



Alumni
Association

PHPS Alumni Association Update July 2005

New PHPSAA Website!

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce our new PHPSAA website. Thank you to Hoang Dang (PHPS '98) for constructing the site. It is still under construction, but we encourage you to check it out and provide feedback so we can include more information that you'd like to see. The website is located at www.phpsalumni.org.

A Message from the PHPS Director

Greetings from Atlanta! It has been a busy time for PHPS since my last update and I appreciate this opportunity to share a few items of interest with you.

PHPS Program Staff

Congratulations to Michelle Scott and Thelma Williams who were accepted into the 2005 International Experience and Technical Assistance Program (IETA). A requirement of the Program is that they each go out on 90-day TDYs at different times over the next 7 months. In anticipation of this, as well as to fill the vacant PHPS Supervisor position, we have been working hard to interview and select a replacement. Due to the reorganization underway in the Office of Workforce and Career Development (OWCD), we are unable to hire permanent staff at this time, but I am pleased that Marlisa Hughes-Duncan has joined PHPS on a 90-day "detail" through August 2005. She has taken over supervision of the Prevention Specialists currently on Michelle's Team while she is in Ethiopia for her TDY. Our hope is that we will be able to extend Marlisa's "detail" so that she can do the same for Thelma's team while she is in South Africa later this year. Marlisa is very familiar with the PHPS Program through her participation in the PHPS interviews over the past couple of years. In addition, she is well-versed in the ins and outs of mentoring as both a mentee during her tenure as a Presidential Management Intern and as a mentor in the CDC/ATSDR Mentoring Program.

With the departure of Lourina Dudley, we have lost her FTE, as it was an A-76 position identified through the President's Management Agenda as a government position that should be contracted out. However, there is currently a freeze on contractor positions, so we are not able to fill this vacancy. The good news is that we are in Elsie Ogletree's capable administrative hands during this transition period.

Incoming 2005 PHPS Class

With regard to the selection of the 2005 PHPS Class, the Program received 198 applications (141 eligible) and invited 72 of the top candidates for interviews in March and April. Offers were made in May and the class of 25 has been filled and will begin on October 17, 2005. In keeping with past experience, 80% of the class is female, 20% male.

Field Assignments for the 2004 PHPS Class

The 2-year field assignment process for the 2004 Class was a successful one this year. We received 190 LOIs from health agencies and invited 113 to submit full applications. Following the 2-week Open Recruitment period in April, Prevention Specialists selected 72 health agencies to invite to Atlanta for Interview Day on June 11th. The match resulted in Prevention Specialists being placed in 20 states and territories, including five new partners-- American Samoa EPA, U.S. Virgin Islands DOH, Milwaukee Health Department (WI), University of Nebraska Medical Center, and Chattanooga-Hamilton County DOH (TN). Placements include the Department of Environmental Health (American Samoa), the Indian Health Service (New Mexico), a non-profit organization (Arkansas), universities (NE, TX), 5 state health departments, and 15 local health departments. Seventy-six percent (19) of Prevention Specialists were matched with their first choice, 16% (4) with their second choice, 4% (1) with their third choice, and 4% (1) with their fourth choice.

CDC and OWCD Reorganization

As you know, CDC has been undergoing a major reorganization process over the past year as it implements the recommendations of the Futures Initiative. This has led to the creation of new Coordinating Centers, as well as new Offices, including the Office of Workforce and Career Development (OWCD). As these new Centers and Offices get up and running, one of the major challenges has been for the CDC/OD to provide budgets that allow them to not only carry on the work that they did in the past, but also any new responsibilities they may have been assigned.

When OWCD recently received its budget for FY '05 budget, it became clear that it would fall significantly short of the level-funding we had expected. As a result, OWCD had to make significant budget cuts and we had to cancel the PHPS Annual Conference scheduled for July, as well as all site visits planned by PHPS, EIS, and PMR for the rest of the fiscal year. This decision was not taken lightly and was not a reflection on the quality of work conducted by PHPS, CDD, or OWCD. These have been very challenging budget times throughout CDC and my hope is that we will not be faced with similar cuts in the future. Canceling the conference was especially difficult, since we traditionally host a graduation ceremony for the 2002 Class during the Annual Conference. But true to form, Prevention Specialists and staff rose to the occasion and alternative plans were developed to recognize the 2002 Class's participation in and completion of the PHPS Program.

In spite of reorganization of OWCD, I do not anticipate major changes for the PHPS Program. Melinda, Thelma, Lisa Hammad, and I are involved in several Division-wide workgroups that will help to identify and define the activities and tasks that each of the Division's training programs are involved in; look for opportunities for streamlining, collaboration, and improvement; and make recommendations to the Office of the Director/OWCD for how to best organize the Division to accomplish our mission. Once approved, a transformation plan will be put in place to implement the changes...more to come.

Good news! Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response Conference in August

The backup plans for recognizing the 2002 Class as they complete the PHPS Program are no longer necessary. Some Bioterrorism funds became available for which we proposed conducting a training focused specifically on several of the emergency preparedness competencies for public health leaders and administrators outlined in CDC's "Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response Training and Education Workgroup Report" and the "Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness Competencies for All Public Health Workers" developed by the Columbia School of Nursing Center for Health Policy. The proposal was accepted and we will be bringing all current Prevention Specialists to Atlanta for this training on August 18th and 19th. As part of the training, Prevention Specialists also will have an opportunity to showcase the work they are doing in their CIO and/or 2-year field assignments, with a particular emphasis on lessons learned and implications for emergency preparedness and response. And of course, this means that there will be a graduation ceremony for the 2002 Class!

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your ongoing and continued support of the PHPS Program. Prevention Specialists from every class play an important role at each step along the way. Your help giving presentations at universities, sharing information with potential candidates, forwarding job announcements, participating in conference calls and meetings, and sponsoring social events during the year is greatly appreciated. Thanks, as well, for your help and patience during this time of transition for PHPS, OWCD, and CDC as a whole. It really does "take a village" to accomplish our work.

With warm regards,
John Lisco
Acting Chief, PHPS

Recent PHPSAA Activities

On April 5th, eleven PHPS alumni participated in the PHPS Liaison Committee-sponsored "Life After PHPS" conference call. Alumni working at CDC, state and local health departments, attending school, and working at non-profit organizations were represented on the call. The 2002 class thought the call was a great success!

The 2002 Class met in Atlanta during the first week in May to attend their Leadership and Management Training. Julie Schuitema Wolthuis (PHPS '98) participated in a session on post-PHPS employment. The PHPS Alumni Association (PHPSAA) also sponsored a social during the training which was held at the Savannah Restaurant at the Doubletree Hotel in Buckhead. All PHPS alumni, staff, and current Specialists were invited. Approximately 30 to 40 members of the 2002 and 2004 PHPS classes, PHPS Alumni, and PHPS Staff were able to attend. This social allowed the 2002 and 2004 classes to meet each other for the first time and network with alumni. The 2004 class reported that they found the social to be very beneficial and informative since it occurred during open recruitment for field assignments. The PHPSAA thanks Lisa Hammad (PHPS Staff), Patricia McLendon (PHPS '02), Holly Ortiz (PHPS Staff), Alyce Stewart (PHPS '04) and Chris Thomas (PHPS '01) for their help in planning the event.

The PHPS Alumni Association has teamed up with the PHPS Liaison Committee to develop a PHPS Alumni Directory to include contact information on all PHPS Alumni to date. This directory will be available soon. Thanks go out to Mark Mueller (PHPS '03), Dianna Frick (PHPS '03), and Lisa Roth-Edwards (PHPS '99) for all of their hard work on this project.

Alumni News and Updates

Job Updates

Todd W. Wilson (PHPS '99) left the Division of TB Elimination in Atlanta to take over as Officer in Charge of the new CDC El Paso Quarantine Station in El Paso, TX as of April 4, 2005. The station is being reopened after a 30-year absence in El Paso, and is part of NCID, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, Quarantine and Border Health Services Branch. The station will work closely with other federal and local agencies on the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas and New Mexico to prevent the introduction of infectious disease into the United States.

Natarsha Thompson (PHPS '00) recently changed jobs and is now working with the Diabetes Association of Atlanta, Inc. She is the Special Projects Coordinator. Her main focus is to develop a comprehensive diabetes prevention and education program for youth.

Jennifer Wiley (PHPS '98) and her husband, Tim, moved to Westlake, OH (about 10 miles west of Cleveland). She is still a clinical research monitor for IMARC Research, but also the company's trainer. Jennifer is in charge of developing training materials for new employees, organizing the annual training seminar, and training new employees for IMARC and other companies. She's even been to Melbourne, Australia to train clinical research coordinators and Milan, Italy to train clinical research monitors.

Patrick Flaherty (PHPS '98) recently changed positions to move to CDC's Procurement and Grants Office (PGO). He is working in the Office of the Director as an analyst, primarily working on performance management for PGO's operations and meeting its key imperatives. It is an extension of his work as CDC lead on the Performance Management Team of the CDC's Accelerated Extramural Awards Solutions (ACES) Project that began in March, 2004. Patrick also began classes in May for the Evening MBA Program at Emory University's Goizueta Business School and his scheduled graduation date will be May, 2008. Patrick also recently purchased a loft/condo in an elementary school built in 1911. It is located in the Home Park neighborhood in Atlanta, right off of 10th street by Georgia Tech.

Sharon Daves (PHPS '01) traveled around southeast Asia and China after finishing PHPS in September. She left Saipan, and in January, began work as a Project Officer in the Division of Diabetes Translation. Sharon works with the Pacific Islands the Division funds through cooperative agreements.

Shelly Huffman (PHPS '01) recently started working at the Seattle Indian Health Board as the Health Educator for the Viral Hepatitis Integration Project (VHIP).

Lisa Roth-Edwards (PHPS '99) and her husband, Gene, are moving to Wilmington, Delaware on August 1st. Lisa will be working for a disease management company as an Outcomes Consultant.

Education Updates

Deb Stone (PHPS '98) is at the Harvard School of Public Health with **Joanna Weisbord Almeida** (PHPS '98). Deb just finished her first year and Joanna finished her second year. They are both in the ScD program in Society, Human Development, and Health.

Pam Blumson Buchalter (PHPS '97) finished her PhD in May and is now Dr. Pam Buchalter. She will be a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia come August. She also recently received an award from the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) for her dissertation research. Congratulations, Pam!

Other Updates

Maria Benke (PHPS '00) and her husband, Rodney, had their first baby, Ryan Henry, on 1 February 2005. He weighed 7lbs, 12 oz. Maria is an Environmental Science Officer with the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, and was promoted from First Lieutenant to Captain in May. She is currently serving as Chief of the Environmental Health Section, Preventive Medicine Service, for the U.S. Medical Activity on Fort Meade, Maryland.

Jonathan King (PHPS '99) is happy to announce his engagement to Mary Rose C. Andres from Cape Coral, FL. They will be married on October 2, 2005 at the Boughman Center Chapel in Gainesville, FL. Jonathan says "Many thanks to PHPS!" Jonathan and Mary Rose met in Tampa three weeks prior to the end of Jonathan's 2-year assignment. They kept a very long distance relationship while he was in American Samoa. They will start our married life together in Atlanta. Mary Rose works at Piedmont Hospital and Jonathan still works at CDC in the Parasitic Division.

Candice Jalonen Swartwood (PHPS '98) and her husband, David, are expecting a baby boy in early September.

Julie Schuitema Wolthuis (PHPS '98) and her husband, Dan, are also expecting a baby in mid-September.

PHPSAA 2005 Elections

It's Election time again! Special thanks go out to all PHPSAA members who have accepted nominations. Please don't forget to complete the PHPSAA Election Ballot found in the July 2005 membership mailing.

**PHPS Alumni Association
Executive Committee 2004-2005**

President

Maureen Sinclair, PHPS '98
msinclair@usaid.gov

Vice President

Lisa Roth-Edwards, PHPS '99
lisar@doh.state.mn.us

Treasurer

Kathy Witgert, PHPS '99
kwitgert@niaid.nih.gov

Secretary

Mary Kate Weber, PHPS '98
muw1@cdc.gov

Member At Large

Julie Wolthuis, PHPS '98
jschuitema@dhr.state.ga.us