

**1998**

**Bridge of Hope and Service: A Collaborative Community Based Rehabilitation Experience.**

D. Hernández

*Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico*

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists and others recognizes the contribution that Occupational Therapy makes within the community based rehabilitation (CBR) framework as a strategy of human rights. With the purpose of developing educational instruction as well as knowledge and skills on the students in this area, this CBR level I fieldwork experience and service project emerges from collaboration between the University of Puerto Rico, the Occupational Therapy Graduate Program, the Preschool Education Program, Vieques Public School-Puerto Rico and Colorado State University, Department of Occupational Therapy. With this purpose faculty and students traveled to Vieques for 15 days to listen and learn from the people and the community, and to determine how we could support them. Why Vieques? The effects of the presence of the United States Marine for over sixty years along with many other risk factors such as poverty, unemployment, life threatening diseases and environmental problems have placed the people living in this small island at a higher risk with limited resources ,which has had an impact on human rights. Using the principles of community development that are central to CBR, occupational-based practice and Occupational Therapy Framework to guide evaluation and intervention an occupational profile was obtained from a group of children with special education needs. Trends regarding the needs of the teachers and the level of skills of the children were identified. Results showed lack of knowledge and skills on teachers in behavior management and in the selection of appropriate activities to enhance skills, educational needs and participation of the children. Intervention strategies focused on health promotion and skills development included: education and consultation to enable teachers, occupation-based and social activities adapted to the needs of the children, among others. One-hundred percent (100%) of the teachers and the students expressed a high level of satisfaction with this CBR fieldwork experience and service. They recognize the importance to continue with these partnerships to support the health, wellness and the human rights of the people of Vieques.