

SPRING 2015
Volume 13 Issue 1

**SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**



Healthviews

**Peace Corps Master's International Program:
Providing SPH Graduate Students With Unique
Volunteer Service Around the Globe**

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SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH



The School of Public Health is one of seven health sciences colleges at UIC providing a system-wide approach to healthcare.



AT LEFT Photo taken by Michele Hom (MPH '14) on Lake Victoria near Kisumu, Kenya. Just after sunrise, two boys prepare to fish for Tilapia as dark clouds approach. Ms. Hom spent six months in Kenya working for Safe Water and AIDS Project, which promotes health through community engagement, education, and selling health and hygiene products.

ON THE COVER Brian Barg (MPH '14) spent 26 months in Malawi while participating in the Peace Corps Master's International program. As a Community Health Advisor he worked with individuals and community groups in his village to implement projects and conduct trainings on topics such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, malaria, and natural medicine.

Healthviews

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The UIC School of Public Health is committed to preserving the environment. This publication is printed on post-consumer recycled paper using biodegradable ink.



As another academic year comes to a close, I like to pause and reflect on all that our students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters have helped the UIC School of Public Health accomplish. In this issue of

Healthviews, I am pleased to share with you stories that will make you proud to be part of the UIC SPH community.

You may have heard the news already about the \$1.4 million estate gift that was generously left to UIC SPH by Dr. Paul Levy and Virginia Tomasek. This unrestricted gift is the largest to the school from an individual and will support student scholarships and establish the first endowed professorship in the division of epidemiology and biostatistics. You can read more about it on page 15. Check out the Pulse of Public Health on page 3 to see how members of the UIC SPH community suggest we use another gift of this size should one come our way!

I'm pleased to share news about a new online certificate program in Pharmacoepidemiology (see page 6). To my knowledge, it is the only fully online program to offer this kind of training and I know its potential reach is global. Another

very unique online program offered by our school is our Doctorate in Public Health Leadership (DrPH) program. Check out pages 4-5 to find out what the buzz is all about!

I'm very proud of the fact that our faculty rank 8th on research funding per faculty member among schools and programs of public health. Read about our groundbreaking research in each of our divisions on pages 12-13. Robin Mermelstein, clinical professor of community health sciences, received UIC's 2014 Woman of the Year Award (page 14). The award recognizes Dr. Mermelstein's significant contributions to women's health.

The school's commitment to global health is evident by the impact we are having around the world. Check out pages 8-11 to learn more about our students, alumni and faculty working in various countries (and Chicago!) to address public health concerns. Did you know that UIC SPH is partnering with the Peace Corps? Read about two students who are the first to graduate from our Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) program, the only program of its kind in the Midwest.

Lastly, I hope you'll see photos from the many events that took place during the past year (pages 24-25) and be inspired to join me at one of our alumni events planned for the upcoming year.

Wishing you good health,

Paul Brandt-Rauf, DrPH, MD, ScD
Dean, UIC School of Public Health

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New UIC Chancellor Honors Public Health Students

A highlight of the academic year is the Chancellor's Student Service and Leadership Awards (CSSLA) program. Since 1973, the CSSLA program has recognized outstanding student leaders and student volunteers who, while maintaining high academic achievement, demonstrate a commitment to the UIC community through student organizations and campus activities and through active service and community engagement throughout the greater Chicagoland area.



Chancellor Michael D. Amiridis

This year, UIC's new Chancellor, Michael D. Amiridis, presented awards to 17 School of Public Health students through the CSSLA program. A 2015 graduate of the Bachelor of Arts program, Katie Bobbitt, also won the Eugertha Bates Memorial Award. This award honors a student whose volunteer activities in a campus or community setting demonstrate an outstanding degree of caring dedication, selfless

commitment, and a truly exceptional humanitarian contribution to the needs of others. Ms. Bobbitt was nominated for her work with UIC's Global Brigades, the largest student-led organization for global health and sustainable development. Not only did she volunteer on two trips to Honduras, but she also served as the inaugural Chapter President where she was able to expand the program to mobilize more UIC students to volunteer.

2015 CHANCELLOR'S STUDENT SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

Catherine Bobbitt	Yaejin Park
John Capua	Shruti Patel
Daniel Finn	Emalee Pearson
Josephina Frankovich	Ernestina Perez
Rachelle Johnson	Kari Peterson
Hulliams Kamlem	Jamel Russell
Hee Jin Kim	Daniela Toledo
Shambreia McBrayer	Lakeshia Watson
Rachel Pananookooln	



Members of the Mental Health and Disability Alliance receive the New Student Organization of the Year award.

In addition to the individual students being recognized, the Mental Health and Disability Alliance (MHDA) received top honors as the New Student Organization of the Year. MHDA was founded by John Capua (MPH '15) to address barriers surrounding mental health and disability. Mr. Capua said he worked with other public health students during the group's



Katie Bobbitt receives the Eugertha Bates Memorial Award from Chancellor Amiridis.

initial planning phase because he knew that people with mental health issues often don't seek help because they are afraid of being stigmatized. With more than 50 members, the group includes undergrad and graduate students, staff and faculty working together to host events on campus to raise awareness. The group's visibility on campus caught the eye of the Chancellor's office because of the impact they are having on students' lives. "It's really important to have an open discussion about mental health. It's okay to have depression, it's okay to have PTSD, it's okay to have these conditions," Mr. Capua said. It's no wonder the group received the top award for campus student organizations. ●

The UIC School of Public Health recently received a \$1.4 million gift from the estate of a former faculty member and his wife. If the school were to receive another gift of this size, how would you suggest they use it to make the world healthier? The UIC community weighs in...



I believe UIC School of Public Health should use its next major financial gift to establish a Center for Domestic and Global Health Equity with a mission to train scholars and practitioners to become leaders that foster cross-disciplinary and community-based public health projects around the world.

ROHAN JEREMIAH, PHD, MPH
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES



To make the world healthier, another gift of that size could go to support the incredible students of SPH. If another \$1.4 gift was used to execute some of the amazing health interventions and programs I've seen proposed by my classmates and peers, I have no doubts the world could become a healthier place.

EMALEE PEARSON, MSW/MPH CANDIDATE
PRESIDENT, PUBLIC HEALTH
STUDENT ASSOCIATION



When a school receives donations, it shows how much they believe in the programming. What an honor! UIC is respected for its research. Let's keep it strong by providing scholarships to students who exhibit a financial need and by strengthening the pipeline programs for the next generation of public health professionals.

JAMEL RUSSELL, MPH '15
PRESIDENT, MINORITY STUDENTS
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH



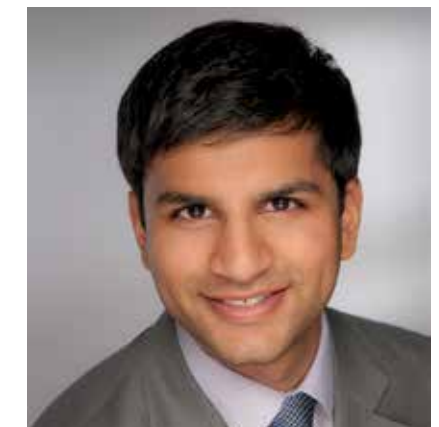
Focusing on Population Health where public health partners would collaborate with community health clinics to decrease disparities in care at the patient level. This could be done directly within the patient visit by incorporating a community health program addressing the barriers to care.

LAVERNE BARNES, DO, MPH '94
MEDICAL DIRECTOR,
TCA HEALTH, INC.
MEMBER, ALUMNI BOARD



To make our underserved communities healthier, we are in need of resources to attract and train a workforce ready to serve in these areas. I would suggest using a gift of that size to begin working towards providing tuition for all of our low-income and modest middle-income students who want to work in underserved communities.

EBBIN DOTSON, PHD, MHA
ASSISTANT DEAN, OFFICE OF
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES



With the shaky political climate and uncertain future of public health programs in the City of Chicago, we have the opportunity to make the world healthier by starting in our own backyard. Such gifts can be instrumental in positioning ourselves as key stakeholders who represent the interests of many of the underserved populations with whom we work.

HAMZA OBAID, MPH '13
ANALYST, PROVIDENT
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING
MEMBER, RECENT
GRADUATE BOARD

Leading Change in the 21st Century: the DrPH

Public health as a discipline and the public's health status present its leaders with a set of complex problems. With healthcare transformation, persistence of health conditions such as violence and chronic diseases, tremendous disparities and inequity in health, and emerging public health threats, leadership is vitally needed to meet these challenges in more effective and enduring ways. The call for leadership in public health is not new. For nearly a century, a succession of reports on public health authored by the Institute of Medicine and other authorities in the field have identified leadership as a key ingredient to more effective public health practice.

In 2005, the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) program was revised to reflect the increased need for leadership to address the changing public health landscape. Led by Program Director Dr. Patrick Lenihan and colleagues, the DrPH program adopted a practice-leadership focus to strengthen public health leaders' competency to drive change, develop policy, build systems, foster innovation and engage in scholarly practice that builds a strong foundation for evidence-based public health practice.



David Carrington, back row center, joins members of the 2014 cohort.

The program's innovative design seeks to maximize its mission through pillars of action learning, adaptive leadership, and systematic reflection, and building the evidence-base of public health practice.

To ensure a practice-orientation, the DrPH program employs an action-learning approach. Nearly all students work full-time and in leadership positions, making it easier to facilitate application of lessons learned, and where leadership principles covered in the virtual classroom can be tested and shared. This real-time feedback reinforces the practice relevance of the content-oriented and theoretical material.

David Carrington joined the program in 2014 and serves as the President and CEO of a healthcare organization. He notes that in less than a year, the program's approach has helped his understanding of effective leadership. "The program's value is rooted in the ability to implement new knowledge immediately. It is more than just theory; the program assists me by providing

"The program's value is rooted in the ability to implement new knowledge immediately. It is more than just theory; the program assists me by providing real time solutions to real life leadership issues."

real time solutions to real life leadership issues," Mr. Carrington said.

The program's six competencies guide a highly structured curriculum, consisting of nine core courses and a focused area of emphasis leading to the completion of a portfolio and a dissertation. The

portfolio is a unique program feature and documents mastery of the six program competencies attained through a student's professional career and academic achievements, including those in the DrPH program. Developed in stages using tools of systematic reflection, the portfolio is built as a student identifies, assesses, and presents in an integrated narrative an individual leadership vision along with evidence reflecting the application of each competency.

Students also complete a practice-based dissertation employing approaches that include a sophisticated use of data in problem-solving, the appraisal of evidence for application, the studied adaptation of evidence-based interventions under real world conditions and more traditionally the direct contribution to the evidence base through practice research.

Overall, the program focuses on providing a theoretical foundation and tools for leading change in today's public health world using principles of adaptive leadership and systematic reflection. In nearly every required class, students apply an iterative process for complex problem solving that requires students to systemically reflect on possible innovative approaches that lead to a more enduring outcome.

Rocio Luna matriculated into the DrPH Program in 2012 and is a public health practitioner with over 20 years' experience. Ms. Luna notes that she always appreciated the interconnectedness of factors that contribute to issues and problems faced by those practicing in the field. She knew that her master's degree in



Rocio Luna

public health provided her with a solid training base, but often only technical strategies for approaching complex public health problems. "Public health problems are often adaptive challenges that require experiential learning, critical new insights, innovation, and a systems perspective," Ms. Luna says. "These are

Leadership Program

skills and concepts that I have learned and applied throughout the DrPH program and symbolize my evolutionary journey from manager to adaptive leader. As an adaptive leader, I am now in a better position to influence change, adopt new approaches, perspectives, and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves."

Lakisha Flagg, a member of the 2011 cohort, recently passed her dissertation proposal defense. An experienced Army public health nurse and a commissioned officer, Major Flagg already has nearly 15 years of experience. Despite her experience and



Lakisha Flagg

strong expertise, she also notes that this approach to problem solving has been key to her work. "While in the program, I have collected a wide-range of knowledge and skills. One of my most critical learning points has been the ability to gain a true understanding of issues before beginning to solve them. And, I have learned that skills like these have the potential for application in many areas of my professional practice. I have used these skills in workforce

development projects, conducting needs assessments, and coordinating and developing staff training. I have also been able to apply them to strategic projects involving multiple stakeholders to identify assumptions and mandates in order to clarify priorities. These skills have proven to be invaluable to me as I mature as a leader and I continue to find opportunities to refine them."

Another key feature of the DrPH program is its distance-based, peer-learning model. Initiated in 2010, the DrPH program moved to an entirely distance-based format as well as applying a co-learning, cohort model to organizing the students. This change allows the program to tap into a broader and more diverse pool of students. It keeps students connected to their work settings across the world and helps to create a peer-based learning community and reinforce principles of experiential learning most effective for professional leadership development.

DrPH students matriculate into the program already as leaders in their areas of expertise but looking to take their leadership in new directions. They work internationally, nationally, and locally in either governmental public health, the military, academia, non-for profit sector, or healthcare making a strong impact in their settings.

Student's work ranges in scope and topic, driving health and systems improvement. Examples include increasing access to services in rural Ethiopia; addressing barriers and facilitators to a range of public health issues such as reproductive life planning across the United States; addressing succession planning and the engagement of the public health workforce;



Susanna Visser, DrPH '14

implementing a state-wide performance management system to promote collective impact; or working to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in public health programming efforts.

Our graduates are also engaged in work that is transforming the field of public health. A recent graduate, Susanna Visser (DrPH '14) said that her time spent cultivating the DrPH competencies

"resulted in the virtual explosion of the Public Health landscape on the very ground that I was tending for impact in the field of pediatric behavioral health. As an epidemiologist at CDC, I found every opportunity to weave the DrPH content into my daily activities, embracing qualitative methods, critical thinking, policy evaluation, and strategic planning to further advance the more traditional epidemiologic approach that I had successfully relied upon for a decade. Taken together, these skills helped me position and expand an important public health issue into an initiative that was selected as an agency priority less than 6 months after graduation. I attribute a great part of this achievement to my more holistic view of the public health system that I gained from my time spent in the DrPH program."

If every student is able to impact the field of public health like Dr. Visser suggests, the DrPH program graduates will make a tremendous impact in the field of public health. ●

DID YOU KNOW?

The UIC School of Public Health has one of only two online Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (DrPH) programs offered in the U.S.

New Online Certificate Program Examines Effective Medication Use



The increased use and complexity of pharmaceuticals have led to public and societal concerns about medication safety and effectiveness. Better evidence on the benefits and harms of medications in populations is critically needed to help inform health care, health policy and treatment decisions made by providers and patients. Individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively examine medication use in large populations are highly sought after by employers from not only the pharmaceutical industry, but also those in consulting organizations, government agencies, and academia.

Together with the UIC College of Pharmacy, the School of Public Health will begin offering a Pharmacoepidemiology Certificate program in the Fall of 2015. "It fills a critical need for those health care professionals concerned with post-marketing drug surveillance and related issues such as drug comparative effectiveness and risk management," said Paul Brandt-Rauf, Dean of the School of Public Health. "It is unique in that it is a fully on-line program that can reach a wide audience of practicing professionals."

The field of pharmacoepidemiology focuses on medication use in large populations and the effect of those medications on the public's health. Traditionally, there has been a particular focus on safety monitoring of medications after they come into widespread use, called pharmacovigilance. However, there is also an increasing appreciation of studying both the benefits and harms of medications in populations to help inform providers and patients when making treatment and prevention decisions and to ensure equity in medication access.

"My colleagues in the College of Pharmacy and I are excited to launch this certificate," said Ronald Hershow, professor and director of the division of epidemiology and biostatistics. "It is designed to equip those working in the pharmaceutical industry for work that will greatly impact the safety and equitable use of medications in the U.S. In fact, it is the only fully online program to offer this kind of training and as such, its potential reach is global."

Pharmacoepidemiology draws on many areas, including pharmacology, biostatistics, healthcare policy and regulatory affairs. "This field is particularly critical now due to the growth of the elderly population in the U.S. and elsewhere and the resultant increased medication use in those populations," said Dr. Hershow. The pharmacoepidemiology certificate program will be important to persons currently working in the pharmaceutical industry or related fields that would

benefit from additional skills and training. Traditional health science students will also benefit from the coursework since pharmacoepidemiology is a growing, important field. ●



For more information, call (312) 996-4795, email PECAdmin@uic.edu or visit www.pharmacoepidemiologycertificate.uic.edu.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ No required campus visits
- ❖ 13 credit hour program
- ❖ Learn anytime, anywhere
- ❖ Diverse student population
- ❖ Fully-accredited and nationally-ranked university and colleges
- ❖ Renowned faculty with research and field experience
- ❖ Multidisciplinary instruction
- ❖ More than a decade of online teaching experience
- ❖ The certificate may be earned in one year (two courses each Fall and Spring semester)
- ❖ Credits could be used toward an MPH or other degree programs

Oral Histories Play Vital Role in Community Health Assessment Course

While those in the humanities have known the importance of oral history for centuries, it has not been a common resource used for health research purposes. Instead, hard data—tangible numbers or statistics, for example—is typically favored by experts to get their messages across. That is starting to change, however, as evidenced by a multidisciplinary community health assessment being led by Dr. Jennifer Hebert-Beirne, assistant professor of community health sciences, and Jennifer Felner, MPH, PhD candidate who has been her teaching assistant for the past five semesters at the UIC School of Public Health. Master of Public Health candidates in the class are learning about the health needs and assets in Chicago's North Lawndale and Little Village neighborhoods by engaging with community residents and hearing it in their own words.



Ana Genkova, PhD student in Community Psychology who took the CHSC 431 class.

"The addition of oral histories as a data source in our Community Health Assessment began when we were told we weren't getting the story that is Little Village," explained Dr. Hebert-Beirne, simply by using traditional methods such as public surveillance data on births, deaths, disease and other health indicators. It was community partner Enlace Chicago's suggestion to work with StoryCorps, a nonprofit that aims to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share and preserve the stories of our lives.

Little Village, located in the South Lawndale neighborhood, and North Lawndale, are often associated with poverty and gang violence. What is the real story of these neighborhoods, though? According to residents, it's one you may not have heard before.

"The stories in the media are different from what I experienced [growing up], and it's up to us to paint the picture of how we want to be represented. People aren't victimizing themselves; they're overcoming challenges and persevering," remarked Evelyn Rodriguez, a StoryCorp interviewee and resident of Little Village.

This sentiment was echoed by Slyvia Gonzalez, an MPH candidate who previously worked on the assessment. She noted that not only are racial minorities misrepresented and reduced to "risk categories" in the media, but also in research journals and academic texts. "We need to rethink minority language and

identity. We're not vulnerable, but empowered," Ms. Gonzalez said at a recent listening event for the project.

Audience members at the listening event marveled at the impact that hearing even a fragment of someone's story, no more than four minutes long, could have on the way we think about health. For example, one story was about Jesús, a former gang member who, up until recent budget cuts at the state level, worked for CeaseFire Illinois (a project of Cure Violence) in order to steer youth away from violence. One audience member mentioned that while she typically thought of health only in physical and mental capacities, Jesús' story had made her think more broadly about what health really means.

Encouraging this type of thinking is one of the main goals of this study, which seeks to better understand community health issues from community members' perspectives. The oral histories taken from North Lawndale, for example, showed that while North Lawndale does face immense socio-economic struggles, the residents are proud of the rich history of the neighborhood and hopeful for the future. However, this side of the story is not often told.

The next step is to urge others in the public health field to value qualitative data in addition to quantitative data, which is still extremely important at a community level. Katie McClellan, an MPH candidate in the class, said that after hearing these stories she recognized "You can't place a number on someone's story. This is so necessary to how we move forward in public health, rather than just numbering things."



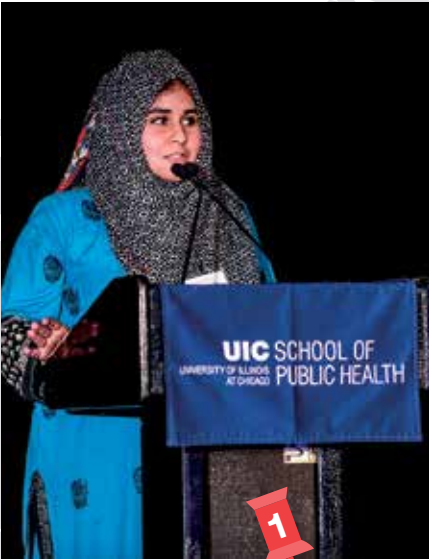
Professor Hebert-Beirne with Shirley Alfaro, Regional Manager of StoryCorps Chicago.

The idea is that the student-generated assessment findings will supplement ongoing health planning efforts in the communities. The work of previous students in the Community Health Assessment class has already been embedded into a quality of life improvement plan in Little Village, and the data from this semester in North Lawndale will be used by Sinai Urban Health Institute to complement the community health survey data they collect. "We want to continue to be a credible partner for community health improvement in these communities," Dr. Hebert-Beirne said. ●

Making a Difference in the Health of Populations Around the World

1. CHICAGO

Nesha Usmani, MPH candidate in community health sciences, is a Wellness Program Intern at RefugeeOne. Her work includes organizing, maintaining, and updating a database of over 500 refugees, which is used to inform on mental health trends of refugees in Chicago. She will also conduct a literature review to look at perception as a barrier to health care access. This literature review will be used as a policy brief to inform stakeholders on the importance of refugee resettlement programs and refugee mental health.



Nesha Usmani speaking about her global health work at the 2015 Annual Alumni Celebration.

2. CUBA

UIC SPH has now established a relationship with Escuela Nacional de Salud Publica (ENSAP), the National School of Public Health of Cuba. Dean Brandt-Rauf and Dr. Pastor Castell-Florit Serrate, Director of ENSAP, recently formalized the relationship with the signing of a collaboration between the two institutions. This will offer new opportunities for the Global Health Program and other faculty and students to work in Cuba.



Paul Brandt-Rauf (right) is joined by Dr. Pastor Castell-Florit Serrate, Director, ENSAP; Prof. Tania Aguilar Guerra, Vicedirectora General, ENSAP; and Dr. Ralph Rivera Gutiérrez, Dean of the School of Public Health, University of Puerto Rico.

3. HAITI

Janet Lin, MD, MPH led a group of UIC SPH students in a Disaster Risk Reduction project in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in March 2015. The UIC team partnered with the local YMCA d'Haiti to help community leaders build the capacity to assess, mitigate, and manage environmental threats, and build community resilience. This is the 4th time the training program has been implemented in Haiti. This project allowed the group to engage first-hand in the implementation of community-based disaster risk reduction programming.



Dr. Janet Lin

4. SOUTH AFRICA

Katelyn Stermer, an MPH candidate in epidemiology and the Global Health concentration, was awarded a Boren Fellowship to spend 11 months abroad in Durban, South Africa. While the fellowship is primarily for immersive language study of isiZulu, she will also be enrolled at the University of Kwazulu-Natal and taking elective classes from their MPH curriculum. Katelyn will also have the opportunity to complete her practicum in rural KwaZulu-Natal collecting data on temporal trends in HIV infection as well as Tuberculosis (TB) co-infection.



Katelyn Stermer

5. ZAMBIA

Shannon Brunner (MPH '12) currently serves as a data analyst with the Prevention, Care and Treatment branch at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Zambia. Her work has included the development and management of data use training programs for healthcare practitioners, analyses and evaluations of HIV data, and geographic information systems (GIS) technical support for the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Zambia interagency team.



Shannon Brunner, top row, third from right

2015 Douglas Passaro Global Horizons Scholarship Awardees

Named in memory of Dr. Douglas Passaro, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Attending Physician in Infectious Diseases at the UIC Hospital from 2001-2005, this award supports graduate students for health-related, hands-on field experiences to carry on Doug's work and passion for global health.



Members of the Passaro family join the 2015 Passaro Scholarship Awardees.

NAME Paula Rusca, MPH candidate in Health Policy and Administration
LOCATION Managua, Nicaragua
PROJECT Paula will be working to improve Nicaragua's Clean Water Program by collecting and analyzing data to help AMOS Health and Hope to provide communities with safe drinking water. Paula will also learn how household water filters create safe water and how this improves the health of the people in rural Nicaraguan communities.

NAME Miguel Rodriguez, MPH candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
LOCATION San Juan, Puerto Rico
PROJECT Miguel will immerse himself in the local culture and engage with clinics and community organizations to better understand the barriers and strategies that HIV-infected individuals have towards a healthy lifestyle and adherence to treatment.

NAME Zabin S. Patel, MPH candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
LOCATION Istanbul, Turkey
PROJECT Zabin will conduct a cross-sectional study that investigates the Quality-of-Life (QoL) of Turkish patients receiving head and neck therapy. Zabin will also examine if QoL is related to socio-demographic variables, including age, educational level, marital status, area of residence, monthly income, and employment status, or clinical variables such as pain, type of surgical treatment, stages of disease, and time since surgery.

NAME Courtney Babb, MPH
LOCATION Ahero District, Nyanza Province, Kenya
PROJECT Courtney will be returning to Nyando, Kenya to lead a project that evaluates the effectiveness of a latrine intervention on childhood diarrheal health. She will be partnering with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation where she will conduct a cross sectional survey to compare the incidence of diarrhea in children in communities with and without the latrine intervention.

NAME Krista Schaefer, MPH candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
LOCATION Kisumu, Kenya
PROJECT Krista will work with the Nyanza Reproductive Health Society (NRHS) on the Sexual Health and Preserving the Environment (SHAPE) project. She will collect data and make observations to answer questions regarding access to care in rural, resource-constrained areas.

Global Health Program Partnership With Peace Corps

Through its Global Health Program, the UIC School of Public Health is dedicated to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of people and communities throughout the world. The program supports education and research across disciplines to find new approaches and creative solutions for global health challenges. One way in which the program does this is through its collaboration with the Peace Corps to offer a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree that includes a foreign service component. The Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) program in public health is the only program of its kind in the Midwest.

"Preparing students to work in global environments and become successful contributors to global health solutions is a high priority at the UIC School of Public Health. The PCMI program provides the perfect opportunity for our students to accomplish this by applying their skills to promote healthy populations and improve the quality of life in countries in need around the world," said Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf.

Now in its fifth year, the PCMI program provides rigorous public health training, equipping students with the management, methods, and application skills they need to improve health outcomes in their host countries. Candidates enrolled in the program take most of their MPH courses before entering Peace Corps service and, upon completion of the program, will have attained both academic training and substantial field experience. Brian Barg (MPH '14) and Jessica Ruggiero (MPH '15) are two students in the first cohort to complete the program.

Mr. Barg spent 26 months in Malawi where he was a Community Health Advisor. He worked with community members in his village to implement projects and conduct trainings on topics such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, malaria, and natural medicine. He says a critical lesson he learned was the importance of



Brian Barg with Desire, a girl in his village who gave him flowers on his last day in Malawi.

cultural competency when designing or implementing a program. "I did my best to take different considerations into account during planning. For example, not having sessions on market days because no one would show up," Mr. Barg explained. The PCMI program offered him a unique opportunity, he said. "It served as a place to directly apply what I learned in the classroom in a real world setting. While Peace Corps does train you on some basic health education, I felt better with the additional knowledge I got from UIC".



Jessica Ruggiero with students in her adult education class with whom she worked on income-generating projects like making jewelry from recycled magazines.

Ms. Ruggiero was in Botswana for 25 months. "My first two months were in-country Peace Corps training, including language, culture, and our responsibilities as volunteers," she explained. "After training, I moved to my village for the remainder of my service." As a School and Community Liaison for Life Skills, Ms. Ruggiero led a weekly health/leadership club after school "where fifty kids would meet me under a tree to talk about topics such as HIV prevention, decision making, goal setting, and self-esteem." She also managed the school library, started a community exercise group, assisted the HIV support group with grant proposals, and taught the adult education class to make jewelry from recycled magazines. She used the data she collected from a youth empowerment and HIV prevention camp for her capstone project.

Both Mr. Barg and Ms. Ruggiero credit the PCMI program with having a significant impact on their lives. They both would recommend the program to anyone who is interested in global health work. "If you are wanting to step off the path and do something different, challenge yourself in a way you never have, then this is the opportunity of a lifetime! It is definitely not the easy choice, and there were times I asked myself what I was thinking, but at this point I feel that it was the best decision I ever could have made," Ms. Ruggiero said. ●



Spending Spring Break in Grenada

In March 2015, the UIC School of Public Health and the University of Michigan School of Public Health (UMSPH) piloted the Public Health Action Support Team (PHAST), a global public health practice and training program in Grenada, West Indies. PHAST is an interdisciplinary public health practice group of MPH students, faculty and staff members that help health departments and community organizations with short-term public health related projects. Over spring break, PHAST was deployed to Grenada, a tri-island state comprising the islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, located in the most southerly part of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean.

"The objectives of these PHAST global opportunities are to train public health graduate students to respond to the needs of public health agencies and programs, enhance public health graduate students educational experience through real-world public health experiences, and promote professional development in the field of public health," said Rohan D. Jeremiah, assistant professor in community health sciences and PHAST Lead Coordinator.



MPH students Kevin Shi, Casey Lowman, and Colleen McLoughlin pose for a photo with Dr. Jeremiah in Grenville, Grenada.

Students served as public health consultants to numerous community-based organizations, government departments, public and private sector programs, facilitating ways to improve the health of people across the nation. They provided public health capacity building to three community driven projects in Grenada. The host organizations were: Cedars Home for Abused Women, the only domestic violence shelter and home of its kind on the island; the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association; and the Drug Control Secretariat located within Grenada's Ministry of Education.

Students working at Cedars Home assisted with an asset-based assessment of the organization, supported the development of an organizational strategic plan, and developed safety protocols for residents and staff. PHAST members working with the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association conducted qualitative interviews to explore the increased rates of unsafe reproductive health practices and public health implications. At the Drug Control Secretariat, PHAST conducted interviews to explore the



Dr. Rohan Jeremiah and Casey Lowman interview Sergeant Francois of the Grenada Royal Police Force.

gendered expressions and justifications of alcohol usage among Grenadian adolescents as well as contributed to the development of the country's new alcohol control policy. "We at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development are pleased with the technical assistance provided by the PHAST and St. George's University. Their assistance will contribute immensely to public health in Grenada," said Dave Alexander, Drug Control Officer, Drug Control Secretariat.

Several media outlets in Grenada and across the Caribbean region featured our PHAST students' activities, highlighting their roles in providing technical assistance in various public health sectors. Dana Thomas, Program Manager at UMSPH remarked, "We are pleased to have the PHAST model become a part of UIC. We believe that this multi-institutional partnership that seeks to provide training for our students to benefit our global communities is an ideal platform for engaged global learning and partnership building."

Both institutions intend to deploy PHAST annually during spring break, as well as arrange individual field experiences during the summer in order to maintain project continuity. "This is an exciting new global health initiative at UIC," said Alyson Lofthouse, Associate Director of the school's Global Health Program. "We look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in Grenada and at the University of Michigan School of Public Health." ●



Alyson Lofthouse, Associate Director, Global Health Program, and MPH students Casey Lowman and Colleen McLoughlin discuss alcohol consumption and control with Dave Alexander, Drug Control Officer, Drug Control Secretariat in Grenada.

Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Dr. Basmattee Boodram is a Research Assistant Professor in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and an active researcher in the Division's Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP). Her highly interdisciplinary research addresses the complex interplay of individual, social, and structural factors that lead to health disparities among marginalized populations. Her recent work examines the potential for the still emerging population of predominantly non-Hispanic white, suburban youths who inject drugs (PWID) to "bridge" HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) as they move between communities with high and low infection prevalence.

Dr. Boodram is UIC's principal investigator of an intervention project called Hepatitis C Community Alliance to Test and Treat (HepCCATT), a program representing a highly innovative interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration that includes the Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health, University of Chicago, Northwestern University, American Liver Foundation, Walgreens, and numerous Chicago community healthcare centers.



HepCCATT will build Chicago's capacity to

test for and cure HCV infections. An estimated 70,000 Chicago residents are living with HCV infection. Approximately half are unaware of the infection. HepCCATT will work to strengthen early HCV diagnosis and address barriers to treatment, enrollment and adherence through the first HCV-based intensive case management program, which was developed by Dr. Boodram. It will also aim to cure HCV infection among Chicago residents most affected, develop a state-of-the art HCV surveillance system and enhance cross-agency collaboration and advocacy for HCV-affected populations.

Dr. Boodram's interdisciplinary approach can be also found in her novel approach to infectious disease transmission and intervention modeling. She co-founded the Consortium for Modeling and Analysis of Treatments and Interventions (www.c-mati.org), which provides a forum for active development of cross-cutting multidisciplinary research, bringing together diverse researchers to generate realistic computational models for advancing public health and clinical interventions.

Dr. Boodram was the co-principal investigator of a recent UIC Vice Chancellor Award of Excellence grant where she led a team in the development of the first realistic computational model to examine HCV among PWID in Chicago that maximized use of 25 years of empirical data. The goal of this work is to facilitate research inquiry not feasible using empirical epidemiological studies, including epidemic forecasting, evaluating the impact of treatment scale up, and simulation of phase III vaccine trials through a collaboration with the Food and Drug Administration.

Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Environmental monitoring is long-term and costly, but it is necessary to safeguard the health of humans and the ecosystem. Numerous chemicals have been synthesized in recent decades, and some are now classified as chemicals of emerging concerns (CECs) because they are persistent in the environment, accumulate in humans and animals, and toxic. With the funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. An Li, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences, has led the project Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program (GLSSP) since 2010.

In this project, Dr. Li's team has collected more than a thousand sediment samples. These samples are being analyzed for hundreds of highly concerned CECs, using sophisticated laboratory procedures and instruments. For example, herbicide atrazine and its degradation products have been found to accumulate in the sediment of Lake Michigan, with their concentrations increasing exponentially over time. In addition, the sediment from the southern lake was found to be significantly more heavily contaminated than those in the northern, in agreement with the agricultural use pattern of this herbicide. Although contamination of the lake water is still low at present, the continuous accumulation of the chemicals in the Great Lakes, as observed in Dr. Li's lab, is alarming and calls for action.

A lot of history of the human society can be retrieved from sediment. Dr. Li's team has not only seen the rise and fall of the pesticide DDT, the notorious polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs),

and highly toxic dioxins as recorded in sediment cores, but also found many previously unknown chemical pollutants. They recently discovered a suite of chemicals called polyhalogenated carbazoles in the deep sediments of Lake Michigan. These compounds are similar in chemical structure as dioxins and PCBs, but we know little about where they come from and whether they are toxic. The information on the spatial and temporal trends of chemical contamination in the Great Lakes is valuable to the EPA in their decision making for the protection of the lakes and the people in the region. The work of her team is featured as part of a cover story "Long-Haul Measurements" in a recent issue of the Chemical and Engineering News, the magazine of the American Chemical Society.



Dr. Li's major collaborators include Professor John P. Giesy of the University of Saskatchewan, Professor Neil C. Sturchio of the University of Delaware, and Professor Karl J. Rockne from UIC Department of Civil and Material Engineering. More than twenty others including visiting scholars, postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduate assistants have participated in this work.

Division of Health Policy and Administration

Dr. Jamie F. Chriqui, professor of health policy and administration and Fellow in the Institute for Health Research and Policy (IHRP), has dedicated her career to answering an old question, "Do policies matter?" with a resounding Yes. Her research focuses on understanding the nature and extent of public health laws and policies adopted by state and local governments nationwide and examining their impact on communities, schools, and individual health-related outcomes.

Her educational training in political science, health policy, and policy sciences, combined with her applied experience working as a policy analyst at the National Institutes of Health and as a federal government contractor prior to joining UIC in 2007, provide her with unique insights as to how the policy process works in practice, which she routinely applies to her research and teaching.

Dr. Chriqui's research has spanned a wide range of chronic disease policy issues, including illicit drug use, substance



abuse treatment, cancer prevention, HIV/AIDS, injury prevention, and tobacco control. For the better part of the past decade, however, she has focused on obesity policy-related issues. This work has primarily been funded by grants and contracts from the National Cancer

Institute, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For the past eight years, her research has focused heavily on studying the prevalence, comprehensiveness and strength of school-district wellness policies, which are mandated by Congress, and related state laws across the country as well as food and beverage taxation from jurisdictions nationwide.

More recently, with UIC colleagues Drs. Sandy Slater and Lisa Nicholson, she has been leading first-of-its-kind research to examine the active living orientation of local zoning codes adopted across the country and their relationship with the active living orientation of communities and adult physical activity.

As a spinoff of their zoning work, Drs. Chriqui and Slater were recently awarded a CDC Special Interest Project as part of the Illinois Prevention Research Center at IHRP to collaborate in the CDC's Physical Activity Policy Research Network. As part of this work, they continue to refine their methods for studying the implementation of more active living-oriented zoning codes through changes to community environments using Google Earth aerial photography methods.

Dr. Chriqui has become nationally recognized as an obesity policy research expert. She has been appointed to numerous national committees and advisory boards, including two Institute of Medicine committees, and has collaborated with Chicago Public Schools, and advises the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago's Children on policies and strategies to fight obesity here in our city. Her career demonstrates that policies can and do promote public health.

Division of Community Health Sciences

Dr. David DuBois, professor of community health sciences and Fellow of the Institute for Health Research and Policy, has devoted his career to investigating factors that contribute to holistic positive development for young persons and translating scientific knowledge in this area to the design of effective programs and policies. His current research focuses on the role of mentoring relationships in strengthening the health and well-being of youth.

With funding from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, he is leading two studies that involve the oldest and largest mentoring program in the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters. In this program, volunteers are helped to form supportive, long-term relationships with youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Youth served by the program experience adversity in their lives, ranging from poverty to incarceration of a parent.

One of Dr. DuBois's studies is investigating the benefits of introducing strategies to promote youth thriving into the program. In collaboration with national program staff and Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates in different parts of the country, over 800 youth and their mentors have been randomly assigned to receive either the new thriving supports or standard program services. The new supports focus on helping youth on a journey toward personal thriving. The process begins with the mentor helping the young person to discover and explore his or her "sparks" areas of special interest or passion. A youth's sparks may help stimulate longer-term career goals and serve as potent sources of motivation for efforts to both do well in school and sustain

engagement in healthy behaviors. Later activities draw on recent brain science to help youth better appreciate their inherent capacity for continuous learning and further development of their skills, thus countering the negative stereotypes that research has shown can undermine the confidence and hope of vulnerable young persons.

Dr. DuBois is also leading an investigation of the long-term effects that participation in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program may have on health and well-being in adulthood. This research follows up with participants from a randomized controlled trial of the program conducted during the early 1990s to assess their health, educational, and employment status as adults. Dr. DuBois and his research team will be working to locate and



survey the more than 1,000 participants in the original trial. Study results will offer important insight into whether pairing vulnerable youth with a supportive mentor-volunteer can alter their prospects for becoming healthy and contributing members of their communities. ●

Robin Mermelstein Named Woman of the Year

Robin Mermelstein, professor of psychology and clinical professor of community health sciences, has been named the 2014 Woman of the Year by the University of Illinois at Chicago Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women. The award recognizes Dr. Mermelstein's staunch support of women as a mentor and leader on campus and her contributions to women's health as a scientist.



Robin Mermelstein, professor of psychology and clinical professor of community health sciences, received the 2014 Woman of the Year Award from Interim Chancellor Eric Gislasen in a March 15 luncheon hosted by the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women.

Geri Donenberg, associate dean for research at the School of Public Health and professor of psychology in psychiatry, nominated Mermelstein for the award. She wrote that for almost 30 years, she has “watched Robin demonstrate an unwavering commitment to advancing women’s career development and women’s health research.”

Dr. Mermelstein is a nationally respected researcher of health behaviors funded by the National Institutes of Health. Since 2008, she has directed the Institute for Health Research and Policy, which incubates and supports multidisciplinary health research as an all-campus unit administered by the School of Public Health on behalf of all UIC colleges. She also serves in the leadership of the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences, administered by the College of Medicine.

“Robin exemplifies ‘Woman of Year’ by helping all women thrive in their research, maintain a sense of purpose and excitement about their work, take pride in their accomplishments, problem-solve challenges, network with colleagues, and ultimately succeed in their careers,” Dr. Donenberg wrote in a speech read by Interim Chancellor Eric Gislasen at a March 2015 luncheon where he presented Mermelstein with the award.

Dr. Mermelstein, who joined UIC faculty in 1989, conducts research tracking the development and progression of health-compromising (e.g., cigarette smoking, substance use) and health-enhancing behaviors and develops and evaluates programs to help change unhealthy behaviors. In a ground-breaking longitudinal study tracking nearly 1,300 adolescents into their young adulthood, she has identified trajectories of and predictors for the development of tobacco dependence. She also leads studies to increase the effectiveness and reach of smoking cessation interventions.

“Robin’s research and scholarly activity have been dedicated to improving women’s health and have had an impressive population impact with potential to greatly reduce a primary cause of morbidity and mortality in women - cigarette smoking,” read the Interim Chancellor.

Among her contributions, Dr. Mermelstein has served as the dissertation advisor for more than three dozen doctoral students in psychology and as a dissertation committee member for 20 other doctoral students, including those from the School of Public Health. Dr. Mermelstein also has served as the primary mentor of a dozen recipients of career development awards.

“She has devoted countless hours providing opportunities, advice, and a safe haven for women,” Dr. Donenberg wrote, mentioning that Dr. Mermelstein is often asked to help mentor and advise junior women faculty from the School of Public Health. “She always agrees, and provides much needed support, helpful feedback, and confidence-building for these women. They uniformly report feeling more comfortable with their career directions and motivated to keep moving forward after speaking with her.”

Letters supporting Dr. Mermelstein’s nomination were written by her former students, academic professionals who have worked for her, and investigators from the fields of medicine, nursing, public health and psychology. As one of her colleagues wrote, “Robin is a natural role model for anyone who has the privilege of working with her.”

Established in 1992, the Woman of the Year award honors a UIC woman who has consistently worked on women’s issues beyond the call of duty and who is an exemplary role model. The award criteria include providing service to women at UIC while on the job, responding to issues affecting women, and offering service to women through volunteerism and public support of women’s programs.

The mission of the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women is to improve the status of women at UIC with a primary objective to advise and make recommendations to the Chancellor regarding attitudes, policies, and procedures that affect women students, staff, and faculty. The committee aims to represent the concerns of UIC women at all levels. ●

Partnering With Communities to Improve Policy and Prevent Disease

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has awarded the University of Illinois at Chicago a five-year, \$4.4 million grant to partner with communities to prevent chronic disease and reduce health disparities in Illinois.

UIC is one of 26 academic research institutions awarded this competitive grant in fall 2014 as part of the CDC Prevention Research Centers (PRC) Program. The Illinois PRC will inform policy and environmental change with scientific evidence to improve health behaviors and lower chronic disease risk, especially in the state’s most vulnerable communities.

The grant gives UIC researchers an opportunity “to apply our expertise in prevention research to health challenges and disparities here in our city and throughout the state,” said Lisa Powell, principal investigator of the Illinois PRC and professor of health policy and administration in the UIC School of Public Health.

In its applied research project, the Illinois PRC aims to increase physical activity by improving access to the built environment and use of parks and playgrounds in the community. Led by Sandy Slater, research assistant professor of health policy and administration, the project is evaluating the impact of Chicago Plays!, an initiative by the Mayor’s Office to renovate the city’s playgrounds. Dr. Slater and her team are observing 78 park playgrounds — 39 that have been renovated and 39 that have not — to determine whether community stakeholders influence park utilization and physical activity and in turn shape the neighborhood social environment.

“Given the importance of moderate to vigorous physical activity in reducing chronic disease risk, and the fact that only one-quarter of low-income urban minority youth currently meet national recommendations, the research is highly significant,” Dr. Powell said.

The center allows UIC researchers across the health sciences to “further develop community collaborations and improve the evidence-base on what environments and policy changes work best to improve the health of Chicagoans,” said Dr. Powell.

For example, Slater and her Illinois PRC colleagues are collaborating with the Chicago Park District and Friends of the Parks in the park study. They also will work closely with community residents and neighborhood park councils during the intervention phase of the project. Furthermore, members of local park advisory councils and neighborhood coalitions that applied for renovations in the Chicago Plays! program serve on a committee advising the research team.

The center also is partnering with local and state government, community groups and small businesses to conduct research. The findings will help guide public health policies and environmental changes aimed at improving nutrition, physical



Swing set and basketball court at Millard Playlot Park, 1331 S. Millard Ave., Chicago, before renovations in 2013 (left) and in 2014 (right). Dr. Sandy Slater is leading the Illinois PRC’s applied public health research project, which is evaluating the effects of the Chicago Plays! initiative on communities throughout the city.

activity, and tobacco avoidance to reduce chronic disease risk — and to diminish disparities among population groups in these health behaviors and outcomes.

The Illinois center was awarded additional funding to support its collaboration in five national CDC networks that address specific research priorities. The funding also supports UIC researchers to work with additional community partners to conduct special interest projects locally:

- ❖ Develop a personalized, internet-assisted patient education tool to self-manage epilepsy
- ❖ Address critical global public health problems such as chronic disease through a community participatory approach to health service delivery
- ❖ Address the health needs of minority, immigrant and low wage workers who are at increased risk for chronic diseases and injury through an evaluation of physical activity and injuries among home care aids
- ❖ Examine the role that zoning codes, land use, and smart growth policies may play in facilitating walkable communities and walking
- ❖ Examine the impact of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative on the local retail food environment in underserved communities.

The MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice of the School of Public Health is providing training to local public health professionals as part of the Illinois PRC. With the Cook County Department of Public Health and Illinois PRC researchers, they organized the May 2015 Change Institute, two days of technical training for 200 people interested in building healthier communities.

The UIC School of Public Health will publish updates on the Illinois PRC’s many interesting projects over the next five years. To learn more about the Illinois PRC, visit <http://go.uic.edu/IllinoisPRC>. ●

From Guatemala to Giving Back

Dr. Susan Scrimshaw's Career: A Labor of Love

Dr. Susan Scrimshaw, Ph.D., believes she developed her love of helping people as a child in rural Guatemala in the back of a Jeep. She spent her formative years traveling from remote village to village in the Central American country, where she often assisted her father, Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, a pioneer nutritionist who the *New York Times* stated “improved the health of millions of children in developing countries by creating low-cost vegetable-based foods for weaning infants.”

It was in those villages where Dr. Scrimshaw grew to admire the Latin culture and learned how to give back. “I grew up identifying as a Latin woman, which shaped who I am and how I worked,” Dr. Scrimshaw said. “Latinos are very focused on people and family relationships.”

Dr. Scrimshaw, an anthropologist, was drawn to public health, with an emphasis in community health and applied research. The current president of The Sage Colleges, in Troy, NY, she was dean of the UIC School of Public Health (UIC SPH) from 1994 – 2006. Prior to coming to UIC SPH, she was the associate dean of public health and professor of public health and anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

“My 12 years at UIC SPH were wonderful years,” Dr. Scrimshaw said. “I loved Chicago and I enjoyed working with the faculty, staff and students.” Of all of her accomplishments as dean, she is most proud of her work with faculty and staff to raise the visibility of the school nationwide. It was not difficult, she said, when she was able to communicate the leading-edge work going on at the school already and that she was able to recruit while she was there.

Perhaps the two programs she is most proud of and she feels helped raise the visibility of the school are Cure Violence (formerly CeaseFire) and the Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP). “Gary Slutkin (founder of Cure Violence) walked in the door and I gave him an office and a phone and I said ‘That’s about all I can give you,’” Dr. Scrimshaw recalls. “He began to raise money and go out into the community. Some of our faculty and staff really guided him in those early years.”

Dr. Slutkin was also great at coalition building and evaluation of the program. “It was fine to go around and say you are stopping violence, but you really needed to prove it through evaluation,” Dr. Scrimshaw said.

The key to both programs was involving those in the community. “We weren’t dictating to the community,” she said. “Everybody had skin in the game.”

At Cure Violence, they train carefully selected members of the community—trusted insiders—to anticipate where violence may occur and intervene before it erupts. They engage the entire community to change behavior and recognize that violence is uncool and there are other solutions to conflict.

At COIP, they employ former drug users to deliver services and assist in conducting research. COIP’s services include street outreach, counseling and testing for HIV, syphilis and other infectious diseases associated with substance use.

Perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of COIP’s work—especially in the 1990’s—is its needle exchange program. “We started off with bleach (to clean the needles), which is a much less preferable alternative,” said Dr. Wayne Wiebel, Ph.D., the founder of COIP. “You have to do anything possible to make sure you don’t transmit HIV.”



Dr. Scrimshaw with her husband, Allan Stern



Dr. Scrimshaw with her father Nevin S. Scrimshaw, daughter Mary Corey March, granddaughter Elise R. March, and mother Mary W. Scrimshaw on the day of her inauguration as President of The Sage Colleges.

There was a time during Dr. Scrimshaw’s tenure when Congress pressured the NIH to stop funding needle exchange. “I funded it out of private donations,” she said. “I couldn’t let it drop.”

Dr. Scrimshaw said the key to the success of both Cure Violence and COIP was the community involvement. Both programs became successful, but it was not always easy to communicate those successes, she said. “I believe very strongly in community health and applied research that could range from bench work to community-based work” she said. “But working in the community is not always easy to delineate. You can’t conduct an experiment the way you can in a lab.”

Dr. Wiebel agreed. “Susan got it,” he said. “She was very keen on any community-based programming. She also got how difficult it was to change behaviors.”

While at UIC SPH, Dr. Scrimshaw and her team brought in more research money per capita than the UIC medical school did. The school was also second to the medical school in absolute dollars brought in on research. All of this, with only a fifth of the faculty of the medical school, she said. “It was a team effort,” she said. “They just needed someone to encourage them.”

Dr. Scrimshaw’s time at UIC SPH was also good for her personal life. She met her would-be-husband, Allan Stern, whom she married just a few months before leaving the school for her next job as president at Simmons College in Boston. The couple asked their wedding guests to forgo giving them gifts and either make a donation to their church or to the UIC SPH.

“I believe so strongly that once we are able to give back we should,” Dr. Scrimshaw said. “Someone helped you and you should always give back when you can.” The concepts of giving back and helping others are concepts that were driven home to her by both of her parents, Nevin and Mary Scrimshaw. While Nevin Scrimshaw did his work in Guatemala on nutrition and

also worked to end endemic goiter (a swelling of the thyroid gland that can lead to mental retardation, deafness and dwarfism), Mary Scrimshaw, a biologist, did graduate work in anthropology—while raising five children.

From his wife, Nevin Scrimshaw learned the importance of consulting anthropologists and consulted with renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead about his work in Guatemala. “She accepted a meeting with him and they talked for hours,” Susan Scrimshaw said, adding that Mead insisted on the importance of adding anthropologists to his team in Guatemala.

Dr. Scrimshaw, always supported by her remarkable father, remembers a day when she was about 12 when he came back from a leadership conference. “He put his nametag on me and said ‘You are going to be Dr. Scrimshaw one day,’” she said.

Although Dr. Scrimshaw has left Chicago, she still remains committed to UIC SPH. Earlier this year she added the school to her estate plan, leaving a generous gift to the school to make sure that students have the same opportunities she has had through education. Because of her gift, Scrimshaw is now a charter member of the UIC SPH Legacy Society, a special group recognizing anyone who has included the school in their estate plan. “I want to help a student of Latino origin to complete their education,” she said. “Giving back is very important to me.”

The current dean at the UIC SPH, Paul Brandt-Rauf, said that Dr. Scrimshaw’s gift will have a significant impact on the school’s ability to continue her tradition of providing educational opportunities to deserving students dedicated to addressing issues of Latino Health. “As the cost of education continues to climb and the state’s investment in higher education continues to decline, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the special mission of our school without additional sources of support,” he said. “This is especially true for maintaining access to educational opportunities in public health for students from disadvantaged communities and for their work addressing the health needs of those communities. Fortunately, we do have many loyal supporters who believe in our mission and value of our work.”

“Susan Scrimshaw’s generous bequest is an outstanding example of this loyalty and dedication,” he continued. “We are deeply indebted to her for all she has done for the school in the past and for her continuing generosity.”

During her time at the school, Dr. Scrimshaw was beloved by the staff, faculty and students as well. “The wonderful thing about Susan was how supportive she was,” Dr. Wiebel said. “She relished in a discussion with an outreach worker who didn’t even have a high school education and their entire life was on the streets. She was comfortable going from the world of academia to the world of a sex worker on a street.”

The reason for that is simple, said Dr. Scrimshaw. “I like people.” ●

Endowment Encourages Academic Evaluation

Those who have benefited from an institution should give back to it if they can, believes Lee Hamilton, who received her MPH from the UIC School of Public Health in 1976. So Ms. Hamilton generously endowed \$25,000 to the school to stimulate study in health policy research, an area she feels is often overlooked. She hopes the gift will encourage thoughtful academic evaluation of the short and long term impact of changes in health care delivery systems resulting from the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Since the ACA is one of the most major pieces of legislation our country has seen, Ms. Hamilton believes that many parts of it need to be studied, including how services are being delivered, how unfunded mandates will be handled, how success is defined and outcomes measured. "Our endowed funds provide students with needed aid to enhance their academic experience and make their education more affordable," said Craig Hyland, Assistant Dean for Advancement. "Gifts like Lee's are invaluable to our students."

Ms. Hamilton was able to meet the student who is the first scholarship recipient of her endowed gift at the school's annual Research and Awards Day. Michele Thornton, a PhD candidate in health policy and administration, received the scholarship and will conduct an analysis of the first two years of the ACA's implementation. Ms. Thornton's work will explore the impact of different types of outreach/enrollment efforts on the uninsured population. "I am so honored to be the first recipient of the Hamilton Scholarship. It will assist me in sharing my work beyond UIC at upcoming academic conferences. I'm thrilled that my interests aligned with Ms. Hamilton's and I look forward to sharing my ongoing work with her and the UIC SPH community as it evolves," said Ms. Thornton.

But while the impact of the ACA is of particular interest because of the magnitude of change it imposes, the school is not limited to direct the endowment funds to this one area. "If the school feels that other health policy issues are more pressing, they have the flexibility to direct the funds as they see fit," Ms. Hamilton said.

A speech and hearing therapist by training, Ms. Hamilton started working at UIC in 1966 first as an instructor and then acting director of research in the Department of Otolaryngology. There, her focus was on research in early identification of hearing loss in high risk populations such as premature infants. She pursued an MPH because she recognized that to grow professionally an advanced degree was essential. Public health helped strengthened her academic skills and supported her professional interests.

After obtaining her MPH, Ms. Hamilton said she was able to take on new challenges as she advanced professionally at the UIC Medical Center. It also enabled her to develop opportunities outside the university by expanding her professional network.

Ms. Hamilton retired in 1997 from the UIC's Office of the Vice Chancellor of Health Services. While in the office, she was involved in strategic planning, program development and policy analysis.



Scholarship recipient, Michele Thornton, met Lee Hamilton at the school's annual Research and Awards Day on April 7, 2015.

After retirement she worked as a consultant to the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs at Roosevelt University on a project concerning the multifaceted impact of substance abuse on metropolitan Chicago.

Ms. Hamilton says she hopes students will be encouraged to pursue a degree in public health.

"The study of public health is important because it relates to every aspect of our daily lives," she said. "Public Health is multifaceted, calling upon the talents of many disciplines committed to research and the promotion of health and well-being at local, national and international levels. I would encourage students to explore public health because it offers both the opportunities and the flexibility to tailor careers that will meet their individual interests and academic strengths." ●

The Power of a Transformational Gift

As a founding faculty member, and the first director of the school's Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Dr. Paul Levy is remembered by colleagues as being transformational in his field. A highly innovative biostatistician whose expertise was widely sought by biomedical and public health researchers around the world, Dr. Levy, through his work, improved the lives of millions. Although he passed away in 2012, he will continue to impact the lives of many through a generous estate gift he and his late wife, Virginia F. Tomasek, made to the UIC School of Public Health.

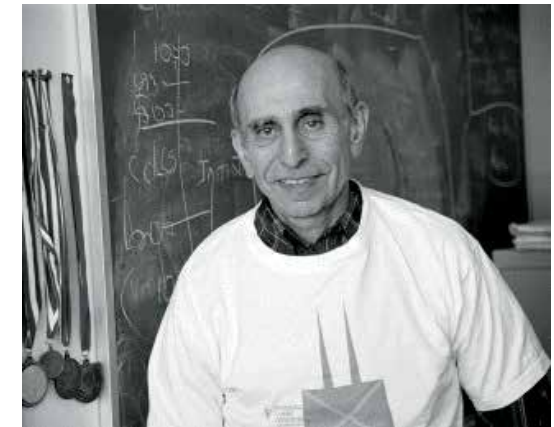
"I feel this gift is a clear example of Paul and Virginia's leadership and a capstone to the legacy they worked to build over their lives," said Paul Dean Brandt-Rauf. The estate gift of \$1.4 million, the largest to the school from an individual, will support the first endowed professorship in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics – the Paul Levy and Virginia Tomasek Professorship.

"This gift will be transformational for the School of Public Health," said Dean Brandt-Rauf. "Having an endowed professorship named after Paul Levy is certain to be a powerful attractant for top talent in the field because he did so much well-known, groundbreaking work."



Dr. Levy and his wife Virginia Tomasek.

In the early 1980s, Dr. Levy helped create data collection and analysis tools for the Centers for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the world's largest ongoing phone-based health survey. That system is "still yielding important health data that guides U.S. public health decision making," said Ronald Hershow, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Director of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.



Dr. Levy's other significant contributions include leading an investigation into the effectiveness of the Illinois trauma system, which showed that the time it takes to get a patient to an emergency department is a crucial factor in determining outcome. He also spearheaded a collaboration with the University of Chicago to help establish the Patient Registry for Primary Pulmonary Hypertension. Data in the registry was used to design some of the first pharmacological strategies for reducing deaths from the disease.

Dr. Levy was also a superb teacher, advisor and mentor to students and faculty, Dr. Hershow said. A testament to how well liked he was as a professor was the fact that so many former students spoke at his 2012 memorial service. "It is only fitting that part of Paul and Virginia's gift be used to support student scholarships," explained Dean Brandt-Rauf.

"I feel this gift is a clear example of Paul and Virginia's leadership and a capstone to the legacy they worked to build over their lives."

This gift comes just months after the UIC School of Public Health established its Legacy Society, a special group recognizing alumni, faculty and friends who include the school in their estate plan. "In this first year, anyone who confirms a gift will be a Charter Member, so I am thrilled to induct Paul and Virginia into this society," said Craig Hyland, Assistant Dean for Advancement. "They join a group of over a dozen friends who are ensuring both the school's and their legacies live on into the future."

Dr. Levy and Ms. Tomasek's gift demonstrates a strong commitment to the school and the field of public health. "Their impact will be felt for decades to come. And we are proud they chose us as the stewards of their legacy," said Dean Brandt-Rauf. ●



The UIC School of Public health has been sustained through the years by the generous gifts of many faithful friends. We are proud to honor the distinguished group of leadership donors who, year after year, help the University to prepare our students for success. Membership in the Founders Circle recognizes donors who make annual gifts of \$500 or more. Benefits of membership include:

- Exclusive invitations to Founders Circle receptions
- Special communications from Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf
- Invitation to An Evening With Legacies and Leaders dinner



Create a better tomorrow for public health students, educators and the society they serve by including the UIC School of Public Health in your will today. You can direct your gift to any fund or program at the school, making college more affordable for students in need or supporting research that improves people's health and changes lives. Your gift will help prepare our next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers and inspire answers to tomorrow's biggest challenges.

Any member of the UIC School of Public Health community who confirms a planned gift by June 30, 2015 will become a Legacy Society Charter Member, and will be included on a plaque to be displayed in the school.

For more information about the Legacy Society or Founders Circle, contact Craig Hyland, Assistant Dean for Advancement, at craigh@uic.edu or 312-355-4501.

Celebrating the Achievements of Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff

BRUCE BERNARD, MD, (MPH '86), Chief Medical Officer for the Health Hazard Evaluation Branch of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), was deployed to Monrovia, Liberia from October – December 2014 as the head of Force Protection at the Monrovia Medical Unit, a 25-bed field hospital designed to provide care to healthcare workers, both international and Liberians, who had been infected with the Ebola virus.



Bruce Bernard

JAY BHATT, DO, (MPH '08), MPA, FACP, has been appointed the first chief health officer of the Illinois Hospital Association.

PAUL BRANDT-RAUF, Dean, received the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Lifetime Achievement Award, which is presented to an individual who has had a distinguished career in one or more disciplines of occupational medicine, environmental medicine, and/or environmental health. He also received the Rosenfield for Alumni Excellence in Public Health, awarded by Columbia University - Mailman School of Public Health. This award recognizes a graduate who has exhibited distinguished leadership in the field of public health and been an important contributor to the Mailman School community. It is the top alumni honor bestowed by the Mailman School.

PATRICIA BRENNAN (MPH '00), president of P. Brennan & Associates, Inc., presented "The Public Health Voice in Marketing Campaigns" at the UIC SPH March 2015 Lunch with the Pros.

LISA BROSSAU, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences and director of Illinois Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Education and Research Center (Illinois ERC), was appointed by the Department of Labor to serve on the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH).

FRED CARLSON (MPH '76) is a 2015 recipient of The University of Illinois Alumni Association's Loyalty Award. The award is given to alumni who make significant, notable and meritorious contributions, and who have consistently demonstrated exceptional loyalty, commitment, dedication and service to the University.

KATHY Z. CHANG, MD, (MPH '07) recently joined Samaritan Health Services, where she works as a hospitalist, seeing inpatients at Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital.



Heather Davis

HEATHER DAVIS (DVM '12 and MPH '13) was accepted to serve as an officer in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS).

AMY EISENSTEIN (PhD '11) presented "Career Building in Research and Aging" at the UIC SPH April 2015 Lunch with the Pros.



Paul Goldstein

BRUCE ELEGANT (MPH '77), President and Chief Executive Officer of Rush Oak Park Hospital, joined the Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society Board of Directors.

The Knox County Board of Health named **MICHELE FISHBURN** (MPH '09) to the dual role of public health administrator and CEO of the Knox County Community Health Center.

MARIAN FITZGIBBON, professor of health policy and administration, was inducted as president of the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) during the 36th Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions. SBM is a 2,200-member organization of scientific researchers, clinicians and educators.

A special issue of Criminal Justice Review (Volume 40, March 2015) was dedicated in honor of **PAUL GOLDSTEIN**, professor emeritus, for his Tripartite Framework. During the last 30 years, this framework has become one of the most influential ideas in the study of drugs and violence.

JACOB GOLICH (MHA '08) has been promoted to Administrator of Tempe St. Luke's Hospital, a leading community hospital that provides comprehensive healthcare services.



Jacob Golich

PhD candidate in environmental and occupational health sciences **JIEHONG GUO**, has been selected for one of the 2015 Graduate Student Awards in Environmental Chemistry with the American Chemical Society's Division of Environmental Chemistry.

KATHERINE HEIMAN (MPH '00) completed two deployments as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Ebola response efforts. She served as the epidemiology team data manager in the Emergency Operation Center in Atlanta during September 2014, and deployed to Sierra Leone during January 2015, as a member of the Epidemiology team, where she provided technical expertise on surveillance and mapping of Ebola cases.

ROHAN JEREMIAH, assistant professor of community health sciences, has been named a 2015-16 Faculty Fellow from the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.

JANINE JURKOWSKI (PhD '03) was promoted to Associate Dean of Public Health Practice for the University at Albany School of Public Health.

PATRICK LAROCHELLE (MPH '09) finished his residency in combined internal medicine and pediatrics at UC-San Diego in July. He, his wife and two children left for France in late December for 6 months of language training after which they will be moving to the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to work for Samaritan's Purse at CME Nyankunde Hospital.



Sean Lee

Fourth year doctoral candidate, **SEAN LEE**, is one of five graduate student winners of the 2015 UIC Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring Award. The award is given by the Honors College and Graduate College to outstanding graduate student mentors.



Mary Pellettieri

PATRICK LENIHAN, clinical associate professor of community health sciences and director of the Doctor of Public Health in Leadership Program, is the 2015 Recipient of the Maurice "Mo" Mullet Lifetime of Service Award, which is awarded by the National Association of County & City Health Officials and honors local health officials for noteworthy service that reflects commitment, vigor, and leadership.

SUZET MCKINNEY (DrPH '09) was honored at the Women Driving Excellence (WDE) at the 2015 Chicago Auto Show. The event celebrates women who help start, accelerate, fuel, and steer others to excellence.

PhD candidate, **LIN MU**, has been selected as one of four STAR Award recipients awarded by the UIC Graduate College University Fellowship program. STAR awardees are selected based on their stellar academic performance, participation and productivity in discipline-specific research/scholarship, overall promise, and a personal commitment to obtaining a PhD in their selected field.

ISABEL MARTINEZ NOTH, (PhD '05), (MPH '98) is a member of the board at BEDS Plus, a non-profit in La Grange, IL that addresses the root causes of homelessness. Her work on the board has been featured in local news outlets as they advocate for the development of a supportive housing building for twenty chronically homeless people in the community.



Michelle Sandoval

ALUMNAE RANJANA PAINTAL (MPH '04) and **ALIA RYAN** (MPH '12) participated in the Asian American Public Health Student Organization's fall panel event titled "Affordable Care Act Education and Enrollment—First Year Lessons Learned."

MARY PELLETTIERI (MS '95) received the 2014 Milwaukee's Hottest Kitchen Entrepreneur Challenge for creating Top Note Tonic, a line of botanically flavored tonic concentrates she started brewing in her kitchen that satisfied her need for a low sugar and botanical soft drink or tonic.

JESUS RAMIREZ-VALLES, Professor and Director of the division of Community Health Sciences, has been awarded a residency fellowship at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center to work on his project: "Queer Aging: Stories of the Gayest Male Generation."



Gita Rampersad

GITA RAMPERSAD (MHA '11) is a 2015 recipient of The University of Illinois Alumni Association's Loyalty Award. The award is given to alumni who make significant, notable and meritorious contributions, and who have consistently demonstrated exceptional loyalty, commitment, dedication and service to the University.

RAUL R. RODRIGUEZ (MPH '85) has been named Chief Executive Officer and joined the board of directors of Rigel Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

As part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Ebola response efforts, DrPH candidate **MICHELLE SANDOVAL** spent three weeks in Sierra Leone and two weeks in Guinea on the Border Health Measures Team to provide technical support and guidance on exit and entry health measurements to prevent the spread of Ebola Viruses Disease.

GARY SLUTKIN, Founder of Cure Violence, is one of this year's recipients of the Order of Lincoln, which is the state's highest honor for professional achievement and public service.

Congratulations to the Class of 2015

More than 290 graduates were honored at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health commencement ceremony on May 8, 2015. Attendees welcomed Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Executive Director of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, as their keynote speaker. Dr. Hasbrouck spoke about the current “dynamic period of a public health renaissance” and encouraged the new graduates to change the world for the better by following the “Four B’s:” Be You, Be Passionate, Be Audacious and Be Humble.

An important part of the commencement ceremony is the presentation of awards, including two named in honor of UIC SPH founders and one given by the University. The Bernard H. Baum Golden Apple Award is presented each year to a faculty member in recognition of outstanding teaching and extraordinary service to students. This year, it was awarded to Saria Awadalla, clinical assistant professor in biostatistics. The Alan W. Donaldson Memorial Award, named for UIC SPH’s first Associate Dean, was given to Marissa Young, MD, because of her demonstrated academic excellence, quality of leadership, and community service. The University presents the Silver Circle Award to the campus’ best teachers, as indicated by a student vote. This year,

Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH, adjunct assistant professor in health policy and administration, was nominated for this award by the graduating seniors of the school’s undergraduate program.

The ceremony concluded with graduates being encouraged to stay connected with their alma mater. Tracie Smith (MPH ‘03), President of the UIC SPH alumni board, spoke to the Class of 2015 about ways to stay involved. She urged the graduates to get involved, even during their very first year as alumni, by hosting a student intern at their place of employment, referring a future student to UIC SPH, or giving back by volunteering or donating to the school. ●



Dr. Saria Awadalla, recipient of the 2015 Bernard H. Baum Golden Apple Award



Members of the Class Of 2015



Dr. Linda Rae Murray receives the Silver Circle Award from Emalee Pearson, President of the Public Health Student Association.



Alan W. Donaldson Memorial Award recipient, Marissa Young



Members of the Class of 2015



Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Executive Director of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, delivered the commencement address.

2015 Events

Please consider joining us for the following events:

ADLER AFTER DARK
July 16, 2015
6:30 pm – 10:30 pm
Adler Planetarium
1300 S. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60605

**ALUMNI RECEPTION AT
NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION**
August 21, 2015
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
UIC School of Public Health
1603 W. Taylor Street
Chicago, IL 60612

HEALTHY SPIRITS
September 9, 2015
5:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Goose Island
1800 N. Clybourn Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614

**FOUNDERS CIRCLE AND LEGACY
SOCIETY ANNUAL RECEPTION**
October 8, 2015
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

APHA ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION
November 2, 2015
5:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington Street
Chicago, IL 60602

For more information on
all of these events, visit
publichealth.uic.edu/alumni.



FOUNDERS CIRCLE AND LEGACY SOCIETY RECEPTION

Founders Circle and Legacy Society members attend a special reception on March 4, 2015.



HEALTHY SPIRITS

Alumni and friends at Elephant and Castle on February 12, 2015.



ANNUAL ALUMNI CELEBRATION

Guests enjoyed a three course plated dinner at the Annual Alumni Celebration on April 9, 2015.



GAMING FOR THE GREATER GOOD

Members of the Recent Graduate Board hosted a fun evening of socializing and gaming to support the Global Health Program on January 22, 2015.



ALUMNI RECEPTION IN NEW YORK

First alumni and friends event in the New York Capital District hosted by former UIC SPH Dean, Susan Scrimshaw (center). Dr. Scrimshaw is joined by Christine Bozlak (PhD '10), Allan Stern, Paul Brandt-Rauf and Joanne Guo (MS '08).

2015 Annual Alumni Celebration

The UIC School of Public Health held its Annual Alumni Celebration on April 9, 2015 at Galleria Marchetti. The evening's reception included signature cocktails provided by alumna Mary Pellettieri (MS '95) of Top Note Tonic, and a silent auction, which raised support for the school's Global Health Program. Nearly 200 guests enjoyed dinner and an awards presentation to alumni who were recognized for making significant contributions to the field of public health.



Students in the school's Global Health Program took to the stage to help raise funds for the program. All gifts to the program will be matched dollar for dollar through December 31, 2015.



Recent Graduate Board Co-chairs, Ashley Arnold (MPH, MBA '13) and Swetha Ramanathan (MPH '13), presented the Rising Star Award to Sherri L. LaVela.

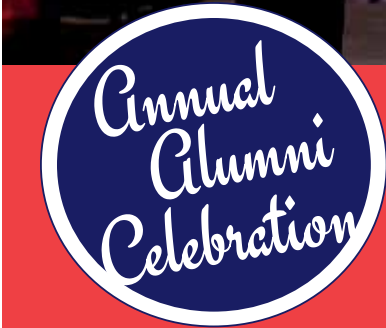


Senior Associate Dean Lorraine Conroy (left) and Vice President of the Alumni Board Todd Stankewicz (MPH, MBA '01) (right) presented the divisional awards to Patricia K. Kokotailo, David Ansell, Cynthia Klein-Banai, Linda Van Horn and Julio C. Silva.



Basmattee Boodram (PhD '09) receives the Health Equity Advocacy Award from 2014's recipient, George Smith, Jr. (MPH '96)

Alumni Board President, Tracie Smith, served as emcee for the evening.



Rising Star Award
Sherri L. LaVela, PhD '08, MPH '02, MBA

Health Policy and Administration Alumni Achievement Award
Julio C. Silva, MD '88, MPH '00

Dr. Jacob Brody Epidemiology and Biostatistics Alumni Achievement Award
David Ansell, MD, MPH '91

Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Alumni Achievement Award
Cynthia Klein-Banai, PhD '10

Dr. Naomi Morris Alumni Achievement Award for Community Health Sciences
Linda Van Horn, PhD '83

Dr. Naomi Morris Alumni Achievement Award for Maternal & Child Health
Patricia K. Kokotailo, MD, MPH '89

Health Equity Advocacy Award
Basmattee Boodram, PhD '09

Champion of Public Health Award
Paul Levy and Virginia F. Tomasek

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