



Alumni
Association

Newsletter

Winter 2004/2005

A Message from the President

Dear Alumni Association Members:

Happy New Year! I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are looking forward to the year to come. On behalf of the PHSAA Executive Committee, I am pleased to present this latest update from the PHSAA to you. During the past year, we continued our commitment to supporting the PHPS Program by sponsoring social events at APHA and the Class of 2004 Orientation, by conducting interviews of candidates for the 2004 PHPS class, and by participating in the PHPS Annual Conference, the Class of 2004 Orientation, and the Mentorship Project. We established regular communication with PHPS Program staff to provide input into programmatic decisions when requested. In addition, we established four committees to increase opportunities for every PHSAA member to be involved in our activities: Communications and Networking; Recruitment and Membership; Mentoring and Training; and Social Activities.

During the coming year, we plan to continue supporting the events we have been involved with in the past as well as to create new ways for Alumni and PHPS Specialists to interact. One of the ways we'd like to increase communication is through the establishment of a PHSAA website. We are just beginning this process; stay tuned for updates on this activity during the coming months. As always, if you are interested in getting involved with this activity or any others, or have additional ideas you'd like to share, please contact me or any other PHSAA Executive Committee member.

Although last year was another productive year for PHSAA, I am convinced that we could do even more if we had more involvement from our members. I would like to thank all of you who participated in events during the past year and I would like to encourage those of you who didn't to make an effort to become more involved this year. Even if you can't attend some of the events, you can still contribute to the Association through your participation in the Mentorship Project or on one of the Committees. You can also contribute just by sharing your innovative ideas with a member of the Executive Committee. If you haven't yet become involved, I hope you will consider getting involved this year.

I am looking forward to another exciting year for the PHSAA and the PHPS Program. Thank you for your continued support. Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and successful new year.

Sincerely,

Maureen Sinclair
PHSAA President

2004 PHSAA Executive Committee

President

Maureen Sinclair
(PHPS '98)

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(PHPS '99)

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(PHPS '99)

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Mark Mueller (PHPS '03)

PHPS Mentorship Project

The **Public Health Prevention Service (PHPS) Mentorship Project** was established in September 2003 to provide Prevention Specialists and PHPS Alumni with an opportunity to interact in a one-to-one relationship emphasizing personal support and professional development. PHPS Alumni and 2nd year Prevention Specialists who are interested in having a mentor/mentee relationship submit applications in the fall. Project planners then facilitate a two-way matching process, whereby both mentor and mentee applicants review and choose their best match. Once the matched mentor-mentee pairs are established, they set mentorship goals for the coming year until the following November when the mentor-mentee relationship officially ends. All pairs receive ongoing support from the Mentorship Project including orientation materials, conference calls, and strategies for having a successful mentoring relationship.

During its pilot year, the PHPS Mentorship Project successfully matched and supported eight matches of PHPS Alumni mentors with 2002 Prevention Specialist mentees. While the final evaluation of the pilot year is being completed, preliminary results have shown high levels of satisfaction with personal and professional development from all those involved. As a result of this success and growing interest among Prevention Specialists and Alumni, year two activities began in October 2004. The matching phase for this year's Mentorship Project resulted in nine matches between PHPS Alumni and 2003 Prevention Specialists. We are all looking forward to another successful year and many more to come as we continue to cultivate public health leadership and strengthen relationships throughout the Prevention Specialist network.

The success and implementation of this project are largely due to the support and collaboration of the Public Health Prevention Service, PHPS Liaison Committee and the PHPS Alumni Association. The project is coordinated by a group of Prevention Specialists and Alumni who represent both the LC and PHPSAA. For more information, please contact Lisa Roth-Edwards at lisa.roth-edwards@doh.state.nm.us.

PHPS Annual Conference

The **6th Annual PHPS Conference** was held August 2-3, 2004 in Atlanta. The theme was *Improving Health Impact through Preparedness, Health Promotion, and Prevention*. PHPS alumni were well represented at the conference. Patrick Flaherty ('98), Jason Lang ('98), Natarsha Thompson ('00), Michael Sells ('00), Letia Boseman ('97), Caroline Bragdon ('00), Maggie Kownaski Moore ('98), Parul Nanavati ('00), and Marvin DeBerry ('00) participated as session moderators. Several alumni also celebrated with the 2002 class, current specialists, and staff at the conference's various social events. Leslie Boss, from the National Center on Environment Health, received special recognition for her commitment to the PHPS program. Michelle Mercier ('98) and Maggie Kownaski Moore ('98), who both worked with Leslie, participated in the ceremony. Mary Kate Weber ('98) spoke on behalf of the PHPS Alumni Association congratulating the new PHPS graduates and encouraging them to join the Alumni Association as a way to stay connected to the PHPS program and to each other.

The **2005 PHPS Annual Conference** is tentatively scheduled for late July. Watch your email for more information as the plans are finalized.

Class of 2004 Orientation

Welcome PHPS Class of 2004!

The PHPS Alumni Association is committed to strengthening connections among PHPS Alumni and Specialists. One way we build these connections is by reaching out to new PHPS Specialists. On the afternoon of September 22, 2004, PHPS alumni were involved in several activities during the PHPS Class of 2004 Orientation.

On behalf of the PHPSAA, Mary Kate Weber congratulated new PHPS Specialists and welcomed them to CDC and to the program. Mary Kate described some of the activities that the Alumni Association will be working on in the coming year. She also encouraged Specialists to make connections with Alumni working both inside and outside of CDC and with current Specialists in the field.

PHPS Alumni also participated in an Orientation panel, "The PHPS Experience," which included four graduates of the PHPS program, Julie Wolhuis ('98), Jalaa Abdelwahab ('00), Michael Sells ('00), and Ezra Jones ('01). Presenters described their personal challenges and achievements as they moved through the PHPS program and also talked about where they are today. They then fielded questions from new Specialists on a wide range of topics including assignment quality, field assignments, and employment post PHPS.

The culmination of Alumni activities was the Alumni Association Happy Hour at Chili's Restaurant. New class members, PHPS staff, and about a dozen Alumni attended. It was great to see old friends and meet some new colleagues as well!

Making connections with current specialists is a wonderful opportunity to keep informed about the PHPS program, to share our PHPS experiences, and to continue to create a strong network of public health professionals.

PHPS Social at APHA Annual Meeting

The PHPS Alumni Association sponsored its annual social during the American Public Health Association's meeting in Washington, DC this fall. The social took place on Tuesday, November 9 at Fado's Irish Pub, near the DC convention center. Approximately a dozen PHPS Alumni and current Fellows attended. They were joined by John Lisco, Acting Chief of PHPS, and Nancy Hunt from CDC's Office of Workforce and Career Development, PHPS's new organizational home. Several former CIO supervisors from CDC also joined the festivities.

For the first time this year, the PHPS Alumni Association invited candidates interested in the PHPS fellowship to the social. They turned out in force to socialize with current Fellows and Alumni, who were happy to share stories of their PHPS experiences.

It was wonderful to catch up with everyone who was able to attend this year's APHA social. See you next November in New Orleans!

PHPS Program Updates

The Public Health Prevention Service wishes all of you a healthy and prosperous new year. As 2005 gets started, the PHPS program continues to experience changes and looks forward to a new year of growth and opportunity. There have been many staffing changes in the past year including: the resignations of Everett Expose (PHPS Supervisor), Reginald Hunter (Training Coordinator), and Chanda Dicks (Program Assistant); and the addition of new staff Lauren Swirsky (PHPS Supervisor), Elsie Ogletree (Program Assistant), and Melinda Williams (Deputy Branch Chief). This past year has also found PHPS in new office space at 2400 Century Center.

Organizationally, the PHPS Program is now housed in CDC's new Office of Workforce and Career Development (OWCD). Steve Thacker remains the Director of this unit, formerly known as the Epidemiology Program Office (EPO). With the CDC Futures Initiative and reorganization of OWCD, the PHPS program expects to only get better and enhance the opportunities for Prevention Specialists to become future public health leaders.

We look forward to working with you in the year ahead to make the PHPS program "all that it can be!"

Alumni News and Updates

Engagements / Weddings

Lauren B. Jenks ('99) got married on July 4, 2004 to Matthew Taron. They live in Olympia, WA, where Matthew teaches 10th grade English and Lauren manages Washington's Steps to a HealthierUS program.

Viva Combs ('98) is engaged and entered a PhD program in Norway.

Katy Turner ('98) was recently engaged to Aaron Brooks. Katy continues her work as Project Manager for Evaluation at the HIV Vaccine Trials Network, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Aaron is a software engineer and semi-professional musician. They live in and immensely enjoy Seattle.

Jobs / School

Priscilla Barnes ('99) is pursuing a doctorate (PhD) in Interdisciplinary Health Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

India J. Ornelas ('99) moved to Chapel Hill, NC and has started a PhD program in Health Behavior and Health Education at UNC Chapel Hill. She looks forward to continuing her work in Latino communities and gaining more experience in cancer prevention and control. Not to mention some great basketball! She would also like to propose a PHPS '99 reunion at APHA 2005 in New Orleans - the site of many memories for the 1999 class!

Jobs / School (continued)

Kathy Witgert ('99) moved to Washington, DC this summer to start a new job at the National Institutes of Health. She is a legislative liaison for one of NIH's Institutes. You might catch her on CSPAN some day, flipping posters for the boss. She bought a condo with her boyfriend, Brian, and they would be happy to see any of you living near or visiting the DC area.

Maureen Sinclair ('98) accepted the position of Deputy Director for the CDC Central Asia Regional Office and relocated to Almaty, Kazakhstan in May 2004. The Central Asia Regional Office has three main programs: infectious disease surveillance and prevention, including HIV, TB, hepatitis, and blood safety; an Applied Epidemiology Training Program; and a new program on biological threat agent detection and response. The CDC Office works with the Ministries of Health in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, so Maureen travels frequently and has many interesting stories to share. You are welcome to contact her at MSinclair@usaid.gov.

Births

Cheryl Schott ('98) reports that a lot has changed in her life over the past few months. "I resigned from my position at the Michigan Public Health Institute in August and became a full-time mom. Lena Grace was born August 12 and weighed in at 7 lbs 14 oz, 20 inches. She will be 4 months on December 12 and keeps me very busy." ☺

Todd Wilson ('99) and Angie Wilson announce the birth of their daughter, Trinity Alaina Wilson, on June 14, 2004 at 10:30 am at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, GA. Trinity was 7 lbs. 13 oz., with lots of dark brown hair and blue eyes.

Other Updates / Achievements

Patrick Flaherty ('98) and **Cindi Melanson** ('99) ran in the Chicago Marathon on October 10, 2004. This was Patrick's first marathon and Cindi's second. Patrick finished with a time of 3:42:23 and Cindi finished with a time of 4:42:45.

Publications

Miyai T, **Turner KR**, Kent CK, Klausner J (2004). The Psychosocial Impact of Testing Individuals with No History of Genital Herpes for Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2. Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Sept; 31(9): 517-521. [**Katy Turner** ('98)]

Condolences

To John Lisco, (Acting Chief, PHPS), on the recent death of his mother.

Keep in Touch!

Has your contact information changed?
Please send address and/or email
updates to Mary Kate Weber.
(Email: muw1@cdc.gov)

Interested in receiving the minutes
from PHPSAA Executive Committee
conference calls? Please contact Mary
Kate Weber to be added to the email
distribution list.
(Email: muw1@cdc.gov)

Contributions to the Alumni News
and Updates can be emailed to
Julie Schuitema Wolthuis.
(Email: jschuitema@dhr.state.ga.us)

We would like to begin a new feature
in the PHPS Alumni Association
Newsletter highlighting the work of
an alum since finishing PHPS. Please
contact a member of the Executive
Committee to “nominate” someone
for the next issue of the newsletter.