



AOTF Announces the Harlan and Rita Temple South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association Endowed Scholarship

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation (AOTF), Bethesda, Maryland, announces the creation of the Harlan and Rita Temple South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association Endowed Scholarship.

Harlan K. Temple, a successful businessman and farmer, and his wife Rita, residents of rural Davis, South Dakota, are believers in the value and importance of occupational therapy. Working in collaboration with the South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association, the Temples have now endowed a perpetual fund to support the education of occupational therapy students in South Dakota.

Temple was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and uses a powered wheelchair for mobility and, for more than eight years, he and his wife have offered their farm as a site for occupational therapy classes. The students learn about occupational issues unique to a farm and ranch population and specifically farming and ranching with a disability. They receive a firsthand look at the modifications and adapted strategies that Temple has used in order to complete farm tasks. Since 2003, 150 occupational therapy students have visited the Temple's farm.

"God has blessed us in so many ways that we wanted to share our blessings by leaving a legacy with occupational therapy students for their education," said Temple, who enjoys meeting all of the students and learning about why they decided to pursue a career in occupational therapy.

"South Dakota is very rural with small numbers of occupational therapy practitioners as compared to most states in the country, said Stacy Smallfield, president of the South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association. "Because of the generosity of the Temples, we will now be able to offer financial assistance to occupational therapy students from South Dakota. We hope that the scholarship will assist residents of South Dakota in pursuing occupational therapy education in their home state and that ultimately occupational therapy practitioners across the state will continue to influence health and wellness in South Dakota."

The endowment will fund scholarships awarded to students enrolled in an accredited occupational therapy educational program within the State of South Dakota and who are members of the South Dakota Occupational Therapy Association. Endowed scholarships continue in perpetuity, supporting future generations of professionals and leaders in occupational therapy and touching countless others who benefit from their expertise. Each year, the investment earnings for endowed funds on deposit (the principal) are used to award scholarships and the principal remains intact. "This is an enduring and time honored approach to creating lasting legacies that assure the future of occupational

therapy,” said AOTF Executive Director, Charles Christiansen. “We are grateful to the Temples for their vision and commitment to the future of the field.”

Through December 31, 2011, any new funds contributed to an endowed scholarship will be matched dollar-for-dollar by AOTF. Unprecedented in the history of AOTF, the matching program reflects the Foundation’s concern about the rising costs of professional education and its commitment to partner with colleagues in occupational therapy community to provide scholarships that offset the educational costs associated with becoming a practitioner in the field.

“Harlan and I have become close friends over the last seven years because of this experience,” continued Smallfield. “When he approached me about wanting to start a scholarship for occupational therapy students I was familiar with the matching funds that AOTF had available this year and was able to explore that scholarship opportunity with him. Ultimately, he chose to pair with SDOTA and AOTF because the matching funds allowed for the scholarship to be endowed and because other people will be able to contribute to the fund in order for it to grow and benefit many more students in the future,” she said.

The American Occupational Therapy Foundation is a 501c3 charitable, scientific and educational organization established in 1965. Its mission is to advance research, education, and leadership in the field of occupational therapy and to raise public awareness of the importance of enabling individuals to participate fully in life, regardless of their physical, social, mental, or developmental circumstances. To learn more about AOTF, the Scholarship Matching Grants Program or to make a gift, visit www.aotf.org

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