



# West Chester University

MPH CONNECTIONS | SPRING 2023



[mbpce.com/westchesteruniversity](http://mbpce.com/westchesteruniversity)

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# MPH Program Director

## Dr. Stacie Metz

Our Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) MPH re-accreditation site visitors concluded their two-day visit on April 18, 2023. While their final report is forthcoming by June, the preliminary briefing suggested we fully met all criteria with one met with commentary and one partially met. We are excited to submit our supplemental response and learning about the board's final decision in December!

We are **extraordinarily grateful** to the students, alumni, and community partners who actively participated in the reaccreditation process. This includes sharing feedback for improvement via surveys or focus groups, through service on MPH committees or advisory boards, critiquing sections of our self-study program document, and meeting with the site visitors in student and stakeholder/alumni sessions. It was a joy to hear how your dedication to and engagement in our quality improvement processes was reflected by the site visitors in their briefing.

As with our final reaccreditation self-study, this newsletter showcases the **exceptional educational, research, and service accomplishments of our deeply engaged community** of students, alumni, community partners, administrators, staff, and faculty. As a highlight, we congratulate our College of Health Sciences Dean Scott Heinerichs on accepting the Service to Youth award to West Chester University at the annual breakfast of champions for the YMCA of Greater Brandywine. See the YMCAGBW Video [here](#).

We are just a phone call or an email away. Tell us frequently about your journey after completion of the MPH program, your current work/fellowship/academic program, and changes in your personal life. We will be starting a section in our newsletter specific to alum updates ~ stay tuned for a submission link. We are richer when we can collectively celebrate individual accomplishments.

Have a lovely summer,  
Stacie Metz, PhD, MPH, MSW, MA  
MPH Program Director & Graduate Coordinator





# MPH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

## Mission, Goals, & Who We Are

The mission of the Master of Public Health Student Advisory Board, or better known as MPH SAB, is to support the Department of Health by serving as a liaison between students and faculty/staff to foster a sense of community and professionalism. We are a collaborative group of MPH students who are willing to share ideas and advice to help encourage current students on their journey through the MPH Program.

Our goal for this year is to become more involved with the University and Chester County community by conducting community service events, social/networking events, and professional development events. The main objectives for these events are inclusivity, awareness, and community-building. MPH SAB meets once a month for a general body meeting and invites anyone who is interested to come and learn about upcoming events, how to get involved, or share their experiences in the program. Come share your ideas and experiences, participate in community service, help plan activities, or show your support by attending our events. We look forward to meeting you!

Thank you, MPH Student Advisory Board

### Faculty Advisor: **Chiwoneso Beverley Tinago, PhD, MPH, CHES®**

Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago is the faculty advisor for the MPH Student Advisory Board. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health where she teaches both undergraduate and graduate Public Health courses and studies structural environmental influences on health among women and adolescents in southeast Africa through emic and community-based participatory methods.



## WELCOME TO THE 2023–2024 SAB EXECUTIVE BOARD

### President: **Kevin Andoh**

Kevin Andoh is a first-year MPH (Community Health track) student at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He has a Doctor of Pharmacy from Ghana who is interested in infectious diseases as a public health issue. He is a graduate assistant for the College of Health Sciences Global Health Research team and the Nutrition Lab. Throughout his academic and professional journey, he has been actively involved in various extracurricular activities and has consistently demonstrated strong leadership skills. Kevin is known to be very friendly around everyone he meets and finds joy in helping people. As the newly appointed President of the MPH Student Advisory Board, Kevin is committed to upholding the executive board's values and achieving its goals. He is excited to work collaboratively with his team and get everyone involved in the activities of the SAB. With his passion and dedication, Kevin is poised to lead the MPH SAB to new heights and leave a lasting impact on his peers and the organization.

Email: [KA988604@wcupa.edu](mailto:KA988604@wcupa.edu)



## **Vice President: Sameera Guttha**

My name is Sameera Guttha, and I was born and raised in North Wales, Pennsylvania. I am also of East Indian descent and I enjoy learning to read and write in the Telugu language. I am currently enrolled in my second semester of the MPH- Healthcare Management Program at West Chester University. I have also recently obtained my doctorate in Medicine from Saint James School of Medicine. I hope to use my continuing knowledge of medicine and public health to better understand how policies come to fruition in relation to preventive healthcare.

Email: SG673842@wcupa.edu



## **Secretary: Chiamaka Ilondu**

Chiamaka Ilondu holds a bachelor's in Applied Biochemistry from a University in Nigeria, where she gained a deep understanding of the fundamental principles of biochemistry and their applications in various real-world scenarios. During and after her undergraduate studies, she actively engaged in research and volunteer projects related to the intersection of biochemistry and public health. Chiamaka developed a keen interest in understanding how biochemistry impacts human health and well-being and how public health interventions can be used to prevent, manage, and treat diseases at a population level. Driven by her passion for improving health outcomes at a community level, she is currently pursuing a master's degree in public health and expecting to graduate in May 2024.

Email: CI993216@wcupa.edu



## **Community Health Track Rep: Maitiya Meadows**

My name is Maitiya Meadows, and I am a first-year graduate student here at West Chester University in the MPH program in the Community Health Track. I serve as a Graduate Assistant for the College of Health Sciences focusing on research in maternal and child health along with other realms of public health. I was able to gain experience with public health coursework graduating from the BS Public Health program at WCU and I have been able to acquire knowledge in research methods, public policy, foundations of public health, and community health. Serving as the Community Health Track Representative for MPH SAB will give me the chance to get in touch with students in the program and show them how interesting and fun public health can be!

Email: MM909854@wcupa.edu



## Environmental Health Track Rep: Victor Nwinee



Victor Nwinee, is a Nigerian, born on March 25, 1985, in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Growing up in a family of health workers, Victor's interest in the biological and health sciences was discovered and nurtured by his parents. As a young boy, he dreamt of becoming a doctor, believing that caring for the sick and seeing them recover was a gift to humanity. In 2011, he began his lifelong dream of becoming a physician at the University of Lagos Medical School. However, his life took a different turn in 2014 when he contracted a chest infection and fell ill. Fortunately, a cohort of public health workers provided him with timely medical help, sparking his interest in the vast and amazing field of public health. Following his graduation from medical school in 2017, Victor began practicing medicine and working in underserved communities, carrying out health promotion campaigns. He has participated in a variety of research projects and has eight published works to his name. In the fall of 2023, Victor will be commencing his Master of Public Health degree program, at the prestigious West Chester University of Pennsylvania to expand his knowledge and skills in public health. Email: VN1008495@wcupa.edu

## APHA Campus Liaison: Parisa Karimzadeh

My name is Parisa Karimzadeh, a medical doctor from Iran. I am a first-year student in the MPH program, Community Health Track. I received my MD from Iran and worked as a Family Physician for two years there. My passion for public health is arise when I attended an epidemiology class as one of my courses and wonder what I can do to make a positive impact on the health of the population rather than individuals. I worked as a researcher in different public health centers from chronic disease to environmental and maternal health during medical school. After graduation, I want to pursue my education in Epidemiology as a Ph.D. student and broaden my knowledge in health data analysis.

Email: pk1008580@wcupa.edu



## Social Media Outreach Coordinator: Issata Massaley

My name is Issata Massaley and I am a first-year MPH student in the Community Health Track. I hold a Bachelor's in Bio-Behavioral Health, and I currently work as a manager at a non-profit behavioral health organization. Coming from the impoverished country of Liberia, which is also rich in culture and history, I have seen first-hand the impact of public health issues on vulnerable communities. I believe that community involvement is essential to effecting meaningful change and I am excited to have been selected as the Social Outreach Manager for the MPH SAB. In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, getting lost in a series of videos on YouTube, and hanging out with friends.

Email: IM748905@wcupa.edu



# MPH AND SAB EVENTS

JOIN WCU MUSLIM STUDENT ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR


## Ramadan Speaker Event

with **Imam Arqum Rashid**  
of Islamic Society of Central Delaware



رَمَضَانَ مَبَارَكًا

**April 13 | 5:45 - 8 PM**  
**SECC Ballroom**

*Iftar and Dinner will be provided.*

RSVP THROUGH QR OR RAMCONNECT! → 

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD


117 East Gay Street West Chester, PA, 19380

## FREE FOOD\*

The Event Will Be Held On:  
Thursday, March 2nd  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm  
at the Social Lounge

JOIN US!  
**THE MPH SAB & DELTA OMEGA SOCIAL EVENT**


Join the members of the MPH Student Advisory Board & Delta Omega Honorary Society at the Social Lounge! Get the chance to make new friends, learn how to get involved, & enjoy delicious food & drinks.  
\*Snacks and appetizers will be provided.

Questions? Contact Sara Hassan at sh873161@wcupa.edu

## The Department of Health MPH Program Presents:

### Public Health and Health Equity Trained Professionals in the Pharmaceutical Industry

*A Virtual Panel Discussion*



Introductory Remarks by Terry-Ann Lynch, DPAC, MPH

Featuring Panel Participants:

Terry-Ann Lynch, DPAC, MPH (*she/her*)  
Stakeholder & Advocacy Lead, Public Affairs, NA CHC, Seno, Board Member, Tigrily Foundation;  
Doctor of Public Administration student, West Chester University

Danielle DiGiorgio, MPH (*she/her*)  
Clinical Research Associate, The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson

Shannon Fyalkowski, MPH, CHES\* (*she/her*)  
Operations & Communications Manager, AstraZeneca Foundation (via Kelly Services)


Dawn Patillo Exum, MPHc (*she/her*)  
Director of Public Policy | National Community Liaison Manager | HIV Sales Manager, South Central, Merck & Co.

Drexel Shaw, MPH (*he/him*)  
National Patient Advocacy Liaison (HIV/Health Equity) Lead, CVS Health

**Wednesday April 19, 2023, 6PM-7PM**

WCU WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Join the Zoom at: <https://wcupa.zoom.us/j/873161>  
(Meeting ID: 697 869 5284 | Passcode: 993865 | Call-In: +1-309-205-3325)



Questions? Contact Dr. Stacie Metz at smetz@wcupa.edu

THE WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESENTS:

## The Health & Human Rights of Refugees & Immigrants

HOSTED BY THE MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

Friday, February 17th | 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm ET  
<https://tinyurl.com/refugee-panel>  
Meeting ID: 916 7000 6051 | Passcode: 818581





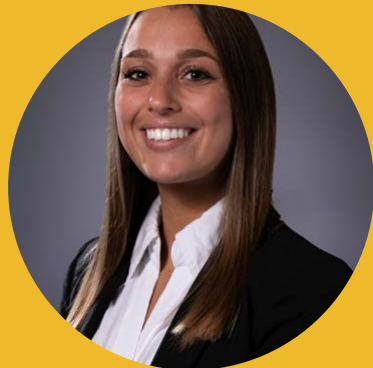

ISRA CHAKER      YARA ASI      JASMIN LILIAN DIAB      HALEMA WALI

Join our panelists as we explore the current state of refugee communities, what is (or isn't) being done to address their health and human rights, and what actions we can take to help

CO-SPONSORED BY: WCU MUSLIM STUDENT ASSOCIATION | ENGLISH DEPT. | PEACE & CONFLICT DEPT.

# WCU BETA XI CHAPTER DELTA OMEGA EXECUTIVE BOARD 2023-2024

Faculty Advisor: Chiwoneso Beverley Tinago, PhD, MPH, CHES®



## **President** – Ashley Cifarelli

Ashley Cifarelli, MPH, CAPM, CSSYB was inducted into Delta Omega Beta in 2019. She received her B.S. in Public Health, minor in Nutrition (2018) in addition to an MPH in Healthcare Management (2019) from West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Ashley worked with Penn Medicine for 6 years in various administrative roles across both inpatient and outpatient departments to innovate technology, build standardization, and improve patient quality. She recently transitioned into her current role as a Data Analyst and Visualization Specialist at Main Line Health Corporate. She currently resides in Philadelphia with her boyfriend, and her two cats. In her spare time, Ashley enjoys going to the farmer's market, hitting the gym, cooking, and enjoying the outdoors.



## **Vice President** – Doris Swarn

Doris Swarn, MPH, LSSG earned her MPH in Healthcare Administration from West Chester University in Pennsylvania. While in graduate school Doris completed an administrative internship with Main Line Health in Pennsylvania where she expanded access to perinatal testing and provided a framework to improve the throughput process for environmental services. She was inducted into Delta Omega in 2021. Prior to her graduate studies, Doris worked as a patient advocate with the Camden Healthcare Coalition, where she helped patients in marginalized communities navigate the healthcare system and address social determinants of health. She also worked with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Public Health to ensure the community access to quality wellness programs through a program called, PhillyPowered. Her professional interests include community health, healthcare strategy and operations, and healthcare policy. Doris is also very passionate about aquatic safety and community improvement through service.



## **Secretary** – Sunita Wolford

Sita is a Senior Customer Success Manager at Carrot Fertility, a digital health technology startup and the leading global fertility benefits platform. She is responsible for the strategic support of her clients including engagement, education, retention, and growth. Prior to Carrot, she worked in well-being consulting at Cigna, responsible for creating wellness and benefit education strategy for her clients. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences from Penn State University as well as a Master of Public Health from West Chester University. She is also a Certified Health Education Specialist, trained within the core seven areas of competency of health promotion and health education and holds her Virginia Life, Health & Annuities Insurance License. She was inducted into Delta Omega in 2018. Currently Sita resides in Arlington, Virginia with her husband and their new baby girl—where they love to go on runs by the national monuments in Washington D.C. and visit local museums and restaurants!



# 2023 DELTA OMEGA INDUCTEES

*Delta Omega is the honorary society for graduate studies in public health. The purpose of Delta Omega is to recognize academic merit and sincere commitment to public health work. Our Chapter (Beta Xi) is honored to announce this year's inductees.*

## Desiree Harris



Desiree is a second-year student in the MPH program in the Community Health Track. She graduated with her undergraduate degree in biology from West Chester University. What drove her to pursue her master's in public health was the variability within the field. She is passionate about advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves and is inspired that finishing her program will give her the necessary skills needed to do just that. Currently, Desiree is interning with Penn Medicine's Center for Addiction Medicine and Policy. It has been a fantastic experience for her so far. She is learning many in-the-field skills, which has deepened her passion for continuing to work with individuals with substance use disorders. After completion of the MPH program, Desiree will be attending Morgan State University to obtain her Doctorate in Public Health.

Dan is in the sixth and last semester of the Community Health program and currently works in the chronic care division for a local pharmaceutical company. Dan will be completing their ALE project through the university, for the YMCA this summer. After this Dan will be looking for new professional and further educational opportunities.

## Daniel Hofmann



## Leah Callwood



I am a Public Health Advocate with a focus in Health Care Management, respected for executing strategic initiatives and action plans to support individual and community wellness. I am currently enrolled in my senior year at West Chester University of Pennsylvania's MPH program, and on path to graduate in December 2023. I possess a strong passion for advocacy and policy in maternal and infant health and looking forward to starting my Fall 2023 internship at March of Dimes. In my spare time, I had the pleasure of volunteering in March of Dimes, Pennsylvania March for Change. I communicated with PA state legislators discussing current issues affecting maternal and infant health outcomes and advocated for support of the March of Dimes proposed bills aimed to help address those issues. I also love to spend time with my daughter and fiancée, eat at restaurants, and watch movies.

# 2023 DELTA OMEGA INDUCTEES

## Marguerite Lena



Marguerite “Maggie” Lena, born in Santa Monica, CA and graduated in May 2021 from Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI with a B.S. in Biomedical Sciences, and a Minor in Biology. At Marquette, she competed within the Big East Conference and played Division 1 soccer while also sitting as the first Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. She continued her collegiate athletic career at West Chester University on the Women’s Soccer Team where she lead her team to the NCAA National Championship in Seattle. Additionally, she was proud to work as a graduate assistant in the Academic-Athletic Mentor Program for Dr. Tammy James. Marguerite is graduating from West Chester University with a MPH and a Certificate of Health Care Management. She has worked as a research coordinator for the Learning Assistance Resource Center and interned for Health IT company CareAlign throughout her second year. As of January 2023 she signed her first professional female soccer contract to play in Israel with F.C. Kiryat Gat to compete in the Israeli First League and the Israeli Women’s Cup. Her life goal is to strive to make the world a better place by working to increase access to public health, educate on institutionalized racism, and advocate for marginalized groups.

Rackel Nderi recently graduated from West Chester University with her MPH concentrating in community health. She currently works as an Associate Director, Health Leader Specialist and Community Manager at Health Union. Driven by the importance of patient-centeredness and representation, she takes pride in her role in diversifying and highlighting patient voices in her current position. As an immigrant and black woman, her future goals include working to improve health equity for these marginalized populations. She hopes to earn her doula certification in the upcoming months. In addition to her career and aspirations, Rackel also enjoys traveling, dancing, and trying new restaurants.

## Rackel Nderi



## Julinette Vasquez



My name is Julinette Vazquez, and I am a second-year Community Health track student in the MPH program on path to graduating in August 2023. I am a retired veteran, and served in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard for six years. I received my undergraduate degree from West Chester University in Public Health. I am currently working as a Graduate Assistant in the Athletic-Academic Mentoring program, where I assist student-athletes with their academic needs. After receiving my MPH, I would like to work in health equity and address health disparities in underserved communities. I am currently serving as the Vice President of MPH SAB for the 2022-2023 school year.

# 2023 DELTA OMEGA INDUCTEES

## Sara Hassan



Sara Hassan is a second-year Master of Public Health student in the Health Care Management track. She earned her B.S. in Biology and minor in Ethnic Studies from West Chester University. She currently works as an Infection Control Data Analyst and a Medical Laboratory Scientist at Chester County Hospital. In addition, she serves as the President of the MPH Student Advisory Board and is a Graduate Assistant for Dr. Harry Holt. Upon graduation, she hopes to pursue a career in the pharmaceutical industry with a focus on research and development. She is particularly interested in exploring the looming health issues in the Middle East and contributing to the development of solutions that can improve the health outcomes of communities in the region. Her long-term goal is to return to Iraq to develop programs to help families affected by the wars.

William Ramsey is a highly motivated and dedicated Master of Public Health (MPH) student at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He is passionate about promoting health equity and improving the well-being of vulnerable populations through community programs. Throughout his academic career, he has demonstrated exceptional academic achievement and leadership. His commitment to learning has allowed him to consistently maintain a high GPA. William has also been actively involved in the public health community. His passion for outreach first began with volunteering at his church, Faith Tabernacle House of Prayer in Norristown, PA. Since he was a teenager, He would volunteer in the community kitchen and with the youth mentorship programs. He now serves as the Executive Director of his church. In this role, he leads program planning, staff and volunteer recruitment and training, and fundraising. William looks forward to continued growth and development, and to contribute to advancing health equity, advocacy, and leadership in Norristown.

## William Ramsey



# 2023 ALPHA ETA HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTEES



Alpha Eta is a national honor society for students in Allied Health. This society, founded in 1975, has chapters nationwide and has initiated over 35,000 members over the decades. The West Chester University Chapter of Alpha Eta – the 90th chapter of this esteemed society – received a charter in January, 2019. Both undergraduate and graduate students are recognized. Graduate students who are invited to membership in Alpha Eta (a) have completed at least 50% of the semester credits in their respective curricula, (b) have earned a cumulative GPA of at least 3.80, and (c) have ranked within the top 20% of their cohort. More detailed information about Alpha Eta is available at <https://www.alphaeta.net>.

**West Chester University Chapter of the Alpha Eta Honor Society, the national honor society for Allied Health, was honored to induct three MPH students on April 23, 2023 -- Muhammad Ilyas, William Ramsey, and Sara Hassan.**



MPH inductees starting on the left -- Muhammad Ilyas, William Ramsey, and Sara Hassan. Department of Health undergraduate inductees are also represented in the photo.

In the SECC Ballroom, on the afternoon of Sunday, April 23, these inductees, accompanied by family members and friends, received their green cords, as well as their pins and certificates, to mark their lifetime membership in Alpha Eta. Representing the CSD, HEA, KIN, NTD, and SMD Departments (including the PAS Program) within the College of Health Sciences, these individuals demonstrated academic excellence and leadership potential. Also honored at the ceremony were staff and faculty members identified by the student inductees into Alpha Eta as people who had made a powerful difference for them. These individuals received certificates of appreciation.

# SARA HASSAN (HCM) RECOGNIZED AS CAMPUS-WIDE 2022-23 OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT

The WCU Student Leadership Outstanding Graduate Student Award recognizes a graduate student leader who has made extraordinary contributions to their scholarly, campus, and/or wider communities. The recipient should demonstrate strong leadership skills through such activities as peer mentoring, teaching, research, publishing creative work, and service, employment and/or participation in professional association activities.



## Excerpts from faculty recommendation letters included:

"Sara is a leader who takes initiative and welcomes collaboration. A leader with a vision. A dependable leader. An impactful leader. As President of MPH SAB, Sara has connected students, faculty, and staff within the Department of Health through various events and activities that foster belonging and collegiality. Sara has also connected MPH SAB with the broader university and external and global community through, for example, the panel discussion on The Health & Human Rights of Refugees & Migrants which was held virtually on Friday, February 17th, 2023. Sara conceptualized the idea and then worked collaboratively with the WCU Muslim Student Association, the English Department, and the Peace and Conflict Department to recruit prominent panelists in the U.S. and abroad to explore the current state of refugee communities."

"Participation in the Healthcare Leadership Network of the Delaware Valley case competition was even more challenging given that it was delivered virtually, however, Sara and her teammate's performance was the by far the strongest of the five teams who entered the competition. The presentation made special emphasis for how the product could serve the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals of the company and other health care systems. Sara and her teammate were awarded first place, with judges commenting on their presentation's clarity and attention to detail."

"Sara has been a standout student while handling multiple professional and work commitments simultaneously. She is an excellent writer and researcher and can synthesize complex peer-reviewed articles when completing writing assignments."

"Sara exemplifies our program values of inclusivity and community engagement in her leadership role as President of our MPH Student Advisory Board. It is a joy to work with someone holding a unique blend of talents and strength in vision. She demonstrates extraordinary adaptive leadership skills that mobilize others."

# DESIREE HARRIS (CH) AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP, SERVICE, AND ADVOCACY



Graduate coordinators partner with the WCU Graduate Council and the Graduate Student Association twice a year to acknowledge excellence in our graduating students at WCU. Faculty nominate and choose one student in the MPH program who is graduating in May (and one student in December) to acknowledge in one of the three categories including: 1. In the Field, 2. In Scholarship and Creative Activity, and 3. In Leadership, Service, & Advocacy.

**"Desiree's leadership and advocacy pursuits have intersected with public health, student success & belongingness, and cultural competency. We have no doubt her collaborative and adaptive leadership skill set will serve her well in her DrPH program at Morgan State University and in practice!"**

## **Interview with Desiree:**

After completion of my MPH degree, I will be attending Morgan State University to obtain my Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) in Community Health & Policy. What drove me to pursue public health was the variability within the field. I am very passionate about lessening the racial disparities in health care through education and promotion. I've lived in areas that vary greatly in racial demographics and seen the difference in opportunities for treatment. I hope to make a difference in the areas of incarceration and ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) in the Black community.

Currently, I am interning with Penn Medicine's Center for Addiction Medicine and Policy. It has been a fantastic experience. I am learning many in-the-field skills, which has deepened my passion for continuing to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. I have been inspired by the professors at WCU to continue my education and enhance my professional skills to make a difference in my community. I am continuing my education to obtain my DrPH to gain an advanced level learning in the areas of community engagement, health planning, and social/ behavioral factors in public health.

Some ask if obtaining a DrPH is different than pursuing a PhD. Yes, a DrPH aims to equip you with the skills and knowledge to work as a leader or administrator in a variety of practice-based settings within the public, private, and academic sectors, while a PhD is designed for a career in research and/or academia. Some advice I would give anyone considering pursuing a doctorate is to research every program and try to speak with current/past students. Personally, I will have to work throughout my program, and I found it important to choose a program that will not only support my future career goals but also support me as a working student.

# MAITIYA MEADOWS (ACCEL. MPH-CH) AWARDED 2022-23 VIRTUE SCHOLARSHIP

The WCU Virtue Scholarship is awarded to a student accepted into the Master in Applied Ethics or Master of Public Health program who demonstrates financial need and interest in the intersection between ethics and public health.



## **Interview with Maitiya:**

As a graduate assistant with Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago, I have been exposed to a plethora of public health administrative, research, and service activities. I assist in scheduling meetings and panels for undergraduate public health students in which I am able to connect with public health professionals.

I am currently working on recruitment for a project focusing on understanding essential caregiving practices in high-risk adolescent and young mothers in PA. I am also connected with Dr. Tinago's other graduate assistants regarding global health practices (e.g., rabbit farming in Uganda) and how their work and research can be applied in the U.S. and vice versa.

Ethical principles are applied to any research project. As researchers, we need to have a certain level of competence when it comes to working in these different communities. It is important to respect participants, whether it be through in-person interactions, surveys or questionnaires, providing beneficence when it comes to making efforts to secure participants well-being while conducting research, and being fair with selection of participants with certain projects. These values and practices can not only be applied in global research, but any type of research dealing with human participants.

# MPH STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

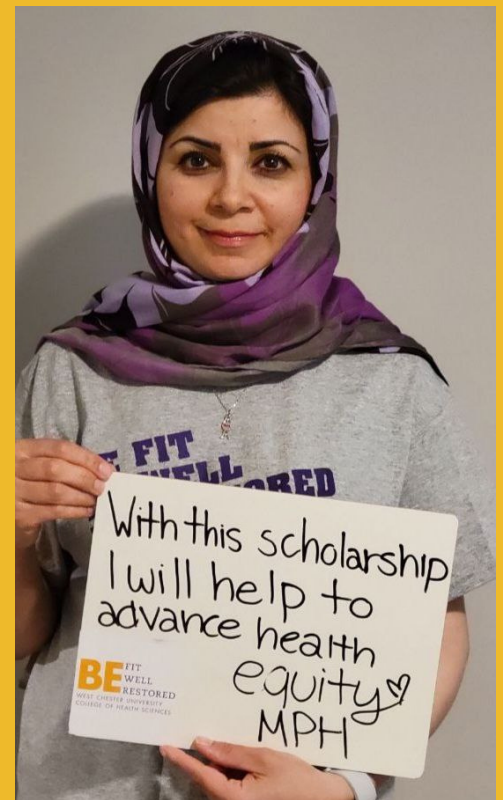


## Elizabeth Rivera (Accel. MPH-CH) 2023 Alice Lawson Scholarship Winner

Elizabeth Rivera is the recipient of the 2023 Alice Lawson Scholarship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This scholarship fund was created in 1998 by the AAUW West Chester-Chester County Branch to recognize Alice Lawson's commitment to the mission and values of AAUW, the nation's leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls. The purpose of this fund is to provide educational scholarships to women from Chester County with special needs and circumstances.

## Zahra Abbasi Nasrabadi (MPH-CH) 2023 Russell L. Sturzebecker Scholarship Awardee

Zahra Abbasi Nasrabadi is the recipient of the 2023 Russell L. Sturzebecker Scholarship. In collaboration with the Sturzebecker Foundation, WCU offers the Russell L. Sturzebecker Scholarship to students in College of Health Sciences degree programs. The scholarship program is intended for high achieving undergraduate and graduate students who hold a minimum 3.25 GPA and have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours at WCU.





# WCU ALUM CH AWARDED 2022 EXEMPLARY CHARACTER AWARD AT POTTSTOWN HOSPITAL

**Can you tell us a little about your role and this organization? What inspired you to work at Pottstown Hospital?**

Pottstown Hospital is a non-profit hospital that serves the tri-county area of Berks, Chester, and Montgomery counties. Our primary service area covers urban, suburban, and rural communities. My specific duties as a Community Navigator include screening Medicaid and Medicare patients for the social determinants of health who are referred to me by our emergency department, case management, and local family practice staff; coordinating the referral process to health, human, and social service partners; and following up with patients to ensure the continuity of care.

I was referred to this position from a colleague within the MPH program. After learning more about the position and the community of Pottstown, I decided this role was the right fit for me. I wanted to assist disadvantaged members of the community and help close some health equity gaps.



**JAMES KAUFFMANN, MPH, CHES, COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR,  
POTTSTOWN HOSPITAL – TOWER HEALTH**

**How do you and your team help to support continuity of care post-hospital discharge for patients?**

To support the continuity of care post-hospital discharge, I provide monthly follow ups to patients until their social determinant of health needs are resolved. I also send referrals out to community service partners using a HIPAA compliant database. This database allows us to close the referral loop by having the ability to communicate with our service partners. We know if a patient was able to be connected to a program or service because someone from that organization is on the other end reaching out to them and responding to the referral in real time. Our hospital, along with other community partners, runs Montgomery County's Street Medicine Program. This program brings healthcare and other critical services to our homeless community members. If I encounter a patient who is unhoused, I can connect them with our Street Medicine team and know they will be in good hands



**What tips do you have for those applying for roles like yours?**

My tip for those applying for roles like mine is to do some research on the community you may be working with so that you can start to develop an understanding of potential service gaps, inequities, and health disparities. As a non-profit hospital, we must complete a community health needs assessment every three years. Reviewing that helped me to understand the dynamics of the community so that I could be prepared for my role as a Community Navigator. I recently received my CHES certification at the end of 2022. Sitting for my CHES certification helped to enhance the skillset needed for this role. Moreover, it has opened doors for me to take on additional responsibilities within the hospital, our department, and other work I am involved in.

**What tips do you have for students in the MPH program? What about the MPH program helped you the most on your professional journey?**

One tip I have for students in the MPH program is to network. Networking has gotten me to where I am today and has helped me to advance my career and experiences in public health. Another tip I have is to engage in non-academic experiences, such as volunteering, that relate to your specific public health track. Engaging in these experiences can help you apply what you are learning while in the MPH program. Additionally, it can be a great opportunity to network! My professors during my time in the MPH program helped the most with my professional journey. They always pushed everyone to do their best work and would take extra time to ensure the class understood the topics they were covering. They taught me many valuable skills to use in the public health field as my professional journey continues.

## INTERVIEW WITH MPH EH ALUM

### LT PAULA MORGAN, MPH, CSP, CPH, REHS/RS

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER, INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

***Briefly describe your current agency, role, and a meaningful moment on the job.***

I am currently the Environmental Health Officer for the Indian Health Service located in Utah. A meaningful moment I've had on the job is when I conducted a community assessment related to syringe disposal and was able to connect with the individual tribal communities on their needs and hear their stories.



***How did the MPH program prepare you for your current position? What other training or continuing education did you find beneficial to your role?***

The MPH program prepared me for my current position by the variety of classes offered in the Environmental Health track. The classes covered the basics related to industrial hygiene, general environmental health, and toxicology that I was able to build on with additional training and education. I found additional training in food safety & sanitation, safety, and environmental topics such as waste management, air quality, and water quality extremely useful.

***What is your biggest tip to current MPH-Environmental Health students?***

Public health and environmental health are not a linear field, are squiggly and there are always facets to learn about. You may find some classes more appealing than others or have a clear idea of what you want to pursue career-wise after the program, but just remember that as you grow in your professional career, it is okay to branch out into other areas and gain additional skills & expertise.

***From your unique lens, what are the critical training needs for public health & environmental health professionals to best promote health and health equity to the diverse populations your agency serves?***

In my experience, the critical training needed to best promote health and health equity to rural populations would include the ability to complete and interpret community environmental health assessments including training & education to underserved populations on topics that directly affect them, on a level they can understand with cultural competence. Every area is different with their needs and capabilities, but being able to adapt and utilize your expertise to complete a needs assessment and determine required resources in a culturally valid way is vital to the initial steps or promoting better health and equity.

# INTERVIEW WITH MPH HCM ALUM SHANAY WILLIAMS, MPH, CPHQ

**Can you tell us about your Manager of Quality Improvement role at Community Behavioral Health (CBH) in Philadelphia?**

I will start by answering what inspired me to work at CBH. I grew up in Pittsburgh, but my Dad is from Philly. I grew up spending most of my summer and winter in Philly and fell in love with this city. I knew since I was in high school that I wanted to live in this city when I got older. Before my time at CBH, I worked in the quality department for a special needs facility in the surrounding Philadelphia suburbs. While working there, I started to find that I have a love for quality improvement and performance evaluation. So, when I started to look for a new job, I knew I wanted to combine my love for the city of Philadelphia, behavioral health, and quality.

As the Manager of Quality Improvement, I work with my team to lead the organization through multiple large quality projects, such as monitoring and creating interventions surrounding HEDIS Measures, Performance Improvement Plans, and internal quality projects. We also have organizational-wide quality training for all departments across CBH. Our goal is to improve the quality of care for members who are served by CBH to ensure that we are providing the best behavioral health care possible.

**Mental health is a public health issue. From your lens, what are some of the key social determinants of mental health that we as public health professionals should be working to address in practice?**

As a public health professional working in behavioral health, we need to make sure that we are listening to the needs of those we are serving. There are simple things we can do that can make a huge impact on our members' lives, such as making sure that we have the appropriate translation services, transportation, and communication plans in place. Furthermore, I believe that providing stable housing for folks is a great foundation for those who are working on their behavioral health journey.



**What tips do you have for students in the MPH program? What about the MPH program helped you the most on your professional journey?**

I would tell students who are interested in entering behavioral health to look at their options. Many aspects of behavioral health care may not be talked about often. When I started my program at West Chester, I did not even know what healthcare quality improvement was. So basically, don't be afraid to try something new! Also networking and chatting with others in the field can really help you figure out exactly what you want to do in the behavioral health field. For me, my Applied Learning Experience was my gateway into healthcare quality and quality improvement. My ALE project was around improving quality at a behavioral health facility, and I fell in love with the process of quality. If I never completed my ALE experience, I do not think I would have found my way to healthcare quality improvement. As a person who loves data, evaluation, and behavioral health, I was able to find the perfect job at CBH in the Quality Improvement Department after receiving a solid foundation from the West Chester University MPH Program.

**An increasing number of students and alum are interested in applying their MPH skill set for organizations that support mental health & wellness. What tips do you have for those applying for roles like yours?**

My undergraduate degree was in psychology, and I worked in the behavioral health field as a Behavioral Health Tech before taking on a quality role. I think that it is important to have some on-the-ground experience with those you want to work with before transitioning into more of a leadership role. I also decided to get the Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ) certification. I would highly recommend this certification because it provided a solid ground foundation for my knowledge in healthcare quality. Additionally, many quality-related positions are requiring that people have this certification, and it would help your resume stand out when applying for these roles. Before sitting for the certification, I took a class provided by NAHQ (National Association for Healthcare Quality), which I found that to be extremely helpful. I am working toward earning a Six Sigma Green Belt certification as well. I also find that I use a lot of the skills that I learned in my public health program in my current role at CBH. If I were to highlight a few classes that found particularly helpful, I would suggest Program Evaluation, Epidemiology, and Social and Behavioral Health Aspects of Health. I also recommend doing your Applied Learning Experience in Healthcare Quality so you can get a feel for how it feels in real-world practice.



**CAREER CORNER WITH  
MPH EH ALUM  
JUSTICE BUKARI LAMBON,  
MPH, REHS, CSP, CPH**

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER,  
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE,  
PARKER, AZ**

**Describe your current agency, role, and a meaningful moment on the job.**

I am currently a Commissioned Corps Officer in the U.S. Public Health Service detailed to the Indian Health Service (IHS) Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. Our mission is to enhance the health and quality of life of all American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level by eliminating environmentally related disease and injury. I serve as a technical consultant on matters relating to food safety, child and geriatric injury prevention to five Native tribes; namely Fort Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hualapai, Havasuapai and the Colorado Indian Tribes. I also provide OSHA training (on bloodborne pathogens, Hazcom, emergency action plan, etc.) to tribal head start and business establishments.

**How did the MPH program prepare you for your current position? What other training or continuing education did you find beneficial to your role?**

The MPH program has given me enough tools and foundation necessary to thrive in my current position. After graduating with MPH in environmental health, obtaining Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) credential placed me in a very good position.

**From your unique lens, what are the critical training needs for public health & environmental health professionals to best promote health and health equity to the diverse populations your agency serves?**

Communication and presentation skills are the most important training to have. Being able to present a health problem or ideas and push for an action requires a lot of convincing skill. One also needs to be culturally competent to communicate appropriately to diverse populations in IHS.

**What is your biggest tip to current MPH-Environmental Health students?**

Make sure to do at least one internship as well as volunteer work before you graduate. An internship gives you talking points that you can discuss during your job interviews. Finally, make sure to build relationships with your supervisors and colleagues during your volunteer work or internship since they will be called upon during reference checks.

# PODCAST WITH MPH ALUM ETHEL RICHARDS

Ethel Richards, MBA, MPH, CPH, LSSGB, PMP® is the founder and chief inspiration officer at iEatMorePlants, LLC. iEatMorePlants™ is anchored in generosity, passionate about people, and helping you reclaim your health and well-being one meal at a time. Ethel's personal mission is to live, and teach others, a life that honors the health and well-being of our bodies, our minds, and our emotions, emphasizing holistic nutritional health and wellness in tandem with social, financial, spiritual, occupational, environmental, and physical health and wellness.

**Interview with Ethel:** My podcast, In the Kitchen with the Plant Based Nutritionista™ is designed to build a community in health by bringing viewers & listeners into my kitchen to hear some of the candid conversations I have with my mentors, personal physicians, faith leaders, colleagues, and friends. We address all domains of wellness which includes not only nutritional and medical health but also financial, occupational, psychological, spiritual, physical fitness, and much more. Why? Because your health and wellness are complex and making decisions about your health and wellness is equally if not more complex. The In the Kitchen w/ The Plant Based Nutritionista™ podcast is just one of my avenues to reach my community at large, and more specifically my melanated brothers and sisters, to reclaim their health one meal at a time by addressing the realities of life, history, decisions, and the environments that lead to comorbid living. **Nutrition is the foundation of life**, no matter how we look at it, turn it upside down or inside out, it is the foundation of humanity's health status - and that is a fact.

We can argue the many reasons why we suffer from various diseases, but once all is said and done, there is **no reason that we should be suffering and dying from preventable diseases**. Period. My podcast, In the Kitchen w/The Plant Based Nutritionista™, is a safe space and place for my listeners and viewers to hear important conversations with people who look like me and them. We discuss all things health and wellness, which includes: how to navigate the health and medical care systems, the importance of speaking up for yourself and being your chief advocate, and most importantly the best ways to prevent and even reverse common chronic diseases.

**To my fellow alum and current students, you were born with a unique purpose, and only you know what that is.** Therefore, I encourage you to PAUSE in quiet confidence to lean into exactly what your purpose for existence is. You see, your God-given purpose positions you to impact and influence the world around you to make it a better place for both current and future generations, and while your scale may not be visible globally, it is our collective efforts that lend us as good global stewards and neighbors over our area of purpose and influence. That said, you must take the time to "write the vision and make it plain" so that others can see it and get on board. We are truly better together, and I believe we are the generation that can save our planet, demonstrate what it means to be good neighbors and global stewards, improve global relations, and especially turn the tide on all racial and social injustices that plague our world. And, it is up to each of us to become and remain resilient, own our purpose, defy the odds, do the work, speak truth to power, and never, never give up! Remember, we are better together and there are more than enough resources to go around, we were meant to live in harmony together. Let's share and do life together in love and kindness! Go Rams!



**My tagline is simple:** Here to inspire you to take your health back one meal at a time by eating more plants™! So, while planning my speaker series for 2023, it was a no-brainer to ask Dr. Gopal to be a part of this inaugural year. Dr. Gopal is brilliant, well-rounded, and stays on the cusp of evidenced-base medicine and research as well as all things global public health. In honor of National Public Health Week, I thought it fitting to begin helping my community understand the tenets of public health in very simple ways by starting with the basics. Dr. Gopal answers important questions including: 1. What is public health, 2. Why is public health important, and 3. How does public health show up in our lives every day? And then we bring the conversation home, right into my listeners and viewers' personal lives by discussing practical public health to help them understand what public health is and how it impacts our everyday lives. I concluded by inviting my listeners and viewers to join me in celebrating National Public Health Week by joining Team iEatMorePlants™ for the annual Keep it Moving Challenge in partnership with the American Public Health Association.

For those wondering why movement is important in taking your health back one meal at a time by eating more plants™, it is because our gut health and movement are directly connected to our mental health - a hot topic this decade. In fact, I coined and trademarked the phrase and/or formula to help you remember the connection, and it's simply: **Gut Health + Movement = Mental Health™**.

You are invited to subscribe to my YouTube Channels: @iEatMorePlants™ and @ThePlantBasedNutritionista™ to be among the first to be notified as each podcast drops. You can also head over to my website [www.EthelRichards.com](http://www.EthelRichards.com) or [www.iEatMorePlants.com](http://www.iEatMorePlants.com) to learn more about my purpose, what I'm up to, and to follow me across my socials.



## LEAH CALLWOOD (HCM) FEATURED IN KYW RADIO INTERVIEW ABOUT ADVOCACY FOR MATERNAL HEALTH RESOURCES

**Thank you for being an advocate for equitable maternal health services and policy. Can you describe your experience being interviewed by KYW Newsradio about advocacy for maternal health resources?**

I enjoyed being able to advocate for a health issue I am highly passionate about, while bringing awareness to the lack of access of maternal healthcare resources in a specific region. Being given the opportunity to speak on the significance of midwifery care from a personal perspective was delightful. I was hopeful that my interview was able to inform other pregnant women of alternative options for maternity care. **For the full radio interview, go to: <https://www.audacy.com/kywnewsradio/news/local/march-of-dimes-advocates-healthcare-access-mothers-babies>.**

**Can you chat about your practicum with the March of Dimes' national office and how it aligns with your professional values and career goals?**

I secured my ALE position at March of Dimes prior to completing the KYW interview. On my initial interview with my site supervisor, her colleague recommended that I participate in a March of Dimes event called March for Change. March for Change is a day when advocates from coast to coast meet with their state lawmakers to share the results of the March of Dimes 2022 Report Card and advocate in support of legislation that will help all families. As a result of my advocacy efforts for PA March for Change, the Maternal Infant Health Director for the Philadelphia region asked me if I wanted to do a radio interview the following day. The radio interview was just something I agreed to do on my personal time, but I'm glad I did.

In the Fall 2022 semester I took a policy in public health class. I wrote my first Op-Ed and policy analysis paper on poor birth outcomes in the state of Mississippi. I knew the fundamentals of policy, combined with maternal and infant health was what I wanted to focus on in my career. From then on, I discovered that the professional values that were most important to me were social justice, equality, commitment, and improvement. I knew I had to find an organization that aligned with what my career goals and professional values were. March of Dimes was that organization!

After I became a mother and went through my pregnancy journey it brought forth my passion for black maternal and infant health. March of Dimes has a commitment and mission to pass legislation that ensures every mom and baby is healthy regardless of wealth, race, gender, or geography. Their efforts to improve social justice, addressing health inequities, and engaging with policy makers on key maternal and infant health policy reform initiatives are the exact career goals that I look to be involved in my future public health professional career.

**What tips do you have for incoming MPH-HCM students?**

Attend any virtual panels or in person conferences that WCU offers. Attending these events can open your perspective on public health and healthcare management. These panels or conferences can be helpful in finding out what you want your career path to be and how to get your foot in the door. It may even help you figure out your passion. It's a great opportunity to network and possibly create opportunities for your applied learning experience when the time arrives. I'd also recommend incoming students to view each class you take as an opportunity to learn more about your interests. The public health field offers a variety of career paths and it's sometimes easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of options. Take your time in learning and reflecting after each semester. You never know what you could discover about yourself!



**Advocates pushing for more access to maternal, infant health care in Pa.**

Advocates with March of Dimes want state lawmakers to enact policies that would increase access to quality, high-value health insurance, and programs...



# **INTERPROFESSIONAL EVENT SUCCESSFUL**

## **400+ PARTICIPANTS JOINED**

The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), in one of its 22 Foundational Competencies for the Master of Public Health (MPH) program, has included the need for Interprofessional Education (IPE). Competency #21 requires the MPH program curriculum to integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health. To meet the requirements of this competency, all MPH students are required to enroll in a semester-long course, Interprofessional Practice in Public Health, offered every spring semester. During the course, the students learn about the four competencies pertaining to: 1. Values and Ethics; 2. Roles and Responsibilities; 3. Communication; and 4. Teams and Teamwork. These four competencies are set forth by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC).

In addition, the students enrolled in Interprofessional Practice in Public Health are provided the opportunity to participate in a virtual three-hour Interprofessional Education Learning Event. This semester, the learning event was held on Tuesday, April 18th. The event brought together over 400 students and faculty from various disciplines including public health, social work, nursing, communication sciences and disorders, school counseling, nutrition, exercise science, sports medicine, and physician assistant studies.

A site on D2L (our Online Learning Platform), Interprofessional Event 2023, was created and made available to all students who participated in the event. The content included videos on each discipline with focus on their roles and responsibilities, and additional videos that related to other IPEC competencies. A case study, along with a framework for analysis, and additional resources relevant to the analysis were provided to the students. They also completed a pre-event questionnaire (pre-test) that had been pre-approved by the Institutional Review Board at West Chester University.

During the virtual event on Zoom, students initially assembled to receive agenda and instructions. Thereafter, all students were assigned to one of five subgroups with a faculty lead. Within each subgroup, 9-10 breakout rooms were created with 8-9 students from different disciplines assigned to each breakout room. Each group, after introduction of members, analyzed the case and developed plausible solutions that they shared with their subgroup through short presentations. Finally, all subgroups came together to share and learn from one another the key themes that emerged from presentations made in each subgroup.

The participants completed a post event questionnaire (post-test). Overall, it was a successful event, with excellent ideas put forth by students to address the issues presented in the case study. Faculty from different disciplines facilitated the event and later discussed in depth what worked well and what could be changed for next year's event.

Our MPH students immersed themselves in this experiential learning event on interprofessional collaborative care and moved one step closer to graduation!

# MPH ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH EQUITY IN COATESVILLE, PA

## Let's Talk: Community-Designed Solutions Series

The Alliance for Health Equity (The Alliance) is a nonprofit community-based foundation serving the City of Coatesville which struggles disproportionately compared to Chester County as a whole. The mission of The Alliance is to advance a more equitable, resilient, and healthy Greater Coatesville community. The Alliance's Let's Talk: Community-Designed Solutions series aims to influence systemic racism and discriminatory practices by challenging individuals to identify solutions to Coatesville's pressing needs relating to health, well-being, education, employment, housing, and economic redevelopment.

The Alliance is looking for interested individuals/teams on May 18 and June 15 to present a five-minute discussion on solutions to Greater Coatesville's pressing needs relating to the above Social Determinants of Health. Each session will distribute five prizes ranging from \$500 - \$2,500 for selected ideas, and allow the opportunity for partnerships, connections, and potential for idea implementation. **To submit your solution, visit <https://alliancehealthequity.org/community-voice/>. Register [HERE](#) to attend a session and vote on innovative community solutions!**



Upper: Ragha Mohan (MPH-CH student) won 3rd place for her Buddy Program idea; Lower: James Kauffman (MPH-CH alum) won 1st place for his idea to bring the Street Medicine program to Coatesville.



## Career Chat with Alyssa Kotzmann, MPHc, Development & Communications Manager



"My name is **Alyssa Kotzmann** and I began at The Alliance in September 2021 after graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health at West Chester University. My role is to manage and execute the coordination of community and donor events, coordinate individual, company, and funder engagement strategies for donations/investments, lead grant writing efforts, and implement The Alliance's communication strategy. I began WCU's MPH program with a focus in Health Care Management in the Fall of 2022 to build on my skills of leading, engaging with communities, and serving with a purpose in my field. Classes such as Health Care Management, Social Behavioral Aspects of Public Health, Advocacy and Quality of

Health Care Services have greatly improved my abilities in the public health profession as well as supported the advancement of our organization. As a student of the Health Department at WCU for now 6+ years, I am confident that the public health faculty and programs supply students with ample support, resources, and learning to shape and empower equity-focused health care professionals."

**Congratulations to the Dept of Health team (Drs. Zeinab Baba, Heather Edelblute, & Stacie Metz) for being selected to provide evaluation services to the Equity Health Center in Coatesville.**



# WCU MPH STUDENTS WIN BEST POSITION PAPERS AT THE AMERICAN MOCK WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 2023 CONFERENCE



**Naya Weeks** (MPH-Community Health) and **Elizabeth Rivera** (Accelerated MPH) participated in the American Mock World Health Organization (AMWHO) Conference from April 14th – 16th, 2023 at UNC Chapel Hill in Chapel Hill, NC. The topic of this year’s conference is “Planetary Health and the Human Condition: Recognizing, Addressing, and Rectifying the Interdependence Between the Earth and Human Health.” Both students participated as delegates representing a country where they debated policy, wrote a position paper, and worked collaboratively with other delegates to draft a resolution paper to present to the actual WHO Assembly in Switzerland. Naya and Liz both won the best position paper awards for their regions. Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago serves as the faculty advisor for students participating in the AMWHO conference.

## **Best Abstract Award**

Garba Rimamskep Shamaki, MD, **Chiwoneso B. Tinago, PhD, MPH, CHES**, Favour Markson, MD. Age-Cohort disparities in Pregnancy-related cardiovascular outcomes among black women in the United States. Research and oral presentation at the Association of Black Cardiologists Conference Dr. Jay Brown Best Abstract Competition in New Orleans, LA, March 3-4, 2023. Winner, Best Abstract.

# WEST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP WINS 2023 GOVERNORS AWARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE



(Submitted Photo)

On Wednesday April 12, West Goshen Township was awarded the 2023 Governors Award for Local Government Excellence in the Health and Wellness category for their achievements in sustainability. The awards ceremony took place at the State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Those present to receive the award were Township Supervisors Ashley Gagné, Tinamarie Smith and John Hellmann, Township Manager Chris Bashore, and Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) members **Melanie Vile** and Susan Charkes (Daily Local News, 2023)

“It is an incredible honor to receive this award from the Governor and the Department of Community and Economic Development in Pennsylvania,” Gagné said. “On behalf of the entire Board of Supervisors, Township and Sustainability Advisory Committee, I thank the Governor and the selection committee for recognizing West Goshen’s achievements in Sustainability ( Daily Local News, 2023)

“What began as the West Goshen Sustainability Task Force, a small grassroots group of only a few volunteers, has grown into a Township Committee that is moving mountains. I couldn’t be more proud of the work that each and every committee member has put in to achieve this milestone....When the community comes together—and when we combine our talents and our shared vision for a more sustainable future– we can achieve great things.” (Daily Local News, 2023)

West Goshen will be celebrating its second year as an officially recognized Tree City USA with a reforestation planting at Hamlet Crest Park organized by the Sustainability Committee. The event is open to the public (Daily Local News, 2023)


# ECOSYSTEM SERVICES OF WEST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP PARKS PRESENTED ON RESEARCH DAY ON APRIL 21ST

## Ecosystem Services of West Goshen Township Parks: Why Tree Canopy Cover Matters

Gillian Perrotta<sup>UG</sup>, Dante Fruncillo<sup>MPH</sup>, and Bakr Salman<sup>MPH</sup>  
 Department of Health, West Chester University, West Chester PA, 19383

### Introduction



- Parks and their associated trees are important to both public and planetary health.
- Yet park design is usually planned from an economic perspective (e.g., mowing vs. a stream's edge as opposed to maintaining a riparian buffer).
- Park design should be directed to achieve specific ecosystem services (Fig. 1) that are equally accessible to all demographics.
- We conducted a survey of percent tree canopy cover, and calculated carbon (C) sequestration annually and total C storage in trees in West Goshen Township (WGT) Parks to help guide future improvements to all 14 parks (Fig. 2). Forestry experts recommend at least 30-40% tree canopy cover.



### Results



WGT Park	Area (acres)	Tree Canopy Cover (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest Land Cover (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest Cover Class
1. Community Park	32.0	35.2	54.2	Grass
2. Stonybrook Park	22.2	35.4	11.2	Grass
3. Coopersmith Park	15.2	64.3	33.1	Grass
4. Barker Park	11.5	53.8	43.7	Grass
5. Bob Elder Park	5.3	52.1	38.1	Grass
6. REI Skate Park	3.3	0.1	90.8	Impervious
7. Cloud Park	3.2	42.1	54.2	Grass
8. Hamlet Crest Park	2.2	21.9	46.0	Grass
9. Fresh Meadows	2.2	0.05	99.1	Grass
10. Bickling Park	1.9	57.1	38.1	Grass
11. REI Dog Park	0.6	9.3	14.9	Bare Soil
12. Peck Pike Park	0.5	8.0	55.1	Grass

### Discussion


- WGT Park trees provide \$ in ecosystem services every year, and professionals in the field suggest 30-40% tree canopy cover.
- 6 of the parks have achieved more than 40% tree canopy cover, yet all of the 14 parks surveyed have significant grass cover.
- You may be wondering why grass, while green, is not desirable. It is, of course, more desirable than concrete, but green lawns have a host of negatives. Grass lawns are expensive, unsustainable, and poor investments, especially if you employ fertilizers, herbicides, etc.
- Maintaining grass lawns increases greenhouse gasses, pollutes ecosystems, wastes water, and diminishes biodiversity, and decreases native pollinator populations.
- While the amount of C collectively stored in WGT parks is commendable, a subset of parks surveyed clearly need a substantial investment in tree plantings to ensure the health and well-being of WGT residents.

### Methods

- We used i-Tree Canopy to quantify tree canopy cover for 14 WGT parks (Figure 2) by defining the assessment area from an aerial photo on Google Maps™.
- We classified the land cover class (e.g., trees, grass, impervious road, etc.) of each randomized point until we achieved a sample size of at least 1000 points.
- We ground truthed i-Tree Canopy data with diameter at breast height (dbh) measurements for all trees in a subset of parks.
- We calculated the ecosystem service of carbon (C) sequestered annually in trees and total C storage. Amount of C sequestered is based on 1,365 T of C, or 5,005 T of CO<sub>2</sub>, per ac/yr and rounded. Amount of C stored is based on 34,281 T of C, or 125,697 T of CO<sub>2</sub>, per ac and rounded. Value (USD) is based on \$170.55/T of C, or \$46.51/T of CO<sub>2</sub>, and rounded. English units: T = tons (2,000 pounds), ac = acres).
- We calculated pounds of air pollutants prevented and gallons of storm water runoff avoided.

### Recommendations

- Our reconnaissance of WGT parks and data collected suggest that there is space to expand tree canopy coverage.
- One example is the Robert E. Lambert skate and dog park where tree cover is sorely needed. Pooches need shade too!
- Using the recommended 40% tree canopy coverage, tree plantings are suggested for WGT Community Park.
- Hamlet Crest, Robert E. Lambert Skate and Dog Park, Paoli Pike and Fresh Meadows Park.



### Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge our faculty advisor, Dr. Melanie Vile for her help and guidance throughout this research project.

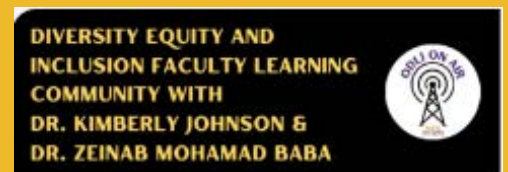
Gillian Perrotta, an undergraduate Environmental Health Major, along with MPH alumni Dante Fruncillo (EH) and Bakr Salman (EH) presented their work on estimating carbon storage and tree canopy cover in West Goshen Township Parks at the Research Symposium, April 21, 2023, West Chester University. Their data will help WGT target areas that need tree plantings to improve ecosystem services in West Chester and the surrounding area.

# FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Dr. Chiwoneso Tinago** (Principal Investigator) was awarded a Faculty Professional Development Council (FPDC) Grant, \$7,213, for a study titled Understanding essential caregiving practices in high-risk adolescent and young mothers in Pennsylvania. The project will begin in June 2023 in collaboration with the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County and the University of South Carolina. MPH students Naya Weeks and Maitiya Meadows are graduate research assistants on this project.

**Dr. Zeinab Baba** and Dr. Kimberly Johnson were interviewed on a podcast to share their experience developing and facilitating a **Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Learning Community** for faculty who teach in the College of Health Sciences at West Chester University. This podcast is hosted by Jessica Drass and Dr. Tom Pantazes. Check out this podcast on Spotify.



**Dr. Rebecca Rich** was awarded the 21st Century Health Education Practice Scholarship at the March Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) conference in Atlanta. This award recognizes health education specialists and practitioners for their contributions to health education but also provides financial support to attend the SOPHE Annual Conference in the spring or the Advocacy Summit in the fall. Dr. Rich presented two research projects at the Annual Conference. The first was an oral session titled Using Feminist Pedagogy to Create an Inclusive Sex Education Classroom. This was research that Dr. Rich conducted this academic year with the help of MPH student and graduate assistant, Leah Frantz. The second paper titled Evaluation of an Inaugural Interactive College Student Well-Being Expo was also presented with Leah Frantz. Drs. Heather Edelblute and Zee Baba were co-authors as well. Dr. Rich serves on the PA SOPHE Executive Committee as the National Delegate.



# SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

## Publications

Makau-Barasa, L. K., Ochol, D., Yotebieng, K. A., Adera, C. B., & de Souza, D. K. (2022). Moving from control to elimination of Visceral Leishmaniasis in East Africa. *Frontiers in Tropical Disease*. 3, 965609. doi: 10.3389/fitd.2022.965609

McDonough, K. & Knight, E. (2023, March 1) Inequitable access to sport in juvenile justice across the US: Findings from a national survey. *Health Promotion International*. 38, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daac170>

Rich, R. & Frantz, L. (2023, March). Using Feminist Pedagogy to Create an Inclusive Sex Education Classroom. Oral session presented at the 73rd Annual Conference of the Society for Public Health Education, Atlanta, GA.

Frantz, L., Rich, R., Edelblute, H., Baba, Z., & Trogus, J. (2023, March). Evaluation of an Inaugural Interactive College Student Well-Being Expo. Round table session presented at the 73rd Annual Conference of the Society for Public Health Education, Atlanta, GA.

Vosburgh DJH, Cauda E, O'Shaughnessy PT, Sheehan MJ, Park JH, Anderson K. 2022. Direct-reading instruments for aerosols: A review for occupational health and safety professionals part 1: Instruments and good practices. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*. 19(12):696–705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15459624.2022.2132255>

Sheehan MJ, Vosburgh DJH, O'Shaughnessy PT, Park JH, Sotelo C. 2022. Direct-reading instruments for aerosols: A review for occupational health and safety professionals part 2: Applications. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*. 19(12):706–729. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15459624.2022.2132256>



# SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

## Presentations

Sankaran, G. (2023). Invited virtual panel presentation on Tips for success in the field of public health locally and globally as part of Connect & Mentor Series: An opportunity to meet and learn from professionals in the field of public health, organized by Student Healthcare Executives in collaboration with New York Medical College School of Health Sciences and Practice and Alumni Council on Thursday, April 27.

Sankaran, G. (2023). Invited virtual lecture on An Overview of COVID-19 Health Disparities in Developing Countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa in PH 340: Global Health course at Fort Lewis College, Colorado on Monday, March 27.

Sankaran, G. (2023). Invited virtual three-hour workshop on Area IV. Evaluation and Research, Area VII: Leadership and Management, and Area VIII: Ethics and Professionalism as part of the CHES Test Preparation Course, organized by The Green Group for Health Education Resources on Sunday, March 12.

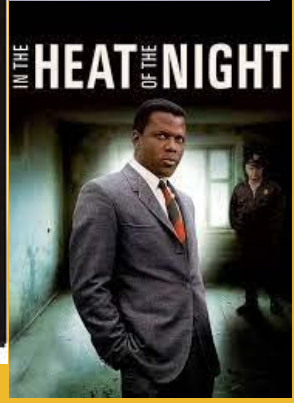
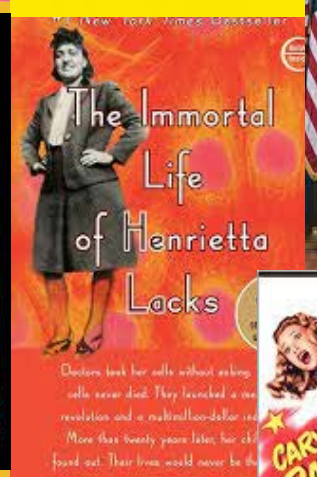
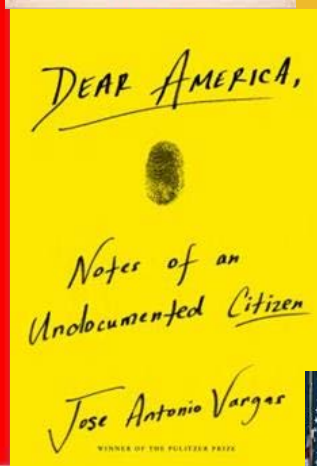
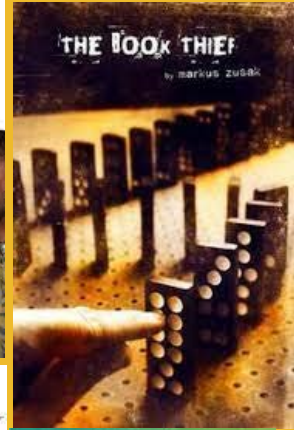
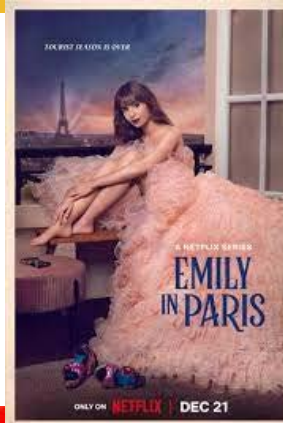
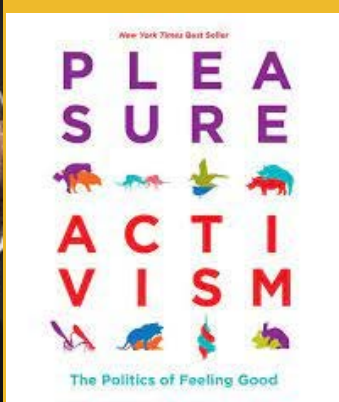
Sankaran, G. (2023). Invited virtual three-hour workshop on Area I: Assessment of Needs and Capacity as part of the CHES Test Preparation Course, organized by The Green Group for Health Education Resources on Sunday, March 12.

Sankaran, G. (2023). Invited participant to discuss The power of public health and its role in our everyday lives with Ethel Richards, MBA, MPH, CPH, LSSGB, PMP® on a videocast for National Public Health Week (April 3-9, 2023) prerecorded on Wednesday, January 11. Videocast is available on YouTube/@iEatMorePlants: <https://youtu.be/Nnvq8z9j8PQ> and YouTube/@ThePlantBasedNutritionista: <https://youtu.be/p4UQHT6S1HI>.

## Professional Development

Sankaran, G. (2023). Participant in The Committee for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) Book Club. Reviewed and discussed the text, Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom by Kelly A. Hogan and Viji Sathy, in three virtual sessions on Tuesday, February 21, Wednesday, March 22, and Wednesday, April 19.

# SUMMER FUN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MPH STUDENTS





Have a happy  
summer!

See you all in  
the Fall!!