REPORT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Our object in forming a District of Columbia Association was to promote occupational therapy. We believe that we can best do so by education of aides and of the general public.

The association is composed of 62 paid members and is staunchly supported by countless friends. The members are those persons who are actively engaged in occupational therapy in the District of Columbia, and the following hospitals are represented: District of Columbia Tuberculosis Hospital, 150 patients, 1 paid worker; United States Veterans' Bureau Hospital, of which Miss Morris is to give a report; St. Elizabeth's Hospital for psychopathic patients, 4000 patients, 35 paid workers; Walter Reed General Hospital, 700 patients and 37 aides.

The activities of the association have mainly consisted this past year of exhibits and meetings.

In May the Handicraft Guild invited the district association to put on an exhibit, at the Art Center, of work done in the different hospitals. The exhibit was for the purpose of educating the general public as to what was being done in the hospitals of the District of Columbia. In order to make the general public understand the work, rather than merely to put on a craft exhibit, we endeavored to feature the therapeutic side shown by diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of the patient. We exhibited the work most clearly demonstrating the progress of the individual patient. The members of the district association firmly believe that occupational therapy embraces more than

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1 Read at sixth annual meeting of the American Occupational Therapy Association, held at Atlantic City, September 25 to 29, 1922.
merely craft work. We believe that crafts are not the only vehicle of expression for occupational therapy. We stand for academic and commercial work. Americanization of foreigners and illiterates is more valuable to many patients than work in crafts. Equally important is recreational activity, and when there is no recreational director, this work falls on the occupational therapist.

The exhibit at the Art Center lasted several days. The various hospitals of the District sent aides, one at a time, to take charge of the exhibit and explain it to the visitors. Various meetings were held during this time. We had a Congressional Day, Doctors’ Night, Occupational Therapy Night, etc. For speakers we had Dr. Keber, Dean of Georgetown Medical School, Dr. Peabody, Superintendent of the Tuberculosis Hospital, Dr. Pellew, the authority on dyes and dyeing, and Col. H. M. Evans. The District Association sent an exhibit to the convention of the Federation of Women’s Clubs at Chatauqua, New York. This exhibit was for the purpose of educating the general public as to the meaning of occupational therapy; its place and use in the care of patients. The exhibit was composed of work from the District Tuberculosis Hospital, the Walter Reed General Hospital, St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, and the United States Veterans’ Hospital. In order that the work and the conditions under which it was made might be properly explained, the district association chose one of its members—Miss Morriss, Superintendent of Aides of the Veterans’ Bureau, to represent the association at Chatauqua.

The meetings of the district association—we have held six the past year—have been comprised of business meetings, lectures or addresses of educational value to the aides, followed by an hour of general discussion over a cup of hot chocolate or a plate of salad.

In February a meeting was held at the Walter Reed Hospital. We had addresses by Dr. White of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital on Psychiatry and the place of an aide in a psychiatric hospital. Capt. Pratt also spoke on occupational therapy for psychiatric patients Dr. R. Tunstall Taylor was kind enough to repeat for
us the very fine lecture he gave at the meeting of the national association last September, and Major J. W. Sherwood, Educational Director at Walter Reed, spoke on the subject of organization of a department of occupation therapy. After the addresses, the meeting adjourned to another building where the Walter Reed aides had arranged an exhibit and served a very fine supper for a cold night.

In February the association held a meeting to elect a delegate and decide upon the policy to adopt at the New York meeting of the House of Delegates of the national society. In August another business meeting was called to elect delegates and decide upon a policy with regard to this annual meeting of the national society. The district association has endeavored to cooperate in furthering the policies of the American Occupational Therapy Association.