



# The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

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OJOT Sponsor Profiles

Occupational Therapy

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Eva M. Richardville, OTR, ATP, CDRS, CAPS

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## **Sponsor Profile:**

**Eva M. Richardville, OTR, ATP, CDRS, CAPS**



*The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy* (OJOT) is pleased to recognize Eva M. Richardville, OTR, ATP, CDRS, CAPS, as the sponsor of the Spring 2019 issue. Eva is an occupational therapist and the president and CEO of Therapeutic Mobility Services, Inc. She is also co-owner of Accessible Mobility Solutions, PLLC, located in Charleston, Tennessee. Eva has provided comprehensive, community-based occupational therapy services for driver rehabilitation, community mobility, assistive technology, and low vision for over 20 years. Her clinical expertise includes working with drivers with visual impairments, aging in place, ergonomic and work-site consultation, and home modification. Eva is recognized by the Indiana BMV (Bureau of Motor Vehicles) and credentialed as a bioptic driver evaluator and trainer. She enjoys creating excitement about the role of occupational therapy in comprehensive community mobility and assistive technology solutions.

Eva was born in Auburn, Indiana, approximately 20 miles north of Fort Wayne. She grew up in a family of contractors and spent a lot of time playing with building materials. After high school, Eva was interested in becoming a homemaker. She got married and moved to St. Louis, where she found a job in the field of accounting. Four years after welcoming her first child, Eva's husband passed away unexpectedly. As a single mother, she made the decision to continue her education. She initially decided to pursue a career in nursing but changed her track to physical therapy. While observing a physical therapist, she was introduced to the field of occupational therapy. "Occupational therapy found me more than I found it," she said. "I know this was the path that I was always intended to be on."

Eva enrolled in the occupational therapy program at Indiana University. As a student, Eva already had an interest in driver rehabilitation. Growing up, Eva observed both her mother and grandmother as they suffered from vision loss as the result of diabetes. She witnessed the impact of vision loss first-hand in her own family. "Someone needed to address these issues," she said. In 1998, Eva earned a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy, and she accepted a position in an acute care setting at a local hospital. Eva delivered a presentation on driver rehabilitation to her colleagues at the hospital. "The demand was there, but unfortunately the program was not a priority for the hospital at that time," said Eva. This experience was the catalyst for Eva to open a private practice.

After developing a home-based, low vision program at the hospital, Eva knew she could do even more. In 2003, she founded Therapeutic Mobility Services, Inc., a community-based, occupational therapy practice. Eva's mission: "To maximize independence through quality, community-based,

occupational therapy guided expertise that enhances daily living skills at home, at work, and in the community where our clients live.” Eva started her practice with a home office and one sedan. As the business grew, Eva was able to hire staff and moved into a more accommodating office. Eva quickly realized that the consumer’s home environment was a key factor of their independence in community mobility. She shared an experience that led her to develop a more comprehensive approach to community-based occupational therapy:

I arrived at a consumer’s home to complete a driving evaluation and noticed other factors that impacted his independence. For instance, he was using a wheelchair that his family had recovered from a dumpster. The main entrance had five steps to enter or exit the home. To accomplish this, he would heave himself out of his wheelchair, toss it down the steps, crawl down the steps, and climb back into his wheelchair. He used a similar method to enter the home. That day, I realized there were several factors that needed to be addressed in addition to driving. Otherwise, the driver training would be for nothing.

Through this experience, Eva realized community-based intervention was key to developing a comprehensive plan for addressing the individual needs of each consumer. “It is incredibly important to provided services that address all of the individual components that impact someone’s independence,” she said. “This includes demands of the context and environment, as well as the roles and routines of the consumer. The big picture is so very important.” Growing up in a family of contractors, Eva had extensive knowledge relating to construction. This proved beneficial when completing home modifications. “It was easy for me to build a rapport with the contractors because I could understand the verbiage being used,” she said.

As demand for services grew, Eva assembled a talented and multidisciplinary team. Today, Therapeutic Mobility Services, Inc., employs a multidisciplinary team of skilled rehabilitation specialists providing services throughout Indiana, northern Kentucky, and eastern Illinois. Eva has eleven staff members, including occupational therapists with specialty certifications as driver rehabilitation specialists (CDRS), credentialed bioptic driver trainers, assistive technology professional (ATP), and a certified home modifications specialist for aging in place (CAPS). The staff also includes a vehicle maintenance compliance specialist and a professional tutor who assists consumers with pre-driving readiness. The team at Therapeutic Mobility Services is committed to providing comprehensive, community-based services to maximize the functional performance and independence of the consumers they serve.

Today, Therapeutic Mobility Services offers a variety of products and services. Driving evaluations are available to determine the capacity of senior drivers and people with low vision interested in bioptic driving. Driver education and training programs offer one-on-one tutoring for individuals with learning challenges, autism spectrum disorder, and low vision bioptic drivers. Evaluations and training are also available for drivers in need of specialized driving devices and individualized vehicle modifications. To identify mobility devices that will meet the unique needs of each consumer, evaluation and consultation services are available for wheelchairs, power mobility, and assistive technology. For optimal safety and independence in the home, accessibility and modification evaluations are available that include construction specifications and project management. Workplace and functional capabilities evaluations ensure the optimal person-work-environment fit. Therapeutic Mobility Services offers free consultations to consumers who are interested in learning more about their services.

Eva enjoys sharing her knowledge and expertise at regional and national conferences, including at the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED). She has served on many professional organizations and committees, including as the president and vice president of the Midwest chapter of ADED, as an ADED board member at large, an ADED Certification Committee co-chair, and for the ADED Finance and Government Relations Ad-Hoc Committee. During her tenure at ADED, Eva contributed to the development of the ADED mentor program and was a recipient of the ADED Presidential Award of Recognition. She also enjoys serving as a guest lecturer for occupational therapy doctorate students in her home state of Indiana. Eva encourages all occupational therapists to become aware of the home and community mobility resources available in their areas.

Consumer education plays a key role at Therapeutic Mobility Services. “Our consumers don’t always know what services they need to get from point A to point Z,” said Eva. “We provide education to help our consumers see what is possible, and to guide them toward funding sources.” Eva believes teaching her consumers to self-advocate is crucial to their independence. “They often do not know that it’s okay to self-advocate and ask questions,” she said. Eva believes all recipients of occupational therapy services owe it to themselves to do that. “I love it when our consumers realize that education is power,” she said. “To empower our consumers is so very important.”

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To learn more about Therapeutic Mobility Services, Inc., please visit:

<https://www.theramobility.net/home.html>

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