In August, the Undergraduate Degree Program in Public Health at UC Denver hosted our first “What is Public Health?” Fair on the lawn in front of North Classroom building. This two-day event was a huge success! About 500 students stopped by the event and we had over 60 volunteers, including many current public health majors.

More than 10 professors presented on their research in public health, on topics such as decision making and health disparities. In addition, there were representatives from the Anschutz School of Public Health MPH program and the Colorado Department of Public Health. Karen Hampanda and Melanie Tran, the academic advisors, were also present to discuss the academic requirements of the BA and the BS. And, the Experiential Learning Center came with information about numerous potential public health internships.

Both prospective and current public health majors found the fair highly informative and walked away with lots of information, free food, PBHL buttons and stickers, and for some, a new major. The number of undergraduate students at UCD declaring public health as their major continues to climb, as does the progress of the program itself with dedicated faculty, quality teaching and research, and highly motivated and involved students. Keep a look out for more fun PBHL events coming soon!

In March, Joaquin Gallegos, a senior majoring in Public Health, was recognized in Washington, D.C. as a Champion for Change by the Aspen Institute’s Center for Native American Youth. While at the capital, he was invited to present on Federal Indian Health law and policy to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Native American Affairs-The White House, and The National Congress of American Indians. Gallegos is a member of the Jicarilla Apache Nation and intends to begin dental school after graduation. Congratulations Joaquin!
While completing my final year as an undergraduate in the Department of Public Health, I chose to branch out and pursue an internship. Starting in January of 2013, I began working at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). I am stationed in the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section, and have been working diligently with the El Paso County Public Health Department.

Most of my time has been dedicated to preparing and participating in a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER). This tool was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) but this event was the first in Colorado’s history. The topic of the survey focused on emergency preparedness, methods of communication, and behavioral health needs in case of a flood following the Waldo Fire in and around Colorado Springs.

This experience has been very valuable in learning the difficulties in collecting data from a population, as well as gaining experience using a database program called Epi Info. By far, the most valuable lesson I learned is the importance of pursuing internships throughout your academic career. By doing so, you will have the opportunity to network, as well as learn what type of organizations you would like to work for once you have completed your degree.

I want to thank CDPHE, the faculty of the Public Health Department, as well as the CU Experiential Learning Center. They have made the process of obtaining an internship for credit pleasant and worthwhile. I would highly encourage anyone contemplating an internship to contact the CU Experiential Learning Center located on the Auraria campus.

This semester, the Public Health Club has been more involved in off-campus activities and events. In February, students volunteered and attended the 2040 Neighborhood Health Summit, as a part of the Taking Neighborhood Health to Heart and 2040 Partners For Health initiative. This was a great event to see public health in action through community members from different sides of the spectrum – healthcare professionals, to politicians, police enforcement, local community members and students - joining together to learn and share ideas for how to improve health and healthcare in the local neighborhoods. After listening to an array of wonderful and inspirational speakers, the group split into breakout sessions on relevant topics in order to voice the opinions of community members on how to move forward to better health and health equity.

The Public Health Club also had the opportunity to visit our sister school at the Anschutz Medical Campus in order to learn more about the graduate public health program. We had a wonderful and very insightful experience learning about the different programs and admission requirements. The UCD Public Health Club also had the opportunity to tour the campus, gain greater insight on student life from currently enrolled students, meet professors, as well as meet with the public health career counselor to learn more about possible public health careers and the best ways to network.

Make sure to stay connected to the UCD Public Health Club page in order to hear more about future events and meetings:
Beyond UCD: Public Health Opportunities in Assessment and Planning

by Karen Hampanda

In order to better understand public health efforts in the state of Colorado and to learn about future career opportunities for our graduates, I spoke with Heather Baumgartner, the Assessment and Planning Manager at the State of Colorado, Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). She began by framing the work that she does at CDPHE with an explanation of some recent health policies. In 2008, the Colorado Public Health Act (Senate Bill 08-194) was passed, which calls for a wide variety of public health system modernizations, including a requirement that local public health agencies take the lead on developing stakeholder-driven community health improvement plans every five years. These plans need to be data driven through comprehensive community health assessments using both quantitative and qualitative methods (i.e., mixed methods approach). Public health agencies and their partners also need to determine the capacity of their systems and the current assets that can be employed to address public health needs.

Through a systematic prioritization process, each local collaborative is establishing a set of public health priorities for the next 5 years. For example, El Paso county, through this process, has identified obesity control as their highest priority. The Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System (CHAPS) provides resources and guidance to help the local public health agencies meet assessment and planning requirements of the Public Health Act of 2008 and the goals of the Colorado Public Health Improvement Plan (COPHIP). Through these improvement plans, there will hopefully become a collective impact approach that leads to a state-wide movement in improving public health across Colorado and increasing health equity.

In order to meet the demand of improving Colorado’s public health system, many state and local agencies have created “Health Planner” positions. In addition, there is also the opportunity now for local public health agencies to become accredited through the national Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), thus the need to hire or identify “Accreditation Managers.” Candidates matched to these positions often have a background in public health planning, such as an MPH or related degree and certain competencies, such as: project management; data analysis; facilitation skills; communication skills; project planning skills, and leadership skills. Experience in elements of community engagement and use of technology are also highly competitive qualifications. In these positions, individuals take the lead on the assessment and planning process for specific public health agencies, their system partners, and the communities they serve. Ms. Baumgartner believes that there will be increasing demand for these types of positions throughout Colorado. There is a need for individuals with training in all of the core competencies of public health, including epidemiology, biostatistics, social and behavioral health, and environmental health.

For more information about CDPHE and CHAPS, please go to: http://www.chd.dphe.state.co.us/CHAPS/default.aspx.
Our Public Health Capstone group chose to research food insecurity in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. During our Honors project, we spoke to disaster medicine physicians, videographers that were in Haiti, humanitarian volunteers, and various UCD professors that had worked with Haitians.

Epidemiological research pointed out the need for improved data collection. An analysis of global factors led us to conclude that there is a critical need for registering and monitoring NGOs operating in Haiti. An investigation into social determinants led to the endorsement of the use of food vouchers for Haitian women in order to control the chaos associated with food distribution programs. After speaking with Professor Cronin, and viewing his video, we were enthusiastic about the novel use of vetiver grass to halt soil erosion. During lively class discussion after our presentation, we concluded that more needs to be done, from a policy standpoint, regarding natural disaster preparedness and interagency cooperation. Creating policy to empower the United Nations, with sole authority to coordinate all actors in a national disaster, would greatly enhance communication and order during rescue efforts. Our team explored complex public health issues on a much more comprehensive level and we will carry the Honors experience forward in our future careers.

During a semester’s class of Social Determinants of Health the service learning assignment helped to reinforce course topics and offered a new perspective of the social determinants of health. During this assignment, 20 volunteer hours were required as well as a journal depicting how the organization affected the social determinants of health in those it was catering for and for those who volunteered.

For our service learning assignment we volunteered at PROJECT C.U.R.E.. PROJECT C.U.R.E. is a non-profit organization that helps to reduce health disparities between countries based on availability of western medicine. Donated items are delivered to over 120 underserved countries across the globe. First the donated items are gathered in small collecting centers and distributed to the distribution warehouses across the United States. These items are then sorted and packaged for delivery so that clinics in 3rd world countries can get the medical supplies they need. We worked at one of these distribution warehouses: sorting donated medical supplies, packing these supplies into boxes for easy shipping and finally packing a cargo container with the donated supplies and equipment. Volunteering on a day in September was particularly rewarding for the both of us. We spent 7 hours filling up a cargo container with over $400,000 worth of medical supplies to be shipped to the country of Georgia, located outside of Russia.

Packing the truck to its fullest and seeing what medical supplies and equipment were actually being donated to people in need helped us realize the impact of our service learning. Their mission statement: “ONE day, ONE hospital, ONE patient at a time, PROJECT C.U.R.E. is delivering health and hope to the world.” We had the opportunity to assist in delivering health and hope to the world and plan to continue volunteering at PROJECT C.U.R.E. in the future.
Volunteer Opportunities!

Roundup River Ranch

Help give children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses a fun, safe, and empowering camp experience at Roundup River Ranch. Located in Gypsum, Colorado, volunteers are needed to serve in a variety of capacities to provide campers with an incredible camp experience in sessions held during the spring, summer, and fall.

If you're interested in smiling so hard your cheeks hurt, serving more pancakes than you could have ever imaged, dancing up a storm after meals, helping campers achieve the impossible, and more, we encourage you to volunteer.

Join us for an unforgettable experience at Roundup River Ranch as a cabin, facilities, and kitchen volunteer today. Please visit www.roundprirerranch.org/volunteer to learn more.

Paws for a Cause 5K

“Global Health Connections, Inc, a non-profit based out of Denver run by CU Denver Alumni, would like to cordially invite you to our inaugural 5K, Paws For the Cause! This event, to be held on the Auraria Campus on September 28, is to raise money for vocational training in Léogâne, Haiti which was the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake. Our midwifery training initiative has come about in order to insure that Haiti’s infant mortality rate does not skyrocket back to its devastatingly high rates that were seen before the earthquake with the depart of Doctors Without Borders next year. GHC's goal is to provide the Léogâne area inhabitants with the resources and skills they will need to prosper and improve their health.

So, please join us by clicking on the registration link below! If you have any questions or would like more information about what Global Health Connections is doing in Haiti, please feel free to contact us at info@globalhealthconnections.org or visit http://www.runningguru.com/EventInformation.asp?eID=9742.

Do you need volunteers?

If you have any volunteer opportunities or events you would like to share with the Public Health program, please email melanie.k.tran@ucdenver.edu.
Thank you to everyone who participated in and volunteered at the PBHL fair!
The mission of the undergraduate major in Public Health is to train students to think critically in addressing public health’s greatest challenges.

Karen Lutfey  
Associate Professor &  
Director of Undergraduate Programs  
Karen.Lutfey@UCDenver.edu  
(303) 556-4301

Abby Fitch  
Program Administrator  
Abby.Fitch@UCDenver.edu  
(303) 556-4300

Karen Hampanda  
Graduate Advisor  
Karen.Hampanda@UCDenver.edu  
(303) 556-6796

Melanie Tran  
Graduate Advisor  
Melanie.K.Tran@UCDenver.edu  
(303) 556-6796