A partnership can be a beautiful affair! When partners exchange ideas, resources, skills, and creativity, things happen which might otherwise never have been possible. “Partnerships in Research” is a series of workshops on research methods and design, initiated in the spring of 1980. This was one of the first programs developed by the Office of Professional Research Services. Its purpose was to provide opportunity for partnerships to be established among clinical and academic investigators, promoting joint research projects. If therapists working in academic and clinical environments could share their resources, skills and imagination, wouldn't occupational therapy research be furthered? And indeed it has been.

But another partnership was to be strengthened by this program, as well. Since research costs money, it was agreed that each of the research teams should receive a mini-grant to aid them in the completion of their work. It might be used to buy computer time, to consult with a statistician, or to pay for postage in a survey, for example. Educators agree that learning is greatly enhanced by doing, by actually completing a task that requires the integration of the concepts being learned. Thus, the value of the “Partnerships in Research” program would be increased considerably if research projects could be funded and completed, not just designed.

AOTF and AOTA have long been partners in promoting occupational therapy, of course. This relationship is well represented by the “Partnerships in Research” program. AOTA funds totalling $5,500 were invested in these workshops, and AOTF provided a donation of $4,000 to support the mini-grants so necessary for their success.

During Phase I of “Partnerships in Research ... 1980,” 16 teams initiated original research projects that otherwise might never have been started. Each of these projects was soundly designed, manageable within 18 months, and specifically targeted toward solving a real problem shared by the members of the research team. The resulting publications will add significantly to the data base of the profession, and hence to the credibility of occupational therapy.

Phase II of the “Partnerships” program will be carried out during Fiscal Year 1980-1981. Ten regional consultants will be trained to serve as liaisons for the Office of Professional Research Services. With a goal of providing continuity in research consultation in all parts of the country, these therapists will be able to provide additional research workshops based on the model used for “Partnerships in Research” during 1980. Each region that was not visited during Phase I of the program will be scheduled for a workshop during the spring of 1981.

These research teams will have the added advantage of having a regional consultant nearby to assist them throughout the duration of their research. For these workshops, the regional consultants and the research teams will be supported by AOTA/AOTF funds.

Phase III of the program will permit AOTA/AOTF to partially subsidize certain activities of the regional consultants in order to further the development of research across the country. Regional groups, state associations and their districts, specialty sections, and other groups of occupational therapists will be able to develop their own working contracts with the regional consultants for workshops in research design, proposal writing, editing and preparation of research reports of publication, and other research-related issues. When possible, these workshops should be used as fund-raising events for the sponsoring organization. Such funds might be used to further research in some way for the local therapists; for example, awarding an annual research stipend, or supporting a local research special interest group.

Research activities such as these are making a difference for occupational therapy. Become a partner in a process that will enhance our professional image; participate in a research partnership during 1981!