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The Next Generation of Public Health

One of the overarching goals of the Center for Community Health Development (CCHD) is to provide relevant training in order to ensure a well-equipped public health work force in the areas of community-based participatory research (CBPR), health promotion and disease prevention. In an effort to achieve this goal, CCHD has been providing training for students through graduate assistantships and practicum opportunities.

Since the Center's inception, a total of 91 students have engaged in field-based training as graduate research assistants, project staff, interns and practicum students. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, CCHD provided 22 graduate assistantships and 11 practicum opportunities, marking the largest number of students trained to date. We also reached another milestone this year as we graduated our first two doctoral students—Dr. Monica Wendel and Dr. John Prochaska.

The graduate assistantships and practicum opportunities provided through CCHD have allowed students to participate in the community development and organization processes and to gain hands-on experience in conducting community-based participatory research. Center Director Dr. James Burdine highlighted the importance of providing students with this type of training: "Students at the School of Rural Public Health receive excellent education through their course work. The center supplements that by providing them an opportunity to practice what they're learning and gain exposure to some of the aspects of practice that they cannot get from the

classroom. Our students demonstrate exceptional professionalism, do outstanding work, and represent the center and the school very well."

Not only have our students impacted research, they have also made a difference in the communities in which they worked. Reed Edmundson, vice president of Rural Hospitals for the St. Joseph Health System, discussed his experience with the center's efforts to develop public health leaders: "It has been a real pleasure watching the School of Rural Public Health grow to meet

the defined needs of rural health leadership. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with many graduate assistants who helped assess the health needs of the Brazos Valley, implement health resource centers to meet those identified needs and evaluate the overall effectiveness of those resource centers. The overall energy of these graduate assistants and desire to improve the health status of our rural counties has significantly impacted the success of the Brazos Valley Health Partnership."

The experience and skills gained through working with CCHD has led our students to professional positions in a variety of settings. We have been fortunate enough to have kept three of our students as full-time staff members, while others have gone on to work for physicians, hospitals and the military. Several of the students have chosen to further their education through medical or dental school and others have enrolled in Public Health doctoral programs.

We have dedicated this issue of *Communitas* to our graduating students to celebrate their accomplishments and recognize their hard work and dedication throughout the past year.



Cary Haynes



My name is Cary Haynes, and I will complete my Master's in Public Health

with an emphasis in Social and Behavioral Health in August 2009. I am leaving one acronym for another, CCHD for PPRI, the Public Policy Research Institute, at Texas A&M University. At PPRI, I will be working to identify programs of promise for families with children with disabilities. These programs will be compiled into a report to be presented to the United Nations. Working at CCHD has been a fulfilling and enlightening experience. I have truly enjoyed working in the rural counties and have greatly benefited from the relationships I have built with the community partners. These individuals are inspiring with their continued dedication to improve the overall health of their community. The skills I have gained while working here will be with me on my new journey at PPRI.

Chelsea Bishop, M.P.H., B.S.



Chelsea Bishop, MPH, B.S., is a recent graduate in the Social and Behavioral Sciences

concentration at Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health. She has been a part of the CCHD team as a graduate assistant working on the Diabetes Kiosk project for the Diabetes Prevention and Management Program. Chelsea has also been working on a joint research study between the School of Rural Public Health and Scott & White Health Center in College Station for her required practicum. She has been certified as a lay leader in the evidenced-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and A Matter of Balance. She has completed teaching a workshop in each and will begin a second workshop in June. She has really developed her love for health education through these teaching experiences. Chelsea will continue to be a part of the CCHD team throughout the summer awaiting future professional opportunities. This experience has offered Chelsea a great opportunity professionally, allowing her to develop as a young health care professional while being mentored by great public health examples. Personally, Chelsea enjoys spending time with her family and friends, warm summer days in the sun, Texas Country music, and traveling with her best friend.

Danielle Henderson



Danielle Lea Henderson graduated with a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology

with honors and received the Student Achievement Award for excellence in academics, research, departmental involvement and community outreach for the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She was selected for the seventh class of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologist Fellowship Program where she will be spending the next two years researching substance abuse and mental health for the state of New Mexico. Many of the practical public health skills acquired while working for the Center for Community Health Development made her a competitive applicant for the fellowship and will be used daily as she seeks to improve the mental health and substance abuse programs of New Mexico.

John D. Prochaska, Dr.P.H., M.P.H.



Dr. Prochaska began his relationship with the Center for Community Health Development in December

2005, working with the Center's core research project. Since then, he has worked on a number of center-affiliated projects. During his tenure with the center, John successfully completed his Doctor of Public Health studies with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Health. However, without the faculty and staff affiliated with the center, he believes his success would be less than noteworthy. In a recent discussion, John noted, "the center's faculty and staff are committed to not only the center's research and practice goals but to the potential impact the teaching and training role of the center will have on shaping the way public health problems and issues are addressed by future practitioners." Dr. Prochaska is now moving on to begin building his own academic career. Due to his experiences while working at the center, he plans to grow an academic research portfolio that aims to 1) foster inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to public health problems, 2) ensure the inclusion of communities in public health research, and 3) take an ecological and systems-based approach to defining and examining public health problems. His primary research interests are in the areas of rural healthy aging and the role of the community, social, and physical environment in determining health status and outcomes.

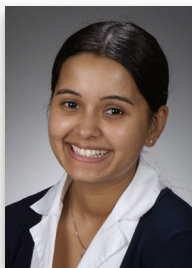
Orie Achonwa



For the past year, I have been a graduate assistant at the Center for Community Health

Development (CCHD). During my time here, I have been involved with incorporating and authoring the policies and procedures for the Brazos Valley Health Partnership and assisting with developing a Healthy School Recognition Application for Region Six schools. This experience has given me insight into the process of building support and momentum for a regional health partnership (or any partnership for that matter) and strategies for group facilitation and organization. Overall, the most valuable lessons that I learned is that a facilitator needs to tactfully plan the next steps for an organization so that the group makes progress and continues to move in the direction of their ultimate vision. I'm leaving CCHD to begin a doctoral program in Public Health at the University of North Texas Health Science Center. Here I plan to focus my studies on strategic planning and social marketing in order to consult health service organizations with developing the educational component of their outreach efforts so that their product is better utilized by the community they serve.

Sayali Tarlekar



Sayali Tarlekar is currently a second-year graduate student at the School of Rural Public Health with

the department of Social and Behavioral Health. As she moves ahead to begin her summer internship at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, she reflects back on her work at the CCHD. She worked with CCHD on the Reference Manager (REFMAN) Library Project from June 2008–May 2009.

Sayali believes that the REFMAN Project has given her some unique skills that will go with her a long way. The REFMAN Project is a project that will help many online library users, including the faculty as well as students, in the future. Working on this project has enhanced her understanding about what the library users would like to receive when it is finally ready to be used, indirectly making her sensitive to others' needs even if it is locating a library article. It made Sayali work harder to save quality articles along with quantity in the REFMAN database.

Sayali has also learned a lot about other work qualities from everybody that works at CCHD. Every individual brings a unique quality with them, and Sayali believes that she has been extremely fortunate to pick up on all the learning styles from the CCHD staff.

Shawta Sackett



Shawta Sackett graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in May 2007 with a Bachelor of

Science Degree in Nursing and started at the School of Rural Public Health in August 2007. Working at the CCHD from September 2007 through May 2009 has considerably increased her ability to work with communities. There have been some incredible experiences that have included a large multi-county assessment of children's health for the Cook Children's Health System in Fort Worth and a county-level community assessment for the Tarrant County United Way. Shawta plans to apply her recently acquired Master of Public Health in Epidemiology, her experience as a nurse and public health employee, her energy, and her heart to the health of international communities within the next five years.

Ashleigh Dozier



Ashleigh Dozier is a recent graduate of Texas A&M Health Science Center School of

Rural Public Health where she received a Master's in Health Administration in May 2009. While at SRPH, Ashleigh worked for the CCHD to enhance access to medical care in Washington County. Ashleigh has worked with Trinity Medical Center, Faith Mission and Washington County in collaboration to develop a health center that will house several health-related entities as well as a clinic for qualified, uninsured, Washington County residents. Through this project, Ashleigh was able to apply the skills she learned in health administration and further develop her leadership talents. Ashleigh also received grant writing experience as she successfully secured a \$235,500 grant for ORCA on behalf of the project. Ashleigh also completed an internship with Trinity Medical Center where she was able to gain valuable hospital experience while continuing to facilitate the health center project. Through her studies and work experiences, Ashleigh has developed a passion for rural health. Because of this passion, Ashleigh was awarded the John F. Boff Memorial Fellowship award by Texas Organization of Rural Community Hospitals (TORCH) at the 2009 annual conference in Dallas, Texas. Ashleigh will continue her career in rural health as the administrative fellow at Moore County Memorial Hospital in Dumas, Texas.

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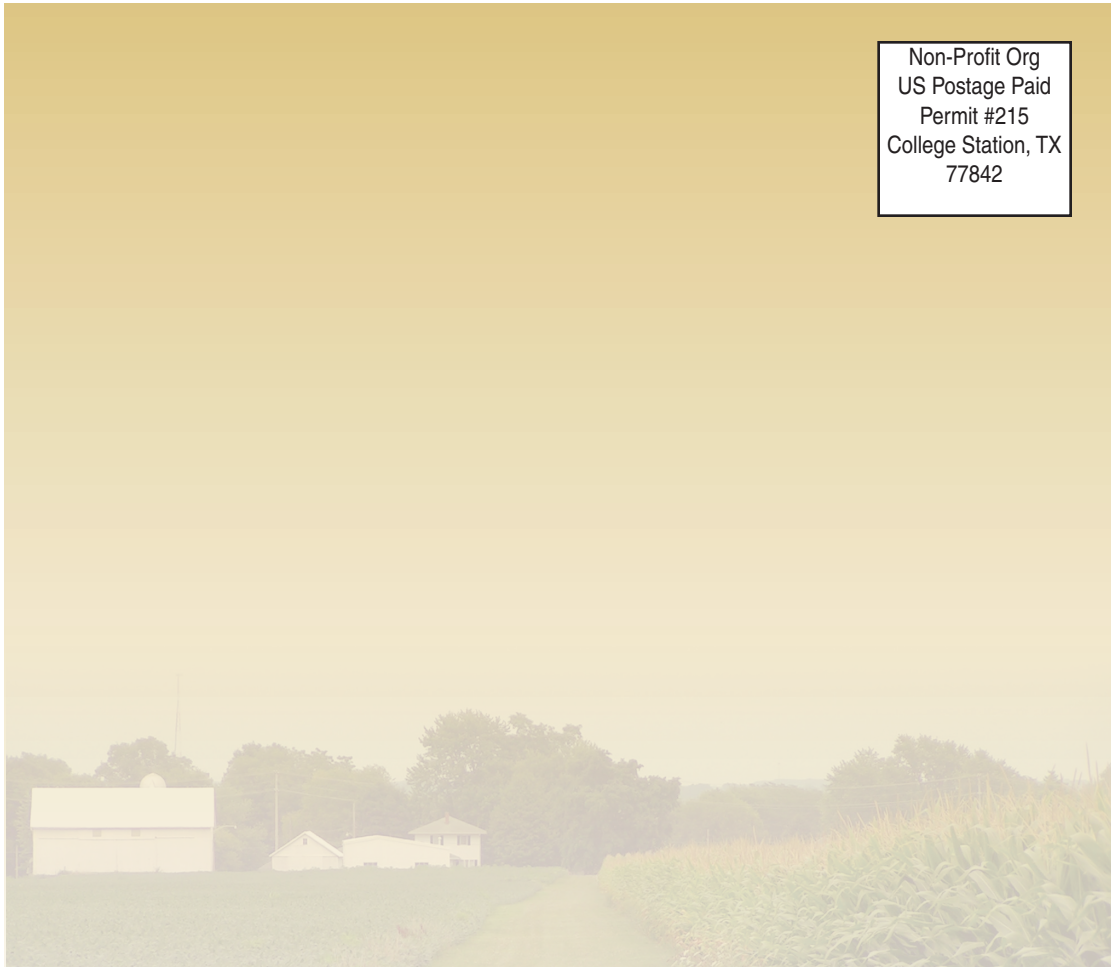
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Services

The Center for Community Health Development can be contracted to provide services, training, or technical assistance in the following areas:

- Strategic Planning
- Operational Planning
- Leadership Development
- Research Design
- Survey Construction
- Coalition Development
- Assessment
- Evaluation