



News

from the
Kazakh Ergotherapy Association

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Word from the president

It was with great joy and thankfulness that we as an association looked back on the past two years, during our annual board meeting in August. Since the start of KEA in 2015, we have intentionally been sharing about Occupational Therapy through trainings, presentations and our website (www.ergotherapy.kz) and facebook account (www.facebook.com/kazergo).

It is wonderful to see partnerships being developed and different healthcare workers being interested in developing OT in Kazakhstan.

In this newsletter, there is a brief introduction to one of our partners in Taraz called Caring Hearts. Two OT's from our association have had the privilege to develop OT training with them for caregivers.

If you or your organization is interested in OT training, don't hesitate to contact us!

We hope you enjoy reading our latest news with new stories!

On behalf of KEA,
Gerdine Lok - Interim-President

Ethics

As Occupational Therapists, we help people in different stages of life to participate in the things they want and need to do, through the therapeutic use of everyday activities (occupations). To do our work well and protect the quality of our interventions, we work according to a set of ethics. Developing a new profession in Kazakhstan also challenges us in contextualizing our (Western) ethics. While we are aware of cultural differences, our personal and professional attitudes remain unchanged. We as OTs demonstrate personal integrity, reliability, flexibility, open-mindedness and loyalty in all aspects of our professional role. These attitudes help us as we meet individual clients and their families. It means, for example, being open to listen to the struggles a mother of a child with CP is expressing or exploring a young man's desires and dreams for his future after he's been severely injured in a car accident. It means doing what we as therapists have promised to do for our clients and families ... and so much more.

Core to our beliefs is that we are client-centered and are always looking for areas where we can help to improve his or her quality of life and through that the quality of life of the family they are part of!

Introduction

Hi, my name is Petra. I'm an Occupational Therapist and I live with my husband and two young boys in a small town called Shelek, a couple of hours east of Almaty. And I am KEA's first member.

In Australia, I worked in the areas of community health and pediatrics; and I am looking forward to seeing how I can develop a role here in this community. The first step has been raising awareness of the skill and scope of an occupational therapist. There is very little support for people with disabilities and their families in this town, so people are eager to hear how occupational therapy can help.

It really excites me to see what KEA is doing in and for this country, and am keen to get alongside where I can. My hope and vision is to see people with disabilities engaged in meaningful occupation, proving to themselves and their community their value and ability to contribute.

On the left is a picture of Shelek's first accessibility ramp, built as part of renovations to our organization's property. Small steps (or lack thereof!) towards promoting universal access and community participation for all people.



A story from Almaty

Linda Beadle - Occupational Therapist in Almaty

Rosa is a nine-year-old girl. She was born with Down's syndrome. When she was three years old she had a stroke, which caused the right side of her body to be affected. After the stroke, her family were told that she couldn't do anything for herself anymore and they took on full time care for her.

When we saw her, instead of focusing on all the things she couldn't do, we looked for her abilities and we found many! Our concern was also for her mother who was lifting her and doing everything for her. We could see potential damage to her mom's back and joints as her mom got older and frailer and as Rosa grew taller and heavier.

The home program we drew up for the family focused on Rosa doing more for herself. We taught techniques for Rosa to get up off the floor by herself rather than being pulled up by her mom. We encouraged the family to let Rosa do as many of her activities of daily living by herself - washing, dressing etc. so that she could gain more independence. We encouraged them to do this slowly - bit by bit. We also gave them ideas of how to encourage her to use her arm and hand affected by the stroke. Her arm wasn't completely paralyzed, there was some voluntary movement, but she showed signs of hemi-neglect i.e. forgetting that she has two sides of her body because of the paralysis and reduced sensation on that side. For this family, the main challenge was motivating Rosa. For so many years Rosa had had everything done for her, why would she want to work now to do things by herself? The family was incredibly positive and they found ways to encourage and motivate her - like singing songs and clapping and cheering for her after she had accomplished something by herself.

We look forward to seeing all that Rosa can accomplish with perseverance and lot more singing!



Partnership in Taraz

Beth Turnock – Director of Caring Heart Public Fund

Caring Heart Public Fund is working in Taraz, Kazakhstan with orphans, single mothers and children with disabilities. This year we've started the first training program to focus specifically on helping other professionals such as social workers and therapists, work with children with disabilities and their families. Societal attitudes are shifting and more parents are keeping their children with special needs but much support is needed. It's also critically important to see each child with a disability as unique, having potential and to be treated in a way that fosters the best environment for growth and development. If given a chance, with the right assistance, and a lot of hard work many of these children can learn to care for themselves and make great physical and cognitive gains. For us, it's about seeing potential and helping to support these precious children and their families. As more opportunities are given for therapy and a more holistic approach is taken to care for families, these children will have a chance at a much brighter future.



Edited by Bouwine van Eeden Petersman

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