



October Feature: Get Connected with The Amethyst Project, Inc. -- Deb Blackburn



**Deb Blackburn,
Dr.P.H. student
Public Health Leadership**

The Amethyst Project, Inc. is a community-based organization dedicated to promoting HIV prevention and providing social services to people who have tested positive for HIV. The project was started in Statesboro in 1984 and is a part of United Way.

Deb Blackburn is the former executive director of the Amethyst Project. One of her goals is helping HIV patients with financial and psychological issues that come with the medical problems associated with being infected with the virus. She estimates the average cost of medication for HIV to be around \$1,600 a month per patient.

While the Amethyst Project is concerned with helping those who are HIV-positive, another objective of the Amethyst Project is prevention. In Bulloch County there are about 200 reported cases of HIV infections. But this number represents the cases that have been reported, and does not include those who do not yet know they are infected.

Funding for organizations like Amethyst comes from the Federal government, so it is important that data are reported correctly. The state of Georgia tracks the numbers, and the amount of money Amethyst receives depends on problem severity. Unfortunately, Georgia's Department of Human Resources has stated that many doctors are not reporting cases accurately.

Georgia ranks eighth in the nation for the number of AIDS cases, but was one of the last states to use name reporting to track these cases. Our neighbor state, South Carolina, has not only been tracking numbers of HIV cases, but has also been keeping a record of those who have died while on the waiting list for medication aid.

In order to stop the growth of cases in Georgia, the Project is promoting awareness and prevention. But as Blackburn has learned, people are afraid to talk about HIV. "We have to

reduce the stigma, otherwise we are never going to be successful in providing appropriate services," Blackburn explained. "It's not a gay disease, it's an everybody disease."

Among its primary mission is spreading awareness in schools, but Amethyst also reaches out to other places. Staffing is always an issue -- not enough workers to meet their goals -- so they are looking for volunteers of all types. They need every kind of help from web design and CPA work to painting the interior of the office.

Dr. Ahmed Adu-Oppong, Assistant Professor of Health Services Policy and Management in the JPHCOPH, serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for Amethyst in Statesboro. If you would like more information on the Amethyst Project and/or how to volunteer, you may contact Deb Blackburn at the following: bkbrn_db@yahoo.com.

Some information excerpted from Connect Statesboro, June, 2007

Dr. Lili Yu Named Faculty Advisor to the Office of the ICSA



The Executive Office of the International Chinese Statistical Association is now housed in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health with Dr. Lili Yu acting as the faculty advisor.

Dr. Karl E. Peace, professor of Biostatistics, made a proposal in June 2006 to the Board of Directors of the ICSA that the central office be located in the JPHCOPH. Dr. Peace said, "The ICSA was very meaningful to my late wife as she was in fact one of the first [active members]."

Many hope that by having the Office located within the College, positive recognition will be generated, and act as an instrument in recruiting both students and faculty. Such a partnership has also been seen as a way to increase culturally-diverse opportunities for our public health students.

Membership in the ICSA is open to individual statisticians and organizations around the world. The ICSA holds an applied statistics symposium each year and an International Statistical Conference once every three years. For more information about the ICSA, visit <http://www.icsa.org/>.

Some information excerpted from The George-Anne Daily, September 26, 2007

Dr. Lynn Woodhouse Receives Distinguished Alumni Award



*Dr. Lynn Woodhouse
Associate Dean & Professor
Community Health/Health Behavior*

The College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (CECH) at the University of Cincinnati annually recognizes outstanding alumni with its highest honor, the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Faculty, staff, alumni, and students are invited each Spring to nominate alumni for this award. Nominations are collected and the CECH National Alumni Board review them and select two or three recipients each year. Selections are based on achievements and excellence since graduation.

The 2007 CECH Distinguished Alumni Award winners include Dr. Lynn D. Woodhouse, Associate Dean and Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior at the Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University.

Dr. Woodhouse was honored at two ceremonies during the UC Homecoming Weekend. She rode in the parade on Oct. 13 with the Dean of the College, Dr. Larry Johnson, and was also honored at the Alumni Award Brunch on Sunday Oct. 14, 2007.

College Hosts BBQ for Students/Faculty

On Friday, September 21st, students and faculty were able to share a meal, conversation, fishing and a fun time at Ms. Lee Mitchell's Pondhouse. Family members and friends of students and faculty also enjoyed the afternoon of fishing and games. A hotdog and hamburger meal was catered by Bruce Yawn, owner of Snooky's Restaurant of Statesboro.



Lee Mitchell and students fishing at the BBQ.

Dean's Student Advisory Committee Holds First Meeting



Dr. Hardy welcomes the new members to the committee

Dean Hardy welcomed new members to the DSAC at the September 26th meeting. The purpose of this committee is to provide a forum for students to have input into the management and leadership postures of the JPHCOPH. The DSAC is dedicated to serving and promoting communication between faculty, staff and student body. Members are selected by the Dean based on the recommendations of faculty, staff and students.

Two students from each concentration were selected. The term of the new members is one academic year. Members are as follows: David Bazunu (Health Services Policy & Management), Christopher Brown (Epidemiology), Amber Erikson (Epidemiology), Matt Hutcheson (Environmental), DeAnna Keene (Environmental), Chang-Lu Liu (Biostatistics), Krista Mincey (Community Health), Chandra Rivers (Community Health), Priyanka Thumar (Biostatistics), and Matt Walker (Health Services Policy and Management).

JPHCOPH Starts Seminar Series

The Office of Public Health Research initiated monthly public health seminars to discuss topics relevant to public health. September's seminar, entitled "Until We're Insured," featured Dr. Claire Hicks, the Clinical Coordinator Georgia Public Health District 9-2. She received her M.D. from the Medical College of Georgia in Macon and completed her residency at the Family Medical Center in Macon. She has been treating uninsured patients with HIV/AIDS in Southeast Georgia for many years. She realizes first hand the devastation, frustration, and even deadly consequences of not being insured.



Dr. Hicks speaks to students about the uninsured crisis in Georgia.

October's seminar topic was "Winning the Cancer Battle in Georgia: Using the Public Health Model," by Gayle Bina, an independent Public Health Consultant. She described statistics related to cancer diseases and deaths in Georgia, relating them to the Public Health Model. She emphasized that cancer will touch all of us one way or another and that we must do something about it.

Faculty Spotlight...



Dr. Anthony Parrillo
Associate Professor
***Community Health/
Health Behavior***

Anthony V. Parrillo, PhD, CHES is a behavioral scientist with over two decades of experience in health education and public health practice. He holds the PhD in health behavior from Indiana University, Bloomington.

He taught health education at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels for six years in New York City before pursuing graduate study. Upon completing his masters degree in 1984, he worked as a public health educator with the Onondaga County Health Department in Syracuse, NY for a period of five years, primarily in the areas of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

In 1989 he began doctoral study at Indiana, earning the Certified Health Education Specialist credential while there. After completing the PhD with cognate specialties in human sexuality and methodological inquiry, he joined the faculty of East Carolina University in 1992 as Assistant Professor in the School of Allied Health Sciences, teaching courses in health behavior, planning and evaluation of community health programs, history and foundations of public health education, and AIDS and other STD. While at ECU, he also served as program coordinator of the undergraduate track in community health education, and was recognized as researcher of the year in consecutive years – 1996 and 1997. In 1998, he joined the Academy for Educational Development as a Senior Research Scientist on the CDC/DASH project, conducting in-depth evaluation studies on the status of HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs nationwide.

While at AED, Dr. Parrillo directed evaluation studies for Departments of Education in the states of Michigan, Maine, New Jersey, and Massachusetts, as well as for local education agencies in San Francisco, CA and Denver, CO. He also supervised a study evaluating the Can We Talk? curriculum on parent/child communication. After a brief period as an independent consultant and member of the adjunct faculty at Morgan State University, where he taught dissertation writing, he joined the faculty of Georgia Southern University in 2003 as Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate MPH Program in Community Health. Author of sixty peer-reviewed articles and abstracts, his research interests include the study of multi-problem risk behaviors among adolescents and young adults, behavioral modeling, human sexuality, STD and HIV/AIDS, and the evaluation of community-based health programs.

Student Spotlight...



Matthew Walker, Dr.PH
Public Health Leadership

Matthew W. Walker is a Dr.PH student at Georgia Southern University's Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health. He was born in Reno, Nevada where he attended Reno High School, then UNLV, where he majored in Kinesiology. His senior year, Matthew was awarded a study abroad scholarship, and chose Sichuan University in China, where he studied Chinese language, philosophy and taught English. His experience in China sparked a continued interest in travel, culture, and languages which continues today.

Matthew resolved to pursue a career in public health after spending time at a mission hospital in northeastern Peru. He was so moved by the energy, spirit and compassion of the staff and taken aback by the overwhelming need, that he enrolled in Sydney University, Australia, where he received his Masters in Public Health. After an internship with the aboriginal health department in Western Australia, he took a job in Belize, Central America, working for an international NGO. There he had the opportunity to work in many sectors of human development, by planning, implementing and evaluating public health outreach campaigns addressing topics such as HIV, Chagas disease, prenatal care, nutrition, diabetes, human rights, and education, among others.

During his time in Belize, Matthew developed an appreciation for the people and culture of Central America, and gained insight into the importance of needs based, culturally appropriate and sustainable public health.

Matthew has recently started his Dr.P.H. in public health leadership, and is a graduate assistant in the JPHCOPH. He feels privileged to have the opportunity to further his education at GSU and after graduation hopes to continue his career in public health by assuming a leadership role in the public health system.

Public Health Student Association Celebrates Oktoberfest A Kick-off Fundraiser for American Cancer Society's Relay for Life

The Public Health Student Association celebrated Oktoberfest by selling “beer and brats” to raise money for American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life. The cookout featured grilled bratwursts and hotdogs along with rootbeer and water.

Also as part of the fundraiser, a raffle was held. Donations for the raffle included a brand-new 4GB ipod nano, donated by the Public Health Student Association. The group was led by President, David Bostick, Community Involvement Chair, DeAnna Keene, and the Community Involvement Committee.

The Public Health Student Association would like to thank all of the students that helped with this event as well as Dr. Kari Fitzmorris, faculty advisor. Overall, the group raised \$400 for Relay for Life. PHSA will continue to raise money for Relay for Life until the closing event in April of 2008.



Left: David Bostick, PHSA President

Bottom left to right: David Bostick, Kimberly Scott, Chandra Rivers, Charlisa Osgood, Amber Erickson, DeAnna Keene, Heather Mayer, Matt Hutcheson, Kelley Chester, Sarah Jones, Katie Burkett & Kristin Westphal.



Give to JPHCOPH...

Public health touches every aspect of our life. Our nation’s economy, security, environment and the quality of our daily lives depend on the strength of the public’s health and on the systems that support it. You can do your part to prevent disease, protect the public from harm, and promote the health of communities throughout the state, the nation, and the world by making a gift to the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH).

Every gift to the JPHCOPH plays a vital role in improving the public’s health by supporting:

Excellence in Public Health Education. Provides scholarships and fellowships to highly qualified, committed, and diverse students, many of whom cannot attend the JPHCOPH without financial help. Gifts will also support curriculum development, innovations, and linkages with public health practice.

Excellence in Public Health Research. Supports distinguished faculty in their work to find answers and solutions to public health problems.

Excellence in Public Health Service and Outreach. Supports programs that focus upon the development of community-based participatory programs and research.

Gifts to the JPHCOPH are critical to our development. Private financial support provides the margin of excellence that distinguishes good universities from great ones. As a Doctoral Research University, Georgia Southern University is proud to be a public university. But direct public support accounts for less than half of Georgia Southern University’s annual operating budget. We rely on the generous support of our alumni, friends, and the research grant support of our faculty to make up the difference.

Please consider making a gift to JPHCOPH today. For more information contact Charles J. Hardy, Founding Dean, JPHCOPH at 912-681-5653 or check out our website at <http://jphcoph.georgiasouthern.edu>

Public Health Matters...

Public Health Matters is a publication of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) at Georgia Southern University. Public Health Matters is published monthly for faculty, students and friends of JPHCOPH. If you would like to contribute to this publication please contact the office of the Dean.