

http://occupational-therapy.advanceweb.com/Web-Extras/Online-Extras/OT-of-the-Year-2016-Honorable-Mentions.aspx?utm_term=HEAR%20THEIR%20STORY&utm_campaign=Enews%3A%20Meet%20the%20OT%20of%20the%20Year&utm_content=email&utm_source=Act-On+Software&utm_medium=email&cm_mmc=Act-On%20Software-_-email-_-Enews%3A%20Meet%20the%20OT%20of%20the%20Year-_-HEAR%20THEIR%20STORY



advance
healthcare
NETWORK

FOR
OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY PRACTITIONERS

OT of the Year 2016: Honorable Mentions

These OTs deserve a spotlight on their hard work and dedication to occupational therapy.

By Dillon Stickle

[View Comments \(0\)](#)[Print Article](#)

Michele Morgan, OT/MAEd, and Debb Carlton, OT/MBA



ADVANCE: Why did you decide to become an occupational therapist?

Morgan: I respect the value occupational therapy places on the use of purposeful activity to help individuals shape their abilities, find meaning and quality in life, and ultimately achieve an identity. Working in this field allows me to combine creativity and theory. I am engaged and passionate about my work and I hope that passion is passed along to my students.

Occupational therapy allows me to serve as a role model, teacher, counselor, environmental manager, and consultant.



Carlton: I enjoy the daily opportunities to identify a person's challenges, isolate their strengths, and generate the goals needed for them to achieve meaning in their lives.

ADVANCE: What patient population do you work with and why?

Morgan and Carlton: We work in a center-based program for students physically impaired/cognitively impaired from ages 14-26 in a general education high school. We also work in the summer with at-risk youth who have a variety of barriers that may prevent them from obtaining competitive employment. Michele also works at the elementary level. Working in a school environment from elementary through post-secondary allows us to work with students across time. As their acting transition coordinators, we are able to guide students and their families through the exciting, and sometimes painful, realities of navigating the adult world with a disability.

ADVANCE: What is the most challenging aspect of your work?

Morgan and Carlton: It is challenging and gratifying to develop a program that meets established goals while maintaining the vital connection between the personal interaction and the theory it supports. We use machining and homesteading to meet our therapy and transition goals. Our students create functional art with technology-driven machines used in today's manufacturing environments. Our student work is displayed in local boutiques, an art education center, and a store run by special-needs adults in a work-training program. For our homesteading program, we have an aquaponics system that produces organic salad greens, herbs, and tilapia. We work with pet shops to support the breeding and composting of worms, we have a small covey of quail, and we're exploring animal-assisted therapy with an on-site rabbitry. Along with strong support from our district, we benefit from understanding our personal strengths and weaknesses. We are confident in our abilities individually, but feel we are highly effective when we combine our assets. Michele generates ideas for new projects, finds community partners, and writes grants. Debb organizes materials, builds jigs, and develops custom workstations.

Visit them on their website, wwtot.weebly.com, and give them a follow on Twitter and Instagram @michelewwtot.

Dillon Stickle is on staff at ADVANCE. Contact: dstickle@advanceweb.com