2013 PUBLIC HEALTH HERO AWARDS RECEPTION
THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2013
FARRAGUT INNBALLROOM

Hosted by the
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
HEALTH SCIENCES (CEHS)
PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM

As part of

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK
April 1-7, 2013 :: www.nphw.org
**Student Honorable Mentions**

**Nishu Vora, MPH (c)**

Nishu Vora is currently a Global Health Track MPH candidate in the Touro University California Public Health Program and is working as a research assistant in the Oral Health Program. The Oral Health Program provides free dental services to the underserved population in the Vallejo, California area. Nishu currently works in the Public Health Program Office as an office assistant, helping faculty and staff with daily needs. He also works as a student research assistant with faculty in the TUC College of Osteopathic Medicine studying neuron formation in embryos and anti-inflammation medications’ effect on recurring heart attacks. Nishu serves on the Student Advisory Committee for the College of Education and Health Sciences as the MPH Class President. He is also the Director of Finance for the student-run Public Health Club at TUC. Nishu is also involved in a number of other TUC student public health community service projects and organizations and such as Tune-Up and the Student Run Free Clinic.

**Schedule of Events:**

11:00 a.m. - Welcome & Prayer
Rabbi Elchonon Tenenbaum
Opening Remarks
CEHS Dean Jim O’Connor
11:10 a.m. - Keynote Speech
Dr. Phil Gardiner
11:30 a.m. - Awards Ceremony
11:45 a.m. – Lunch
12:55 p.m. - Closing Remarks

**About the Award**

The Public Health Hero Award was originally established in 2007 in conjunction with the Day of Compassion. In 2010, the Public Health Hero Award aligned with Public Health Week. The purpose of the award is to honor students, faculty and community members who have demonstrated significant contributions and a commitment to public health service and research.

**2013 Public Health Heroes**

**Student Hero**
Armando Vallin, MPH (c)

**TUC MPH Alumni Hero**
Manu Multani, MPH

**Faculty Hero**
Annette Aalborg, DrPH, MPH

**Community Heroes**
Holly Garcia, MPH
Alameda County Medical Center
Vilma Aquino
Global Center for Success & Community Garden Project

**Student Honorable Mentions**
Mithu Bindal, MPH (c)
Nishu Vora, MPH (c)
Carol Quach, MPH (c)
Keynote Speaker

Phillip S. Gardiner, DrPH

Dr. Gardiner is a Public Health activist, administrator, evaluator and researcher. For the past 25 years, he has worked on studies ranging from Hypertension, Multiculturalism and AIDS, to Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Diabetes and Smoking. Dr. Gardiner received his Doctorate in Behavioral Sciences from the University of California at Berkeley, where he focused on Youth Violence as a public health issue. Throughout his research career, Dr. Gardiner has maintained his community activism to address racial disparities in health, through writing, organizing, evaluating and public speaking. For the past 15 years, Dr. Gardiner has lectured around the country on African American health disparities generally and menthol smoking in the Black Community, particularly. Currently, Dr. Gardiner is the Policy and Regulatory Sciences and Neurosciences and Nicotine Dependence Program Officer for the Tobacco Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP), University of California Office of the President. Dr. Gardiner is an adjunct faculty member in the Touro University California (TUC) Public Health Program, where he teaches a course on Health Disparities. Dr. Gardiner is also the leader of an independent consultation firm, Gardiner & Associates, whose main evaluation work has centered on health disparities. And lastly, Dr. Gardiner is Co-Chair of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (AATCLC), a group of Black professionals dedicated to fighting the scourge of tobacco impacting the African American community in California and Nationally.

Student Honorable Mentions

Mithu Bindal, MPH (c)

Mithu (Shika) Bindal is currently a Community Health Track MPH candidate in the Public Health Program at TUC. Shika has been involved in creating and delivering oral health education activities at Widenmann Elementary school since the October 2012. She was also a key author of an oral health abstract submitted to APHA on the association of self-esteem and proper oral health hygiene. Shika has been instrumental in the research and planning of a mental health as well as oral health grant proposals for Lincoln Elementary located in downtown Vallejo. She continuously strives to improve the lives of the underserved in the county of Solano by volunteering her services in various events.

Carol Quach, MPH (c)

Carol Quach is currently completing her MPH in the Global Health Track at the TUC Public Health Program. She recently raised funds from CEHS Student Council to purchase medical supplies for a Health Center in Siem Reap, Cambodia where she recently completed her Global Health field study last fall. Beyond completing her field study degree requirements, she was able to obtain funding to purchase band aids, gauze, and water heaters for the rural health center where conditions are such that local clinics lack many basic medical supplies. Carol raised $1,300.00, of which $500.00 was donated to the health center’s AIDS project, and $800.00 was used to purchase and donate medical supplies to their clinic.
Community Hero

Holly Garcia, RD, MPH

Holly Garcia is the Medical Home and Health Education Manager for Alameda Health System (AHS), Ambulatory Care Division. She is responsible for overseeing the transformation of the ambulatory clinics into patient centered medical homes. She also provides leadership for Health Education Department and facilitates many quality improvement initiatives. Her primary interests are in chronic disease prevention and management, including patient self management support; quality improvement; project management; and strategic planning. Her work focuses on improving the health and quality of life of underserved communities through individual and population-based services.

Prior to her services with AHS, Ms. Garcia served as the Health Services Manager for the Solano County medical clinics where she spearheaded Public Health’s Quality Management program, including a division-wide Quality Advisory Committee and a number of quality improvement projects. In addition, she was instrumental in the development, implementation and evaluation of the clinic’s chronic disease management program. She also managed two federal grants – Ryan White (HIV) and Healthcare for the Homeless.

Ms. Garcia has served as a field study preceptor for the Public Health Program since 2007 in both Solano and Alameda counties. She has significantly contributed to the practical public health component for several students over the years, extending herself to ensure that students gain the necessary experiences to apply didactic knowledge in a public health setting. In spite of resource shortages which have reduced the numbers of employees at public health departments, Ms. Garcia has always made the time commitment to provide meaningful and substantive opportunities and train students in preparation for the public health workforce.

Student Hero

Armando Vallin, MPH (c)

Armando Vallin is completing his 2nd semester as an MPH student in the Global Health Track of the TUC Public Health Program. Prior to enrolling in the Public Health Program, Mr. Vallin taught elementary school for several years and spent the past 7 years working as a standardized patient trainer. In the short time since matriculating into the MPH Program, he has truly demonstrated his commitment to social justice as a framework for public health. With leadership and humility, Armando has been instrumental in creating and delivering oral health education activities at Widenmann Elementary; managing numerous aspects of the Public Health Program’s Evaluation of HHRSA funded School-based Oral Health Services Project in collaboration with the Solano Coalition for Better Health; and volunteering time on several other community based health initiatives in Vallejo. Armando’s passion for health equity is demonstrated in the enthusiasm and excitement he has for seeking ways to make a difference.

Alumni Hero

Manu Multani, MPH

Manu Multani received her MPH from TUC in 2012. She has been actively involved with providing access to wellness services for the medically underserved at San Francisco’s only safety-net hospital, San Francisco General Hospital. She is currently leading all efforts of program evaluation using tools she acquired from TUC. Her current position allows her to directly measure the impact of her program on the San Francisco community focusing on the patient experience, satisfaction, decreased social isolation and an improved perception of the hospital overall. She also co-facilitates a cancer support group for underserved populations in English and Spanish on a weekly basis, allowing her to fortify community cohesion for those dealing with cancer. While engaging in community organizing and providing a platform to hear patient’s voices, she also demonstrates strong leadership and skills in advocating for women’s empowerment and access to abortion services in the United States and internationally. Her constant involvement with underserved populations throughout the world promoting health and wellness demonstrates why she deserves the Public Health Hero award.
Faculty Hero

Annette Aalborg, DrPH, MPH

Dr. Aalborg has many years of experience developing, implementing and assessing family-school-community health collaborations and research studies focused on improving community capacity to solve community health problems with the goal of improving overall healthy developmental outcomes for low-income ethnically diverse children and families. She served as a Principle Investigator for a 5 year NIAAA random control trial of family-focused substance use prevention conducted in 4 SF Bay Area cities and delivering family intervention programs to over 600 families. During her 13 years as a Research Investigator at the Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente, she served as the Research Lead for Pediatric Weight Management Policies and Programs and was the PI for studies focused of neighborhood effects on childhood physical activity, pediatric obesity prevention interventions in health care, school and community settings and school/community based violence and depression prevention interventions. For the last 5 years, Dr. Aalborg has been a core faculty member of the Master of Public Health Program at Touro University California (TUC) and is Chair is the Community Health Track. Currently she is leading several community-based research studies all of which include MPH student researchers as part of the research team including: Community Transformation Grant (Community Initiative to Limit Consumption of Sugar Sweetened Drinks), Family-Based Weight Management Intervention: ENERGY (Latino/African-American families), Community Health Promoter Training Project and a Vallejo Elementary School Health and Fitness Intervention and is co-leads the HHRSA funded School-based Oral Health Services Project aimed at increasing access to oral health services for low-income children in Vallejo. Dr. Aalborg works closely with Touro MPH students to publish results of their capstone and community research efforts resulting in 5 peer reviewed student authored presentations at the American Public Health Conference held in October 2012 and one student peer review journal article.

Community Hero

Vilma Aquino

Vilma Aquino is the pioneering spirit behind the Vallejo People’s Garden. A resident of Mare Island, Vilma’s vision was to convert the vacant lot at the corner of East Poplar and Oscar Streets on Mare Island into a garden to grow organic fruits and vegetables for the homeless, provide a place for people to learn about sustainable gardening practices, and to grow friendship and community. The official ground breaking began fall of 2009. It took her about a year to raise the funds and go through the bureaucratic hurdles to start the 65 by 100 square foot garden, including getting approval from the land developer, as well as from historic building and toxic substances control departments. With community support, Ms. Aquino won a $25,000 grant by Nature’s Path Organic to start the garden. Almost a year and one growing season later, the garden has produced more than 600 pounds of vegetables. Between seven and 10 volunteers help her every Saturday tending the crops.

Ms. Aquino is mindful of the research which confirms that community gardens can play a significant role in enhancing the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being necessary to build healthy and socially sustainable communities. She is an inspiration to residents of Vallejo, CA.

Ms. Aquino has also been instrumental in the development of numerous programs with the Global Center for Success (GCS), a 501(c)(3) on Mare Island that provides supportive human services and programs to the homeless and needy. GCS helps with life skills training, health, and job skills training.