



Connecting students to careers,
professionals to communities &
communities to better health.

ACCESS



Inside

AHEC Welcomes
Rimma McKnight 2



Living the American
Dream. 4



Inspiring Future Health
Care Professionals. 5



From CSI to STDs:
AHEC Scholars Help
Communities in Need. . . . 6



Summer Academy Alumni:
Where Are They Now? . . . 7



Access by Email!
The **AHEC Access Newsletter** is transitioning to an electronic format and will be emailed to our readers. To ensure you continue to receive uninterrupted Access, please submit your email address to ahecnew@health.usf.edu.

AHEC Showcases Its Pipeline Programs

By Anne DeLotto Baier and
Anne Maynard

The University of South Florida Area Health Education Center took its opportunity to shine when the program hosted a visit by Elizabeth Duke, PhD, administrator for the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA oversees Title VII programs across the nation, including USF AHEC.

Dr. Duke was in Tampa to present the keynote address at the National Health Service Corps Scholars Conference. She and her senior advisor, Steve Smith, spent the morning of August 1 with USF AHEC Program Director Cynthia S. Selleck, DSN, ARNP and Associate Director, Anne Maynard, MPH; Gulfcoast North AHEC Executive Director Jody Lazzara, LMHC; and Gulfcoast



Dr. Elizabeth Duke, center, with the USF students who shared their AHEC experiences during her visit. From left to right: Daniel Quinones, Harold Paul, Alyssa Brown, LaShanta Rice and Renee Clarke.

South AHEC Chief Executive Officer Edna Apostol, MPH. "It was an honor for us to have Dr. Duke visit our program," Dr. Selleck said.

AHEC works closely with NHSC to inspire, train, recruit, and retain a diverse and broad range of health

professionals to practice in communities where the need is greatest, primarily in medically underserved inner city and rural areas experiencing severe healthcare workforce shortages. Dr. Selleck is an NHSC Ambassador and also serves as the

Pipeline continued on page 2...

Grassroots Efforts to Reduce Health Disparities

By Charlene Chirillo, BS, RN
and Claudia Quiñones

A grassroots effort is sometimes what's needed to get people's attention and initiate change. It usually is conceived when an imbalance exists and there is a profound need to be heard. Such was the case in a historic African American community in the incorporated City of Sarasota this past summer.



Panelists left to right: Edna Apostol, MPH, CEO GSAHEC; Emile Commedore, MD, JD, Director of the Office of Minority Health; Washington Hill, MD, FACOG; Lisa Merritt, MD and Dr. Miglena Entcheva, Sarasota Memorial Hospital Institute for Advanced Medicine.

There is a disproportionate connect between access and delivery of adequate healthcare to our ethnic and minority populations. The publication of Healthy People 2010 advanced a goal for the elimination of all health disparities in the United States and acknowledged that a comprehensive strategy in-

Grassroots cont. page 3...



AHEC ACCESS

AHEC Program Director
Cynthia Selleck, DSN, ARNP

Gulfcoast North AHEC
Executive Director
Jody Lazzara, MS, LMHC

Gulfcoast South AHEC
Chief Executive Officer
Edna Apostol, MPH

ACCESS Editor
Rimma McKnight

AHEC ACCESS is published biannually for members of the health care community serving our nine counties: Charlotte, Citrus, DeSoto, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota.

Send correspondence or notice that you have received this newsletter in error to:

Rimma McKnight
ACCESS Editor
AHEC Program Office
College of Medicine, MDC 76
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-4799
813.974.3507
rmcknigh@health.usf.edu

For more information please contact the AHEC in your service area or visit: www.health.usf.edu/ahec.

USF AHEC Program Office
813.974.3507

Gulfcoast North AHEC
1.888.546.2432
(Serving Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco & Pinellas counties)

Gulfcoast South AHEC
1.800.967.0807
(Serving Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee & Sarasota counties)



Welcome, Rimma McKnight

Please join us in welcoming Rimma McKnight to the USF AHEC Program Office. Rimma began working as a staff assistant for AHEC this past July, assuming the reception, clerical and support duties formerly held by Mary Taylor. In addition to these duties, Rimma will help maintain the USF AHEC website, oversee the loan of AHEC-owned books and other materials, process HSCNet accounts for preceptors and edit the AHEC ACCESS newsletter, among other things.

Rimma is originally from Russia. Her parents, both teachers, passed along their passion for reading and learning. In the fifth grade, she was introduced to foreign languages and became hooked! Her mom and dad encouraged her to enroll in college where she studied English and German. She became a teacher, then an interpreter. Rimma met her future husband,



Rimma McKnight

Scott, at a Christian college for missionaries where she worked as an interpreter. "I am thankful to my husband for his loving support and encouragement."

She moved to Florida in 1994 and began her life anew. Though she has faced many challenges, her faith has been a source of strength. In her new job, Rimma is looking forward to utilizing her skills to help the USF AHEC Program achieve its goals.

Pipeline from page 1...

current president of the National AHEC Organization. Dr. Duke's visit was an opportunity to showcase for the HRSA guests two of AHEC's "pipeline" programs that target promising underrepresented and disadvantaged youth interested in pursuing careers in health. Students participating in the Interdisciplinary Community Health Scholars (ICHS) and Pre-Medical Student Enrichment Program (PSEP) shared with Dr. Duke the impact of their AHEC experiences.

PSEP participants Harold Paul and Daniel Quinones shared their experiences as part of this intensive six-week summer program for highly motivated and underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students preparing for medical school. Participants shadow community physicians, review for the medical college admissions test (MCAT), work with patient

simulators and standardized patients in the Center for Advanced Clinical Learning, and attend clinical seminars on such topics as health disparities, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Mr. Quinones shadowed the chief of orthopedic surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital and observed several surgeries as well as physician interactions with patients. "About 80 percent of his patients spoke only Spanish," said Quinones, who hopes to one day be an orthopedic surgeon or neurosurgeon. "I learned a lot about the cultural aspects of medicine and barriers to care. It makes me want to be a better doctor.... Even if I become a specialist, I'd want to give back to the community."

AHEC introduces PSEP and ICHS students to community partners such as Premier Community Healthcare Group, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that cares for medically



GSAHEC AWARDED KOMEN GRANT

To help fight against breast cancer, GSAHEC was awarded a \$23,000 grant from the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. In partnership with Healthy Start Manatee and the Newtown Wellness Program in Sarasota, GSAHEC is supporting community health workers to provide breast health education and facilitate awareness activities to Hispanic women/Latinas in Manatee County and African American women in Sarasota County. Many thanks to the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure for their continued support!

underserved and uninsured patients in East Pasco County. Dr. Marlene Hart, medical director of Premier Health Center CEO Charles Bottoms and Suncoast Community Health Center CEO Brantz Roszel, also attended the meeting with Dr. Duke. The three FQHC executives spoke highly of their regard for AHEC. "It seems as if the best of the best come to us through you," Mr. Roszel told Dr. Selleck. "I'm glad we could add some insights into how important you are."

Dr. Duke commended the students on their interest in AHEC and was particularly impressed with the FQHC collaboration. "We desperately need diverse health professionals who understand patients with different cultural backgrounds. I hope to meet you in the near future in your new roles."

Staff Changes at USF AHEC

After more than 14 years of service, Mary Taylor retired this summer to enjoy spending time with her family and traveling with her friends. A native of Tampa, Mrs. Taylor provided administrative support and aided the AHEC staff on a variety of projects. Her connections to the community and network of peers at USF gave her a wealth



Mary Taylor

of knowledge to draw upon whenever challenges would arise or questions needed answers.

“Mary is one in a million,” Dr. Cynthia Selleck told a crowd of appreciative onlookers who gathered for Mrs. Taylor’s retirement

party. “She was the first person I hired when the program started in 1993. She is someone I can always rely on and a very good friend.” Congratulations, Mary!

Other changes that took place recently are the result of the state’s budget crisis. Because of a 10% reduction in funding, USF AHEC was forced to cut back on several programs and eliminate two staff positions this year.

The Assistant Director of Development and Public Relations position held by Mandelyn Hutcherson since 2006 was eliminated; Mandelyn was hired by the USF Health Development Office. Information or questions about giving to AHEC should be directed to Dr. Cynthia Selleck.

The AHEC Librarian position held by Jonathan Hartmann since 2006 was also eliminated. Jonathan is now with Texas Medical Center Library in Houston. Searches and other reference help will continue to be provided for AHEC affiliates by Leila Martini; email accounts and loan of AHEC materials will be provided through Rimma McKnight; reference materials for AHEC clinical sites and USF ID cards will be handled by Jill O’Reilly. Contact the Program Office with any questions.

Grassroots from page 1...

corporating research, education, policy changes, and community partnerships, is fundamental to accomplish this goal.

To answer this charge, a Newtown Health Advisory Council was born. Focus groups were conducted, hard questions were asked, and powerful data were gathered and analyzed. What resulted were the common themes of limited transportation options, a greater need for health education, and difficulties interacting with providers. Fetal mortality, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease were also listed as important health problems found in the minority community.

The next step was to plan and implement a conference so that healthcare providers could learn about the latest evidence-based research on these disparities and translate that information into practice. Gulfcoast South AHEC (GSAHEC) became an integral part of the planning process working closely with James McCloud, President and CEO of Genesis Health Services, and Dr. Lisa Merritt, Director of the Multicultural Health Institute, to insure that their vision for a community-driven conference would become a reality.

The conference, “Medical Education Interactive: Crisis in Minority Health Disparities” was held in Sarasota on June 7, 2008 and brought together close to 100 participants. Emile Commedore, MD, JD, Director of the Florida Office of Minority Health (OMH), spoke on the challenges Florida’s healthcare system faces regarding cultural proficiency. Edna Apostol, CEO of GSAHEC, presented the topic “A Focus on African-American and Latino Health Disparities.”

Similarly, Gulfcoast North AHEC (GNAHEC) assisted the Florida Health Department OMH with the 2008 Florida Minority Health Disparities Summit held in Tampa, August 13-15, 2008. With its theme of “Bridging the Gap: Embracing Solutions to Eliminate Health Barriers,” the conference presented interventions and solutions to help bridge the health disparity gap in Florida.

Over 400 participants of the summit, representing various



Congresswoman Kathy Castor (right) and USF AHEC Program Director Cynthia Selleck, DSN, attended the Minority Health Disparities Summit in Tampa. Congresswoman Castor addressed the general assembly and spoke of the egregious differences in health outcomes experienced by minorities and the uninsured alike. She expressed her continued commitment to expanding access to healthcare for minorities and the underserved through measures such as the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and reauthorization of legislation to continue AHEC programs nationwide.

government, community, and faith-based organizations serving minority populations throughout Florida, received greetings from the Honorable Congresswoman Kathy Castor, 11th Congressional District of Florida, the Honorable Betty Reed, Florida House of Representatives, District 59, and the Honorable Arthenia Joyner, Florida Senate, District 18. Leaders such as State Surgeon General, Ana M. Viamonte Ros, MD, MPH and Florida OMH Director, Emile

Commedore, MD, JD presented messages that included a call to action to improve the health outcomes of underserved minority populations in the State.

The conference was packed with nationally-known speakers on the topic of racial and ethnic health disparities, including Louis Sullivan, MD, former Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Kevin Stephens, MD, JD, Health Director for the City of New Orleans, Richard Allen Williams, MD, author of *Eliminating Healthcare*

Disparities in America: Beyond the IOM Report, and Adewale Troutman, MD, MPH, Director of the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness, to name a few. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive—over 98 percent indicated the summit provided them with knowledge or skills that would help them to improve patient care and commented that presenters were “inspiring, thought-provoking, and informative.”



Dr. David Hughes with wife Dr. Natasha Hughes and daughter Sophia Grace.

A Rewarding Career in Family Medicine

By Christina Mathis, MBA

AHEC preceptor David Hughes, MD, is the first health professional in his family. But his career didn't start out that way.

A Tampa native, Dr. Hughes was unsure of what path to pursue in high school. Four short days after graduating, he joined the Marine Corps Reserve and began attending the University of South Florida. A career placement exam revealed he was well suited to medicine, a field he was very interested in. He attended medical school at USF and through AHEC

rotations realized the opportunities primary care could afford him. He decided to study family medicine because he could be on the front line treating a variety of conditions every day and make a difference in his patients' lives.

During residency at Bayfront Medical Center in St. Petersburg, Dr. Hughes became familiar with the Community Health Centers of Pinellas, a National Health Service Corps loan repayment site. He was so impressed by the wonderful care they provided medically underserved patients he wanted to work there after completing his residency. AHEC Program Director and NHSC Ambassador Dr. Cynthia Selleck helped him apply to the NHSC

Loan Repayment Program. He was accepted and began working at the center last year. His wife, pediatrician Natasha Hughes, MD, was also accepted into the program and hired by the center. Husband and wife now serve on primary care's front line of side by side!

As an AHEC preceptor, Dr. Hughes has made it his mission to acquaint medical students with the rewards of caring for the underserved. His compassion is evident to the new recruits as he talks with patients; his serious demeanor often softens into a smile as he tends to their needs. Patients and students alike are fortunate Dr. Hughes is on the front line of primary care.

Living the American Dream

by Jody Lazzara, MS, LMHC

Nancy Calderon and her boyfriend Mauricio Polanco are shining examples of what the United States is famous for: people who immigrate, work hard, and become contributing members of our society. The young couple also exemplify AHEC's mission to increase the number of health professionals working in underserved areas and working to reduce health disparities for medically needy populations.

Mauricio was born in 1978 in Mataroros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, a border town across from Brownsville, Texas. When he was 12, the family moved to Texas and then to Wimauma, Florida, an agricultural area east of Sun City Center. Mauricio remembers his parents having high expectations and the message to him from early childhood was "you must better yourself" and there can be "no giving up." While attending high school Mauricio was part of a Medical Explorers Post, worked with Redlands Christian Migrant

Association (RCMA), and was mentored by Daniel Stowe. He attended the Health Academy at Tampa Bay Technical High School for almost four years, riding a bus for two hours twice a day to attend the magnet school.

After graduation, Mauricio was awarded a Bright Futures Scholarship and worked towards his associate degree from Hillsborough Community College. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training from USF where he received the Lisa Barth Memorial Award for achievements in the Sports Medicine Athletic Department and had the opportunity to intern with both the Tampa Bay Storm and Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Most recently, in December 2007, Mauricio graduated from Barry University's PA program. During the program he completed rotations arranged by AHEC in rural areas, including Dade City and Key West, Citrus and Hernando counties.

Nancy Calderon's parents were both farmworkers; her father, who worked in labor camps for



Nancy Calderon and Mauricio Polanco hope their success inspires future generations

many years, suffered a stroke at age 30. Nancy, too, worked in the fields until the age of 14. After graduating from East Bay High School in 1997 she began working towards her AS degree at Hillsborough Community College in the RN program. Upon graduation, she took a nursing position at Suncoast Community Health Center in Ruskin where she met Mauricio. She went on to enroll in a graduate nursing program at USF and is on track to earn her degree as

a family nurse practitioner in 2009.

Mauricio notes that he and Nancy have achieved much in the ten years they've been together. "We have worked really hard for what we have accomplished, but we want you to know that we feel very proud that now we are influencing the younger generations in our families. Maybe we broke the chain that held our families back for a long time." He then adds, "We feel that this is not the end of the line for us yet. There is always something new to learn and as long as we feel like that, we will always keep on growing."

Mauricio and Nancy are wonderful examples of young people who, through hard work, dedication, and perseverance, have become successful health-care professionals. Gulfcoast North AHEC is honored to have played a small part in their path to success and we look forward to continuing a relationship with this delightful and inspiring couple.

Community Profile: Ivette Del Castillo, RN, BSN

By Tiffany Prater, MA

Ivette Del Castillo began her experience with Gulfcoast South AHEC (GSAHEC) in January 2008 during her last semester in the Florida Gulf Coast University Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program. After taking part in the GSAHEC Student Orientation, she completed her community rotations in Arcadia, Florida.

Ivette applied for and was chosen to participate in the Projects Addressing Community Topics (PACT) Service-Learning project which took place during a six-week period in May and June 2008. This year's PACT Program utilized the "Be Wise About Your Portion Size" curriculum created by the Florida Interagency Food

and Nutrition Committee. Ivette completed 11 presentations with over 200 total attendees and was able to reach a variety of age groups (from ages 2-8 at the Imagination Station Day Care to 65+ at the Senior Friendship Center in DeSoto County). Because she is bilingual, Ivette was able to reach the Mexican-American community through Catholic Charities of DeSoto County and she also translated the lesson plans into Spanish for future use.

After PACT concluded, Ivette commented, "I really enjoyed the internship and I liked the challenge of educating the community on nutrition—something I haven't done before. I felt a great sense of satisfaction educating and reaching underserved popu-



Ivette Del Castillo with children from the Imagination Station preschool in Arcadia

lations, and I hope I've made a positive difference in their health practices."

After passing her Nursing Boards in July, Ivette accepted a position as a Registered Nurse on

a Medical-Surgical orthopedic unit at Doctors Hospital in Miami. She plans to complete her master's degree and pursue a career as an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner or a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist.

Summer Internships:

Inspiring Future Health Care Professionals

By Joan Beatty-Lee

At some point in time everyone has experienced the age old dilemma, "I can't get a job without experience and I can't get experience without a job." High school students, who want to learn about the many and varied opportunities in health care, are frustrated when internships relegate them to filing, answering phones, and running administrative errands because of their age and inexperience. This does not promote a fun and exciting learning environment, nor does it inspire youth to become future health care professionals.

What does it take to create an internship program that will provide students with hands-on health career experience?

1. Resolve the HIPAA issue. Students can watch a standard 10 minute Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance and privacy video, and then sign

a privacy and confidentiality compliance form that can be kept on file at each host site. This will allow students to interact with patients, within reason and with the patient's permission of course. Students do not expect you to let them practice medicine, but they do want to be in the room when it happens.

2. Seek out willing participants to host site visits. Mired in a critical shortage of health care professionals, with over 47 million Americans medically underserved, providers should willingly offer to share their knowledge. Sharing a little bit of their time to impart their wisdom and advice upon these impressionable minds will serve us well for the future, literally, because we need these students to take care of us as we age.
3. Promote a shortened time frame for job shadowing experi-

ences. Create several half-day or one-day job shadowing opportunities exploring a variety of careers. This shortened time frame does not overwhelm health care staff, thereby allowing them room for creativity when planning activities for the students.

4. Plan hands-on activities. Students can interact with patients (play BINGO in an assisted living facility, transport patients via wheelchairs, watch the immunization and vaccination process for children). They can also observe some patient interviews and treatments (view veterinary surgery, sort medications and count pills, tour the inside of an ambulance). Additionally, it is beneficial for students to interview health professionals and learn to use the tools of their trade (blood pressure cuffs, splinting, suturing boards, CPR/First Aid, and examining slides under microscopes).

Following the strategy outlined above, Gulfcoast South AHEC (GSAHEC) successfully implemented a 90-hour summer internship program in 2008. Dara Moore, student intern, affirmed, "I want to thank you for the opportunity for this internship. I really enjoyed it and I'm so excited that I got the chance to explore different health careers. I never knew what some of these health careers were like but after getting the chance to go behind doors, I have a better sense of what I want to do. Thank you so much for this opportunity!" Pharmacist Rod Pawich asserted, "Each student seemed very knowledgeable in the science field. They were all very eager to get involved and stay involved and worked well with the other employees. They were respectful, considerate, and asked appropriate questions. Please do not hesitate to call us again! It was a pleasure having them."

Have you inspired a future health care professional today?

From CSI to STDs: AHEC Scholars Help Communities in Need

By Tiffany Prater, MA & Christina Mathis, MBA

Each summer, AHEC sends teams of dedicated health professions students to local underserved communities to help address conditions that contribute to local health problems. From helping adults access healthcare to protecting babies in the womb, these Interdisciplinary Community Health Scholars (ICHS) are given the opportunity to help those in need find solutions to the challenges facing them. At the same time, they learn how powerful working as a team can be.

Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County

Newborns in Sarasota County are at greater risk of being exposed to alcohol, drugs and other substances. AHEC assigned medical student Alyssa Brown and public health students Renee Clarke and LaShanta Rice to work with the Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota on a program to reduce the number of substance exposed newborns. The team met with health professionals as well as mothers participating in a substance abuse program called First Step. With the information they gathered, they developed the Clean Start Initiative (CSI). This toolkit and resource booklet will be used throughout Sarasota County to educate clinicians and the community about substance abuse and available services.

Laurel Civic Association

Children involved in the summer camp held at Laurel Community Center in Sarasota come from a variety of backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common: they're from disadvantaged backgrounds. Master of Science students Joyonna Gamble-George and Jude Registre, medical student Rachel Scheerer, and premedical student Lenford Sutton II were selected by AHEC to provide the kids with health information and educational activities. But in addition to making presentations, the scholars

served as role models for the kids, particularly the older ones involved in the camp's Teen Empowerment Program.

Nature Coast Community Health Center

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease (STD). The Teen Education Clinic at Nature Coast Community Health Center in Hernando County wanted help addressing this problem in their area. AHEC tasked medical students Christian Robles and Nina Swadener, public health/anthropology student Rebecca Nupp, and premedical student Junior Common, with creating innovative games to promote conversations about STDs, sexual coercion, and self-esteem. The scholars produced a "spinning wheel" banner and a computerized "Jeopardy" style game to stimulate discussion in a non-threatening way, and engaged teens at the clinic in the design of promotional materials and incentives. The team also helped the clinic investigate reasons for its high rate of patient no-shows.

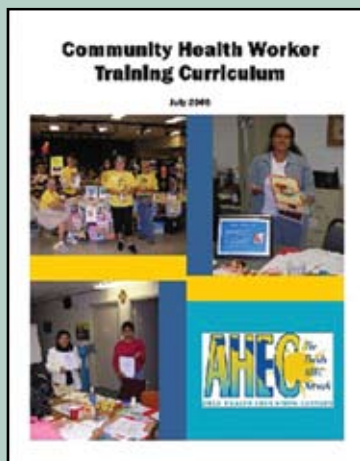


ICHS student Lenford Sutton and the Sarasota County Summer Camp Students at the Laurel Civic Association.

Pasco County Health Department

As part of the third phase of its Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnership (MAPP) Process, the Pasco County Health Department needed help determining the perceived quality of life in its area. AHEC deployed public health students Patrick Vander Kelen and Jacqueline Wachtel, medical student Woojin Chong, and premedical student Barvan Alvarado to aid the Community Health Promotion Division with surveying county leaders and identifying "Community Themes and Strengths." The team interviewed thirty-five leaders and analyzed their responses. They found that the most significant concerns were limited access to healthcare and a growing number of uninsured residents. This information will be shared with the Pasco Alliance for Treatment and Health (PATH) and other community partners to create awareness of the issues and guide further planning in the process to improve the county's healthcare system.

Leading the Way with CHW Curricula



Maureen Guthke, MPH, CHES,
Ansley Mora, BA

The Florida AHEC Network's Community Health Promotion (CHP) Committee is fortunate to consist of a number of dedicated AHEC leaders from around the state, including Edna Apostol and Ansley Mora of Gulfcoast South AHEC, and Maureen Guthke of Gulfcoast North AHEC. This summer, they and other members of the committee developed and conducted a "train the trainer" workshop for the new Community Health Worker (CHW) Training Curriculum, designed

to standardize the preparation of CHWs around the state.

The 12-hour curriculum was developed by Lajuana Campbell, a public health graduate student from USF, under the direction of Edna Apostol. It includes instruction on nationally recognized CHW competencies and on skills such as communication, instruction, health promotion knowledge, service coordination, capacity building, advocacy, and organization. While comprehensive, the curriculum is flexible enough to allow CHW trainers to tailor it to meet the needs of different target audiences.

Trainers from many of the state's AHEC Centers and Program Offices attended the workshop.

Goals have been set to update the curriculum with modules on stress management, health literacy, cultural competence, conflict resolution, and behavior change models. Additionally, Maureen Guthke spearheaded the process of posting updated resources to the Florida AHEC Network Infonet—an excellent tool for disseminating information to AHEC staff. Through the Infonet, trainers now have access to a variety of

CHW continued on page 7...



Summer Academy Alumni: Where Are They Now?

By LaToya S. Clark, MPH

As bags are thrown into over-packed trunks and cars drive away, AHEC staff wave goodbye to another graduating class of the Health Professions Summer Academy. Students complete the two-week residential Academy feeling energized, empowered and eager to begin their quest to become future health care providers. But what really happens when they go home and off to school in the fall?

Upon review and follow-up, we found that several Academy alumni have accomplished major goals in life. Some were accepted to the best Ivy League colleges and universities in the nation, received top dollar scholarships and grants, and others have already completed their health professions programs. As a college prep program, the Summer Academy is proud to be a foundation for students' success.

Since the Academy began in 2001, 194 students have completed the program. Where are those students now? That is the question USF AHEC has set out to answer. This story details the whereabouts of three former Academy participants. Sydney Kraemer, a graduate of the 2006 Academy class, is now a freshman at Harvard University. She recalls the best benefits of the Academy being the intense SAT prep courses, visits to various medical facilities and the relationships she developed with her diverse student class. Sydney is

one step closer to accomplishing her goal of becoming a physician. Her journey to Harvard is the first on record for a former Academy alumnus. Sydney is hopeful that many of the well-known universities who accepted her as an undergraduate will also accept her for medical school in the year 2012.

Rebecca Weeks, a graduate of the 2005 Academy class, is a sophomore and biology major at the University of Pennsylvania. She received acceptance letters from several universities as well. Her most memorable moment of the Academy was a seminar at USF College of Medicine. Advice, mentoring, and real life scenarios given by medical students assured Rebecca of her desire to become a pediatrician. Rebecca learned about the needs of the medically underserved while attending the Academy and she plans to use her knowledge to give back to the community.

Taryn King, is a sophomore and biomedical science major at the University of South Florida. Taryn, like many other Academy students, fell in love with USF after attending the Academy in 2005. She received acceptances to other colleges and universities, but since she was so impressed with the Academy college tours, meetings with faculty, staff, and students around USF campus, it was very easy for her to make a choice. Taryn noted that she never thought she would experi-

ence such personal growth during the two-weeks she attended the Summer Academy. She praised the Academy for equipping her with the knowledge and helping her to prepare for the challenges ahead. Taryn's tireless efforts to give back to her community were one of the reasons USF AHEC hired her to become a college student counselor for the 2008 Academy class. We hope that Taryn will select USF College of Medicine as her medical school of first choice in the future.

Sydney, Rebecca, and Taryn are just a small percentage of Academy alumni that have made their way into college. The good news is that the USF AHEC Health Professions Summer Academy has made the journey from high school to college possible for many students living in some of Florida's most rural and underserved communities.

So where are the Academy alumni now? USF AHEC and its two Centers, Gulfcoast North AHEC (GNAHEC) and Gulfcoast South AHEC (GSAHEC), are currently trying to connect with all

CHW from page 6...

materials to complement their CHW training with topics such as cancer, heart disease, bone health, diabetes, nutrition, and physical activity.

To learn more about the Florida AHEC Network CHW Training Curriculum or to schedule a CHW training, please contact Maureen Guthke at 813.929.1000 for Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus counties, and Ansley Mora at 941.361.6602 for Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties.

Above: 2007 Health Professions Summer Academy students tour Shriners Children's Hospital.

Academy alumni through follow-up surveys and a new USF AHEC Summer Academy Facebook page created by LaToya Clark, MPH. Academy alumni or their parents are encouraged to contact USF AHEC, or one of its centers to receive a copy of the survey. Gift cards are provided to those who return completed surveys before November 14, 2008.

The 9th annual Summer Academy will take place in June 2009. Applications and brochures will be mailed to high school career counselors and guidance counselors beginning December 1, 2008. Applications and brochures will be available for download on the USF AHEC website at www.health.usf.edu/ahec on December 1 as well. For more information about the Academy, contact the Director of the Health Professions Summer Academy, LaToya S. Clark, MPH, at 813.974.3507 or lclark2@health.usf.edu.

The University of South Florida Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program, inspires, trains, recruits and retains a diverse and broad range of health professionals to practice in communities where the need is greatest. Your gift will assure improved access to health care for Florida's disenfranchised and medically needy populations.

I would like to direct my gift to:

- The USF AHEC Program
- Gulfcoast North AHEC (serving Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas Counties)
- Gulfcoast South AHEC (serving Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties)

I am pleased to enclose my contribution of:

- \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

USF AHEC gladly accepts gifts by credit card.

If you would like to make your gift by credit card, please complete the following:

- Visa MasterCard Discover Amex

Card # _____

Card Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

To learn more about how you can become involved with AHEC, please call **Cindy Selleck at 813.974.3507**.

- I would prefer to have a Foundation representative contact me.

Please make checks payable to:

USF Foundation/AHEC Fund
College of Medicine MDC 76
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-4799

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email _____

Visit our Web site at health.usf.edu/ahec

To make a gift online, visit: <http://giving.usf.edu/> and search for AHEC, or select the AHEC fund from the list of funds in the College of Medicine.

Gifts to the USF Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Area Health Education Center Program
College of Medicine, MDC 76
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-4799

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit NO. 1632
Tampa, Florida

If you have received this newsletter in error, or if the address is incorrect, please send a note to ahecnews@health.usf.edu.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED