

Global OT

Online and in person, Tracey Ellis '93 helps families around the world

Thursday, July 10, 2014

•
•
•



TRACEY ELLIS '93 BRINGS AN APPETITE FOR INNOVATION AND A SPIRIT OF MACGYVER-ISM TO DELIVER OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES AROUND THE WORLD.

As an occupational therapist, Tracey Ellis '93 is trained to solve problems.

So when her Washington, D.C.-based Ellis Therapeutic Consultants began delivering occupational therapy (OT) to American families living abroad and was quickly overwhelmed with work, she found a solution some in the high-touch field of OT might find surprising.

She took her services online.

“At each location we went to, as soon as people found out we were in town, we had 15 meetings set up,” Ellis says of her early days of traveling, primarily visiting embassies, schools, and hospitals. “There are families all over the world that are just looking for support.”

Before she began fielding international inquiries, Ellis, whose Ellis Therapeutic Consultants serves children with special needs in the Washington public schools, assumed that Americans living abroad would have easy access to services for their children with special needs. It turns out they don't, despite an overwhelming need, particularly for services for children with autism spectrum disorders but also for kids with less complex learning disabilities.

So with an appetite for innovation and an OT's spirit of MacGyver-ism, Ellis harnessed technology like Skype and iPads to deliver her services remotely to families as well as to international schools. “We're the special ed team, but online. We provide them training, we do weekly coaching, we have office hours on Skype,” she says. As her overseas work boomed, she launched a second company, [International Diagnostic Solutions](#).

“Geographic barriers should not prevent a child from having support they need to succeed,” says the Peterborough native. “We're making it possible for families to go abroad.”

Ellis holds a Master of Public Health degree from George Washington University but was never tempted to leave direct-service practice. “There was such a need and I loved the work that I was doing so much, and my practice was growing without my having any business skills,” she says. She started in private practice in 1994, incorporating Ellis Therapeutic Consultants in 2000, and provides extensive services to the Washington, D.C., public schools.

She credits her time at UNH with instilling in her many life lessons. Her UNH professors “taught me to think outside the box,” and from OT professor emerita Betty Crepeau she learned the importance of sustaining relationships and connections. Now, in addition to sending an annual Christmas card to her mechanic from Durham auto shop Smitty's, she's found ways to circle back to UNH and the OT department.

On the board of the Boulder Crest Retreat for Veteran Wellness in Virginia, the former ROTC cadet is working with UNH's Northeast Passage for guidance on recreational activities for people with disabilities while extending that organization's reach beyond New England. And as a member of the development board of the College of Health and

Human Services, she's helping the college expand cultural diversity by connecting the college to Hebrew and Hadassah University in Israel.

The quality of UNH's OT program also helps Ellis connect with fellow Wildcat occupational therapists in a meaningful way. "If I have a resume from someone who went to the UNH OT program, it's almost a done deal that I'm going to hire them," she says. "I see a lot of what comes out and I know that the program at UNH is really spectacular."

Originally published by:

UNH Today

- WRITTEN BY:

[Beth Potier](#) | Communications and Public Affairs | beth.potier@unh.edu | 2-1566

SUCCESS



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

[MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkedIn

UNH Today RSS feeds

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234

Copyright © 2021 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)