CATCH: Coordinated Approach to Children’s Health pairs NIU with DeKalb schools

The idea of “Communiversity” is being displayed through a collaboration of partners at NIU and within the community to provide CATCH lessons in DeKalb School District 428.

CATCH stands for Coordinated Approach to Children’s Health. It focuses on nutrition, physical activity and reducing screen time (TV, computers, games) through physical education, classroom, cafeteria and family activities.

The idea is to begin a cultural shift in nutrition and physical activity attitudes of elementary school children as a means to fight the childhood obesity crisis.

CATCH started as a pilot program in 2010 at one DeKalb school. It grew in 2012 to include the entire district with the help of the following partners:

Dist. 428: Led by Cristy Meyer, Principal at Jefferson School & Co-Chair of Dist. 428’s Wellness Team.

NIU: Nancy Prange, Director, Dietetic Internship, FCNS
Andrea Hein, Teacher Certification Coordinator, PHHE-NUHS, and Rebecca Pritchard, Practicum Coordinator, PHHE-NUHS
Catherine Maney, Assistant Professor of Nursing, NUHS

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Communiversity at its best.

Nancy LaCursia during CATCH training

Nancy Prange during CATCH training
Dear CHHS Alumni and Friends,

During a recent visit to London, I spent a few wonderful hours in the Living and Dying Gallery at the British Museum. The gallery depicts ways people from different cultures cope with challenges regarding health, well-being, illness and death.

In the gallery, there was a powerful textile installation called Cradle to Grave that spatially illustrates the medically prescribed pharmaceutical history of a man and a woman from birth to death.

The trio of artists of Cradle to Grave go by the name Pharmacopoeia and include Susie Freeman, a textile artist, Liz Lee, a physician, and David Critchley, a video artist. Cradle to Grave contains two lengths of fabric enclosed in a single glass case about 43-feet long. Each fabric length has more than 14,000 sewn pills, ampules, lozenges, etc., arranged chronologically.

Medications included the first injection of Vitamin K the two people received right after birth to individual asthma medications, birth control pills, antidepressants, and blood pressure medication.

A caption explained that the lifetime average number of doses of prescribed medication for a person in Britain is over 14,000. Cradle to Grave also contains photographs and personal objects with accompanying handwritten captions. For example, there are deciduous teeth, xrays, prosthesis, etc.

According to a website about the installation (http://www.cradletograve.org/), the artwork “has engaged viewers in the debate around our relationship with medical treatments, encouraging us to examine our own medical and pharmacological history.”

The intersection of culture, health and technology is personally fascinating to me and is also a recurring theme in many of the programs in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Our students learn to be culturally sensitive and appropriate in promoting health and well-being and dealing with illness, disability and death.

It is clear that the integration of the arts and humanities into our programs helps make for thoughtful, reflective graduates.

In this new year, I wish our alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends health, peace and understanding.

Dean Derryl Block

CHHS Hosts Viewing and Panel Discussion of "Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare"

On Sept. 17, 2013, CHHS Dean Derryl Block moderated a panel discussion following the viewing of the documentary, "Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare." It tackles one of the most pressing issues of our time: how can we save our badly broken healthcare system?

"Escape Fire" examines the powerful forces maintaining the status quo, a medical industry designed for quick fixes rather than prevention, for-profit-driven care rather than patient-driven care. After decades of resistance, a movement to bring innovative high-touch, low-cost methods of prevention and healing into our high-tech, costly system is finally gaining ground. "Escape Fire" is about finding a way out.

Panelists included Monica A. Wallace and Dr. Donna Plonczynski. Wallace is a summa cum laude graduate of NIU, who is a partner in the law firm of McDermott Will & Emery LLP, based in the firm’s Chicago office. She focuses her practice on complex regulatory and transactional counseling to healthcare organizations such as health systems, hospitals, physician groups, integrated delivery systems, durable medical equipment suppliers, home health agencies, and other health care providers.

Wallace is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association; American Bar Association, Health Law Section; and Illinois Association of Healthcare Attorneys. She also serves on the Board of the NIU Executive Club and is a recipient of the NIU Honors Program Young Alumnus Award.

NIU Nursing faculty member, Dr. Donna Plonczynski, has worked for nearly 20 years as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. Within her field Dr. Plonczynski works with underserved populations and addresses barriers to healthcare access.

The event was organized by Dr. Jim Ciesla in concert with the Alumni Association. The event was well attended by alumni, students, faculty and community members. It generated a dynamic discussion by the audience and panel. It was a very successful program by all measures.
NIU President Baker visits the Child Development Lab

Newly-named NIU President Doug Baker visited CHHS last August, including touring College facilities. Staff and children were delighted when President Baker visited the NIU Child Development Lab. They colored special pictures for him and enjoyed snack time and talking with him.

CHHS featured in NIU President Baker’s Inauguration

College of Health and Human Sciences faculty, staff, students, and alumni were highlighted in NIU President Doug Baker’s inaugural address, in a video called “Student Career Success and Bold Futures.”

Public Health alum Allison Delgado and Becky Pritchard, NUHS Public Health Practicum Coordinator, were featured in the opening video that showcased how NIU students are making a difference in the world today. Delgado recently returned from Uganda where she served in the Peace Corps.

Nursing alum Joseph Griffey shared his personal story of serving our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom as an Army reservist. After his tour ended, Griffey earned his bachelor’s degree in Nursing in 2013. He now is a psychiatric nurse in the adolescent wing of Linden Oaks Hospital.

Associate Professor of Nursing Dr. Jeanette Rossetti’s Mental Health Simulation also was featured in the inaugural program. The simulation is an international collaboration with the National University of Ireland and gives Dr. Rossetti’s students a hands-on experiential learning opportunity.
NIU pairs with DeKalb School District for CATCH program

From page 1

Jenny Parker, Associate Professor, KNPE
Kishwaukee Hospital Community Wellness: Lisa Cumings, RN, Community Health Liaison.
Kishwaukee Family YMCA: Lesley Feyerherm, Youth Development Director
DeKalb County Health Department: Nancy LaCursia, School Health Coordinator

In 2013, after the first full year, the program was evaluated by NIU students and District 428 teachers and administrators. From this feedback, the curriculum was reinvented for each lesson to build upon the previous ones and to identify the Core Curriculum and Illinois Learning Standards that were met within each lesson.

In addition, visual learning models were purchased using funds from the health department’s “We Choose Health” grant and placed into bins for each school to enhance the lessons.

Over the summer, a CATCH Academy for District 428 elementary classroom teachers was held to improve teacher buy-in and to gain input on the new lessons. An overview of the CATCH program was provided describing each layer (PE, classroom, cafeteria, family) giving the teachers a sense of where they fit into the program.

The future plan for growing the CATCH program beyond the current PE and classroom components was shared. Finally, teachers were given the opportunity to provide feedback on their grade level lessons. At the end of the day, the CATCH Champions were excited to promote the program within their own schools.

In August, the CATCH overview also was presented to district leadership to gain administrative support. Approval was given to conduct a Pre- and Post-CATCH knowledge survey to K-5 students at Founders Elementary School. This will provide a snapshot of what students learn in their CATCH lessons. The post-survey will be administered in April 2014 after the last of 6 annual CATCH lessons.

To prepare CHHS’ cadre of students, a CATCH training in September provided the opportunity to learn the principles of CATCH and to review the lessons and visual learning models. To ensure confidence in lesson delivery, CATCH practices were provided in the McMurry Health Education Teaching Lab one week prior to each CATCH Wednesday. NIU students were able to rehearse their lessons. Lastly, to provide support to the NIU CATCH cadre, one of the trained on-site CATCH partners was assigned to be at each school for the entire CATCH day.

In addition to six annual CATCH days, two Family Nights are provided (half the schools in the Fall and half the schools in the Spring) to encourage healthy habits for the whole family. The nights are held at Kishwaukee Family YMCA and include four healthy stations: two physical activities; one CATCH activity; and one nutrition station. Families rotate through all of the stations during the evening and get a glimpse of the types of lessons their children are learning through CATCH.

Feedback from the first three CATCH days and Fall Family Night has been overwhelmingly positive. Over the next couple of years, steps to expand the program include cafeteria signage and promotion of healthy choices at both breakfast and lunch meal times.

Lastly, creating a partnership with the school district’s PTA programs will encourage healthy fundraising and events as well as healthy choices at home. This will complete the CATCH program to encompass all of the program layers. In the long term, the hope is for a turning of the cultural tide to promote healthy growth and development of DeKalb elementary school children.

Associate Dean Beverly Henry named Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group Outstanding Member of the Year for 2013

Beverly W. Henry, PhD, RD, was named Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group (PNPG) Outstanding Member of the Year for 2013. PNPG is a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietsetics, and has more than 3,500 members. Dr. Henry has been an active member of PNPG more than 20 years and has served in leadership positions, including PNPG Post editor and the Professional Development Chair. Her contributions to the field of pediatric nutrition and leadership in the profession were highlighted as praiseworthy. Her career in dietetics demonstrates her professional commitment as a researcher, educator and mentor to others. This award was presented at the PNPG Annual Business Meeting at the Food and Nutrition Convention and Exposition Oct. 20, 2013, in Houston, Tx. As part of the award, Dr. Henry received a $1,200 stipend to attend a conference on Pediatric Nutrition in 2014.
Audiology Students Win Top Prize

Rachel Magann Faivre and Liz Tusler with their award.

Rachel Magann Faivre and Liz Tusler, Doctor of Audiology students in the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders within CHHS, were awarded top prize and $5,000 in The Academy of Doctors of Audiology’s (ADA) Student Business Plan Competition.

Students in the competition were challenged to create a business plan for a start-up company that would be presented to a bank for funding. The top five finalists were awarded scholarships to attend the ADA annual conference. The finalists submitted a written business plan document, a poster for presenting, as well as a presentation given in front of the membership and judges.

The applicants were held to the same standards as any potential new business owner and were judged based on five aspects of the plan: creativity, feasibility, completeness, cohesiveness throughout the document, and professionalism and polish.

Magann Faivre and Tusler decided to create a three-year business plan for a private practice audiology facility, located in Joliet, IL. Its staff would consist of two audiologists, a front desk staff person and an additional certified public accountant who would take care of many business matters. The practice would provide a variety of services including hearing diagnostic testing, hearing aids for management of hearing loss, tinnitus diagnostic testing and management, and studies about hearing standards where work is noisy (such as construction sites). In their plan, the students also focused on marketing to the Joliet location. Their target market was adults older than 50. They chose to place their facility near a large hospital and senior residences.

Magann Faivre said she is grateful for the flexibility and preparation the NIU program provided. “The NIU audiology program has always been supportive of students seeking out education in various ways,” she said. “As a student, it’s good to get the big picture and obtain a well-rounded view of your field.”

Magann Faivre and Tusler expressed gratitude for this opportunity and a new-found self-reliance in the business skills they developed. “Overall, I became more confident with the idea of opening my own practice through this experience,” said Magann Faivre. “We got to make our own plan and have professionals look it over. What better foundation to lay?”

Magann Faivre and Tusler will use their winnings toward professional and business development endeavors.
In October, The School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders in conjunction with The Graduate School at NIU, hosted a Graduate Colloquium. Dr. Jos J. Eggermont, an internationally recognized and world expert in the field of Tinnitus and Auditory Cortex Plasticity, presented “Tinnitus; Maladaptive Plasticity & Effects Of Non-Traumatic Noise On The Auditory Cortex.” Dr. Eggermont is an Emeritus Professor at the departments of Physiology, Pharmacology and Psychology; and full member of the Hotchkiss Brain Institute. Dr. Eggermont also is the Campbell McLaurin Chair for Hearing Deficiencies. Following Dr. Eggermont’s presentation students and faculty participated in a lively discussion.

Numerous Speech-Language Pathology faculty and students recently presented their research at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention, including:
- Dr. Jamie Mayer – “Pure alexia in the context of visual aperceptive agnosia.”
- Dr. Pat Tattersall - “Assessing Native Language Spelling Proficiency in Spanish-English Speaking Students: Dictated Words versus Free Writing Tasks.”
- Graduate student Beata Wegrznowicz - presented a poster with Dr. Danai Fannin and Dr. Pat Tattersall, “Orthographic Errors Among 3rd Grade Polish-English and Polish speaking Students.”
- Graduate student Kristina Kelzer presented a poster with Dr. Pat Tattersall, “Matching the Reader to the Text: Meeting Common Core Standards through Picturebooks.”
- Graduate student - Gabriel Hershberger served as a convention volunteer.
- Dr. Jamie Mayer - served on the ASHA program Committee for Language Disorders in Adults.
- Dr. Danai Fannin - is the Professional Development Manager for SIG 14 (ASHA’s Special Interest Group on Communication Disorders and Sciences in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations).

Rehabilitation Services senior named Lincoln Laureate finalist

Allied Health and Communicative Disorders senior Lauren Nale, who is majoring in Rehabilitation Services, was a finalist for the prestigious Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. The Lincoln Laureate Award is given annually to an outstanding senior from each of the four-year granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois. Lincoln Laureates are honored for their overall excellence in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Nale was presented with a certificate of her accomplishment by NIU President Baker in November 2013. Congratulations Lauren for this great accomplishment!
Heart of Hearing Trip to China provides valuable experience

Every year, Dr. King Chung, Associate Professor of Audiology, takes students to a different country/governing region throughout the world for a two-week humanitarian research and service trip. During the trips, NIU students and faculty provide hearing services to underserved and unserved populations, visit professional organizations, and tour cultural landmarks in the countries visited.

On May 31, 2013, Dr. Chung met three Doctor of Audiology students (Maggie Clemens, Emily Hehn, and Alexandra Rosenbaum), audiology alumnus (Tad Bishop), and a graduate student from Adult and Higher Education (Danielle Morrow), at the Beijing Capital International Airport where they began a two-week trip in China.

They toured Palace Museum, Jingshan Park and the famous Tienanmen Square before leaving Beijing for the Shandong Province by high-speed rail. The General Secretary of Linqu, Mr. Wenpeng Cui, helped arrange several testing sites for the group: one special education school, four mainstream primary schools and four nursing homes. The schools and nursing homes were located in different villages around Yimeng Shan, a countryside marked by poor living conditions. Many of the testing sites could be accessed only via winding, unpaved country roads.

The group tested a total of 184 primary school students and 109 residents in nursing homes. Dr. Chung and an audiologist from Beijing Hearing Society (Becky Ma) served as translators. Overall, 87% of students passed the hearing tests, 7.6% required wax removal, and only 2.2% students had hearing loss or other ear-related disorders. One of the four students who failed the testing had an undetected mild hearing loss. They informed the teachers (and their parents) for preferential seating at school.

Another student had known severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss. At the time of testing, she was wearing two different brands of hearing aids with insufficient power that she received from two separate charity events. Her teacher urged the NIU contingent to find a pair of hearing aids for her because her parents had very limited resources. They were basically “waiting for her to grow up and get married.”

The NIU visitors were touched by the story and Dr. Chung contacted her friend in Siemens Singapore who, in turn, connected her with Siemens China. The company donated a pair of high-power, high-performance digital hearing aids.)

Requests were made to the local chapter of the China Disabled Person’s Federation to provide follow-up hearing services for them.

Besides conducting hearing tests, Dr. Chung gave a talk on hearing aid technologies to nurses, ENT doctors and other local hearing healthcare providers. The group also visited rock markets and a newly-developed scenic area, Yi Shan Scenic Area, before leaving Shandong Province.

After returning to Beijing, they visited several state-of-the-art professional facilities: The Technical Support Center of the Beijing Hearing Society, the headquarters and the Beijing Center of the China Rehabilitation and Research Center for Deaf Children, and the 301 Military Hospital.

A trip to Beijing would not be complete without visiting the Great Wall, the Bird Nest, the zoo and other landmarks. The Great Wall is one of a few man-made structures visible from space with the naked eye. The NIU team climbed a more rustic and less crowded part of the Great Wall, Juyongguan Pass. The steep climb was exhausting to some but exuberating to others.

The group said they were impressed by the hospitality extended to them and their dedication to help the people and community grow. They hope more people will participate in humanitarian work to provide hearing and other health services to underserved and unserved people around the world.


(Acknowledgement: Many thanks to Etymotic Research for lending two EroScan Pro units, to Oticon, USA, for its generous monetary support; and to Siemens China and Siemens Singapore, for donating a pair of high-power digital hearing aids.)

CHHS Clinics

♦ Family Therapy Clinic: Providing therapeutic services for individuals, couples, and families. (815) 753-1684.

♦ Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic: Providing Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology services from a family focus, because a speech, language, or hearing problem affects all members of a family. (815) 753-1481.

♦ Physical Therapy Clinic: Providing evaluation and treatment of acute and chronic musculoskeletal conditions. (815) 752-2675.
AHCD Faculty Accolades:

Dr. Cristine Clemente Dos Santos

Medical Laboratory Sciences Assistant Professor Dr. Cristine Clemente Dos Santos recently passed the test to become a trainee in the AABB Assessor Program. The AABB is an international, not-for-profit association representing individuals and institutions involved in the field of transfusion medicine and cellular therapies. The association is committed to improving health by developing and delivering standards, accreditation and educational programs that focus on optimizing patient and donor care and safety.

Medical Laboratory Sciences Associate Professor Dr. Masih Shokrani has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of ASCLA-IL Insights, published by the Illinois branch of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science. Dr. Shokrani also was named as National Academies Education Fellows in the Life Sciences for the 2012-2013 academic year. This honor is bestowed by virtue of Dr. Shokrani’s selection to and enthusiastic participation in the 2013 National Academies Northstar Summer Institute on Undergraduate Education in Biology. The National Academies are private, nonprofit institutions that provide expert advice on some of the most pressing challenges facing the nation and the world. Their work helps shape sound policies, inform public opinion and advance the pursuit of science, engineering, and medicine.

Dr. Masih Shokrani

AHCD Clinical Interdisciplinary Event

On Nov. 1, the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders held a Clinical Interdisciplinary Event which included student clinicians from Audiology, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Counseling and Speech-Language Pathology.

Students were given a case study that included family, educational and work history, and current patient concerns to review. The students were then asked to outline any additional information they may need, indicate what tests they may perform, and list any concerns they have.

After all five disciplines presented their findings, the students, with help from the audience, discussed the patient as a whole and how all five disciplines can collaborate as a team of professionals. The panel of students fielded questions from the audience, as well as from each other.

The event was an amazing way to showcase each of AHCD’s clinical programs and the breadth of knowledge that each student possesses, in addition to showing how all five disciplines are interconnected and work together seamlessly to provide the best patient care.

The outstanding panel participants included: from Audiology, Kaylee Todd; from Medical Laboratory Sciences, Lynn Gorecki; from Physical Therapy, Elise Livingston; from Rehabilitation Counseling, Alide Shemshedini and Nate Winkler; and from Speech-Language Pathology, Beth Ford Baldner and Chassidy Mangers.

AHCD plans to continue holding Clinical Interdisciplinary Events, with the next event planned for the Spring Semester. Events are open to the public, so please keep an eye out for the next scheduled event. Treat yourself to an afternoon of engaging and stimulating discussion led by our wonderful student clinicians.

Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences - FCNS

Dr. Lin Shi works in Kosovo

Dr. Lin Shi, Associate Professor and Director of the Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy, returned to Kosovo this fall for the third time to conduct clinical supervision and training of local psychiatrists and psychologists.

Dr. Shi collaborates with a group of six experienced educators and clinicians from professions of Marriage and Family Therapy, Psychiatry and Social Work. Their work is supported by the Kosovo Health Foundation. The program has been in operation for three years. The 24-page manuscript about the program based on the philosophy, experiences and data collected has been accepted by the Journal of Family Psychotherapy.
Doctor of Audiology students complete capstone project on Hearing Loops

Hearing in noise is difficult for individuals with hearing loss. Many assistive listening devices are designed to help overcome listening in background noise, at a distance, and in reverberation, especially in large venues. Hearing loops can increase the signal level, reduce background noise and reverberation and increase the signal-to-noise ratio for large area listening. Yet, there is little evidence-based research supporting the use of hearing loops.

In a hearing loop system, a wire is placed around a room transmitting a magnetic signal that is detected by personal listening devices, hearing aids, or cochlear implants with t-coils. Speech presented through a microphone or public address system is transmitted directly to the hearing device. Fauzia Ismail and Rachel Magann Faivre, NIU Doctor of Audiology students, met with Tom Thunder, Au.D., to discuss a hearing loop research idea. After that meeting, King Chung, Ph.D., Juliëtte Sterkens, Au.D., and Steve Thunder, B.S.E., joined the team in designing the study.

Twenty-six hearing aid users and 45 individuals with normal hearing participated in the study. Speech understanding scores and perceived sound quality with and without a hearing loop system were tested in an auditorium. Results revealed improved speech understanding in noise and reported increased benefit among all participants when using the hearing loop.

The David and Carol Myers Foundation, Listen Technologies, and GN ReSound supported the study. Magann Faivre was awarded a scholarship to present the research findings at the International Hearing Loop Conference in Eastbourne, United Kingdom, last October. Conference attendees were primarily consumers with hearing loss, as well as audiologists, hearing loop manufacturers, hearing loop installers, and non-profit organizations that support people with hearing loss. The presentation and study results were very well received. Publication of the research in a peer-reviewed journal is currently being pursued.

The purpose of the study was to examine the benefits of hearing loop systems for hearing aid users and those with normal hearing in large area listening environments. Their long-term goal is to raise awareness of the existence and effects hearing loops have on speech understanding and sound quality among professionals and hearing device users.

Ismail, of Chicago, is completing her fourth year externship at Dreyer Medical Clinic in Aurora, IL. Rachel Magann Faivre, originally from Oklahoma City, OK, is an audiology doctoral extern at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Family Social Services Student Internships

Family Social Services students along with Associate Professor Dr. Jane Rode Njue, were recently featured in the NIU Career Services Newsletter: http://www.niu.edu/CareerServices/newsletter/faculty/Csnewsletter_fa13.pdf

NIU Career Services met with the students to prepare them for all aspects of the job search. Family Social Services students have a variety of internship choices to prepare for career success. A few of the various internships available to Family Social Services students are:

- CEDA Northwest, counseling families in crisis.
- Cook County Juvenile Probation, assisting probation officers on school visits, home visits, and to the detention facility; eventually learning to conduct a social investigation report and present it to the court.
- Rockford MELD Homelessness Prevention/Crisis Intervention Shelter, providing assistance to homeless mothers between 17-20, by providing stability and support through case management.

Dr. Surjadi Appointed Faculty Coordinator of Asian American Studies Certificate Program

Assistant Professor Flora Surjadi, from the Family and Child Studies program in the School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences, has begun serving as faculty coordinator of the Asian American Studies Certificate Program.

Open to all NIU students, the program provides a strong sense of the Asian American experience and its influence on individuals, communities and the nation. The interdisciplinary program requires 12 credit hours of selected coursework.

Dr. Surjadi is excited to be taking on this new role. She will devote her time working with the Certificate Program and her home program in FCNS.

A valuable resource for this program is NIU's Asian American Center. It is one of the first of its kind in Illinois and provides student-centered services, learning opportunities, leadership development, student organizational advisement, and educational/cultural programs for Asian American Students at NIU.

Students interested to learn more about the certificate program are encouraged to contact Dr. Surjadi.
Tanzania Study Abroad

By Rachel McBride, Graduate Student, Nutrition and Dietetics

During the summer 2013, I traveled more than 8,500 miles away from the comforts of home to the sub-Saharan country of Tanzania. The trip was offered as part of a summer study abroad program through NIU and was led by Dr. Kurt Thurmaier, from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

For one intense month I was challenged mentally, physically and spiritually as I absorbed the culture and lifestyle of the Tanzanians. The trip allowed us to experience three distinct ways Tanzanians live. It ranged from life in a poor rural city to a developed yet overpopulated city, along with the blooming tourist attraction island of Zanzibar. It is absolutely amazing to see the vast differences in ways of living and change of conveniences that were only within a couple hundred miles in the same country.

For the first three weeks of the trip we stayed in Musoma, Tanzania. In this rural city, the majority of the population lack resources for the most basic things, such as clean water, reliable electricity and even paved roads. In contrast, we stayed at a beautiful, lakeside Catholic Retreat Center called Epheta, which means “Open Your Eyes” in Swahili.

While in Musoma, we participated in a crash course in Swahili language lessons during the first week to help us in basic conversations with the locals. As part of our midterm, we gave an introductory speech in Swahili about ourselves to over 300 high school students at the Nyegina Secondary School. All of the students and teachers laughed when we mentioned our pets because in Tanzania animals are not considered part of the family.

The second two weeks of the trip consisted of an exhilarating and bumpy safari ride in the Serengeti, where we were face-to-face with creatures of the wild. We attended various seminars with local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and met with a variety of local businesses responding to local challenges with innovative business practices.

Among the many organizations impacting the community of Musoma, the two that affected me the most are Afreda and the Tupande Center because of what I have learned in Dennis Barsema’s courses. Afreda is a microfinance organization in Musoma that helps stimulate the local economy by supplying microloans, around $10, to small businesses that in-turn help the local small businesses grow. The Tupande Center is a place designed for orphaned children to spend their days learning valuable life skills and making products like clothes, cards, and other artwork in order to make an income for them and their siblings.

Part of the trip consisted of laying the foundation of the Nyegina Library and Resource Center. In this process, we worked side-by-side with the Nyegina Secondary School students and local stakeholders by passing rocks and bags of sand.

In addition, I conducted an independent project that was funded by an NIU Honors Scholarship, Provost’s Honors Travel Grant, and an Undergraduate Research Assistantship. My project, entitled, “Nyegina Secondary School: A Nutrition Needs Assessment,” was guided by Dr. Beverly Henry.

It consisted of interviews with the school’s cooks, headmaster, four students and the school’s matron, in order to gain a better understanding of the food served and schedules of students who live at the school year-round.

I determined the food program has areas of strength, such as serving three meals per day to over 500 students and meeting the protein requirements of the children. However, the meals consist of the same recipes every single day, which significantly limits the amount of nutrients students receive throughout the majority of the year.

To finish off the trip, we traveled to the highly populated and developed cities of Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. On the spice island of Zanzibar, we toured a fruit and spice plantation and experienced a delectable cuisine filled with outstanding flavors.

Dar es Salaam was our final stop before heading home. We spent our days learning about the local government and our evenings dining with governmental leaders who were alumni from the Nyegina Secondary School.

I never imagined my first trip outside the U.S. would be to Tanzania. The trip has enriched my life in countless ways and was a great life decision. The trip enabled me to make relationships with many Tanzanians as well as bond with NIU students and faculty.

On a daily basis I continue to ponder about how blessed we are to have the luxuries of stable electricity, access to clean water and safe food, and reliable transportation. Studying abroad is an experience that offers much more than what a typical classroom lecture can offer; such as real-life learning opportunities and experience, and helping one to communicate outside of your comfort zone in a foreign country.

I am extremely excited to finish my Master’s degree in nutrition here at NIU and apply the skills I have obtained in a career that will impact numerous lives.
Children’s Kitchen Garden Education Intern at Olbrich Botanical Gardens

By Marie K. Norris, Dietetic Intern, MS Candidate, Nutrition and Dietetics

Last summer, I worked as an instructor at Children’s Kitchen Garden Education Intern at Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, WI. I provided plant-based education through hands-on learning to Madison-area underserved and urban youth and family public programming. The educational goals for this program focused on plants, food-based gardening, and fostering a life-long awareness of the integral role plants play in our daily lives.

The eight-week internship provided practical experience in managing educational activities for large and small groups and direct teaching of plant-based curricula. I taught five classes a week to a group of 10-20 second-fifth grade students enrolled in Madison School and Community Recreation programs.

Each week we focused on a different theme in plant-based learning, which included biomimicry (how technology mimics nature), plants to pants, plants as shelter, papermaking, flowers and the edible garden. I developed strong teaching and public programming skills that will be invaluable to my future career as a Registered Dietitian.

My favorite part of the internship was the autonomy I had to develop new activities and hands-on learning experiences. One activity I developed focused on a student’s favorite meal and allowed them to walk around the garden and write down plants that would be useful in making their favorite meal. Many students chose pizza as their favorite meal so they walked around the garden and wrote down plants such as tomatoes, peppers, basil, oregano, zucchini and more. This allowed the students to learn how plants are essential for food production and to observe them growing in their natural environment.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens is home to 16 acres of outdoor display gardens and a 10,000-square-foot tropical conservatory. The outdoor gardens include 10 unique specialty gardens and received the 2005 National Award for Garden Excellence (www.olbrich.org).

Children’s Kitchen Garden Intern Essential Functions (www.olbrich.org):

♦ Group Management: Assist the Youth and Family Program Coordinator in facilitating plant-based education for groups of 40+ children/participants.
♦ Direct Instruction: Act as lead teacher providing direct, hands-on instruction to groups of 10 to 40+ children/participants.
♦ Volunteer Collaboration: Work with and supervise adult program volunteers.
♦ Internal Collaboration: Build productive and cohesive relationships with co-workers, and work well as a member of a team.

♦ Educational Preparation: Prepare instructional materials and set up the outdoor classroom each day before groups arrive, properly store materials at the end of each day, and be well-versed in the learning objectives/lesson plan prior to the arrival of children/participants.

♦ Garden Maintenance: Work with the Youth and Family Programs Coordinator and the program’s Horticulture Intern in maintaining the Children’s Kitchen Garden.

♦ Program Evaluation: Provide constructive feedback on all aspects of the Children’s Kitchen Garden programs.

♦ Program Wrap-Up: Responsible for proper clean-up, inventory and storage of all materials at the end of the summer program.

Dr. Marilyn Stromborg guest lectures for NUHS

Former NUHS Chair, Dr. Marilyn Stromborg, recently was a guest lecturer for Suzanne Mullis’ NURS 432 Nursing Leadership class. Dr. Stromborg spoke on liability issues, malpractice, negligence, standard of care in regards to the law, failure to diagnose and the law. Mullis said Dr. Stromborg was a great choice as a guest lecturer “because of her experience as a nurse and nursing leader, as well as, Dr. Stromborg being a national and international speaker, who has published numerous articles.” Dr. Stromborg is also an attorney and serves with the DeKalb County State’s Attorney’s Office.
The “Mental Health Ward:” A Simulated Patient Care Experience

On Sept. 28, 31 nursing students and 15 faculty and nurses were involved in “The Mental Health Ward” at Linden Oaks Hospital in Naperville. Many of the nurses were past students of NIU Nursing (who were summer interns in psychiatric nursing) and are now working at Linden Oaks Hospital.

The Mental Health Ward is an innovative, simulated hospital environment that includes the use of standardized patients and role play scenarios. It results in a full mission simulation where students learn a variety of psychiatric diagnoses, and practice a variety of skills including nursing assessments, the admission process, discharge process, medication administration, therapeutic communication, and patient education groups.

The students also can be involved in high risk areas such as handling aggressive, suicidal and homicidal patients.

History:
Siobhan Smyth and Evelyn Byrne, faculty of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), developed The Mental Health Ward during Dr. Jeanette Rossetti’s sabbatical in Ireland in the spring of 2012, where she focused on learning how to bring back The Mental Health Ward to the U.S. She spent time teaching in the psychiatric nursing curriculum and had hands-on experience with the ward. NUIG faculty shared all of their expertise, forms and lessons learned about the ward.

Dr. Rossetti brought back what she learned in Ireland and began a Mental Health Ward planning committee of NUHS faculty and students. The committee included Dr. Kathleen Musker, Catherine Maney, Susan Andersen, Kris Selig, graduate nursing student Katherine Hess and undergraduate nursing students Aileen Scarim, Joe Griffey, Rachel Quaco, and Patricia Van Hoesel. NUHS faculty Carol Wahlstrom, Maryann Abendroth and Kari Hickey joined the group in the fall of 2013.

Irish colleagues Smyth and Byrne also consulted and joined in on the meetings at NIU via Skype sessions. In addition, collaboration began at Linden Oaks Hospital. The Chief Nursing Officer Trish Jones-Bendel joined the team and offered the use of one of their units at Linden Oaks Hospital Outpatient Center so the ward did not have to be in the “medical” simulation lab, but in a realistic psychiatric environment. It was very exciting to have the opportunity to be in a realistic environment and have the support and collaboration of a clinical agency who are clinical experts.

Research Study:
A research study was conducted to evaluate the self-efficacy and communication techniques utilized by the nursing students in the simulated experience. The CAE Simulation Effectiveness Scale was utilized as the tool in the study. Upon completion of the ward experience a debriefing occurred. All was approved by NIU’s Institutional Review Board. Results are being analyzed presently.

Dissemination:
Dr. Rossetti, Trish Jones-Bendel, nursing alum Abbey Knur and Joseph Griffey presented “The Mental Health Ward” at the American Psychiatric Nurses Association Annual Conference in San Antonio in October. Dr. Rossetti and Dr. Musker presented at Sigma Theta Tau International’s Conference in November. A manuscript is under development for consideration in the Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services.

Support:
The team was excited to receive a CHHS grant to financially support the development of the infrastructure of The Mental Health Ward and to plan the research study that occurred to evaluate the outcomes of the learning in the simulated experience.

Also, Dr. Jan Strom, NUHS Chair, financially supported an NIU coach bus to transport students to Naperville and back to DeKalb, and agreed for an NIU photographer to capture the event. Support from CHHS and NUHS is greatly appreciated!

Without the amazing support of all faculty, students and nursing staff involved, The Mental Health Ward could not have occurred. The dedication shown led to an amazing innovative learning experience.
Nursing student Barnes awarded LIFE scholarship

Junior Nursing major Shakira Barnes was one of 24 students awarded a scholarship from the Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education (LIFE). Barnes earned the $2,000 scholarship through the non-profit's ninth annual LIFE Lessons Scholarship Program.

New York Life’s Chicago North Shore General Office Managing Partner Van A. Ewing II personally matched the scholarship by contributing $2,000, bringing her award to $4,000.

“I thank the LIFE Lessons Scholarship Program and New York Life for giving me the opportunity to share my story,” said Barnes, who is studying to be a pediatric nurse. “I am thankful for the scholarship, which will help me reach my goal of receiving my degree at NIU and helping others in the future.”

The LIFE Foundation is dedicated to helping students like Barnes pay for their college education. It offers financial support to college students and college-bound high school seniors who have persevered despite the loss of a parent or legal guardian.

The LIFE Lessons Scholarship Program asks applicants to submit an application along with either a 500-word essay or three-minute video describing how their lives have been challenged, both financially and emotionally, by the death of a parent or guardian who did not have adequate life insurance.

Barnes’ essay documented her and her siblings’ financial struggles after her father died in a car accident without enough life insurance coverage. This year, LIFE has awarded a record total of $125,000 in scholarships to 24 students ranging from $2,000-$15,000.

Over the past six and a half years since her father died, Barnes has had many ups and downs, she said. She works three days a week on campus to pay for tuition and also helps her mother and siblings at home when she has extra money.

“I always wonder how my life would be if my father were still here. I truly feel the emotional and financial impact of the absence of my father,” Barnes said. “I remember the struggle to get here, the struggle to pay for my ACT test and worrying how I will pay for college. The struggle, the stress and the bills all seem overwhelming at times, but somehow God always makes a way for us.”

Barnes hopes to make enough money after graduating from NIU to move her mother into a safer neighborhood and a better home. “My mother has always been there for me,” she said.

Dr. Catherine Maney joins Nursing faculty

Catherine Maney, Ed.D. (c), RN, obtained her BSN from Lewis University and her MSN from NIU. She will graduate with a Doctoral degree in Educational Technology from NIU in May, 2014. She has been licensed as an APN (Community Health Nurse Clinical Specialist), as an NAECB Certified Asthma Educator, and she holds an Illinois Type 73 School Nursing certification.

Prior to becoming a Nurse Educator in 2004, Maney worked in various areas of Community Health Nursing, including Public Health Nursing, Maternal-Child Health, Community Mental Health Case Management, and School Nursing. At NIU School of Nursing and Heath Studies, Maney has taught Senior Capstone courses, Medical-Surgical, Mental Health, and Community Health Nursing clinicals. In 2009, she was awarded the CHHS Lankford Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Maney became interested in the use of Human Patient Simulation (HPS) as an educational tool when it was first introduced into nursing education. She participated in the integration of HPS into NIU’s nursing program, and she was part of the team that designed the current HPS Laboratory.

Her research interest is focused on exploring various methods of HPS as it relates to pre-licensure nursing students’ learning.

In her position as a tenure-track faculty member, her duties will focus on working with at-risk pre-licensure nursing students, instructing both community and mental health clinical experiences, and conducting research to discover empirical evidence about the effect HPS has on clinical judgment.

Van Ewing presents Shakira Barnes with a $2,000 matching scholarship to complement her LIFE award.
Study Abroad 2013: Exploring Ireland's Community and Mental Health Services

In the summer of 2013, Dr. Jeanette Rossetti and students, Loretta Slowik (NUHS, Undergraduate, Nursing), Tahanie Omar (NUHS, Undergraduate, Nursing), Katie Myers (NUHS, Graduate, Public Health), Leigha Johnson (NUHS, Graduate, Public Health) and Jessica West (FCNS, Undergrad, Individual and Family Development), visited Ireland.

From July 7-20, Dr. Rossetti and the students lived at Trinity College in Dublin and at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

The primary purpose of this study abroad program was to provide students with the opportunity to explore a variety of mental health and community psychiatric healthcare services in Ireland.

During this program students learned about the history of Ireland's mental healthcare system, Ireland's mental health services, Ireland's community/public health system, and the preparation and education of Ireland's psychiatric nurses and mental healthcare workers. Site visits included a tour of St. Patrick's Psychiatric Hospital, Phoenix Care Psychiatric Hospital, the National University of Ireland, Galway School of Nursing and Midwifery's Simulation Lab, and Trinity University School of Nursing. In addition, students were exposed to the cultural opportunities that the beautiful country of Ireland has to offer such as the Aran Islands, the Cliffs of Moher, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Kilmainham Jail, The Book of Kells and Riverdance.

Dr. Rossetti and Dr. Musker (NUHS) are planning a trip to Ireland in the Summer of 2014 and hope to take another group of students from CHHS to explore Ireland’s healthcare system. Once again, students of the CHHS are invited to join.

NUHS Faculty Accolades:

Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health Dr. Sarah Geiger is a new editorial board member for the journal *Pediatrics and Neonatal Care*.

Dr. Geiger was also a speaker at the Wisconsin Coroners and Medical Examiners Association annual meeting in Manitowoc, WI, in October 2013.
Autism Spectrum Disorders Research

Dr. Lucy Bilaver, Assistant Professor of Public Health, and her co-principal investigator, Dr. Judy Havlicek, Assistant Professor at the UIUC School of Social Work, began research on "Autism Spectrum Disorders: Advancing Understanding of Youth in Foster Care" in July, 2013.

Two NIU students have been funded to work on the project: Marissa Beldon, an MPH student funded as a graduate assistant, and Lauren Nale, a pre-occupational therapy student and University Honors Fellow and Scholar. They will work on the project in Spring 2014 through the support of NIU Undergraduate Research Assistant program.

Public Act 94-442 established the Autism Research Fund to provide resources for research to advance the understanding, techniques and modalities effective in the detection, prevention, screening and treatment of autism and may include clinical trials. The fund received contributions through an Income Tax check-off for the year ending Dec. 31, 2005. Due to a limited response, the check-off program was discontinued, but netted $56,000 in contributions. As of December 2012, was approximately $64,217 with accrued interest. The Scientific Review committee of the Autism Task Force convened to establish objectives and internal procedures necessary to receive grant applications.

There are 3 specific aims of this research. They are:
• To describe the characteristics and patterns of service use of a population of foster youth with ASD in Illinois. We will link administrative data from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) with the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois State Board of Education to identify and describe children ages 3 and older in the child welfare system with ASD. Providing an accurate description of the population of foster children with ASD and their patterns of service use will increase understanding of a population that has received limited attention in child welfare and health services research.
• To identify the rate of participation of young adults in foster care with ASD in normative social roles of young adulthood. We will link the DCFS data for a population of foster youth with ASD ages 18 or older with wage report data on employment and wages from the Department of Employment Security. The rate of employment for transition age foster youth with ASD will be compared with transition aged foster youth without ASD. The extent to which foster youth with ASD enter the workforce after exiting high school at comparable rates as their peers can provide an important metric for gauging the impact of existing transition services and supports.
• To understand the barriers and facilitators of transition planning for foster youth with ASD. We will hold separate focus groups with foster youth, foster parents and service providers. Incorporating the voices of these stakeholders will serve to identify barriers and facilitators of transition planning that may be missing from the administrative data, but critical to address from the perspectives of consumers and service providers.

Pride in Mission:

Out of all of the many departments and programs at NIU, the Military Science program’s Army ROTC was specifically chosen to have the responsibility of one of NIU’s most prized traditions: training and presenting the university’s mascot. As the previous husky’s time to retire approached, generous donors offered to fund the next generation husky and requested that the Huskie Battalion be the primary supporter of the mascot, named Mission. The donor stated that ROTC has always done an exemplary job of presenting the colors at NIU games and felt they were the perfect fit for the task.

The battalion developed a club for cadets to support, train and present Mission at NIU special events such as football games. They are calling the club “Mission Support.” Cadet Jesspal Bachhal, a member of the new club, finds it fitting that his battalion was chosen for this honor as he expresses that the battalion “bears the spirit of both our nation and our university.” Cadet Bachhal, a pre-Physical Therapy major, joined the club because he is “excited and proud that our battalion was selected and also, I love dogs.”

Combat Water Survival Test:

There is only one program on campus that asks its students to walk off a high dive board blindfolded while holding a rifle above their heads to plunge unexpectedly into a pool.

Each year, NIU ROTC cadets participate in the Combat Water Survival Test (CWST), which consists of the blindfold leap, a 20-meter rifle swim, and an underwater equipment drop.

Not only is this a test of stamina and physical skill, but also perhaps most importantly, it is a test of courage, confidence and mental discipline. Freshman Cadet Angel Cassidy took the CWST for the first time and said, “It was fun and it definitely tested my ability to trust myself. It’s important to know that you can do it.” Her favorite event was the 20-meter rifle swim because it taught her that she was physically and skillfully capable of such a demanding task. Successful completion of the CWST is also one of the many challenging requirements of cadets to commission in to the Army.

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Family and Child Studies alum educating on the neuroscience of humor

Mary Kay Morrison, MA, alumnus of what is now the Family and Child Studies (FCS) program in FCNS, is an educator on the neuroscience of humor, with over 30 years of experience as an educator.

She has two published books, serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH), directs the international AATH Humor Academy graduate study and certificate program and is the founder and director of Humor Quest, her own company dedicated to bringing humor to classrooms and lives around the world.

Morrison first graduated from NIU in 1968 with a degree in Early Childhood Studies, now FCS, from the Department of Home Economics, now FCNS. She went on to earn an Elementary Education Certification and her M.A. in Adult Education, also from NIU. Afterward, her career began as a kindergarten teacher but has since broadened and developed in a way she hadn’t expected. Her background in education is extensive and diverse. It includes educating adults at Kishwaukee College, facilitating gender equality programs through the Illinois State Board of Education, and improving schools by implementing “No Child Left Behind” through the Regional Office of Education in Rockford, and much more. These experiences gave her first-hand knowledge of what works best for facilitating learning. In particular, her time as an educator has taught her about the power of play and laughter.

Morrison’s interest in neuroscience and its connection to learning began with a curiosity about education for kids with special needs. She began by attending workshops on how the brain works and became educated in the new field of neuroscience. Her background in adult education, founded in counseling and psychology, and her experience working as an educator culminated with her new knowledge of the brain to set her on a path to bring humor into the lives of educators and laughter to their students.

She has been active as an educator on the neuroscience of humor. Her two books, “Using Humor to Maximize Learning; Exploring Links between Positive Emotions and Education” and “Using Humor to Maximize Living” are being used as texts for the study of humor at several universities. Both books are available at NIU’s Founders Memorial Library. She also uses both as texts for the international AATH Humor Academy graduate study and certificate program she teaches as part of an intensive research-based conference, for graduate credit. AATH is an organization for people from all walks of life who wish to study humor and its benefits. Morrison has volunteered as AATH conference chair from 2009-11, is currently on the Board of Directors and is 2015 President-Elect.

Humor Quest, Morrison’s own professional outlet for educational services, offers unique workshops and handouts for “Using Humor to Maximize Living” and other uses for the study of humor. Her work has been published in Psychology Today and other journals and she has appeared on several television broadcasts. Her unique work is gaining attention as the field becomes more established.

“Humor can be used in all aspects of life,” she said, “even in the grieving process—you know you are learning to heal when you can laugh about something.” Her studies have taught her laughter releases pain, evokes strong emotion and puts information in long-term memory. She’s also a strong advocate for the evidence-based power of play, especially in early childhood but essentially throughout the lifespan. “I believe play should be integrated and humor should be used in the assessment process as it can be linked to every aspect of the learning process,” she said.

Military Science

Passing on Values

If there is something in common between the cadets of NIU’s Army ROTC program and the fourth grade students at Sycamore’s North Grove Elementary School, it is the emphasis on the importance and understanding of values. Values are integral in military leadership training and cadets are held to the high standards of strong values on a daily basis, inside and outside of Military Science class. It is because of this experience that North Grove Elementary asked cadets to visit the fourth grade class.

On Nov. 20, seven seasoned Huskie Battalion cadets developed and led engaging and exciting activities for the young students. The activities incorporated values such as integrity, respect, trustworthiness, loyalty and responsibility. One of the favorite activities was a ruck sack race, in which the fourth grade students had to quickly and properly put on a ballistic helmet and an Army ruck sack (a backpack used to carry Army equipment). They then ran down the hallway and back to hand the equipment over to the next person on their team.

Afterwards, the cadets led a discussion about how integrity, fairness and cooperation made the competition a great experience for everyone. The visit was a learning opportunity for the cadets, as well as the experience showed them that Army values can be applied anywhere, even in a local fourth grade classroom.
Alumni Updates:

Jane Semler, who graduated suma cum laude from Medical Laboratory Sciences in 1995, is currently a tenure-track associate professor in the Department of Allied Health Sciences, Medical Laboratory Sciences program, at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN.

Hired in the Fall of 2010 after serving for one year on a temporary appointment, Semler currently teaches clinical chemistry, urinalysis and body fluids analysis, and laboratory management in both on-campus and online formats. She also teaches both service-learning and traditional sections of introduction to healthcare professions, a course she developed for the department.

Semler is the author of the laboratory information systems chapter in the third edition of Harmening’s Laboratory Management Principles and Practices (2012). She is currently working on two journal publications, one on an interdisciplinary approach to Tuberculosis infection control and the second on interprofessional simulation between MLS and nursing students.

Lisa Thanos-Harrod, a 1996 graduate from the COMD program, is a National Education Consultant and Superintendent of Manteno Community School District No. 5 in Manteno, IL. She received the Phi Delta Kappa International Emerging Leader Award in 2008, as well as the Chicago State University Educator of the Year award in 2010.

♦ Justin Maslowski, a 2007 graduate of the NIU Nursing program, finished a Master’s of Science in Nurse Anesthesia from University of Wisconsin -LaCrosse in August, 2012. He has been working at Mt. Sinai Health System in Chicago for the past year as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist.

Featured Alumnus:

Liz Bockman, BS in Nutrition and Master’s in Public Health

Liz Bockman is a CHHS alum through and through. She graduated with a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics, a Master’s in Public Health with an emphasis in Health Promotion, and a certificate in Gerontology.

For approximately 23 years, Bockman worked in the private and public sector of health-care as a physician liaison and a health educator.

Most recently, she has spent the past five years as an entrepreneur combining her passion for personal and professional success by addressing the keys to patient-care excellence by enhancing the soft skills of practicing clinicians.

Initially, Bockman chose NIU because of its ability to offer students internship experiences in various professional and community settings. At the time of her admittance, NIU was the only school in Illinois offering the CUP program for nutrition and dietetic students.

Bockman continued on to earn her Master’s Degree of Public Health because of the professors.

She said, “Dr. Sherilynn Spear was a professor who not only was passionate about her field work, but was a compassionate professor too. Dr. Spear and the many other professors enhanced the classroom experience by sharing real-life scenarios they observed in their field work and applied those experiences to the fundamental principles they were teaching.”

Another factor that influenced Bockman’s decision to attend NIU was the opportunity to serve as a Graduate Assistant for NIU’s Employee Wellness and Assistance Program. The role as a Graduate Assistant minimized her cost of attending NIU and allowed her the opportunity to apply the principles of health promotion to a smaller community—the faculty and staff at NIU.

Bockman’s fondest memory of her time at NIU was earning the “The President’s Outstanding Women Student Award.” Having had her efforts recognized in such manner was an honor and an achievement.

Today, she believes the greatest factor that has influenced her career choice has been the passion her professors exemplified for their profession.

“They’re influence to love what you do and do it well consistently, is what I strive for each and every day.”

Bockman’s advice for NIU students: “You won’t know it all and you won’t be expected to know it all. Approach each opportunity to serve others. Take as many opportunities as you can to volunteer. Have an attitude to choose to do work rather than having to do work. Be engaged. Remember, we are all a work in progress.”
CHHS leadership team tours Jump Education Center in Peoria

Last fall, members of CHHS leadership toured the Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center (Jump Center) in Peoria, IL, to learn more about how the Center supports education and research endeavors.

The Jump Center houses state-of-the-art virtual care delivery settings that replicate different settings clinicians encounter. Actual medical equipment is combined with high tech simulation devices to provide the highest level of medical research, training, and innovation and to attract the finest minds in clinical education.

CHHS plans for future discussions with Dr. John Vozenilek, Executive Director for the Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center, to develop simulation scenarios and potential collaboration with training initiatives.

As background, learning through simulation typically complements traditional classroom, apprenticeship (clinical internship), and continuing educational activities that have been used for generations of professional preparation and development.

Simulation serves as a bridge between classroom learning and real-life clinical experience. Simulation education has become complex and can include high-fidelity, computerized mannequins that perform dozens of human functions realistically in a health care setting.

The Jump Simulation Center has a mock operating room, critical care, and other clinical spaces that are that are virtually indistinguishable from the real thing.

Many people may recognize how simulation plays a key role in training and skill building in many sectors of the economy—particularly the aerospace industry—where, for years, pilot training has required performance on flight simulators.

Members of the CHHS leadership team toured the Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center in Peoria last fall. From left, are: Tom Pavkov, Jim Ciesla, Jan Strom, Sherrill Morris, Derryl Block, John Vozenilek and Beverly Henry.

Today, as simulation educational activities gain prominence as a primary training mechanism for health care professionals, the Jump Center represents what a state-of-the-art simulation education facility can support. Jump was founded in 2011 with a large philanthropic gift from Chicago-based trading company, Jump Trading.

Jump educational, performance improvement, and research programs are under the direction of Dr. John Vozenilek, MD (shown above with CHHS leadership). Through collaboration with the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Peoria and the Order of St. Francis HealthCare on the OSF Peoria campus, the Jump Center supports both academic and clinical goals. For more information, visit www.jumpsimulation.org.

Alumni Updates:

Nursing graduate awarded 2013 American Psychiatric Nurses Association Scholarship

Joe Griffey, 2013 Nursing graduate, has been awarded one of the 2013 American Psychiatric Nurses Association Board of Directors Student Scholarships. The scholarship program honors graduate and undergraduate nursing students who have demonstrated a commitment to psychiatric mental health nursing.

The program seeks to encourage student professional growth and aims to develop young talent within the psychiatric mental health nursing workforce. Scholarship recipients receive registration, travel and lodging at the American Psychiatric Nurses Association Annual Conference and a one-year membership in the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, along with significant opportunities for mentorship and participation in psychiatric mental health nursing initiatives.

Congratulations Joe on this wonderful accomplishment!
CHHS Research Notes

By Jim Ciesla
Associate Dean for Research and Resources

I am very pleased to present this very impressive list of CHHS Faculty’s scholarly accomplishments (pages 19-21). For those who are not familiar with the research process, the work shown here represents innumerable hours of very exacting work.

Our faculty-scholars collect data in their laboratories, at our clinics, and in community settings all across northern Illinois. They perform hours of analysis, write grant applications and research manuscripts.

The competition for research funding is intense and many of the publishers and journals shown here, only accept the very highest quality research.

Much of this research involves students working closely with faculty mentors. Indeed, our students benefit greatly from these engaged experiential learning opportunities—CHHS faculty research is integral to student learning.

This list gives one a sense of the breadth and amount of effort our faculty-scholars dedicate to their research. While it is not possible for me to comment on each piece, I would like to draw attention to the work of several of our newer faculty.

For example, Dr. Amanda McCarthy’s research helps improve the quality of services provided to people with disabilities, Dr. Sarah Geiger’s study gives a sense of the impact of heat related deaths on communities, and Dr. Prisca Collins’ research will help make the education of physical therapists more inclusive of people in minority groups.

Dr. Maryann Abendroth is using a grant she received to pursue her research aimed at improving care for people with Parkinson’s disease. Dr. Lucy Bilaver worked with a group of nationally-known scholars to publish research that will inform public policy and, in turn, the well-being of children with food allergies.

Dr. Flora Surjadi’s paper looks at matters related to the family environment and the ability of children to have healthy relationships when they grow up, and Dr. Julie Ramisch’s research will help Marriage and Family Therapists provide services to married couples struggling with the challenge of raising children with autism spectrum disorder.

As you can see, CHHS faculty do research that addresses many important issues, but it all has one thing in common: it provides tangible and lasting benefit to people in NIU’s service area and beyond.

Dr. Donna Plonczynski
Associate Professor of Nursing, NUHS:

Dr. Sarah Geiger
Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Health:

Dr. Mary Elaine Koren
Associate Professor of Nursing:


Dr. Prisca Collins
Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy:

Dr. Maryann Abendroth, Assistant Professor of Nursing: Abendroth is the recipient of the Joan E. Wood Award for nursing research. The award of $24,709 is for a study titled: Testing the Measurement Model-Data Fit of a Theory-Based Instrument that Measures Risk for Strain among Informal Caregivers of Persons with Parkinson’s disease. Abendroth, M. & Graven, L. (2013). Integrating care of older adults into the nursing curriculum: A case exemplar project. Journal of Nursing Education. 52(9), 529-532.

Dr. Amanda McCarthy, Visiting Assistant Professor of Counseling, AHCD: Lauka, JD. & McCarthy, AD. (2013). Proposed guidelines for operating counselor education and supervision training clinics. Counselor Education & Supervision. 52; 109-121.

McCarthy, AK. (2013). Relationship between supervisory working alliance and client outcomes in state vocational rehabilitation counseling. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin. 57; 23-30


Dr. Masih Shokrani, Associate Professor of Medical Laboratory Sciences, Dr. Judith Lukaszuk, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dr. Aimee Prawitz, CHHS Research Mentor, Dr. Josephine Umoren, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics: Lukaszuk JM., Prawitz AD., Shokrani M., Umoren J. & Norman E. (2013). Methylmalonic Acid Levels in Non-Elderly Adult Chronic PPI Users. Journal of Human Nutrition and Food Science. 1; 1004; 1-5


CHHS Research

Dr. King Chung, Associate Professor of Audiology:

Dr. Florenzia Surjadi, Assistant Professor of Family and Child Studies:

Dr. Lucy Bilaver, Assistant Professor of Public Health:

Dr. Julie Ramisch, Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy, FCNS:

Mary Pritchard Faculty Development Fund
In honor of Dr. Mary Pritchard’s 35 years of service at NIU and CHHS, and in celebration of her retirement, an NIU Foundation fund has been established to support CHHS faculty development in teaching and scholarship for faculty in their first five years at NIU. Dr. Pritchard has been an advocate for faculty and committed to faculty development. To make a contribution in honor of Dr. Pritchard, please (1) make out check to NIU Foundation (2) write M. Pritchard Faculty Dev. Fund in the memo line and (3) send to Christine Radtke, NIU Foundation, Altgeld Hall 135, DeKalb, IL 60115-2882. If you would like to contribute in a different way, contact Radtke at cradtke@niu.edu or (815) 753-1390.
CHHS welcomes your support!

Gifts targeted to the College of Health and Human Sciences are appreciated year-round and play an important role in CHHS’ mission to further science in the service of society. Gifts directed to CHHS are made through the Northern Illinois University Foundation.

Please (1) make out check to NIU Foundation, (2) write where the money should be designated in the memo line*, and (3) send to Christine Radtke, NIU Foundation, Altgeld Hall 135, DeKalb, IL 60115-2882. If you would like to contribute in a different way, please contact her at cradtke@niu.edu or (815) 753-1390.

* Donations can be designated to:

(a) College of Health and Human Sciences

(b) One of the three Schools in the College:
   School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
   School of Nursing and Health Studies
   School of Family, Consumer, and Nutrition Sciences

(c) A specific program in a School, or

(d) The Department of Military Science

Thank you for your ongoing support of CHHS!

Tell us Your Story

Your stories are welcome for inclusion in the Spring 2014 CHHS Dispatch. CHHS Faculty and Staff should send updates by March 15, to Carrie Callahan at ccallahan@niu.edu. Alumni, please send updates to CHHSalums@niu.edu.