

HealthCorps Happenings

March 2009

Young people pursuing careers in the health professions commit to a year of service with the Community HealthCorps at the Institute for Family Health.



Community
HealthCorps

Community HealthCorps at the Institute for Family Health

by Emma Meyer

Early last September, ten young people descended on 16th Street to begin a year of service as AmeriCorps Community HealthCorps members at the Institute for Family Health. They were recruited from

across the country to serve full-time on an Institute project under the supervision of an IFH staff member. This year's group is the third at the Institute, each led by Olivia Hare, Community HealthCorps program coordinator. HealthCorps is part of the largest national service program, AmeriCorps. The mission of HealthCorps is to improve access to health care for the underserved while developing tomorrow's health care professionals, a mission that resonates closely with that of the Institute itself. ■



Left: HealthCorps members serving food at Bronx Healthy Hearts Food Festival.

Annual AmeriCorps Kick-Off in Albany

by Margaret Crenshaw

In November, the HealthCorps team traveled to Albany for the Annual AmeriCorps Kick-Off Celebration. The all-day event at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center was designed to bring New York State's 1,300 AmeriCorps members from 46 programs together to share excitement about

their upcoming year of service. Speakers included New York State First Lady Michelle Paige Paterson and "I Have A Dream" Foundation President and CEO Iris Chen, a former Teach For America volunteer. Everyone offered us welcome words of encouragement and thanks for the work that we will be doing in the coming year. The day finished up with the AmeriCorps oath of service—a pledge that ends with the words, "I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond... I will get things done." ■



Left: HealthCorps members sport their new AmeriCorps tee-shirts in Albany.

Who We Are and What We Do

Jane Akhuetie

Diabetes educator at **Mt. Hope and Phillips Family Practices**

Margaret Crenshaw

Health educator and case manager at our **homeless sites**

Kalina Ehrenreich-Piot

Diabetes educator at **Mt. Hope Family Practice**

Melinda Fernandes

Mentor connection leader
Manhattan-Staten Island Area Health Education Center

Darcy Hamill

Outreach and CQI for cancer screening and **MyChart-MyHealth** programs

Elliot Johnson

Pharmacy assistance associate in the **Psychosocial Department**

Yonit Lax

Prenatal health educator at **Phillips Family Practice**

Emma Meyer

Depression educator and care manager at **Parkchester Family Practice**

Juviza Rodriguez

Health educator at **Washington Irving School-based Health Center**

Scott Smith

Program associate with **Bronx Health REACH**

Highlighted Service Project

More than Just a Haircut: Health Outreach at Local Barber Shops

by Scott Smith

Many men are a little stubborn when it comes to taking care of their own health. In an effort to change that trend, Bronx Health REACH, an initiative to eliminate health disparity led by the Institute for Family Health, partnered with the Black Barbershop Health Outreach Program to organize a free health screening and education event on November 15, 2008, at over 50 barber shops in all five boroughs of New York City. Largely organized by Bronx Health REACH's Community HealthCorps member **Scott Smith**, the event successfully screened over

200 men, and even a few women, for diabetes and hypertension in barber shops in the Bronx alone. Nine different shops in the Bronx opened their doors to 18 medical and non-medical volunteers to perform the screening and provide educational information to all customers. Volunteers included Community Health-Corps members **Margaret Crenshaw**, **Emma Meyer**, **Melinda Fernandes**, as well as program alum, **Ruchi Mathur**. The event was very well received by the community members as well as the barbers, who were vital in encouraging their clients to

have their blood sugar level and blood pressure checked. One customer, uninsured and unaware of being at high risk for diabetes, couldn't thank the volunteers enough for providing him with the resources he needed to seek further treatment and affordable health coverage. The Community Health-Corps will play a vital role in Bronx Health REACH's continuing work with barber shops and similar establishments to raise awareness about chronic conditions affecting the community. ■

Meet two of our members!

Kalina Ehrenreich-Piot



Title: Diabetes Health Educator

Job Description: "I work at Mt. Hope Family Practice one-on-one with patients and in group settings to provide education (mostly in Spanish) on dietary adjustments, laboratory follow-up consultation, and lifestyle management for the chronically ill. Outside of direct care, I'm working with Dr. Molina-Ortiz to both find and implement

successful ways to combat diabetes, especially among the high-risk populations we serve."

Best moment so far: "Seeing the excitement on the face of one of our patients after he was able to understand the combination of dietary and medication habits that have been exacerbating his circumstances and actively correct them. His A1C has recently dropped dramatically."

Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

"Working as a physician in an underserved community and having some time to work abroad with Médecins Sans Frontières or other organizations."

Favorite quote: "When all you have is a hammer, the whole world looks like a nail." ■

Margaret Crenshaw



Title: Homeless Health Care Case Manager and Outreach Coordinator

Job Description: "I work alongside the medical and social work teams to do case management (including insurance enrollment and appointment scheduling). I also do outreach to increase awareness of the services

we offer."

Best moment so far: "Running into a patient at the food stamp office and hearing about some of the steps he was taking to get his life back on track. Not only was it great to have someone to chat with in the crowded waiting room, it was good to hear the patient was taking the steps we had outlined for him."

Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

"Working as a family practice physician for an organization like the Institute. I plan to not only work as an advocate for the health of my individual patients, but also as an activist to increase access to care for the traditionally underserved."

Favorite quote: "Sometimes I can hear my bones straining under the weight of all the lives I'm not living." -Jonathen Safran-Foer ■

The editors of this newsletter are Olivia Hare (ohare@institute2000.org), Emma Meyer (emeyer@institute2000.org), and Myra Resnick (mresnick@institute2000.org). Please contact us with ideas, questions, or contributions. Thanks for reading!