

## Golden Anniversary Celebration

### The Physical Therapist Assistants Profession Turns 50

By: Teresa Powell, LPTA

**PTA 50**  
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the professional designation of Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA). As demand for physical therapy services grew following WWII and the polio outbreak, physical therapist began to discuss the utilization of and need for skilled assistants to help them meet growing demands. In 1967, the American Physical Therapy Association established educational standards, scope of practice, licensure, and eligibility for APTA membership for PTAs. Two years later the first class of PTAs graduated. Since that first class of 26 students the number of PTAs has grown to over 65,000 across the US.



#### **What is a Physical Therapist Assistant?**

A PTA is a licensed health care professional, who provides physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist (PT). They are required to attend an accredited PTA program graduating with associate degree. In addition, they are required to pass a national exam for licensure and participate in regular continuing education to maintain their license.

PTAs plan and conduct therapy sessions to help patients to achieve the goals they set with their PT. PTAs possess the skills to help patients increase their strength and endurance, improve their balance, and to improve their ability to successfully perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTAs work in a wide variety of settings including outpatient clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, women's clinics, schools, home health, and sports facilities.

#### **Are there PTA's at Virginian Outpatient and Rehabilitation?**

Yes, we are fortunate to have four wonderful PTAs providing quality care.

### Teresa Powell

Teresa graduated from Texas A&M University in 1985 with a Bachelor of Business Administration. Although she enjoyed her business career, she decided to pursue her lifelong desire to work in the physical therapy field. In 2017, she graduated from Northern Virginia Community College with an Associates of Applied Science, Physical Therapist Assistant and joined The Virginian Rehab team. Teresa is a member of the APTA and a certified LSVT BIG practitioner.

### Karla Merola

Karla received a B.A. from George Mason University in 1999. However, motivated by a lifelong desire to care for others, Karla pursued an Associates in Applied Science degree in Physical Therapy Assistant from Northern Virginia Community College. Prior to graduating in 2016, Karla spent her final clinical affiliation at the Virginian and found her interest in working with the geriatric population and patients with Parkinson's Disease. Karla has since received her certification for LSVT BIG and is member of the APTA.

## Kelley Grant

Kelley graduated from James Madison University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science and a concentration in Pre-Physical Therapy. She then graduated from Northern Virginia Community College in 2012 with an Associates of Applied Science in Physical Therapy. She joined the Virginian rehab team in 2012 to pursue her clinical interests in neurological rehabilitation and geriatrics. Kelley is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and an APTA credentialed clinical instructor. She is also a certified LSVT BIG practitioner in our Parkinson's Program.

## Heidi Pena

Heidi earned her Associates Degree in Physical Therapy from Northern Virginia Community College in 1993. She has provided Physical Therapy services in clinical settings, including orthopedic outpatient clinics, hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities. She earned an Associate's Degree in Massage Therapy from Northern Virginia Community College in 2007 then obtained her NCTMB State license to provide massage services in the medical orthopedic setting. In 2011, Ms. Pena joined the adjunct faculty of the Massage Therapy Program at NVCC. In 2015 she completed 135 hour study program in Manual Lymphatic Drainage and Complete Decongested Therapy through the National Lymphatic Network. She is fluent in Spanish.



*Don't always think you have the "Luck of the Irish" ...STAY SAFE!*

### UPCOMING EVENTS COME AND JOIN US!!!

- PARKINSON'S SYMPOSIUM - MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup> AT 9AM AT MARIOTT FALLS CHURCH  
FOR REGISTRATION, PLEASE CLICK [REGISTER@WWW.PFNCA.ORG](mailto:REGISTER@WWW.PFNCA.ORG)
- KNOCK OUT PARKINSON'S BOXING GROUP RETURNS MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup>  
CLASSES EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY AT 3PM IN B2 OUTPATIENT GYM
- PERSONAL BOXING PROGRAM WITH KELLEY GRANT  
EVERY WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY AT 3-5 PM IN B2 OUTPATIENT GYM

### VIRGINIAN OUTPATIENT REHABILITATION

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