

S P R I N G 2 0 1 8

Public Health Connections

*Southern Connecticut State University
School of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health*



A Message from the Chair

Welcome to our Spring 2018 newsletter. As I write this, I am on my way back home from Columbus, Ohio where this year's Annual SOPHE meeting was held during National Public Health Week (NPHW). It was wonderful to be accompanied by three other faculty members and our Dean, but also six Public Health students; three of whom were recipients of our new Public Health Student Development Fund scholarship. Inside this issue, we have included highlights from the SOPHE meeting.

Your Department of Public Health has been quite busy this semester as we continue to develop and explore new initiatives, alternative modes of delivery for our MPH Program, new graduate concentrations, and even a possible new undergraduate degree. You can read all about them on the following pages. Faculty and students remain hard at work; Valen Grandelski facilitated an extremely successful Advocacy Summit on campus, Dr. Marian Evans's extensive community service received recognition, Dr. Christine Unson has stayed very busy during her sabbatical, and our students continue to shine and make us so proud. The work of Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) in the West Rock neighborhood has resulted in changes made to the bus routes allowing long needed access to healthy food. Finally, thanks in large part to our Graduate Assistant, Rose Richi, we have entered into the age of social media. If you do not already follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Linked In](#), please do and to see all of the latest happenings.

It seems fitting that this month's *American Journal of Public Health* includes timely articles on addressing the ecological determinants of health, structural racism, and including race in all policies. Now, more than ever, our voices need to be heard and we need to work with our communities on issues of social justice and health equity. Our advocacy work is vital to doing all of this as we learn from our young people how powerful we can be when we stand together in solidarity. Our faculty are participating by leading workshops, attending trainings, and working with students to create a culture of tolerance, peace, and acceptance. We look forward to working with alumni as we move forward with this charge. We will eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities if, as Bassett & Graves advise in their AJPH article; "We can be a country where the color of our skin does not determine our chance for a long and healthy life. The first step is acknowledging the impact of racism on health. The next step is antiracist public health practice" (p.458).

As we round out yet another academic year, let the spring season bring a warm and renewed sense of optimism and hope to each of you. We have so much to be proud of and to look forward to.

"We are tired of being ignored. So we are speaking up for those who don't have anyone listening to them, for those who can't talk about it just yet, and for those who will never speak again." Emma Gonzalez

Save the Date!

MPH
Graduation
Banquet

May 15, 2018

Graduation
Reception &
MPH
Graduation

May 17, 2018

Undergraduate
Graduation

May 18, 2018

Faculty News

Dr. Jean Breny, SOPHE President-Elect



Dr. Breny was sworn in as President-elect at the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) 69th Annual Meeting and conference held in Columbus, Ohio on April 4, 2018. She will serve a three-year term as president-elect, president and past president from April 2018 through spring, 2021.

Dr. Unson's Sabbatical Adventures

Dr. Unson is on sabbatical leave in the Philippines and New Zealand from January to May, 2018. She is conducting in-depth interviews of older women who changed careers or jobs when they were 55 years or older. The purpose of her study is to identify barriers to older women's continued employment or engagement in voluntary work. She is also conducting a study on the effects of quality of housing on health of caregivers of older relatives in New Zealand. She is working with faculty at the School of Management and Marketing in the Department of Management Communication. When she is not working, Dr. Unson fly fishes in New Zealand.



Dr. Christine Unson completed a course in concepts and application of meta-analysis conducted by Dr. Michael Borenstein of Biostat Inc. The course was held at the Hilton Hotel in Sydney, Australia



Students Attend Professional Conferences Thanks to Generous Donations

I would like to take a moment to thank each one of you who has donated to our Public Health Student Development

Fund! Because of **your** generosity, three students were able to attend SOPHE and another student will be attending Yale's Global Health Conference.

Their gratitude is boundless and lives are changed because of these experiences, in the words of one undergraduate student, "This scholarship gave me the privilege to attend the conference and allowed my growth as a public health professional." And, a graduate student said, "I greatly enjoyed my time at SOPHE and feel very excited about my future as a public health professional! Thank you to all of the generous donors who made this experience possible for me!"



Donate to our Scholarship Fund!

In 2016, we launched a scholarship fund in the Department to support student conference participation and international experiences. This year, we were able to partially fund students' attendance to the SOPHE and APHA annual meetings and an international study abroad trip. We would not be able to provide this assistance without your help and are so grateful to our generous donors. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation by going to: <http://go.southernct.edu/giving/hhs.php>. From the drop down menu for "designation" please choose Public Health Student Development Fund. Thank you!

Faculty News, continued



Dr. Marian Evans was honored at the SCSU Heritage Ball on March 8, 2018 and received a Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Faculty Member. The Heritage Ball is a semi-formal event for students in various student organizations to showcase their heritage. Public Health student Dannielle Dixon accompanied Dr. Evans as her guest for the event.

On April 29th, Dr. Evans will also receive the Women's Leadership in Public Health award by the New Haven Club of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

A Message from one of our Distance Learning Adjuncts



Hello to everyone from sunny California! Teaching on line courses for the last two semesters has been quite gratifying! It is typical for me to include videos to reinforce the weekly topics. Veganism was covered recently, and I reached out to Marcello LaGreca, a former student of mine. He happens to follow a vegan diet, so he was the perfect choice. Marcello enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to create a video about his experiences. Whether you are considering becoming a vegan or not, I believe you will enjoy and appreciate the efforts of one of one of our very talented students.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1cNVj-KW8g>

*Yours in health,
Susan Hurt, M.A.G.*

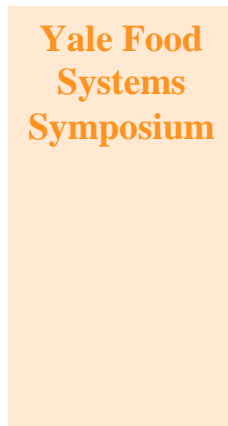


Adjunct Meeting

The Department hosts a meeting for adjuncts each semester for the purpose of sharing information and mingling. This semester Public Health Adjuncts had the opportunity to meet with the University's new Provost, Dr. Robert Prezant and our Dean, Dr. Sandra Bulmer.

Presentations & Research

- Breny, J.,** Zapata, P., Mucha, J., D'Haity, W., Joseph, M., & Robledo. "It's On Us!" Using Community-Based Participatory Research to Increase Condom Use Among Undergraduate College Males." Poster Presentation at Annual SOPHE Meeting, April, 2018.
- Breny, J. & Roe, K.** The Power of Partnerships in Health Promotion Pedagogy: Igniting best practices in student engagement. Oral Presentation at Annual SOPHE Meeting, April, 2018.
- Risisky, D. & MacGregor, J.** "Parks and Recreation Departments: An Opportunity to Collaborate for Addressing Health Among Youth with Disabilities" with Jim MacGregor.
- Santilli, A.** Presentation to the New Haven Board of Alders on CARE's report, *State of Hunger in New Haven*. January 2018.
- Santilli, A.** Guest Lecture on CBPR and CARE's New Haven Health Survey, American University of Armenia. April 2018.
- Vandelski, V.** "Partners in LIFE: Parenting Outcomes and Lessons Learned from a Couples-Based Relationship-Strengthening HIV/STI Prevention Intervention for Black and Latino Adolescent Parents in New Haven, CT" Society for Public Health Education: Columbus, OH: April 6th, 2018.
- Zigmont, V.A., Putzer, A., and Gallup, P.A.** College Students are not Immune to Food Insecurity: An Exploration of Food Insecurity Among Students at a Mid-Size, Public University in New England. (Accepted Roundtable Presentation). Society for Public Health Education: Columbus, OH: April 6th, 2018.
- Zigmont, V.A., and Kaye, G.** Improved Vending Options and Increased Snacking at a Large University in the Midwest. (Accepted Poster Presentation). Society for Public Health Education: Columbus, OH: April 6th, 2018.
- Zigmont, V.A., Taylor, S., Huminski, S., and Santilli, A.** Growing food, knowledge, and partnership: Opening a university garden to the community for health promotion and experiential learning. (Accepted Poster Presentation). Society for Public Health Education: Columbus, OH: April 5th, 2018.
- Zigmont, V.A., Bromage, B., Rynecki, K., Tomczak, S.M., Putzer, A., Beaudreau, B., Huminski, S., Santilli, A., McDougall, J., and Gallup, P.A.** Social Justice in Action: Academic and community service projects focused on food security and ending hunger in New Haven. (Accepted Panel Presentation). 5th Annual Yale Food Systems Symposium: New Haven, CT: Feb 24th, 2018.



Dr. Peggy Gallup, Dr. Victoria Zigmont and Professor Alycia Santilli presented their work on Food Insecurity in New Haven during a panel presentation at the Yale Food Systems Symposium. They were joined by MPH students **Kara Rynecki and Abby Putzer, Suzie Huminski** (Sustainability Office), Dr. John McDougall (Yale), Dr. Steven Monroe Tomczak (Social Work), Bernie Boudreau (CT Food Bank) and Billy Bromage (Yale). Kara Rynecki (MPH student) is photographed above, left and Abby Putzer, above, right.

Capstone Tapas Event (March 6th 2018)

Over 50 graduate students, staff and faculty members and administrators attended the First Annual Health and Human Services Capstone Tapas Event. The event was organized by Professor Chris Sagar (Social Work) and **Dr. Victoria Zigmont**. Thirteen projects were presented for HHS graduate students to get involved in research that can be applied to their capstone projects. Among the presenters from our department were **Amanda Moreau (MPH student), Professor Valen Grandelski, Dr. Peggy Gallup, Dr. Victoria Zigmont, and Professor Alycia Santilli**. Professor Valen Grandelski is pictured left.



Student News



SCSU Department of Public Health Boogies with the Buckeyes at SOPHE Meeting

The SOPHE meeting was well attended by the SCSU Department of Public Health. Undergraduate students **Thanh Pham, Veronica Cortes and John Mucha** attended along with graduate students **Ermonda Gjoni, Abby Putzer and Peter Zapata**. **John Mucha and Peter Zapata** presented with **Dr. Breny** about Condom use among undergraduate male students. **Abigail Putzer** presented research with **Dr. Zigmont** about undergraduate student food insecurity that they worked on with **Dr. Gallup**. **Professor Valen Grandelski, Dr. Deb Risisky, Dr. Victoria Zigmont and Dr. Jean Breny** also presented their research projects at the meeting. The meeting highlight was when **Dr. Jean Breny** was sworn in as President-Elect of SOPHE. We look forward to attending the 2019 meeting in Utah.

Public Health Society

The Public Health Society is having a great year with many programs. They started the year with a fundraiser for Hurricane Maria – with a focus on providing funding for Caribbean islands – they partnered with Council for Exception Children Club to raise close to \$300 in less than 2 hours. They also had a suicide awareness tabling event at the same time as the fundraiser. In October, 25 students attended Connecticut Public Health Associations' Annual Meeting with university funding to assist them. PHS participated in Social Justice Month, running a program called Diversity Soup. Students chose different candy to put in their “soup” and talked about how each was different and how diversity is important to communities. In the spring semester they had a sex education event linked to Valentine’s Day, giving away 500 Trojan condoms they received as a Safe Site of Advocates for Youth. Their final event of the year is focused on Earth Day, using recycling items such as yogurt containers and water bottles to create planters for students. They will have a table in front of Buley Library to provide free plants to promote a healthy earth. It’s been a good year and they look forward to more events in the upcoming academic year!



Student News, continued



Britt Conroy, Dr. Aukje Lamonica & Josephine Ankrah

Department Honors Students for Outstanding Achievements

Desiree Rondeau will receive the Dr. A. Kay Keiser Valedictory Award for highest academic achievement (undergraduate), class of 2018. This award was made possible by the late Dr. Kay Keiser, a former Public Health professor. **John Mucha** will receive the 2018 Public Health Award for Excellence (exemplary academic standing and making a meaningful contribution to the field of public health through service). These outstanding students will be recognized at the Eta Sigma Gamma induction ceremony on April 27th and at the University Honors Convocation event on April 29th.

MPH students **Meadeshia Mitchell, Abigail Putzer and Stacy Tuttle** will also receive the Dr. A. Kay Kesier Valedictory award at the MPH Graduation Banquet to be held on May 15th. Congratulations graduates!

Josephine Ankrah and Britt Conroy

presented at the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) annual meeting and conference in Philadelphia. The title of their presentation was “The Gendered Experiences of Heroin/Opioid Users in the Suburbs – Mothers.” Their advisor, **Dr. Aukje Lamonica** commented that both students were “...well-prepared, kept eye contact with the 35+ attendees the entire time and overall were a delight to listen to....[and]...the panel they participated on was one of 20 that was audio-recorded: a first for SfAA.”

SfAA was founded in 1941 to promote the investigation of the principles of human behavior and the application of these principles to contemporary issues and problems.



Kara Rynecki gave birth to Arden Scott Fallon on April 2, 2018. Kara is an MPH Graduate Assistant who works with Dr. Deb Risicky on the Gaining Early Awareness and Awareness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program, which is a 6-year grant in the School of Education. Kara is already back in class!

Community Collaborations



Pie Day with REMEDY!

*REMEDY (Recovered Medical Supplies for the Developing World) had a very successful 27th Annual Pie Day fundraising event. REMEDY collects unused and expired (but still usable) medical supplies at Yale New Haven Hospital and then when volunteer groups go abroad they bring these supplies with them. MPH students **Josephine Ankrah**, **Amanda Moreau**, **Sherry Van Lange** and **Shama Banik** volunteered their time at the fundraiser. In total, roughly 500 slices of pie were served to hospital staff who help REMEDY recover medical supplies. To learn more about REMEDY go to www.Med-Eq.org. Also pictured is **Dr. Victoria Zigmont** and Josephine's sister, Michelle Ankrah.*

Public Health Advocacy Training

The Connecticut Public Health Association (CPHA) and the SCSU Department of Public Health hosted a successful Public Health Advocacy Training for over 40 students and professionals on April 7, 2018. The half-day training was kicked off by Shelley Geballe, JD, MPH, Assistant Clinical Professor at Yale School of Public Health, and a Clinical Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School, who made the complicated Connecticut legislative structure and process seem simple and straightforward. Shelley was followed by **Ellen Andrews, PhD**, Executive Director of the Connecticut Health Policy Project and Adjunct Faculty at Southern, who gave good advice about the most effective ways to communicate with legislators, including giving testimony and writing op-eds. Senator Gary Winfield, Deputy Majority Leader, representing New Haven and West Haven (with his young son and one of his newborn twins in tow!), put the group at ease about meeting with legislators by talking about what works for him when he meets with constituents about legislative issues.

Thank you to our generous sponsor, the SCSU School of Health and Human Services and **Dean Sandy Bulmer**, and to our student/alumni volunteers: **Amalia Mahon (BSPH student)**, **Bianca Flowers (MPH student)**, **Chandra Kelsey (BSPH/MPH alumna)**, **Ermonda Gjoni (MPH student)**, **Francesca Testa (MPH alumna)**, **Shamika Smith (BSPH alumna)**, **Veronica Cortes (BSPH student)**, and **Whitney Allen (MPH student)**. The planning committee for the event included Ashley Andreou, MPH Student Volunteer, Yale School of Public Health; Roberta Friedman, Co-Chair, CPHA Advocacy Committee; and **Valen Grandelski**, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health, SCSU.



Community Collaborations, continued



The Connecticut Public Health Association and SCSU presented a workshop on Public Health Career Mentoring on April 10 and had a great turn out! Public Health undergraduate and graduate students joined mentors from various areas of Public Health including Epidemiology, Workforce Development, Hospital Administration, Research, and others. Students gained career advice from Public Health experts and had an opportunity to network in rapid-fire mentoring rounds.

SCSU Breastfeeding Initiative: First in the Country



*Dr. Michele Vancour, SCSU President Dr. Joe Bertolino
& Chandra Kelsey, BS, MPH*

Chandra Kelsey (BS, MPH), Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition co-chairwoman, presented a certificate to SCSU for its role in making the school friendly to breastfeeding parents. Thanks to the leadership of **Dr. Michele Vancour**, Southern is now has the distinction of being the first breastfeeding-friendly campus in the state - and the nation! This event was covered in the New Haven Register. Here is a link to the article: <https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/Southern-Connecticut-State-University-becomes-12816274.php#item-85307-tbla-3>

CARE Update

Health Leaders: West Rock

In the Fall of 2017, CARE launched a neighborhood health leadership program for New Haven residents and SCSU graduate students to work together on solutions to pressing social and health issues identified by the community. **Meadeshia Mitchell** is the MPH graduate student leader paired with West Rock resident leader Makia Richardson for this year. Together, Makia and Meadeshia have sought to mobilize community awareness and engagement around key community-identified issues. As of early April 2018, Meadeshia and Makia have succeeded in organizing three community meetings with an average of 20 residents at each meeting. The first two meetings resulted in the identification of key issues in the West Rock community that residents wanted city officials to address, culminating in the prioritization of transportation and public safety. The most recent meeting, held on February 27, was attended by Mayor Toni Harp and state and city officials, representing transportation, community services, economic development, and public safety. Officials listened to resident concerns and committed to making changes in transportation and public safety. A follow-up meeting with the City of New Haven Transportation, Traffic and Parking (TP&P) Department and CT Transit took place on April 12th, to discuss street safety and bus routes. Residents were successful in advocating for a change in the bus route and TP&P committed to several street improvements, including school safety zone and speed signs, stop signs, speed bumps, bus shelters. TP&P is also submitting a grant application to build a much-needed sidewalk. CARE's Health Leaders are organizing the neighborhood and creating change!

Health Leaders: Whalley, Edgewood, Beaver Hill (WEB)

For the second Health Leaders project for Spring 2018, **Cerella Craig** is the MPH graduate student leader who has paired with Beaver Hill resident leader Jacqueline Pheanious. Together, these two sought feedback from WEB residents to assess current quality of life concerns. What emerged was a need to engage more male members of the community in conversations around their wellness in hopes that they will serve as positive examples for male youth in the WEB neighborhood. Cerella and Jaqueline worked together to design and administer surveys of minority men's attitudes towards wellness. The health leaders also conducted a community asset map of the WEB neighborhood, which revealed a surprisingly large number of salons and barbershops in the area. Because the barbershops in WEB represent a significant community asset where many adult male residents gather to share stories, and give advice in a trusted setting, the team approached barber shop owners to inquire into the feasibility of conducting surveys of male barbershop patrons. Four barbershop owners agreed to participate, personally advocating for customers to take the survey and allowing Cerella and Jacqueline to administer the surveys at maximally effective shop hours.

Thus far, Cerella and Jacqueline have collected 55 surveys. At the conclusion of the data collection period at the end of April, Cerella and Jacqueline will analyze the data and determine if a barber shop intervention would be appropriate for the community. If so, CARE will support a project during the next academic year.



Jacquelyn Pheanious, Resident Health Leader; Cerella Craig MPH Student Health Leader, Meadeshia Mitchell, MPH Student Health Leader, and Makia Richardson, Resident Health Leader

Alumni News

Christopher Cannon, MPH '09 is currently the Director of Research and Evaluation at Whitman-Walker Health in Washington, DC. Whitman-Walker Health is the largest LGBTQ health center in mid-Atlantic region serving over 16,000 individuals. The research department does both pharmaceutical drug clinical trials and federally funded behavior interventional studies.

Madeline Chaffee, BS '10 is a Project Manager for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence which is involved with social emotional learning & skill building for children and their families.

Mai Kader, BS '17 is an Americorps Food Corps Service Member for the New Haven Public School System. In this capacity she teaches elementary children about nutrition and how to make healthier choices in the cafeteria.

Chandra Kelsey, BS'15, MPH'17 was recently appointed Manager of Physician Assistant (PA) Research Education at Yale School of Medicine and is responsible for managing all phases of the research curriculum, administration and monitoring of student progress for the PA student thesis, public relations and marketing for PA student research efforts. She also collaborates with the PA Program faculty in their research endeavors. Prior to this she oversaw operational management for the Downs International Health Student Travel Fellowship and supported the Global Health Concentration.

Dena Miccinello, BS'17 joined AmeriCorps, a national service program and Prevention Corps where she is serving in Trumbull with Trumbull Partnership Against Underage Drinking and Drugs working on the Opioid Crisis.

Francesca Testa, MPH'17 is doing amazing work with the National Meningitis Association around vaccinations. Check out her story! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkHcAw7kLFk&feature=youtu.be>

In Memoriam



Theresa Fay (BS '13) passed away on March 9, 2018. Here is information from a GoFundMe page set up by her family:

Theresa always believed in building hope for everyone she met. In her memory, we are striving to combine this mission and her passion for sports by starting a youth scholarship fund to support families in the Hamden, CT area who cannot afford sport camps and activities. Thank you for partnering with us to continue to bring light into the lives of others the way Theresa always did.

<https://www.gofundme.com/theresa-fay-hope-scholarship>

Like us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SCSU-Department-of-Public-Health>

We are looking for more Alumni Updates! You can use the questions below to guide your update or write about what you'd like. Please email your update to Dr. Michele Vancour at vancourm1@southernct.edu. Thanks in advance!

1. What led you to study public health?
2. What year did you graduate from SCSU? Which degree did you receive – BS or MPH?
3. Where do you currently work? What is your position?
4. What is the most rewarding aspect of your work?
5. Did you continue your education after graduating? If yes, where and towards which degree or purpose (i.e. professional development)?
6. What's a piece of advice you can share with new public health students?
7. What are three things you would recommend public health students take advantage of during their education or early in their career development?
8. Is there any other news you can share (e.g., awards received, birth announcements)?
9. What do you do for fun or for your health?
10. Do we have your permission to post on FB and share your information in our materials? If yes, provide your contact information with your answers to these questions in an email to vancourm1@southernct.edu. Thank you!



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