



**ASSOCIATION OF RHEUMATOLOGY
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY

ARHP: The Rheumatology Resource for Health Professionals

2200 Lake Boulevard NE • Atlanta, GA 30319-5312

Phone: (404) 633-3777 • Fax: (404) 633-1870

www.rheumatology.org • arhp@rheumatology.org

ARHP Graduate Student's Testimonial:

2009 Recipient: Emma Swärdh Sjöquist, PT, MSc, PhD-Candidate, Huddinge, Sweden

I was thrilled, proud, surprised and greatly inspired when I found out that I was selected as one of three to receive the 2009 ARHP Graduate Student Award. I am very thankful to the ARHP for this honour and recognition. I am also deeply grateful to my mentor professor Christina H. Opava at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden for accepting me as her doctoral student in 2006 and for always believing in me. With constant support and guidance and by providing me with necessary research skills within several areas professor Opava has helped me to become more and more independent as a researcher. Her longstanding expertise in physical activity for people with rheumatic diseases has been invaluable for me and also inspired me to form my own area of interest, focusing the role of behavioural theories and strategies in physical therapy, especially in physical activity promotion. Professor Opava has also introduced me to her broad national and international network of distinguished colleagues, invited me to take part in exciting projects, and always been a positive driving force in my research efforts.

Working as a physical therapist within rheumatology, I became aware of the multitude of factors that influence the adoption and maintenance of physical activity behaviour. My interest in exploring this complex area became a starting point for my thesis project. It includes a variety of research methodologies with both quantitative and qualitative approaches as well as different statistical approaches. My thesis project focuses on the promotion of physical activity behaviour in patients with rheumatoid arthritis by exploring the patient perspective on exercise maintenance, the physical therapists' conceptions on the promotion of physical activity, and the outcome of a coaching intervention. I look forward to sharing some of the results from my thesis at the 2010 ARHP meeting.

2008 Recipient: Marie Westby, BSc (PT), PhD Candidate, Vancouver, Canada

"I was thrilled to have been chosen as one of two graduate students to receive the 2008 ARHP Graduate Student Award. As a longstanding member of the ARHP, I appreciate all that they do to support students, promote rheumatology research among allied health professionals and offer mentorship opportunities. My PhD supervisor, Dr. Catherine Backman, has been a mentor to many PT and OT clinicians at the Mary Pack Arthritis Centre over the years and was the perfect choice when I was looking for a thesis supervisor in the summer of 2004. She has offered me additional opportunities to become involved in AHRP activities and introduced me to colleagues and researchers who have become invaluable to my research efforts".

"My thesis project has included a variety of research methodologies including qualitative research for which she has great experience. Using this initial exploratory data, along with scientific evidence from systematic reviews and expert opinion and consensus using the Delphi method, I plan to establish best practice recommendations for post-acute rehabilitation for people undergoing total hip and knee replacements. I thank the ARHP for their recognition of my research efforts and Dr. Backman for her ongoing support and guidance. I look forward to sharing the results of my thesis at the 2009 ARHP meeting".