



Jesika Horáková

The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award 2018

Jesika Horáková, a third-year occupational therapy student from Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh received The Barbara Tyldesley Student Award, which was sponsored by The Constance Owens Trust, in January 2018. This award aided an 8-week international placement in Canada, London, Ontario province at Veterans Care Program, from January until March 2018.

The Veterans Care Program is resident-focused and aims to provide complex, continuing and long-term care for Canadian war veterans that will support their needs and promote their health and well-being. This program houses 192 in-patient beds within five wards. The client group that the student worked with were Canadian veterans who served in World War II or the Korean War and other veterans who served in other more recent.

The main priority of the program is to support end of life care. For Occupational Therapists within this setting has a broad focus, including maintaining independence in activities of daily living or activities important to the veteran; maximizing mobility by provision and training of mobility devices and provision of specific adaptive equipment. Other activities within the placement included: transfer assessments, pressure injury management, and falls prevention. During the placement, I looked at different kind of mattresses and wheelchair cushions to help alleviate pressure injuries or minimize risk of getting them. Assessment and wheelchair provision is part of the occupational therapist's role in this program, considering the person holistically to choose the best fit for the client, looking at different kinds of wheelchairs and their features, and what factors needed to be considered when choosing one. When choosing wheelchair cushions occupational therapists assessed and carefully chose one to fit the client's needs, looking at their sitting posture, balance and symmetry.. Many other great opportunities emerged during placement enabling the student to gain knowledge about occupational therapy in Canada, and working with veterans.

The facility has a beautiful outside environment surrounding the buildings. The setting also included an art programme where veterans they create work, sell the creations they make, and socialize with others. A Therapeutic Recreation Specialist takes care of different social activities for veterans such as bingo, gardening or events such as Valentine's Day. The student was able to take part in a Music event, prompted by clients to dance the "Canadian Hokey Pokey" which was fun and a warm introduction into the setting. .. Hobbs (2017), believes that being a Veteran is to be a part of a Veteran culture. It was a pleasure to meet with those who have served their country, and gain a better understanding of this culture.

Jesika said "I am very grateful that The Constance Owens Trust provided me with the opportunity with a unique overseas placement that enabled me to experience a placement in the beautiful land of Canada and enabled me to meet and work with the war veterans at the Veterans Care Program in London, Ontario"

Hobbs, K. (2017). Reflections on the Culture of Veterans. *American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, SAGE journals*, [online] 56(8), pp. 337-341. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3928/08910162-20080801-07> [Accessed 20 Sep. 2017].