It’s that time of year when we reflect on what we are grateful for and we thank those around us for being in our lives. Pondering about gratitude during a pandemic brings this tradition to a whole new level. My goodness, do you remember when we were so excited about 2020 in late 2019? People were calling it the year of perfect vision. I never liked that expression as someone who has needed strong prescription eyeglasses since the age of four. It was also predicted that it would be a year that needed strong vision, a year that would require hard work and dedication, and a year to put important, actionable goals in place. Well ... maybe I shouldn’t have been so disturbed by the ‘perfect vision’ line. I had no idea what was in store for us.

This year I am grateful for all the remarkable, brave individuals who continue to put their health and the health of their families at risk in order to protect our communities. I am grateful for the daily walks we took as a family during which we laughed together, shared our fears and dreams, and made up our own names for local cats and dogs (Schnilly and Schnally are actually Bob Dylan and Carly Simon). I am grateful for this department for always stepping up to help those in need and for creating community initiatives to do so. I am grateful for dear friends and peer mentors who knew there were times when I just needed someone to listen or laugh at my bad jokes or just sit quietly with me (via zoom).

Soon it will be 2021. We will not be in the clear for a while. Let’s continue to grant free passes to each other every so often. Let’s also continue the incredible public health work that you are doing that I love to brag about in this newsletter.

Some of you may be fans of Mr. Alex Trebek, the long-time host of the game show Jeopardy. You probably know that Mr. Trebek passed away just a few weeks ago. In his recent autobiography, he includes a brief and meaningful section on education. His words are more eloquent than mine so I will close with them: “A good education and a kind heart will serve you well throughout your entire life. The more you know, the more knowledge you acquire ... the more you develop an understanding for other people ... You are never too old to learn. There’s a thrill connected to curiosity. Because curiosity leads to discovery. And there’s a thrill that comes with discovery.”

HPEB, I look forward to learning with you in the coming year. Stay safe, keep well, and be curious.

-Daniela Friedman
Congratulations are in Order

Masud Rahman, PhD candidate, received the Maternal and Child Health Graduate Scholarship for his research study for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Dr. Caroline Bergeron, HPEB alum, was selected as a new editorial board member of two academic journals: Journal of Applied Gerontology and Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention in Canada: Research, Policy and Practice.

Jennifer Mandelbaum, PhD candidate, was awarded the Dr. Rick Foster Leadership Award for her important public health work in diabetes, heart disease management, and childhood obesity in South Carolina.

Jenesha Nance, HPEB masters student, is the Fall 2020 recipient of the Butterfoss Community-Based Research Endowed Fellowship.

Dr. Dawit Alemu, HPEB alum, was recently offered a position as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Medicine at Ohio University.

We congratulate Gaby Armendariz and Akeen Hamilton, HPEB doctoral candidates, on their recent nuptials!

Funding News

Victoria Lambert, PhD candidate, won an NIH supplemental grant to support her dissertation research concerning cancer disparities among Latinos. Link
HPEB in the News

Shaena Rouse, MPH graduate, was featured on the Arnold School's website for her commitment to improving public health in South Carolina. Link

Dr. Brie Turner-McGrievy was highlighted on UofSC Arnold School social media for her partnership with GoHealio, discussing her NEW Soul study. Link

Drs. Ed Frongillo and Brie Turner-McGrievy received recognition on the Arnold School website for their recent R01 grants secured through the NIH for their food insecurity projects. Link

Dr. Yoojin Cho, HPEB alum, was featured in the Daily Gamecock for her studies surrounding cigarette packaging's effect on addiction. Link

Jessica Escobar-Algeria, PhD student, was recognized for her publication with Drs. Ed Frongillo and Christine Blake on how government officials behave during presidential transitions. Link

Dissertation and Practicum Presentations

Practicum Presentation:
Katie Fritch: Decreasing Outpatient Endoscopy Non-Attendance Rates - Johns Hopkins Ambulatory Surgery Centers Quality Improvement Project {November 2020}

Dissertation Proposal Defense:
Shiva Bhandari: Examining Homestead Food Production Program in Improving Production of Vegetable and Poultry, Related Practices, and Use of the Products in Nepal {October 2020}

Dissertation Defense:
Kimberly Butler Willis: Evaluation of a Clinic-Based Peer Navigation Program (PNP) for African Americans Living with HIV in South Carolina {November 2020}

Publications and Presentations


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Thank You HPEB!

This newsletter marks my last as HPEB’s student office assistant. Looking back on the past 2.5 years that I have spent in this department only brings a smile to my face. I never thought I would find such a warm and happy environment to surround myself in, and have the pleasure to call it work.

To every faculty, staff, and student whom I have worked with over these years, I am grateful for your support, patience, and kindness. I will have nothing but fond memories with this department to look back on, and for that I am eternally grateful!

Upon graduating in December, I hope to enter the workforce in some Public Health related capacity. I know that I will not stray far from this department, considering that I am hoping to continue my education within these walls (virtual or not).

Again, I extend my sincere appreciation for every member of our department for making an unforgettable impact on my undergraduate career.

-Grace Lewis

Please send submissions for News and Kudos to Pam Metz so that we can share and celebrate your work!
HPEB Discovery I 915 Greene Street Suite 563 Columbia SC, 29208
Tel: 803.777.7096
pmetz@mailbox.sc.edu

Soon-to-be HPEB graduates and alumni, please continue to keep in touch with us! Please also ensure your contact information is current with the Arnold School by updating your information here: Link