



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH  
UNIVERSITY®  
*Physical Therapy  
Program*

# Mount St. Joseph University

## Department of Physical Therapy

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April, 2025



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## School of Health Sciences Comes Together for a Day of Service

*By Dr. Christy Heinrich*



Sciences Day of Service. Fifty-five students, faculty, and staff dedicated part of their weekend to volunteering, making a tangible difference across nine community organizations.

From packing food and clothing to organizing donations and spending time with at-risk youth, their collective efforts provided much-needed support to individuals and families facing hardship.



Volunteers served at a variety of local organizations, each playing a critical role in improving lives:

- Matthew 25 Ministries – Packed and sorted disaster relief materials for global distribution.
- Freestore Foodbank Distribution Center – Organized and packed food donations to fight food insecurity.
- Hope's Closet – Sorted and organized clothing for children in foster care.
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore – Helped organize donated furniture and household materials to support affordable housing initiatives.
- St. Vincent de Paul Clothing and Home Resource Center – Provided clothing and household essentials to families in need.
- St. Vincent de Paul Cantina Choice Food Pantry – Assisted families in selecting groceries and stocked pantry shelves.
- God Uses Simple Things – Organized clothing, shoes, and other basic necessities for underserved individuals.
- Lighthouse Youth Services – Prepared resources for at-risk youth to support their journey toward stability.



This day of service was a powerful reminder that even a few hours of volunteering can create meaningful change. Whether sorting donations, providing food assistance, or simply offering kindness and support, each volunteer played a part in strengthening our community. The School of Health Sciences continues to embrace the spirit of service, proving that together, we can make a lasting impact. Thank you to all who participated—your generosity and dedication are truly inspiring!

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## Clinical Education Spotlight

*By Hadley Faris (Class of 2025)*



I am excited to share about my final clinical experience at Majestic Care of Cedar Village, where I have had the opportunity to work alongside a team of highly skilled physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants over the past five weeks. Majestic Care is a healthcare facility in Mason Ohio that offers a range of services including skilled nursing care, assisted living, independent living and long term care. As a physical therapy student in this setting, I have gotten the opportunity to work with patients in all of these various settings with a diverse range of diagnoses including CVA, COPD, post operative TKA and THA, fractures, balance impairments and so much more. Each case has presented unique challenges and provided opportunities to develop my clinical decision making skills. A unique aspect of Majestic Care is that they offer aquatic therapy, and I have had the opportunity to participate in this type of therapy

A skill that I have developed significantly throughout this experience is my interprofessional communication. Working closely alongside other therapists, nurses, nurse aides, social workers and other healthcare professionals has provided me with numerous opportunities to engage in collaborative patient care. Another area of communication I have developed throughout my time here is family and caregiver education. This type of education is especially important when working with the geriatric population. I have learned how to effectively communicate patient progress towards therapy goals, continued therapy that is needed to facilitate a safe discharge, as well as education on how family may assist with mobility.

One of the most unique aspects about Majestic Care is that all of the physical therapists are graduates of Mount St. Joseph University. As a current student of MSJ, it has been meaningful to be surrounded by professionals who share the same educational background and passion for patient care that I have experienced throughout my own studies. The familiarity of our shared educational foundation has fostered an open and collaborative learning environment. It has been empowering to engage in conversations about treatment strategies, evidence based practices and clinical decision making with therapists who understand the framework and physiology of the MSJ program. Further, all of the therapy staff are truly exceptional patient advocates. They consistently go above and beyond to ensure that patients receive the care they need.

My clinical instructor Steve, is the true definition of a mentor. He consistently pushes me out of my comfort zone and provides continuous support, guidance and encouragement to further my confidence in myself as a student clinician. His expertise and sharing of knowledge have helped develop me both clinically and personally. He creates a positive learning environment, challenges me to think critically, consistently offers constructive feedback and encourages self reflection, which has made me a well rounded student clinician. I am truly grateful for Steve's mentorship which continues to play a pivotal role in shaping my professional growth.

I'm extremely appreciative for the experience I've gained through my clinical rotation at Majestic Care of Cedar Village. I'm proud to be part of a profession that allows me to make such a tangible difference in the lives of others, and I'm especially proud to continue the tradition of excellence that Mount St. Joseph University instills in its students and graduates. I could not recommend this placement more. I have learned so much, grown more than I thought possible as a student physical therapist and will carry the skills and experiences I

educational environment!

## SPTA 13th Annual Golf Outing

*By Dr. Eric Schneider*



Mount St Joseph University's Student Physical Therapy Association held its 13<sup>th</sup> annual golf outing on April 12, 2025 at Neumann Golf Course. A total of 27 foursomes participated in the outing and we received a record number of donations this year. Proceeds from the outing will go directly toward supporting our students attend unique professional and educational opportunities such as state and national conferences and seminars, community service projects, and mentorship programs. As always, 10% of the proceeds raised from the event are donated to charity. This year's contribution will go to the [be.well, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's community based Wellness Program](#) for children with chronic or complex medical needs.

Thank you so much to all of those who donated to this year's outing, especially our title sponsors:

- [Reliable Transportation Solutions](#)
- [Pendleton Art Center](#)

- [AHEAD](#)
- [Lagunitas Brewing Company](#)

The outing would not have been possible without the hard work of our outing's organizers, Isobel Brown, Emily Brewer, Tanner Perry, Ally Muench, Dave LeCount, and Beth Bergdolt from the DPT Class of 2026, as well as the rest of the SPTA members who volunteered their time. Planning for next year's outing will start soon so stay tuned for more information.

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## MSJ DPT at CSM

*By Ben Routhier and Emily Brewer (Class of 2026)*



Ben Routhier, SPT, '26, Emily Brewer, SPT, '26, Tyler Schnitzler, DPT, '24, Lisa Dehner, Professor and Chair of Physical Therapy

### *Ben Routhier, SPT, '27*

CSM provided me with a remarkable experience that gave me the opportunity to network, learn more about up-and-coming technologies in physical therapy, and explore my interest in sports physical therapy. I discussed some of the newer research with experts in overhead athlete physical therapy and grew my connections in the field. CSM sparked my interest in pursuing a residency after graduating from The Mount's DPT program. It has made a lasting influence on my future in physical therapy, and I highly encourage anybody who is interested to attend.



*Emily Brewer, SPT, '26*

My experience at CSM was nothing short of amazing and I am so grateful I was given the opportunity to attend. During my time at CSM, I was able to attend various educational courses and expand my knowledge beyond that of the MSJ DPT curriculum. My favorite course I attended was on a new care model for post-partum women. Physical therapy after giving birth is not the standard of care, however, it should be. This course was so refreshing and as a physical therapy student wanting to specialize in pelvic floor therapy, I hope to be able to implement this model of care in my future practice. Overall, the best part of my time at CSM was being surrounded by so many other physical therapists who have a passion for this profession. I am more excited and prepared than ever to begin my clinicals so that I can apply the knowledge and skills I learned during my time at CSM.

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## Iron Core

*By Mary Grace Kelty, SPT, '27*



My name is Mary Grace Kelty, and I am a first-year student at the Mount St. Joseph Doctor of Physical Therapy program. I had the opportunity to volunteer for Iron Core this semester. Iron Core is a strength and conditioning program for current adaptive athletes to work on improving strength, endurance, balance, and coordination for their specific sport goals. Each athlete is paired with two undergraduate or graduate students to train for one hour each week for a total of eleven weeks.

I have never coached strength training before, so I was nervous and wanted to be prepared to give my athlete the best training. Before starting the leaders created training modules which helped volunteers to understand why to strength train, the components of strength training, and how to adapt exercises. The leaders were helpful throughout the entire process at answering our questions to create the best plan for our athlete. I was paired with a 13-year-old female who has a right amputation at the hip and plays wheelchair basketball. On the first day my co-coach and I performed outcome testing to track her progress through the ten weeks. We came up with a muscular endurance, strength, power, cardio, and goal specific test to test on the first day and at the end of the program. Each week my co-coach and I together made a workout plan to work on our athlete's specific goals. Our athlete wanted to work on her upper body strength in propelling her wheelchair and shooting during basketball. We also worked on accuracy to help with her shooting. Each week she came in excited to be there and learn. She has been so fun to work with

has improved on the final week.

This opportunity has really helped me to feel more confident and excited to work with patients. It has given me the ability to watch an individual's improvement over a period of time. I loved working with my athlete and getting a hands-on opportunity to help her to reach her goals.



## Class of 2026 Visits the Neuro Fit Gym

*By Dr. Monica Myers*



On Thursday January 23<sup>rd</sup> second year MSJ DPT students visited The NeuroFit Gym in Hamilton, Ohio as part of the Neurologic Rehabilitation II class. After learning content on Parkinson's disease and practicing hands on in lab,

for people with Parkinson's disease. Each class focuses on increasing strength, endurance, balance, fine motor skills, multi-tasking, cognitive function, and power." Students received a tour of this unique non-profit by co-directors Amy Beltran and Colleen Schuster. Their mission is to "improve the lives of those living with neurological disorders. NeuroFit offers exercise classes specific to diagnosis, private, and group workout sessions and individualized attention to help individuals with neurological impairments improve their quality of life and reclaim their independence." Class prices are very reasonable and start at \$5 per 30 minute class. If you know of anyone that would benefit from the NeuroFit gym or would like to volunteer, please reach out to [info@neurofitgym.com](mailto:info@neurofitgym.com). Thank you NeuroFit for allowing our students to come visit!



## Alumni Spotlight

*Shelly and Brandon Polking (Class of 2017)*



We are both Cincinnati natives, though Brandon is a true Westsider while Shelly grew up in Montgomery. Brandon enrolled at MSJ for Athletic Training and to play baseball. Shelly went to OSU for her freshman year of undergrad but transferred to MSJ where we both graduated with our bachelor's in Athletic Training in May of 2014. After a few weeks off, and were back on campus for the start of PT school.

We became the inevitable PT couple during our second year in the program. After graduating in May of 2017 Brandon started working for NovaCare-Westside and Shelly worked part-time for Mercy in Rookwood while picking up hours as other clinics needed. We were both absorbing all the knowledge we could being new clinicians! In July of 2018, Shelly started with NovaCare-Colerain and eventually transferred to Westside after Brandon left that office. During our early years we attended multiple continuing education opportunities including Dry Needling, Orthopedic Manual Therapy Certification, Instrument Assisted Soft Tissue Mobilization and KT taping, ACL 3P, Blood Flow Restriction, APTA certified CI, among others between the two of us. As time progressed Brandon has taken more overhead athlete, high endurance running athlete, and vestibular/concussion courses while Shelly has gone into the pelvic floor realm. We both continue to love treating orthopedic cases, as well!



Fast forward to now. We are married, have a great pup named Luna, and our son Easton (born in May of 2024). Brandon is now clinic manager for Athletico at the Delhi and University Square (U2 on UC's campus) clinics while Shelly is a staff clinician for Athletico at the Western Hills office. We both enjoy spending time with family, working out, running marathons, and cheering on the Cincinnati Reds and Bengals. We continue to love what we do and always are looking to pay it forward taking students in our clinics, helping with PT interviews, volunteering at MSJ's 5k, and occasionally being an adjunct for labs on campus.

Our top advice to any aspiring professionals is never stop learning or asking questions and don't be afraid to put the hard work in (people really do notice!). We don't pretend to know everything and science and research is always advancing. Be willing to try something new and fail to better yourself in the long run. And take the opportunities when they present themselves. It will be uncomfortable in the moment, however, that is when the growing usually happens the most!

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Are you a Mount Alum? We'd love to hear from you!  
Click the button below to tell us a bit about yourself and your  
practice and we'll be in touch.

## Join the MSJ PT Alumni Board- Stay Connected, Give Back, and Make an Impact!

Are you an MSJ PT graduate looking for a meaningful way to stay engaged with your alma mater? The Mount St. Joseph University Physical Therapy Alumni Board is seeking passionate alumni to join our team!

Our board serves as a vital link between the PT program and our alumni network.

Members play a key role in fostering community connections, supporting fundraising initiatives, and enhancing social engagement efforts to benefit current and future PT students.

### Alumni Board Responsibilities:

- ♦ **Alumni Engagement** – Assist with yearly alumni events and continuing education offerings for all PT alumni and supporters.
- ♦ **Celebratory** – Help recognize outstanding efforts of PT alumni across all graduating classes.
- ♦ **Program Promotion** – Support program initiatives, including fundraising and marketing for the PT Alumni Scholarship, clinical education partnerships, and opportunities for current students.

### Commitment & Benefits:

- **Meetings:** Held twice a year in the evenings virtually
- **Term Length:** 2- or 3-year appointments, based on member preference
- **Impact:** Strengthen alumni engagement, support program growth, and stay connected with fellow graduates

If you're passionate about giving back to the MSJ PT community, we'd love to hear from you! For more information or to express your interest, please contact Christy Heinrich at [christina.heinrich@msj.edu](mailto:christina.heinrich@msj.edu)

**DONATE**

## Join the MSJ PT Advisory Board- Shape the Future of Physical Therapy Education!

University Physical Therapy Advisory Board is seeking dedicated professionals to join our team!

Our board serves as a vital link between the PT program and the broader healthcare community. By ensuring our curriculum aligns with contemporary theories and practices, members play a key role in preparing the next generation of PT professionals.

#### **Commitment & Benefits:**

- **Meetings:** Held twice a year in the evenings on campus
- **Term Length:** 2- or 3-year appointments, based on member preference

If you're interested in contributing your expertise and insight, please contact Christy Heinrich at [christina.heinrich@msj.edu](mailto:christina.heinrich@msj.edu)

## Support the Program and Students



We gladly accept donations of any amount for the DPT program. The donated funds are used to purchase equipment and supplies for classes, laboratories, and our pro bono clinic. Check out our newly acquired Upper & Lower Body Combo Cycle in the picture above.

We truly appreciate your support for the program! To keep supporting us, please click the button below to donate and choose the Physical Therapy Program.



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