

Public Health at Stony Brook



Fall 2012

OSPHA and GPPH Staff bring you the second edition of our Student and Alumni Newsletter!

Dear GPPH Students and Alumni:

Greetings from the Director of the GPPH! In case you were not aware, I joined the GPPH community as the new Director of the program on February 1st .

After many years as Founding Director, Dr. Ray Goldsteen decided to focus his energy on new opportunities. Under Dr. Goldsteen's visionary leadership, he and Dr. Karen Goldsteen achieved national accreditation for GPPH's MPH program by the Council on Education for Public Health in 2008, and touched many lives through excellence in education, research, and service. The Goldsteens also worked closely to recruit the original GPPH core faculty who are truly outstanding scholar educators and leading public health experts.



Although I am new to the Director position, I have been with Stony Brook University for nearly 10 years and working in public health education since the mid-1990s. I was hired in 2002 to teach and advise students in the community health concentration for the MS in Health Care Policy and Management (School of Health Technology and Management), which is now the Community Health Concentration in the MPH program. Recognizing my training and passion for public health, Dr. Goldsteen invited me very early in his tenure to have a presence with the GPPH as a course instructor and affiliated faculty. Over the years I have enjoyed meeting many GPPH students, serving as a guest lecturer in community health and qualitative research courses, attending national conferences along with members of the GPPH faculty, and participating in student events. All of my interactions have left me feeling inspired and energized, and wanting more involvement with the GPPH. I have attended several GPPH graduations over the years and am very impressed by the exceptional students and alumni who are counted among our community of public health scholars and practitioners. It is a privilege to work closely with GPPH faculty, staff, students, and the alumni community as your new Director.

I also want to let you know of an important change in the structure of the GPPH program. As of January 2012, the program no longer resides within the Department of Preventive Medicine, in the School of Medicine. Rather, the GPPH is a free-standing program that has a direct reporting structure to the Senior Vice President, Dr. Kenneth Kaushansky. The goal of this new organization is to better facilitate opportunities for all 5 schools (Medicine, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine, and Health Technology and Management) of the Health Sciences to collaborate and participate in public health at Stony Brook. GPPH is now part of the over arching "Stony Brook Medicine" brand, at <http://www.stonybrookmedicalcenter.org/gpph>
We are excited about the future and look forward to sharing in your success.
I hope to meet you at an upcoming event.

Best,
Lisa Benz Scott

Professional Development

On February 24th, 2012, students, alumni, and faculty of the Graduate Program in Public Health (GPPH) gathered for a Professional Development Conference. Dr. Breena Taira (MPH '09), Assistant Professor in GPPH, spoke to current students about the [Certification in Public Health \(CPH\) Exam](#). Students learned the logistics of taking the exam, how to best prepare, and the career benefits of becoming CPH-certified. Urszula Zalewski, a representative from Stony Brook's Career Center, spoke about resume and cover-letter writing. Students learned techniques to target public health employers. Finally, Dr. Karen Goldsteen thoroughly covered the practicum planning process and Zarmina Javed (MPH '10) and Casey McGloin (MPH '12) spoke about their practicum experiences. Thank you to all who presented and attended. We also give special thanks to Global Network Solutions for sponsoring a delicious lunch!



Aleef Rahman (MPH alumni) has been working on lab research over the past 4 years with Dr. Srinivas Pentyla and the Dept. of Anesthesiology at Stony Brook University. He recently co-authored a journal article titled "Effect of Lidocaine on Bone Matrix Formation by Osteoblasts" on his findings and was published in the *Journal of Anesthesiology and Clinical Research*.

Muath Bishawi (MPH alumni and current MD student) received the AMA Seed Grant. This is a \$2,500 award that is given to outstanding junior investigators for their basic science or clinical research projects.

For more updates on alumni, <http://www.stonybrookmedicalcenter.org/gpph/news>

Public Health Month 2012

Every year, the GPPH hosts a month-long series of events to spread awareness about various public health issues. This year's Public Health Month took place in March 2012 and featured a wide variety of events, from a film series and free yoga class to blood drives and mental health screenings. The month culminated in the Preventive Health Fair, which took place on Wednesday, March 28, 2012 in the HSC Galleria. Organizations and clubs from the campus and local community hosted interactive tables that served to teach the campus community about a range of public health issues.

OPHSA played a large role in the Preventive Health Fair's success by providing not just volunteers and support but by also hosting two very successful tables. One table displayed information about global health opportunities and showcased a recent GPPH trip to Nicaragua. This table provided a first-hand look at public health opportunities abroad and connected interested students with reputable international organizations such as Friends NE. OPHSA also hosted the Public Health Trivia table, where students, staff, faculty members, and other visitors were able to test their knowledge of various public health issues and win fun prizes. The questions, created by OPHSA board members, focused on a variety of topics, including global health, injury prevention, mental health, and health care policy. This table was a huge success and the questions sparked lively debate amongst the Preventive Health Fair participants.



Overall, OPHSA contributed greatly to the success of this year's Public Health Month through their attendance at all events and especially through their support at the Preventive Health Fair.

Alumni Profile



Farzana Ali (Stony Brook Undergraduate '08, MPH '11, Advanced Certificate in Health Communications '11) has been using her public health skills to make impressive contributions to several organizations in the community. As an MPH student, Farzana became involved with the Stony Brook Hospital Blood Bank where she did her practicum project evaluating perceptions of donating blood before and after people's first donation experience. She continues to volunteer as an advocate for the Blood Bank and gives presentations to community members, most recently in the Preventive Medicine Department during Public Health Month. She credits the Health Communications classes in improving her public speaking skills, which were evident as she convinced many to donate during her presentation.

Farzana's true love is research, and she has been putting her Evaluative Sciences concentration to use in three research projects. Through the help of Dr. Tia Palermo, Farzana found a job evaluating level of funding various countries and health causes receive from the World Bank. This information will be useful in analyzing the efficacy of health initiative programs in the near future. Farzana especially enjoys studying projects being done in her native Bangladesh and sees the tremendous impact the World Bank is having on reducing high child mortality rates in this region.

Farzana also collects data from breast MRIs in the Department of Radiology at Stony Brook Hospital. While current computer programs can automatically label abnormal growths appearing on the scans, it has low specificity and is therefore of limited use. With her programming skills she hopes to design a system that will yield vital data leading to better patient outcomes.

As if that would not keep her busy enough, Farzana is also taking classes and working with Dr. Irene Solomon in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics to determine how anesthetics affect breathing patterns in rats. She hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in Physiology and become a professor where she can combine her passions for physiology and public health. Farzana loves what she is currently doing because "it is amazing to learn about the human body every day" and being involved in many projects "balances me out," she says.

Goodbye!

The Graduate Program in Public Health held a farewell party for Jonathan Ragone, former Academic Coordinator of GPPH in March 2012. During the celebration, students and faculty gathered to acknowledge the significant contributions he made during his time with GPPH. Students and faculty reminisced about their experiences with Jonathan over the years and it is clear that he was such a valuable resource, mentor and friend to all of us. He is now the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Colleges at Stony Brook University, and we congratulate him on this achievement. However, we miss him greatly!

Ray and Karen Goldsteen can now be contacted at the University of North Dakota, where Ray is the Founding Director of the MPH Program, a joint endeavor of North Dakota State University College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences and the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. He can be reached at raymond.goldsteen@med.und.edu. Karen is a core faculty member and can be reached at karen.goldsteen@med.und.edu.

John Shanley retired from Stony Brook University in June to join his wife, Linda Shanley at their home in Connecticut. He plans to remain affiliated faculty and is already scheduled as a guest lecturer in Global Health and Contemporary Issues in Public Health for Fall 2012. He can be reached at shanley45@sbcglobal.net.

An Interview with GPPH's new Director, Dr. Lisa Benz Scott conducted by Gwen Philips (MPH '12)

Q&A

You've had a busy few months settling in! Yes I have! **What has been the best part of GPPH so far?** I love public health. I missed being in a public health environment so it's incredibly rewarding and exciting, having been trained at a very large school of public health, to be back with people who are inspired by similar things. The students are on fire for public health service and research, the faculty are creative and committed, dedicated people. The staff are really excellent. I come to work every day excited, energetic and looking forward to the next thing!

What is one important goal you have for GPPH?

Continue to promote excellence among our faculty, our staff and our students. Grow. Grow in the number of people that we reach, grow in the number of students in the program and grow our faculty.

What is a strength of the School of Health Technology and Management (SHTM) you would like to see incorporated into GPPH?

I appreciate your giving me an opportunity to acknowledge SHTM. I spent almost 10 years with that faculty and there are some amazing people in SHTM. One of the things I come away from is the type of leader I would like to be and many of the department chairs and the Dean of that school are outstanding leaders. They really care about the students, they care about each other, they care about humanity. They lead by example and are very generous people. They take care of each other and are very involved in community service. The other thing I notice about them is that they are really tuned in to what is happening in workforce trends, and they are constantly evolving and changing; reshaping the curriculum to meet the projected needs in the workforce and whatever emerging issues come up in research. So, I think that's something I'd like to emulate as a leader and also as someone who is concerned with making sure what we do is relevant to the world, locally and globally. SHTM is awesome, they are and will continue to be great collaborators for GPPH.

Can you tell me a bit about your current research?

Sure! I think a common theme in my research training is doing work that is relevant to real-world practice; whether that has to do with cardiovascular disease transitions in care, or gender disparities, or race/ethnicity disparities or cancer services. I want to do work that responds to community voices, that's based on relationships, and provides data and information that can be useful in bringing about change. That may be change in policy or it may be change in practice. Helping people is the thing that I really like to do. I'm not a basic scientist; I'm not a lab scientist. My work is really focused on improving the quality of information that gets disseminated, making sure it reaches the people who need it the most and presenting it in a way that is meaningful to what they care about.

You just earned your Black Belt! Yes! **What brought you to Martial Arts?** I think exercise is incredibly important for mental and physical health. I started doing karate at a time when I felt like I was not in balance and I was looking for something that I would enjoy, that I would do whether it was raining or snowing, night or afternoon or morning or weekend...whenever I would be able to fit it into my life. I started doing karate about 5 years ago; and it was something that connected me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And, it's fun! During my first belt test I was one of the only adults in the room and I had mixed feelings about that. It was really fun to be with the children, and to be childlike, but at the same time it is very humbling when you are learning a new skill. I like the discipline of it; I like having a clear goal and a clear path, but it is an art so you can put a lot of yourself in the moves and I like that you can adapt it to your own height, your own weight, and your strengths. Every move is a little different every time you do it. It's kind of like a dance. I don't like the sparring part!! (laughs). I don't feel angry; I don't feel like I need to hit anybody. But if I needed

to protect myself I feel like this has helped me be more prepared. I also wanted to do karate as an adult because I did not have the opportunity as a child. I have 5 brothers, and a sister. I am the youngest of 7. A few of my brothers did karate lessons. My parents did not allow me to do karate as a girl. I gravitated towards it in part to do something I was not permitted to do as a child. I get very excited now to see lots of little girls and little boys in the class and I encourage anybody who is interested to do it. You're never too old, it's super fun, and many SB faculty are in the classes. I run into lots of people; I will not "out" who they are, but it's pretty fun to see your colleagues at karate. I train at Journey Martial Arts (<http://www.startyourjourneyhere.com/>).

Your office is very Zen. Where did you get your inspiration?

Thank you for asking! I want my office to feel comfortable and inviting. I have toys in my office. I want people to feel like they can relax. I have food and drinks in my office so I can take care of people and it feels a little bit like home. I also decorate it in ways that inspire me. Some of the things around the room are not about me, but things I draw inspiration from. There are quotes on signs that you can see in the room. If I'm feeling frustrated I can just look over and get reminded, "Be kind, be daring, be creative, be funny." Those words inspire me. None of them are "be mean, be negative, be evil"!! And the pictures remind me of my daughters. My oldest daughter does a lot of dancing and gymnastics. The picture of a dancer (on the wall) reminds me of her. And the other one, my second child, likes to jump and spin; she's a very free spirit. Some of the pictures around the room are taken from places I've been, they're just happy places. This print is from South Africa and it was a great trip with my husband so I remember it fondly. And this picture over here was taken in Alaska. I took that trip right after I finished public health school. And the only thing that's about me as far as work goes is my diploma and that draws inspiration for me. When I feel like I can't do it or the outcome didn't go my way I always remember that it's a process and there will be wins and there will be losses. That just reminds me of better days. Graduate school is one of the best times of your life and I love to see the students who are truly taking advantage of that opportunity to just be around other people who are like-minded. Read, read, read, read, read. Enrich yourself and develop professionally and personally.

What do you like to do on the weekends to relax?

I love to wear sweats! I usually am in a ponytail and fuzzy fleece and a pair of sweats and sneakers or sandals on the weekends. I like to read the newspaper from front to back. I like to go for walks. There's a beautiful park near where we live. I like to feed the ducks. My kids are very much into nature so we will do things like that. A lot of times I'm doing mommy things. Errands. Taking my kids to their activities. We like to watch movies, especially old movies. I clean my house, just like everybody else. I am absolutely a normal human being! I like to spend time with my family. My mother lives nearby and she's absolutely fabulous so I like to hang out with my mother whenever I can. Visit some friends, do karate, go to Shabbot services. Another unknown Benz Scott-ism is I do play a musical instrument... I play the oboe. When I was in elementary school I played the flute and there was about 25 flutists in my 5th grade class so the band teacher called my parents at the end of 5th grade and said, "There are 25 flautists and we could really use an oboe. If we send your daughter home with an oboe for the summer would you get her lessons?" And they said "Okay, sure, we'll get her some lessons." That is how it started. I got some lessons and I loved my teacher. She became a very close friend of mine. We're still friends all these years later. I played all through college: I played in the Stony Brook orchestra. I played at Purdue in the graduate student orchestra and then I had to give it up to focus on public health school. I just did not have time. So about 2 years ago I met a woman who played the oboe locally and she invited me to be in the Northport Symphonic Orchestra. I played with them for a year. I had to put it down when I started my new job, I just don't have the time. I'd like to go back to it at some point and sometimes when nobody's around I'll practice. But my point is, it's good to have something that feeds your inner self- it could be reading, it could be walking, it could be cooking or baking or whatever, but I found that at the times when I was feeling kind of disconnected and unhappy it was because I wasn't doing one of those things. I didn't make sure I had that other thing in my life. And it's really hard; you have to fight for it! Because it's really easy to not do for yourself those things that give you balance. (Continued on next page...)

...An Interview with the new Director (continued)

What is the one thing that is always in your refrigerator?

There has to be chocolate. There's a chocolate situation!! But I also have a lot of fresh fruit. I actually love fruit. I'm a little lazy when it comes to cooking. I just want to grab it and eat it. So fresh fruit is the easiest thing in the world. I also have a lot of salad dressing in my refrigerator, maybe 10 different kinds; it's embarrassing. I have soymilk. And then a friend of mine has convinced me that soy milk is not good for me unless it's organic because of hormones so I'm trying out coconut milk and rice milk but I don't like it. I like eggs, so I have eggs in my refrigerator most all of the time. And I love potato bread. And coffee. There's coffee in my house at all times. I could pretty much live on those things.

Undergraduate Connections

A widely held misconception among the general population at Stony Brook University is that health means the absence of disease, and hence clinicians such as physicians and nurses are the only professionals that help individuals maintain good health. To dispel these notions, OPHSA hopes to create awareness about public health within the undergraduate community at Stony Brook.

We have begun providing undergraduate students opportunities to participate in various MPH initiatives. During Public Health Month in March, we asked undergraduate students to participate in and volunteer at our events. In addition, nine undergraduate students accompanied MPH students to Nicaragua during Spring Break from March 29th to April 8th to help build homes for some of the poorest families in the communities. These undergraduate students were exposed to a wide range of public health initiatives and how they touched the lives of many people. Towards the end of the trip, many of these undergraduates expressed great interest in pursuing a degree in public health. Finally, at the end of April OPHSA conducted an outreach event at the Student Activities Center on West Campus, educating students on public health facts and the Stony Brook MPH program.

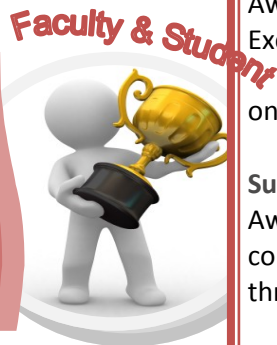
OPHSA hopes to expand opportunities for undergraduates, eventually creating a dynamic and productive relationship with the larger student body. Additionally, OPHSA hopes to reach out to various undergraduate student clubs that have similar goals to build campus wide awareness of public health and a safer and healthier future.

Lisa Benz Scott (GPPH program director), is the recipient of the 2011-2012 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service at Stony Brook University. The Chancellor's Awards for Excellence are system-level honors conferred to acknowledge and provide system-wide recognition for consistently superior professional achievement and to encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence.

Susanne Mendelson (GPPH affiliated faculty), was honored with the Friends of Education Award presented by the Phi Delta Kappa International Stony Brook Chapter to recognize the commitment and effectiveness of outstanding educators, staff members, and citizens throughout Nassau and Suffolk County.

Margaret Pichardo (current MPH student), has had an article selected for publication in the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved. The article titled Dietary Acculturation in U.S. Hispanic Communities was co-authored with N. Davis, MD and E. Chambers, PhD.

Congratulations



A Warm Welcome



JoanMarie Maniaci, our new Senior Academic Coordinator, earned two degrees at Stony Brook University (B.A. in English and an M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). While an undergraduate at Stony Brook she participated in the Academic Peer Advisor Program and worked in the Academic & Pre-Professional Advising Center for nine years.

She enjoyed serving in several capacities in the Center, most especially, her position as an Assistant Director for Pre-Professional Advising, where she coordinated the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Health Program. She is greatly appreciative for the opportunity to join the Graduate Program in Public Health as the Senior Academic Coordinator and hopes to provide students with the same support she has always received from the Stony Brook community.

Dr. David Graham has acted in the capacity as Health Commissioner, Chief Deputy Health Commissioner, and Director of Public Health in Suffolk County immediately prior to joining SBUMC in the Department of Preventive Medicine. He was the Physician-in-Charge of the Employee Medical Bureau of the Police Department of Suffolk County. In that capacity he supervised, practiced and directed a Division of Occupational and Clinical Preventive Services for ~2,500 police officers and 1,000 civilians.



Dr. Graham has been directly involved in health professional personnel decisions, strategic planning, program development, operational efficiency, professional leadership, clinical practice and health and medical education. He has taught a wide variety of courses in the medical school and graduate school at Stony Brook, and graduate and undergraduate courses at many of the universities and colleges in the region for over 30 years.

Carrie Shandra will be a new faculty member in the Fall, we will update you on her in the Spring Issue.

Save The Date

Meet our entering class of 2012! Come to our next GPPH
Faculty, Staff, Students, and Alumni SOCIAL EVENT.

At the home of Amy Hammock and Jaymie Meliker

September 28, 2012 in the Evening

Details to follow

Congratulations to the Class of 2012!

Master of Public Health

Doha H. Ali

Genevieve Allong

Jennifer R. Bleck

Lauren L. Cavalieri

Laura S. Chiu

Armina Eana

Dorcas Yun Eng

Cheryl Hecht

Kristen E. Heide

Zarmina Javed

Dilruba Khanam

Anita A. Li

Giuseppina Licata

Fabio Lima

Casey McGloin

Erika H. Newton

Trinley Palmo

Victoria M. Parente

Swapnil S. Parmar

Gwendolyn K. Philips

Aleef M. Rahman

Nitika Sharma

Kadhambari Sridhar

Timothy G. Van Moorsel

Kate E. Wallis

Farooq Zafar

Erin A. Zazzera

Advanced Graduate Certificate In Health Communications

Genevieve Allong

Trinley Palmo

Gwendolyn K. Phillips