

# Engaged Citizenship

By Sarah R. Blanton, PT, DPT, NCS, Editor-in-Chief

Division of Physical Therapy, Emory University School of Medicine

The sky is a deep Capri blue on this beautiful fall afternoon; just a slight bit of coolness in the air to remind you that the inevitable transition of seasons is upon us. Hard to imagine just a week ago the winds whipped in fury and Mother Nature wreaked havoc, once again. Struck by the devastation, pained to watch the suffering, I was humbled by the resilience I saw in families hard-hit by the storms across the United States and in neighboring countries. News outlets and social media shared stories time and again of individuals reaching out to help others in need. Even in my own little town of Pine Lake, Georgia, folks without power gathered in the neighborhood to share food, hot coffee, music, stories, and themselves. Witnessing this collective support of each other, I thought certainly this is what “engaged citizenship” means.

In this issue, I am excited to have Professors Jeffrey Bernstein, Michael Smith, and Rebecca Nowacek reflect on their book, *Citizenship Across the Curriculum*, which brings together scholars from academic fields to share stories about the “universality of civic education.” Making a powerful argument for the intersection of rehabilitation and citizenship through humanities, they underscore that which humanities teaches us to appreciate—the importance of substantive knowledge and the skills to navigate

ambiguity and complexity. But what they feel might be most important is what we witness in post-storm clean-ups, what drives our work in hospitals and rehabilitation facilities, and what gives our work meaning:

**Finally, and perhaps most importantly, one of the central arguments in our book is that effective citizenship is fundamentally relational, and therefore requires empathy. Being a good citizen requires that a person understand the lives other people experience—their joy and their suffering—and requires that one must work to ease the troubles others face.**

In a time of uncertainty and political unrest, these authors emphasize the critical need to discuss the roles of citizenship across undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. Instead of shying away from difficult political conversations in the classroom, perhaps we should embrace them; treat them as opportunities to teach our students and ourselves the skills to listen and be present, and to truly see the other. Perhaps by engaging in an exploration of those places of difference we can find opportunities to

recognize our similar journeys of joy and suffering. Beginning dialogues about citizenship, for example, may help raise our vision to the broader societal role our rehabilitation professions must play as we navigate our collective futures. How do each of our professions act in engaged citizenship, and how do we cultivate that role individually, in practice, and in community? In our authors' words:

**Indeed, the work of rehabilitation can play a signature role in the rehabilitation of citizenship and community in this challenging time.**

Welcome to the Fall 2017 Issue of JHR!

- Providing a fascinating perspective on the complex intersection of rehabilitation and society, independent scholar Sue Smith reviews *Paying with Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran*. In this book, author John M. Kinder calls for a radical transformation of rehabilitation medicine as we interact with disabled veterans in all their historical, political, and cultural complexity.
- University of Laval, Quebec City, Associate Professor and bioethicist Cory Labrecque, PhD, provides insights into the intersection of religion and the disability experience in his article, "Personhood, Embodiment, and Disability Bioethics in the Healing Narratives of Jesus."
- In her research-based article, Maltese physiotherapist Maria Cynthia deBono explores what it means to embark on the unforeseen journey of acquiring a physical impairment in youth.
- Dr. Joanna Luttrell, PhD, visiting scholar of political philosophy at the University of Houston's Hobby School of Public Affairs, provides a powerful reflection on the experience of "losing her body" after a sudden onset of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
- In her engaging article on sharing stories, Emory Professor of Psychology Robyn Fivush, PhD, presents evidence that patients and medical providers alike benefit by building connections, creating identities, and empathizing with each other through the act of storytelling.
- Through candid and reflective interviews, Sierra Weiss, Tara Olayeye, and Jit Tan explore the experiences of disability that occur in a variety of relationships with differently-abled individuals.
- In "The True Weight of Stigma," physical therapist Cameron Jadali candidly discusses lessons learned when he reflects on how previously unrealized biases affected his interaction with an overweight patient.
- As a guest contributor to our Historical Perspectives in Art series, physician J.O. Ballard, MD, engages the art of Andrew Wyeth to help Penn State medical students sharpen their observational skills and develop an empathic understanding of the patient's lived experience of illness.
- Finally, poetry by Anju Kanwar, PhD, and Bruce Greenfield, PT, PhD, pull us into the poignant experience of loss. Missing her mother's funeral in India, Kanwar tries to come to terms with her grief, new life, and learning to say goodbye honorably, in "The Game." In his poem "Imprisoned,"

Greenfield mixes memory with present reality as he seeks to imagine experiencing a life-changing injury.

We are excited to have Deborah Bowman, professor of Bioethics and Clinical Ethics and deputy principal (Institutional Affairs) at St. George's, University of London, join our Editorial Board Consultants. As former editor-in-chief of the BMJ journal Medical Humanities, Professor Bowman brings valuable experience to JHR. In 2016, she was given the prestigious honor of an MBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), awarded by the Queen of England for outstanding service to the community for

her Services to Medical Ethics.

Thank you for joining us. We hope you enjoy this issue.

If you are interested in submitting your work to JHR, please review our Submission Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions sections. If you are considering being a reviewer, please contact Dr. Sarah Blanton: follow the Contact link, indicate the content area you are interested in reviewing, and attach your CV.



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