



Alumni
Association

Newsletter

December 2003

A Message from the President

Dear Alumni Association members:

It has been an exciting and productive year for the PHPSAA and we are pleased to tell you about the Association's activities in this edition of the PHPSAA newsletter. Some of the highlights included participating in the Class of 2000's Evening of Honors, the PHPS Annual Conference (page 4), and the Class of 2003's Orientation (page 5); assisting in the establishment of the mentoring program (page 3); and conducting strategic planning (page 2). More information on each of these activities is presented in this newsletter.

Although the Executive Committee has been very busy during the past year, some of you expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for non-Executive Committee members to be involved in PHPSAA activities. Based on the results of our strategic planning session and in order to increase opportunities for every PHPSAA member to be more involved, we are planning to establish four committees: (1) Communications and Networking; (2) Recruitment and Membership; (3) Mentoring and Training; and (4) Social Activities. It is my goal to encourage each member to participate in at least one activity in the coming year. Can you imagine how much the PHPSAA could accomplish with this much member participation? More information about these committees is included in the article on the strategic planning session (page 2). If you are interested, please indicate your preferences for committee membership on the Executive Committee election ballot that you will receive in January.

I am looking forward to another productive year as the PHPSAA President and I am especially looking forward to working with many more of you as we put the committee structure in place. Thank you for your membership and please feel free to send comments to me or any other member of the Executive Committee as we work to make the PHPSAA better than ever.

Happy Holidays!

Maureen Sinclair

2003 PHPSAA Executive Committee

President

Maureen Sinclair (PHPS 98)

Vice-President

Deb Stone (PHPS 98)

Treasurer

Kathy Witgert (PHPS 99)

Secretary

Tonya Lang (PHPS 98)

Member-at-Large

Julie Schuitema Wolthuis
(PHPS 98)

PHPS Program Liaison

Thelma Williams
Gayle Daniels

CDC Foundation

Liaison

Linda Kane

Liaison Committee Rep

Natarsha Thompson
(PHPS 00)
Kate Bauer
(PHPS 02)

Planning for the Future

On July 21, 2003, the Executive Committee held a strategic planning session at the CDC Foundation in Atlanta, facilitated by Helen Whitlock of Mosaic Management Consulting. The objectives of the meeting were 1) to develop effective strategic goals in support of the PHPSAA mission and vision, and 2) to prioritize the strategic goals based on the impact to the mission/vision and timeframe to implement.

The first part of the process involved identifying different categories to brainstorm ideas for goals and activities. The Committee identified eight categories:

- Communication
- Networking
- Recruitment
- Mentoring
- Social Activities
- Fundraising/membership
- Training
- Marketing/Branding

The second part of the process involved brainstorming within these categories to identify activities the PHPSAA could perform. Finally, the identified activities were prioritized based on the impact to the mission/vision (critical, important, nice to have) and length of implementation (short-term, medium-term, long-term). The following activities were identified as short-term and critical:

Mentoring

- Identify a membership coordinator
- Help recruit alumni members to be mentors

Marketing/Branding

- Research and determine implications of branding in broader CDC policies

Fundraising/Membership

- Create systematic process for recruiting members throughout the year
- Define and communicate the benefits of being alumni association members
- Identify strategies for recruiting members as they leave the program

Communication

Between Alumni

- Create an alumni directory
- Continue to enhance current alumni association newsletter
- Provide instant feedback/suggestions to the executive committee (e.g., via website)

Between Alumni and Current Specialists

- Clarify differences between PHPS Perspectives newsletter and the alumni association newsletter

Between Alumni Association and PHPS Program

- Schedule regular update meetings between the alumni association and the program (Identify ways for the alumni association to receive regular updates from the program)

The Executive Committee strategic planning session marks the first step in the process of developing a strategic plan for the PHPSAA. Although we solicited input from members before the session, the Executive Committee quickly realized that we needed much more input from PHPSAA general members in both the development and implementation of strategic planning goals. So, we decided to create four committees to assist in the implementation of the identified goals and to develop new activities and goals for the Association. The four committees are:

- Communications and Networking
- Recruitment and Membership
- Mentoring and Training
- Social Activities

We hope that each PHPSAA member will volunteer to serve on at least one committee, so that each member will have the opportunity to shape the future of this Association. You can indicate your Committee preference when you receive your Executive Committee election ballot in January 2004. We encourage all of you to sign up for at least one committee (although you are invited to sign up for as many as you'd like).

If you have any questions about the Strategic Planning session or the new Committees, please contact Maureen Sinclair (MSinclair@cdc.gov).

PHPS Mentorship Project

The mission of the Mentorship Project is to provide Prevention Specialists and PHPS Alumni with the opportunity to interact in a one-to-one relationship that emphasizes personal support and professional development to further enhance a connection with PHPS and public health leadership.

The PHPS Mentorship working group is proud to announce the new PHPS Mentorship Project. The Mentorship Project is a collaborative initiative between the PHPS Liaison Committee and the PHPS Alumni Association. Our debut year officially started on December 1, 2003 and will serve as a pilot test of the program.

On December 2, 2003, the Project hosted its Kick-off Conference Call for its 8 mentor-mentee matches. Since the program is geared to second year Prevention Specialists transitioning into the field, all participating mentees come from the 2002 PHPS class. Mentors come from PHPS graduated classes, 1997-1999.

During the conference call, Deb Stone (PHPS 1998), Alumni Association Vice-President, provided a brief history of the Mentorship Project including a brief description of the need for the program which came out of both an LC survey of PS and anecdotal comments from second year PS regarding the need for support. Anne Redmond (PHPS 2001) discussed the program goals (mission) and objectives for the year. Kate Bauer (PHPS 2002), LC Representative, reviewed the orientation materials provided to each participant including a mentoring handbook published by APHA.

Through the course of the pilot year, matches will have the opportunity to not only meet with one another, but they will continue to meet via conference call as a larger group as well. The purpose of these group calls will be for the mentorship work group to gather feedback on the program and to provide training information to the mentor-mentee matches.

It is the hope of the work group that 2004 will be just the beginning of a long tradition of PHPS peer support. If you have any questions about the PHPS Mentoring Project, please feel free to contact Deb Stone at debstone@edc.org or Anne Redmond at aredmond@dhhs.state.nh.us.

2003 PHPS Annual Conference

The PHPS Annual Conference was held on August 18 & 19, 2003 at the Embassy Suites Hotel – Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, GA. All PHPS alumni were invited to attend. Three members of the PHPSAA Executive Committee as well as several Atlanta-area PHPS alumni participated in the conference.

The focus of this year's conference was on the new identity for PHPS as a fellowship to train program managers. After welcoming remarks from CDC Chief Operating Officer Bill Gimson, a panel addressed the factors leading to the PHPS program redesign, including plans for change and implementation. In her presentation Ms. Karen White, Deputy Director of EPO, defined managers as those who “plan, strategize, have vision, promote health, make things happen, and make science live.” It is anticipated that the tighter definition of Prevention Specialists as managers will meet a need for leadership in public health, and will help the PHPS program establish standards and expectations for CIO and field assignments. Several PHPS alumni attended this presentation and asked questions of Ms. White and other panelists.

The PHPS Alumni Association set up and staffed a membership recruitment booth in the poster presentation exhibit area. PHPSAA Executive Committee members made themselves available during breaks to answer questions and distribute membership forms.

Class of 2003 Orientation

The PHPS Alumni Association is working to strengthen ties between alumni and current Prevention Specialists. To this end, PHPSAA participated in several events during the 2003 PHPS class orientation in September.

During the first week of orientation, PHPS alumni were invited to an evening picnic hosted by the PHPS program. Several Atlanta-area alumni attended the picnic and enjoyed meeting the newest class of Prevention Specialists.

The Alumni Association hosted a happy hour at the 57th Fighter Group Restaurant during the second week of orientation. The entire 2003 class attended, along with PHPS Program staff, a dozen Atlanta-area alumni, and a few surprise guests of visiting alumni. It was great fun to meet the new Prevention Specialists and to catch up with old friends.

In addition, the PHPS Alumni Association participated in an orientation panel of former Prevention Specialists. PHPS staff left the room to allow new Prevention Specialists the privacy to ask current and graduated fellows any questions they had about the PHPS experience. The candid hour-long exchange touched on topics including assignment quality, involvement in extracurricular CDC activities, and two year field assignments. The following alumni participated on the panel: Viva Combs (98), Patrick Flaherty (98), Maureen Sinclair (98), Kathy Witgert (99), and Michael Sells (00).

These interactions with the new class of Prevention Specialists helped us get to know each other and opened avenues for future interactions that will benefit us all.

Alumni News and Updates

Births:

Congratulations to the following members of the 1997 class who gave birth this summer :

- **Sue D'Isabel (PHPS 97)** and her husband had a baby boy on June 3, 2003 – Stephen Samuel Verral.
- **Jennifer Alexander (PHPS 97)** and her husband, David Hofstetter, had a baby girl on June 19, 2003. Her name is Maya Quinn Hofstetter.
- **Jeanne Alongi (PHPS 97)** and her husband Sam had a baby girl, Michael Emily Alongi, on July 25th.
- Zoe Ella Ruff was born on August 19, 2003. She weighed 6lbs 15ozs and was 19 1/4 inches long. Proud parents are Carter and **Anita Teague Ruff (PHPS 97)**.

A 5th member of the 1997 class is due in February! Stay tuned!

Our condolences:

The PHPS Alumni Association would like to express sympathy to **Maureen Sinclair (PHPS 98)** and **Mary Kate Weber (PHPS 98)** whose fathers passed away this fall.

Promotions/Job changes:

Cecile Town (PHPS 99) has rejoined CDC as a USPHS Commissioned Officer working out of the Division of Viral Hepatitis, NCID. She is a field officer functioning as the Hepatitis C Prevention Coordinator for the Indian Health Service (IHS) National Epidemiology Program located in Albuquerque, NM.

Jennifer Wiley (PHPS 98) now works as a clinical research associate for IMARC Research, Inc. She travels around the country monitoring clinical trials & absolutely loves it! She and her husband have moved to Tampa.

Corina Lindley (PHPS 99) lives in Denver and works at Kaiser Permanente of Colorado, as a Community Health Specialist. She skis often and is pursuing a PhD in School Psychology at the University of Denver.

In October, **Librada Estrada (PHPS 99)** was promoted to Program Manager for Project Public Health Ready. This is a pilot certification process that NACCHO is pilot testing with 12 local public health agencies across the country. Also in October, Librada and her husband, Cy, purchased a house in Springfield, VA.

Kathy Witgert (PHPS 99) started a new position as a Public Health Analyst with PHPPO/OD in the Office of Program Planning, Evaluation and Legislation and now has an official FTE!

Parul Nanavati (PHPS 00) has joined the Division of Diabetes Translation in NCCDPHP/CDC as a Project Officer.

Weddings:

Rachel Woods (PHPS 99) will be married to Eric Arnold on August 7, 2004 in Kauai, Hawaii. Rachel is currently in her first year of law school at Willamette University College of Law in Salem, Oregon. Eric is an electrical engineer with Intel Corporation. They own a home in Beaverton, Oregon.

Candice Jalonen (PHPS 98) is getting married April 3, 2004 at the Emory Conference Center in Atlanta. She and her fiancé are also enjoying their new puppy, a yellow lab named Daisy.

Lydia Yu (PHPS 99) and her husband have recently relocated to Galveston, TX. Her husband is an assistant professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch and Lydia is looking for a new job.

Back to school:

Joanna (Weisbord) Almeida (PHPS 98) started a doctoral program at the Harvard School of Public Health in September.

Publications:

Christy Curwick (PHPS 98) has a recently published journal article:
Curwick CC, Reeb-Whitaker CK, and Connon CL. (2003). Reaching Managers at an Industry Association Conference: Evaluation of Ergonomics Training. AAOHN Journal. 51(11):464-469.

Maureen Sinclair (PHPS 98) was a contributing author on a recent journal article:
McLean CA, Kohl K, et al. (2003) The Syphilis Reactor Grid: Help of Hindrance for Syphilis Surveillance? Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Aug; 30(8): 650-3.

Deb Stone (PHPS 98) has recently published a journal article: Potter, L. & Stone, D. (2003) Suicide Prevention in Schools: What Can and Should Be Done. American Journal of Health Education, Suppl (Sept/Oct): 34(5): S-35-S41.

Contributions to the Alumni News and Updates can be sent to Julie Schuitema Wolthuis (jlschuitema@dhr.state.ga.us).