2023. Both organizations were instantly interested in the idea as they felt residents would view the cards as "something [the residents] would love and would brighten their spirits," Marina said.

Cards were dropped off at L'Arche the weekend of 12/8 and sent to Rosener House the weekend of 12/15. Justine mentioned that when she dropped off the cards, "the core members were



very excited." She then fondly reflected on a memorable interaction she had with a core member she frequently interacts with saying, "I remember I gave him the card and I was like, 'Hey! My friends and I made you this card!' He read it and then I saw him go straight to his room and hang it up. I don't know, even though he didn't say anything, seeing his excitement just really touched me."

The residents and assistants at each home were very grateful for the contribution GWU SOTA made to brighten the holiday season. L'Arche assistants noted that this event initiated their interest in building a potentially lasting relationship with our organization.



Following the success of this event, Marina and Justine are eager to do something similar in the future since it simultaneously provides SOTA members flexibility and involvement opportunities.

Thank you, again, to all the members who helped make the holidays a little brighter!



## SELF-CARE START TO THE NEW YEAR

Written by Jenny Kim

Happy 2024! Start the New Year off strong by prioritizing yourself! Self-care is the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's well-being and happiness. It's so easy at times to forget to take care of our bodies, especially when times get busy. It could look like skipping lunch and decreasing sleep to cram some last-minute studying in. As future practitioners,



we must remember to prioritize all health, including our own!

To prevent burnout in 2024, try these self-care activities! They are great to do on your own or with others.

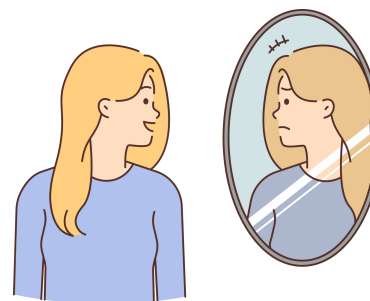
### **Vision Boards for a Fresh Restart!**

Take time to be intentional with your goals. Consider the following: Do you have any new short-term or long-term goals? What are your priorities this year? What are you dreaming of? Vision boards are a great way to refocus your goals, practice self-reflection, and set intentions! Use old magazines, paper, and craft supplies for an artsy night or try a digital version on [Canva!](#)



### **Practice Affirmations for Grounding**

Do you engage in positive self-talk? Practicing affirmations can help challenge self-sabotage or negative self-talk. Try these [simple activities](#) to develop small, impactful habits! Saying affirmations out loud can be an empowering practice.



Here are a few affirmations to get you started:  
**“I love who I am right here in this moment.”**  
**“I let go of what no longer belongs.”**  
**“I forgive myself and am worthy of love and peace.”**



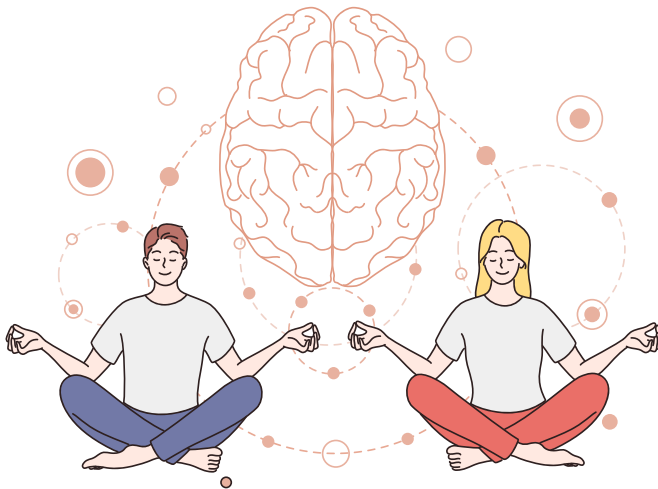
### **Mindfully Engage in Movement**

Movement does not have to be strained or arduous to be considered a “good workout”! Movement can be relaxing and at your own pace. Have you ever tried chair dancing? What about light yoga? Try these and similar videos for a workout session!



### **Meditation for Peace**

Meditation is a great way to practice mindfulness, increase calmness, reduce anxiety, and enhance attention. Try these guided mini meditations by Headspace. These meditations are less than 5 minutes long and are a great way to introduce yourself to the practice.



These tasks are adaptable and can be modified for any specific needs. If you try out these activities for yourself be sure to let us know what you think! Check out the resources linked under each activity for your next self-care day.

# THE INSIDE SCOOP: SOTA EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS

Written by **Jenny Kim**

Don't forget-SOTA will be hosting elections for executive board positions this spring!

If you have been interested in a leadership opportunity or getting more involved within SOTA, try running for a position! The SOTA Newsletter will feature executive board positions for the next few months to give members the inside scoop behind each role. What positions would be a great fit for you?

## Community Service

### **Responsibilities**

- Organize and promote volunteerism within the community
- Research and communicate with community organizations for collaboration
- Recruit volunteers from SOTA for community service events
- Set up and take down event-related materials

### **Important Skills**

- Communication
- Time management
- Willingness to participate
- Research ability
- Optimism and motivation
- Teamwork

### **Most Used Resources**

- Google Excel, Canva



**Interested?** *This role is great for those with a passion for community service and are active participants in SOTA. A goal within this role is to build intentional, community partnerships.*

## Professional Development

### Responsibilities

- Establish SOTA members' professional interests and goals
- Organize professional development opportunities and events
- Communicate and collaborate with healthcare professionals in the community

### Important Skills

- Initiative
- Organization
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Networking
- Scheduling

### Most Used Resources

- LinkedIn, Instagram, AOTA, other professional organizations



**Interested?** This position is great for exploring club interests and increasing networking opportunities! This role can be a great club resource.

## Fundraising

### Responsibilities

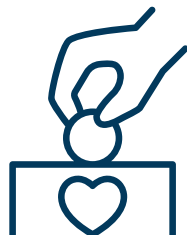
- Organize and host fundraising events
- Collaborate with the Treasurer and SOTA Advisor to ensure there is appropriate funding for SOTA's mission, including:
  - community service events
  - philanthropic endeavors
  - conferences

### Important Skills

- Time Management
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Money Management

### Most Used Resources

- SOTA Faculty Advisor



**Interested?** Someone with a creative and fun spirit can really make this position flourish!

## Public Relations

### Responsibilities

- Promote the GW eOTD program to prospective students
- Serve as a liaison between cohorts
- Help create promotional materials for National OT Month in April

### Important Skills

- Positivity
- Passion
- Energy
- Friendliness

### Most Used Resources

- Collaboration with the executive board and GW faculty from other programs



**Interested?** Anyone who is passionate about OT and mentorship would be a great fit for this position!

## NEW YEAR'S TRADITIONS

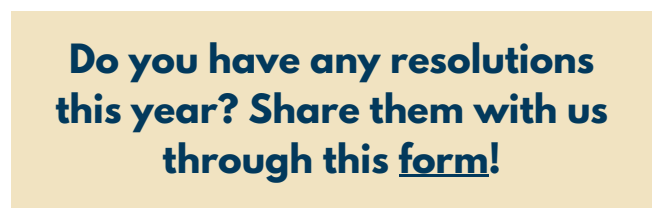
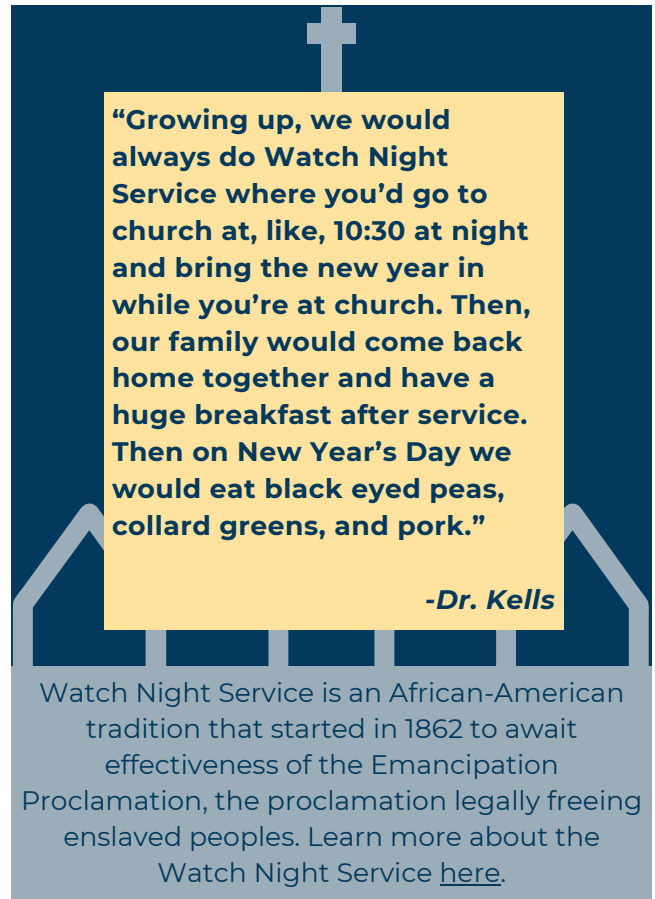
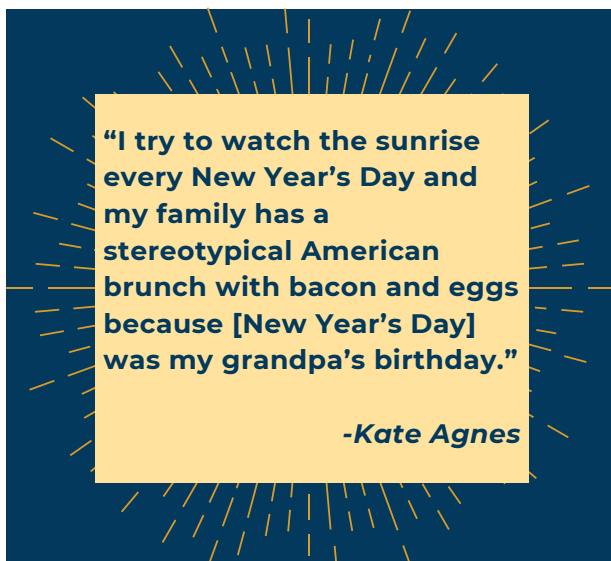
Written by Jenny Kim & Celia Accardi

Did you know? New Year's resolutions are a long-standing tradition that has been around for 4,000 years. This tradition has transformed throughout the years based on time, region, and culture. Historians suggest that the earliest people to engage in this practice were the ancient Babylonians. At the start of the new year, they would make promises to their gods to repay any debts and return any objects that they had owed. These promises served as what we know as the first New Year's resolutions!

In today's culture, we celebrate New Year's very differently. We take a more secular view and tend to focus resolutions on self-improvement. However, according to

popular media and surveys, only about 8-9% of people stick to their resolutions. We have all learned how new habits and routines can be challenging to adopt. How can OTs impact this evolving tradition to be more effective for those who practice it? Could there be a need for OT in traditions like these?

Speaking of traditions, we thought it would be fun to see what New Year's traditions our SOTA members try to participate in annually! Look at what they had to say:



# PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT: DR. KELLS

Written by Celia Accardi

Dr. Kells is a well-accomplished OT, who embodies hard work, persistence, and humility. Her OT career officially began in 2011 and in 2021, she began shifting into academia with hopes to broaden her reach to the next generation of OT practitioners (OTPs). When Dr. Kells is away from the classroom, she participates in her preferred leisure activities, which include baking, cooking, and bowling. She also enjoys traveling, immersing herself in various cultures, and spending time with family. However, in DC, she prominently focuses on her top professional goal: to become an established, confident professor.

Down the line, Dr. Kells hopes to be a reliable resource for her students. She expresses her vision by saying, "I want to get to a place where I feel like I'm doing a good job, I'm doing well by y'all, and that I'm the resource you can look to as a student or new practitioner down the road. I just really want to establish myself as a reliable



*Dr. Kells on vacation at the  
Outer Banks, NC*

resource as a professor. I want to find that balance in life having a good work life, having a good personal life, [and] being happy in everything around me." She practices reaching these goals by setting priorities, delegating tasks, and holding herself accountable.

Coming from a big family has helped with this. From a young age, Dr. Kells would work with her siblings to meet common goals. Those experiences helped her understand how to navigate task delegation and the strengths of working on a team. This skillset fostered her helpful nature, which would be helpful down the line in her career.

Clinical instruction is a prime example of where Dr. Kells' abilities thrived. She would offer to help OT students whenever the opportunity presented itself. This was something Dr. Kells reflected on following a car accident well into her career.



*Dr. Kells baking Christmas cookies with her  
nephews*





*Dr. Kells' parents and siblings*



*Dr. Kells working as a clinician alongside her PT, OT, and SLP coworkers*



*Dr. Kells in her faculty advisor role at the Community Service Event: St. Matthews Health Fair*

Residual impairments from the accident caused her to consider potential career options as she knew a shift would help her prioritize her physical health. Due to her passion for OT and enjoyment in educating future clinicians, she chose to pursue becoming an OT faculty member.

Timing aided Dr. Kells in obtaining her current role as a successful professor of GWU's eOTD program, which in turn led her to become the faculty advisor of SOTA. This was an exciting venture for Dr. Kells to take on, as the last time she was able to actively engage in a SOTA was her own in 2010. Her school's SOTA format at times felt more obligatory than fulfilling. This inspired her to help curate GWU's SOTA into a fun, creative, and inspiring environment where students can flourish outside of the classroom. "I want it to be a space where we can engage and have opportunities to grow and curate skills outside of the curriculum," she says. She also noted that SOTA is a great way for students to build connections with their peers as they navigate GWU's hybrid format.

While this added obligation may at times become stressful, Dr. Kells welcomes the challenge knowing the lasting impacts it will have for SOTA members.



*Dr. Kells with her OT sister, Crystal*



## DR. KELLS' 2024 GOALS:

1. **Personal:** To continue to physically pushing herself to limits she hasn't before

- eg: DriTri at Orange Theory Fitness



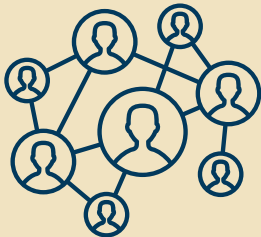
2. **Professional:** Establish more partnerships to provide opportunities for herself and her students

- ie: Collaboration with the GWU engineering department



3. **SOTA related:** Collaboration with other local schools

- ie: networking with other SOTAs in the area



Dr. Kells after completing a 5k in San Francisco, CA



To right: Dr. Kells with her AOTA 2022 poster presentation alongside mentor, Dr. Jen Weaver

# JANUARY CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 <b>12:00-1:00pm:</b> Executive Board Meeting	19	20
21	22	23	24 <b>12:00-1:00pm:</b> All member meeting	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1 <b>12:00-1:00pm:</b> Executive Board Meeting	2	3

Created by Celia Accardi

## JANUARY EVENT DETAILS

**Thurs, 1/18 @ 12:00pm:** Executive Board Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/95851977609>

**Thurs, 1/24 @ 12:00pm:** In-person @ Watergate

# FEBRUARY REMINDERS

February SOTA meetings are currently set to all be virtual. Please mark the dates on your calendars. You can also find the links to these meetings in an email from Meghan Moriarty ([Meghan.Moriarty@gwu.edu](mailto:Meghan.Moriarty@gwu.edu)) on 1/4/24 that has the subject line "January and February Meeting."

Members will be notified by the secretaries if any meeting details change:

**Thurs, 2/1 @ 12:00pm:** Executive Board Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/93424091446>

**Thurs, 2/8 @ 12:00pm:** All-member Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/95117173618>

**Thurs, 2/15 @ 12:00pm:** Executive Board Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/97241942093>

**Thurs, 2/22 @ 12:00pm:** All-member Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/91012252752>

**Thurs, 2/29 @ 12:00pm:** Executive Board Meeting (via Zoom)

- Link: <https://gwu-edu.zoom.us/j/94966399230>

Created by Celia Accardi

## WANT TO BE FEATURED IN THE NEXT SOTA NEWSLETTER?

Reach out to Celia or Jenny by 1/10/24 to write a featured article!

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[celia.accardi@gwmail.gwu.edu](mailto:celia.accardi@gwmail.gwu.edu)

