

Nurturing Relationships:

Updates from the JHU/NHGRI Genetic Counseling Training Program

Welcome to the fall edition of the Johns Hopkins University/National Human Genome Research Institute Genetic Counseling Training Program Newsletter. This newsletter is intended for individuals affiliated with the program, including faculty, clinical supervisors, alumni, support staff, Executive Committee members and current and prospective students. We hope it will keep you up-to-date about our program.

Program Updates

The GCTP Executive Committee held its biennial retreat in July 2010. We're grateful to the students, alumni, faculty and supervisors who participated by providing feedback and input. As a result of discussion at the retreat, the GCTP is piloting a mentorship program between GCTP supervisors and 2nd year students in the program. Additionally, some coursework is being modified on the basis of feedback provided.

Congratulations to Joan Scott, Executive Committee member, in her new position as Chief Executive Officer of the National Coalition for Health Professionals Education in Genetics (NCHPEG)!

We're sad to say good-bye to Susan Richardson but we're pleased to welcome Tyler Fisher as the new GCTP Program Coordinator at NIH. Tyler has a split appointment at NHGRI—he provides program support and research assistance with studies in the Genetic Services Unit of the Social and Behavioral Research Branch at NHGRI. He is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where he majored in Health and Societies. In his spare time, Tyler likes to cheer for the Redskins!

Introductions

In August 2010, the members of the class of 2013 arrived. Please give them a warm welcome if you see them in your clinic, around campus or attending classes!



Weiyi Mu

In 2010 Weiyi earned her Bachelor of Arts at Columbia University, where she studied molecular biology and music theory. While pursuing her undergraduate

degree, she worked with Columbia's Center for the Study of Science and Religion, where faculty and staff collaborated with local faith and community leaders to address issues such as global warming. Weiyi is very interested in religious attitudes towards genetic testing and genomics public policy.



Dana Petry

Dana graduated from Texas A&M University in 2005 with a Business Administration degree. She spent time in Dallas as a management consultant with Bain & Company and then took advantage of an opportunity to move to Paris, France where she worked with Fat Tire Bike Tours. Since then she has been in Austin, Texas working at a family practice clinic and is happy to be back in academics!



Sally Rodriguez

Sally graduated in June 2009 from Princeton University with a Bachelor of Arts in Molecular Biology. She spent the past year working at a community health center in Norwalk, CT, where she primarily assisted in transferring paper charts to an Electronic Medical Record. Her most recent interests lie in the differences in perceptions, understanding and coping mechanisms associated with inheritance risk and genetic disease among racial/ethnic groups.



Ilana Solomon

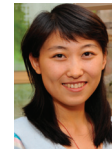
Trained as a Physical Anthropologist, Ilana received her Bachelor of Science from SUNY Binghamton and her Master of Arts in Skeletal Biology, Genetics and Forensics from NYU. Her research experience includes field archaeology, forensic anthropology for the NYC Medical Examiner and phylogenetics at the American Museum of Natural History. After moving across the country, she spent the last three years conducting developmental genetics research at the California Institute of Technology. Her academic interests focus on the impact of direct-to-consumer genetic testing and research methods in public health outreach and communication.

(Photos: Maggie Bartlett, NHGRI)

Summer Activities

The GCTP has long-encouraged its students to take advantage of the wealth of genetics opportunities available to them locally and globally over the summer. We asked

the class of 2011 to describe how they embraced this mandate during their training.



Yue Guan

I completed a three-week rotation at Taiwan. I observed pediatric and cancer counseling at National Taiwan University Children's Hospital. I also participated in the newborn screening project and breast cancer patient conference. After I came back from Taiwan, I spent six weeks rotating in the Baltimore area. Two days a week I was at Kennedy Krieger Institute under the supervision of Julie Cohen and Rebecca Kern. I participated in Down syndrome, Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) and Neurology/Neurogenetics clinics. The other two days a week I saw prenatal cases at Howard County General Hospital under the supervision of Debbie Axtell. In addition to great clinical experience, I was excited to meet people in Taiwan who were enthusiastic about genetic counseling!



Leila Jamal

I spent six weeks in the Genetics department at the Henry Ford Hospital in downtown Detroit, Michigan. During my time there, I worked alongside eight genetic counselors and five geneticists to counsel patients in preconception, pre-natal, pediatric, cancer, and adult genetics. I also participated in a multidisciplinary autism clinic and attended weekly tumor board meetings. Additionally, I volunteered for a community-based participatory research project at the University of Michigan examining public attitudes to informed consent for research using bloodspots from the Michigan Neonatal Biobank. In my spare time I enjoyed outdoor concerts in Ann Arbor, delicious microbrews, and weekends on the beaches of Lake Michigan.



Tamandra Morgan

I spent six weeks this summer rotating in cancer genetic clinics at Johns Hopkins Hospital. I participated in breast and ovarian cancer, colon cancer, and general hereditary cancer clinics. The team I worked with included a genetic counselor, Jennifer Axilbund, as well as several medical oncologists and a gastroenterologist. I was especially fortunate to see patients with very rare cancer syndromes who were referred from all over the world. I had a great time working with the staff and patients at Hopkins!



Belen Pappa

Over the summer, I returned to Buenos Aires, Argentina (my hometown!) to observe general genetic counseling for three weeks at the National Center for Medical Genetics under the supervision of a group of clinical geneticists. Upon returning to the U.S, I completed a five week rotation at the Children's National Medical Center in Washington D.C., where I was involved in the neurogenetics and muscular dystrophy clinics. My summer experiences have broadened my understanding of genetic counseling and our role as professionals in the healthcare team. I have learned valuable lessons not only from my supervisors and peers but also from the families I met. Without question, my rotations have been inspiring, challenging, and unforgettable!

(Photos: Maggie Bartlett, NHGRI)

Where Are They Now?

This is the first in an occasional series of articles updating you on the activities of people who have had a significant impact on the program and left to pursue other opportunities. Those of you who were involved with the program at its inception know that Kathy Peters, MS, is just such a person. Kathy was originally recruited to NHGRI to coordinate research studies with Drs. Les Biesecker and Clair Francomano, counsel study participants and investigate research questions related to her clinical work. She quickly added teaching and supervising GCTP students in the nascent program to her list of responsibilities.

Kathy left the NHGRI at the close of the millennium and relocated with her husband, Jeff, and their 10-month old son, Michael, to State College, PA, where Jeff and Kathy joined the faculty of Pennsylvania State University (PSU). Until 2005, Kathy taught two undergraduate courses in the Department of Biobehavioral Health. She also worked with Dr. Stephen Petrill on studies of math and reading skill development in children. When Dr. Petrill left PSU, Kathy began working with Dr. Jan Ulbrecht on studies of diabetes and obesity for the Penn State Institute for Diabetes and Obesity. While working with Dr. Ulbrecht, Kathy was awarded the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship in 2007 to develop and validate a survey assessing client background, needs and expectations for genetic counseling. She's written and co-authored book chapters and papers based on studies she completed while working at NIH.

Professionally, Kathy has clearly accomplished a great deal. She's also been busy personally. She now has five children: Michael, Elizabeth, Timothy, Monika and Claire. She and Jeff

celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary in March 2010. She's involved in her church and her children's school and likes to scrapbook.

As she looks forward, Kathy says she may be a stay at home mother for a while. The funding for her position with Dr. Ulbrecht ran out, and with five children and Jeff in a demanding job on the faculty of PSU, she feels this may be the best place to focus her attention.

Faculty News

Barbara Biesecker, MS, is the recipient of the inaugural Diane Baker Alumni Award from the University of Michigan Genetic Counseling Program. Barb's award will be recognized when she presents a research seminar on January 10, 2011 in Ann Arbor, MI. In addition to this lecture, Barb will meet with students enrolled in the Genetic Counseling Program.

Andrea Wray, MS, has moved closer to the NIH. In June Andrea joined the Prenatal Assessment Center at the National Naval Medical Center.

Alumni News

Krista Redlinger-Grosse ('01) has joined the ranks of GCTP alumni enrolled in a PhD program. She began the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Minnesota this fall. She'll still be seeing patients occasionally at the University of Minnesota in the metabolism and maternal fetal medicine clinics. If you want to catch up with her, her email address is now redli009@umn.edu.

Jeremy and Kira (Apse) Dies ('03) welcomed Margot Kathryn Dies to their family on July 23, 2010. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mike and **Shawn (Sinesky) Lipinski ('04)**, who welcomed their second daughter, Josephine Marie Lipinski, on August 23, 2010. She weighed in at 8 lb 3 oz and was 20.5 inches long. Baby and mom are doing well.

After crossing the US just two years ago when they moved to San Francisco, **Tricia (Gasser) See ('05)** and family are turning around. This time, they're headed to Boston. Tricia is currently exploring professional opportunities in the Boston genetics community.

Suzanna Schott ('06) and her husband, Taylor, have made some big changes. In May, they relocated from New Mexico to North Carolina where they interned for 3 months on an organic farm. Now they live in the mountains near Asheville, where they hope to buy land in the next year or so and start a small organic farm. In the meanwhile, Suzanna is doing science writing and commissioned art sewing while she explores options as a genetic counselor and/or teacher

in Asheville. Want to learn more? Check out <http://joinedthefarmy.wordpress.com>, where Suzanna and her husband blog about their experiences moving from urban professionals to small town farmers.

Colleen (Brown) Caleshu ('07) announces her marriage to Thomas Caleshu on October 10, 2010. In September she became the first genetic counselor hired by the Stanford Center for Inherited Cardiovascular Disease, where one of her responsibilities is developing their genetic counseling service. Finally, she's the first author on two papers published in the past five months: Caleshu C *et al.* Use and interpretation of genetic tests in cardiovascular genetics. *Heart*, 2010 96(20):1669-75; and, Caleshu C *et al.* Invasive prenatal testing decisions in pregnancy after infertility. *Prenat Diagn*, 2010 30(6):575-81.

Dan and Jessica (Young) Adcock ('08)



announce the arrival of their daughter, Sophie Madeline Adcock. She joined their family on July 14, 2010, weighing 8 lb 3 oz and was 21¼" long. Congratulations!

Courtney Nichols ('08) announces her engagement to Jay Berrios. Jay proposed in the same place where they had their first date, Valley Forge National Park, while on a walk with Courtney's dog, Flo. They're planning a wedding in Kansas City this winter.



Gillian Hooker ('09) and Dylan Burnette are proud to introduce their son, Oliver Andrew Burnette. He joined the family on June 23, 2010. Congratulations!

Amanda Singleton ('10) reports that she's started volunteering with Equine Therapy Associates, which offers horseback riding and exposure for kids with special needs. Her daughter, Olivia, just started kindergarten and Emily is in 3rd grade, so she's started her job search in the Montgomery County area!

Congratulations to **Amy Turriff ('10)** for winning the Best Student Abstract Award at the 2010 NSGC Annual Education Conference! She presented her thesis research on "Adaptation among adolescents and adults with Klinefelter syndrome: The role of illness perceptions, perceived stigma and coping."

We invite you to continue sharing your personal and professional news with us so that we can update the JHU/NHGRI GCTP community. Anne can be reached at Anne.Madeo@nih.gov and Barb can be reached at barbarab@mail.nih.gov.