As we mark the 10 year anniversary of the inception of the MUSC CARES clinics, it is important to understand the clinic’s humble beginnings. In 2005, the CARES Medical clinic provided primary care services staffed mostly by students in the College of Medicine (COM), physician assistant programs, and pharmacy who were supervised by faculty in each of their colleges. Physical therapy services started at the CARES Medical site in the fall of 2005, but not on a consistent weekly basis. In 2010, the CARES Therapy clinic expanded to provide both physical and occupational therapy services and the decision was made to move to its current location at the MUSC OT and PT clinical outpatient space on Ashley Avenue. In 2010, the CARES Therapy clinic initially provided services only one night a week. Since that time, services have expanded and we are open two nights a week and serve upwards of 700
uninsured and underinsured clients a year. In 2015, the CARES Therapy clinic received the Service Learning Award presented by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education demonstrating just how big an impact the Therapy clinic has made on the Charleston community.

While the mission of the CARES Medical and Therapy clinics are to "provide free access to primary health care for the underserved and disadvantaged of the greater Charleston metropolitan area" it is a two edged sword with the secondary objective of providing a hands on clinical experience for a multitude of programs at MUSC. Since opening the Ashley Avenue clinic in 2010, the CARES Therapy clinic has been run by an executive OT, PT, and MHA student board with the supervision of faculty advisors from physical and occupational therapy. The clinic is truly an environment that develops patient-first clinicians with an in-depth understanding of how to best serve the community. The clinic is always finding ways to stay as up to date as possible even with the limited funds which are provided mainly through grants and student organized fundraisers.

One of the biggest changes that the CARES Therapy clinic has undergone recently was the switch to Electronic Health Records (EHR), which has improved operations at the clinic in more ways than one. Since there are often multiple students working with any one patient over the course of their care, the EHR system gives the students and clinicians a more unified way to organize, review and share patient information. It is easy to see that while the methods in which the CARES clinic serves the community have changed significantly since 2005, the goal has not: serve the disadvantaged people of Charleston the best we can. To celebrate 10 great years of growth and improvement, the CARES Medical and Therapy clinics will be hosting a Gala Celebration on January 15th, 2016 at Founders Hall in West Ashley.
Patient Spotlight
Isaac Sims

1. How do you like CARES?

“I like everything about CARES. My experience has been great, and the staff is super friendly.”

2. What is Mr. Sims’s goal at CARES?

Mr. Sims’s goals are to be able to walk again and get back to work. His short-term goals include increasing safety and mobility during housework and recreation. His long-term goals are to improve dorsiflexion to improve foot clearance during gait and to improve plantarflexion to increase pushoff during gait.

3. How is Mr. Sims progressing?

Mr. Sims has been coming to CARES for about 5 weeks. His active and passive dorsiflexion and plantarflexion range of motion has increased. He also met one of his long-term goals of increase dorsiflexion active range of motion by 10 degrees. Way to go Mr. Sims!!

Clinician Spotlight
Nathan Mansell

1. Where did you get your undergraduate/graduate degree?

College of Charleston: Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training

MUSC: Doctor of Physical Therapy
2. Did you always plan on being a physical therapist? If not, which career path were you initially headed?

My original plan was to be an anchor on Sportscenter, but soccer injuries introduced me to athletic trainers and physical therapists. That, in combination with the realization that I would be awful at being an anchor (stuttering), led me down this path.

3. What made you want to become a physical therapist?

There are many reasons, but initially it was my involvement with sports and the fact that PT’s were a key cause in getting someone back to doing what they loved. As I investigated other professions I realized that PT’s have a distinct and potentially unrivaled opportunity to build genuine relationships with people within the healthcare setting. PT’s actually get time with their patients, which allows them to treat the whole person, not just the condition or body part.

4. What drives you to be a better PT?

As time goes on it becomes more and more evident to me that living a life that is other-centered provides more fulfillment and satisfaction than one that is me-centered. This truth motivates me to become a better PT because my increased understanding of the human body/mind has the chance to change someone’s life.

5. Why is CARES so important to you?

As a student, CARES provided me a way to serve the needy and “lepers” of the world while practicing the skills that would prepare me for my future as a clinician. It's an opportunity to serve others while also providing a tangible benefit to those who are serving.
6. Do you work with other medical professions at your practice? How much do you value inter professional experience?

Of course. I work with PTA’s, ATC’s, PA’s, and MD’s/DO’s regularly. All of these relationships are vital to maintaining a high standard of care, thus placing a very high value on effective inter professional communication.

7. What area of your chosen profession particularly interests you?

Orthopedics in general and sports medicine specifically.

8. What does a perfect day look like for you?

Any combination of shenanigans, soccer, football, dachshunds, snow skiing, coffee, cinnamon rolls, french toast, pancakes, breakfast in general, and my wife.

Student PT Spotlight
Margaret McKinney

1. Where did you get your undergraduate/Master’s degree?

UNC Chapel Hill BS Exercise and Sport Science 2013

2. Do you see yourself staying in Charleston after you graduate? If not, where are you headed?

I am not sure! I have loved Charleston and love the people here but I am not sure! I would like to stay in the Southeast and hopefully either begin a residency position or apply for jobs in the neuro field.

3. What made you want to become an PT?

I have always loved fitness and people and PT is the perfect job for that! I volunteered at UNC in inpatient rehab and absolutely loved it. It was then that I knew that I wanted to apply to PT school.
4. What drives you to be a better PT?

What drives me to be a better PT is probably all that I don't know and all that I can learn. I am amazed everyday by how much there is to learn and improve patient care! Every time I am in CARES, I learn something new from a fellow student, supervising clinician or a very insightful patient!

5. Why is CARES so important to you?

When I look back at my time at MUSC, I think that CARES will be at the forefront of my memories. CARES has provided me with invaluable clinical experience treating patients, ability to network with local clinicians and most importantly, provide much needed therapy services to people in our local community.

6. What area of your chosen profession particularly interests you?

Neuro! Dr. Bowden has lumped me into the "neuro nerds" crew and I couldn't be more proud to call myself a "neuro nerd"!

7. What does a perfect day look like for Margaret McKinney?

My perfect day would be a day on vacation with my family in the Caribbean on a diving trip! Waking up early, diving all day and ending with a sunset on the water, good food and laughs with my brother and parents.

8. Did you always plan on being an PT? If not, which career path were you initially headed?

Since high school I thought that I wanted to be a PT but for about two years in college I thought that I would be a sea turtle researcher. I spent a summer as a sea turtle intern for the NC State Parks at Hammocks Beach State Park. I had a blast working with sea turtles but I missed being with people.

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Student OT Spotlight

Sara Atkinson

1. Where did you get your undergraduate/Master's degree?

I received my Bachelor of Science in Biology at Coker College in Hartsville, SC
2. Do you see yourself staying in Charleston after you graduate? If not, where are you headed?

Charleston is an awesome place and I would love to stay here! However, I am still open to trying out other cities outside of SC.

3. What made you want to become an OT?

My first detailed experience with an OT was when my grandma was very sick and made her way through the continuum of care. She was originally admitted to the hospital, then hospice, back to regular hospital room, skilled nursing, and now back at home. Throughout her transitions she was almost always seeing an OT. I loved how the OTs interacted with her and really focused on what was most important to her during her recovery. It was then that I fell in love the profession and realized I could blend my love for science and love for people in a really awesome way!

4. What drives you to be a better OT?

I am driven by the potential change that someone in our profession can make on a person's life. When an OT uses their skills in the correct ways, they can treat someone mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, etc. I love the holistic approach OT brings to treatment of a client and I am striving to bring that to the table as a future practicing clinician.

5. Why is CARES so important to you?

The CARES Therapy Clinic is a rare opportunity for students to take knowledge learned in the classroom and put it into practice while still only doing didactic coursework. The CARES model is also helpful for students who need to visually see techniques being used rather than just reading about it in class.

It is a privilege for us to serve the clients who attend our clinic because they are helping us just as much as we are helping them! Although Charleston has many health facilities in the
area, our community is still underserved. It is organizations like CARES that are addressing the issue and striving to better our community!

6. What area of your chosen profession particularly interests you?

My particular interest so far is in neurorehabilitation! If I had to choose tomorrow on a setting, I would probably say acute care. I like the idea of being one of the first good things present in such a bad time in someone's life.

7. What does a perfect day look like for Sara Atkinson?

A perfect day in the life of Sara Atkinson would be going to a city I've never been before with my fiancé, trying out the local cuisine, and site seeing. We love to travel and my best moments have been on our trips!

8. Did you always plan on being an OT? If not, which career path were you initially headed?

Being the huge nerd that I am, I considered being a researcher in Plant Pathology and Fungal Genetics. I worked in a fungal genetics lab in undergrad and presented our projects in California and Germany. However, a 6-week internship in the lab is all it took for me to realize I needed to interact more with people in order to be happy!