

## GSPH Alumnus Named Legacy Laureate

Wen-Ta Chiu received the University's highest honor this fall. Read about his family's multi-generational ties to GSPH. [PAGE 2](#)

## Dean Burke Elected to Institute of Medicine

Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg praises the achievement. [PAGE 10](#)

## One Book, One Community

Bringing students and faculty together over a good read. [PAGE 14](#)

The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health • **Fall 2009**

# PhoQ

PUBLIC HEALTH QUARTERLY

## TRAIL BLAZERS

Results of the Annual GSPH Career Survey

Assistant mental health planner, Alberta, Canada • Fellow, Emerging Leaders Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • Superintendent, Taipei Medical University-Shuang Ho Hospital • New Hampshire Department of Health • Chief of cancer studies, National Cancer Institute • Genetic counselor, Ohio State University • President of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Manila, Philippines • Medical statistician, U.S. Food and Drug Administration • Director, Howard University Cancer Institute • Preparedness coordinator, Virginia Department of Health • Nigerian Chief Health Planning Officer • CEO of Children's Hospital of UPMC • CEO of Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles • Deputy director of National Eye Health Education Program, National

in this **ISSUE**



4

## TRAIL BLAZERS

Results of the Annual GSPH Career Survey

## GLOBAL TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENTS PRESENT RESEARCH RESULTS



8

## DEPARTMENTS

- 1 Dean's Message
- 2 Alumni News
- 8 Student News
- 10 Faculty News
- 12 Center News
- 13 Events
- 16 Development
- 17 Photo of the Quarter



## EIGHTH ANNUAL TAKE A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL TO THE PEOPLE DAY

12

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN DONALD S. BURKE, MD

### Town and Gown: Academic Public Health Activism

Back in our early days, the GSPH dean was also the director of the Allegheny County Health Department. That kind of arrangement would probably be unworkable today; there are only 24 hours in a day. Nonetheless I have made it one of my priorities to maintain and strengthen the school's relationship with the county health department. The current director, Bruce Dixon, MD, is a member of the GSPH board of visitors, and last year I was appointed to the Allegheny County Board of Health, a nine-member governing board that advises the county health department director.

The Allegheny County Board of Health formulates rules and regulations intended to protect the public's health. Last summer the board considered proposed new guidelines on air toxics control. The current guidelines, implemented in 1988, are used by the county when it considers such things as permits for industrial operations that produce pollutants. Clearly, the makeup of the county's economy and the content of the county's air are not the same as they were 20-plus years ago. Therefore I thought it would be a useful exercise for the board to seriously consider and weigh the new proposed guidelines. But by an eight to one vote (I was the sole dissenter), the board decided to table the guidelines in favor of waiting for the state guidelines to be revised, which could take years. Furthermore, soon after that vote, the economy tanked, funding for the state Department of Environmental Protection was cut, and nearly all hope for a new state version of air toxics regulations was lost, at least in the near term.

Wanting to ensure that the issue received a full public airing, I enlisted past GSPH dean and environmental expert Bernard Goldstein to convene a half-day conference to discuss



air quality in Allegheny County. This conference was designed to be an academic session to shed more light on a topic that is a major health concern in Western Pennsylvania. The purpose of the conference was not to advocate for any specific set of regulations or guidelines, nor in any way otherwise supplant the role of the Allegheny County Health Department board, but just to help the board become informed. I was pleased that two-thirds of the membership of the board attended the conference. For a report on the conference and downloadable versions of presentations given, please visit [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/news.php?id=128](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/news.php?id=128).

I was pleased with the conference, a modest foray into academic public health activism. During the remainder of my tenure on the board I plan to use the academic and research resources of GSPH to continue to study and illuminate issues that are most important to the health of the citizens of Western Pennsylvania. I was the sole dissenting vote on the motion to table the proposed regulations not because I thought they were perfect. I simply thought we as a board could be better informed and more deliberative. This is an appropriate role for academia, to inform and educate on matters of public concern. We can serve both town and gown.

*Donald S. Burke*  
Donald M. Burke, MD



A Publication of the  
University of Pittsburgh  
Graduate School of Public Health

FALL 2009

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Linda Fletcher

CIRCULATION MANAGER  
Jill Ruempler

DESIGN  
Mizrahi, Inc.

PRINTING  
Hoechstetter

FOR INQUIRIES, FEEDBACK, OR  
COMMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:  
Linda Fletcher  
412-624-6325  
lfletcher@pitt.edu

PublicHealth Quarterly is published  
four times per year for the alumni and  
friends of the University of Pittsburgh  
Graduate School of Public Health.

PublicHealth Quarterly is printed  
on recycled paper using vegetable-  
based inks.



## WEN-TA CHIU IS NAMED A LEGACY LAUREATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

It is difficult to know for sure if the Chius are the only family to send three generations of students to GSPH, but it is a fair bet that they are the only three-generation GSPH family from Taiwan.



While in Pittsburgh to accept the Legacy Laureate award, Chiu presented a lecture titled The Public Health Implications of Helmet Laws in Taiwan. The entire lecture can be viewed at [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/lecturearchive](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/lecturearchive). Here Chiu is greeted by Lew Kuller, MD, DrPH, distinguished professor of public health and professor of epidemiology; and GSPH Dean Donald S. Burke, MD.

It began when Yung-Jsong Chiu, at the time a deputy superintendent of a provincial hospital, was appointed by the Taiwanese government to study in the United States. He graduated from the health services administration program in 1954. On his return, he was named superintendent and was later a senator in Taiwan. His son, Wen-Ta Chiu, also attended GSPH, earning an MPH in epidemiology in 1987 and a PhD in the same discipline in 1989. Now, a third generation is studying at GSPH. Jason Chiu, son of Wen-Ta, is a student in the Department of Epidemiology.

This October, Wen-Ta Chiu was named a Legacy Laureate of the University of Pittsburgh, the highest honor that the University bestows on its alumni. He returned to Pittsburgh to accept the award, and while here, he spoke about his family's ties to Pittsburgh and GSPH.

Chiu, who is a neurosurgeon, has had a career-long interest in injury prevention. "I was on a fellowship at Stanford," Chiu recalled about how he ended up studying at GSPH. "As a physician, I hadn't had any training in epidemiology, so I started searching for a program." Because of his father's ties to Pittsburgh, GSPH was his first choice. During his investigation of the epidemiology program here, he was introduced to Ron LaPorte, PhD, who at the time was an associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology. That introduction turned into a 22-year-long-and-counting relationship, first as teacher and student and later as colleagues who have published numerous papers together.

"My career here [at GSPH] changed me a lot," Chiu said. When he came to the U.S. to study, he was chief of neurosurgery at Taipei Medical University-Shuang Ho Hospital. When he returned with his GSPH degrees, he was named vice superintendent of the hospital. Four years later he was named superintendent. Later he was named vice president of Taipei Medical University and this past year was elected to the presidency of the medical university. "Many of Taiwan's top health officers have trained at the University of Pittsburgh," Chiu said. "Some of my classmates became presidents and superintendants of hospitals."

When it came time for Jason Chiu to choose a graduate program, his father advocated that he come to Pittsburgh. "I am very happy and proud that he chose to come here," he said. In addition to his son, Chiu has had five of his students in Taiwan matriculate here. "This is a good place to cultivate good people."

"Pittsburgh is my second hometown," Chiu said.

## GSPH ALUMNI SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the GSPH Alumni Society was held in conjunction with the GSPH alumni reception at the American Public Health Association meeting in Philadelphia. At the meeting, the following officers were elected to serve on the executive committee:

### President

Eric Hulsey (DrPH '08)

*(automatic election from vice president)*

### Immediate Past President

Kristi Riccio Festa, MPH '02

*(automatic election from president)*

### Vice President

Thomas Brindock, DDS, MPH '04

### Secretary/Treasurer

Linda Handley, MHA '89

*(two-year term)*

### Corresponding Secretary

Pat Wehman, MPH '02

*(not up for vote; serving second year of two-year term)*

### Members-at-Large

Lucas Musewe, DrPH '02

Charles Vargo, MHA '84



GSPH Alumni Society president Eric Hulsey addresses the alumni, faculty, staff, and students gathered at the GSPH reception at the APHA annual meeting on November 9.

## IN BRIEF

**Alvin Allison, MHA '82**, was named chief operating officer of Baptist Homes Mt. Lebanon (Pennsylvania) campus and Providence Point in Scott Township. Allison oversees the skilled nursing care and assisted living services at both campuses. Allison has more than 35 years' experience in medical facility administration and he previously served as executive administrator at Baptist Homes.

**Neyal J. Ammary-Risch, MPH '03**, was featured as part of Health Literacy Month in October. The Health Literacy Month



Website published stories about health literacy throughout the month, including an interview with Ammary-Risch about her book, *In Mommy's Garden: A Book to Help*

*Explain Cancer to Young Children*, which she wrote while she was a student in the department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences. The article can be viewed at [www.healthliteracy.com/hlm\\_article.asp?PageID=9114](http://www.healthliteracy.com/hlm_article.asp?PageID=9114).



**James Collins, MHA '87**, is serving as the executive in residence for Department of Health Policy & Management for the 2009-10 academic year. Collins is the president and chief executive officer of St. Clair Hospital in Pittsburgh. The purpose of the Executive in Residence program is to foster better relationships between GSPH's health administration program and the world of practice for the advantage of both the students and faculty of the program.

**Linda Handley, MHA '89**, was named the assistant executive director of the Women's Small Business Association (WSBA), a resource for women to connect, learn practical and professional strategies from nationally and locally recognized experts, and network with peers. She assists the WSBA executive director in day-to-day activities and facilitates the efficiency and organizational support of the office of the WSBA executive director and board advisors, including planning, research, communications, and project management.

**William R. Holman, MHA '79**, president and CEO of the Baton Rouge General Medical Center was elected chair of the Louisiana Hospital Association.



## Do you have news to share?

Go to [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/update](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/update) to tell us what's new.

**Robert Kocent, MHA '86**, was named executive administrator of Baptist Homes in Mt. Lebanon, Pa., responsible for overall operations. Kocent was previously executive director of Masonic Village at Sewickley, Pa.

**Ruth A. Modzelewski, PhD '96**, accepted the position of mission coordinator for the Pittsburgh Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. This affiliate serves a 30-county area of Western and Central Pennsylvania. She oversees the grants program, and education and advocacy.

**Laura E. Rosas, JD/MPH '04**, became the director of privacy and security at the Primary Care Information Project (PCIP) at the New York city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In addition to overseeing privacy and security of the project, which is now the nation's largest electronic health record ambulatory implementation, she also coordinates PCIP's activities with the State of New York's project to build the State Health Information Network (SHINY). She was also recently appointed to the City University of New York's Murphy Institute as an adjunct assistant professor and is teaching a graduate course on health policy evaluation.

**Brian Santo, MPH '09**, accepted a position as a healthcare compliance attorney for Booz Allen Hamilton in Rockville, Md.

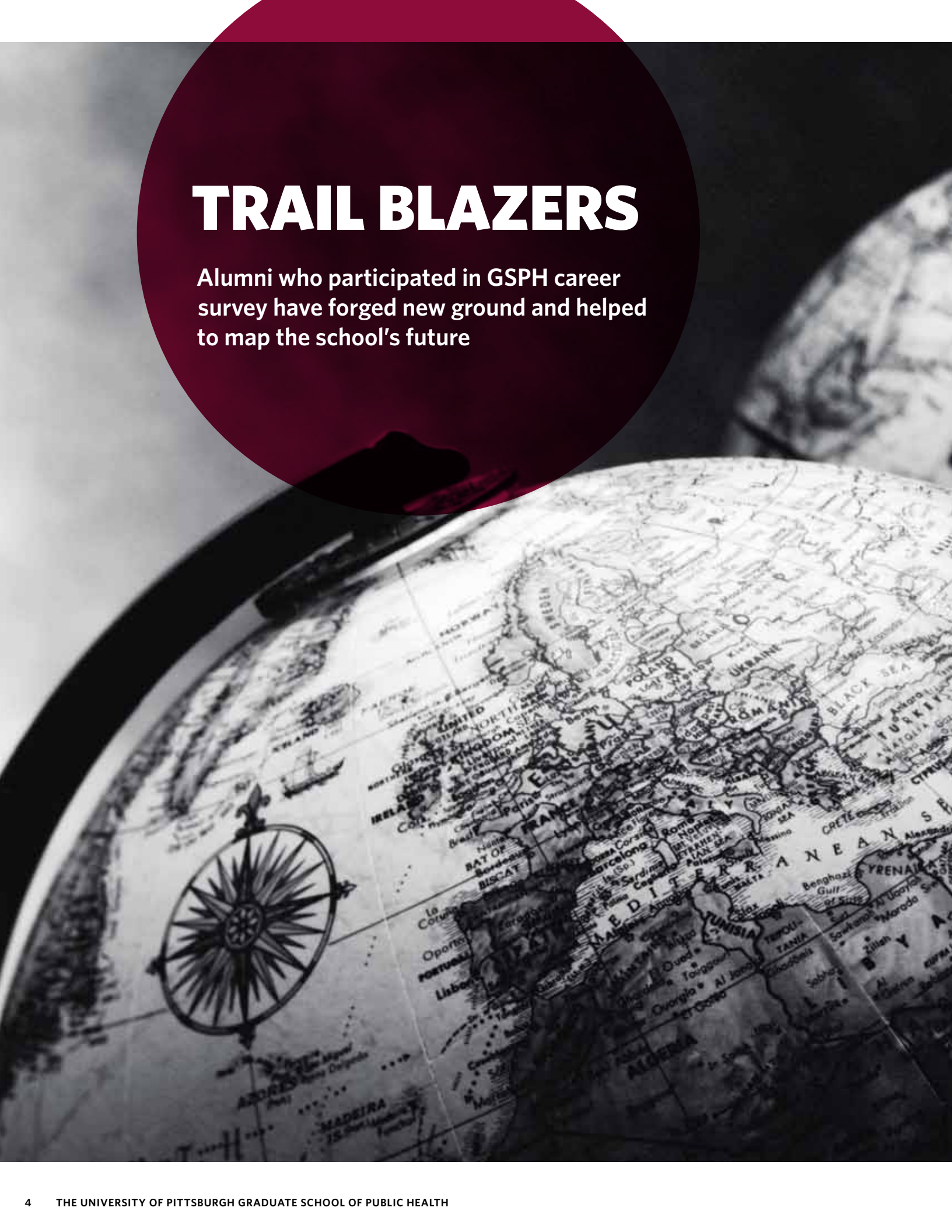
## IN MEMORIAM

**Nancy Thomann**, who earned her MPH in health administration from GSPH in 1973, passed away July 21, 2009, in Denver, Colorado. The daughter of William Augustus and Jessie L. Jones, she was born in Colorado Springs and raised there and in Pittsburgh, where she graduated from Schenley High School. She worked in public and minority health planning in Pittsburgh, Colorado Springs, Denver, and Phoenix, and was president of the Arizona Public Health Association in 2003-2004.

An accomplished pianist and singer, Thomann directed choirs and played the organ at several churches including Grace Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, was the organist at Ebenezer Baptist Church (where her father directed the choir), and sang with a number of choruses including the Mendelssohn Choir. Her family asks contributions be made in her memory to the Lewy Body Dementia Association, 912 Killian Hill Road SW, Suite 202C, Lilburn, GA 30047.

# TRAIL BLAZERS

Alumni who participated in GSPH career survey have forged new ground and helped to map the school's future







In its 60-plus year history, GSPH has produced alumni who have made an impact on health around the world. Among the career achievements of GSPH alumni are:

Assistant mental health planner, Alberta, Canada

- Fellow, Emerging Leaders Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Superintendant of Taipei Medical University-Shuang Ho Hospital
- New Hampshire Department of Health
- Chief of cancer studies, National Cancer Institute
- Genetic counselor, Ohio State University
- President of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Manila, Philippines
- Medical statistician, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- Director, Howard University Cancer Institute
- Preparedness coordinator, Virginia Department of Health
- Nigerian Chief Health Planning Officer
- CEO of Children's Hospital of UPMC
- CEO of Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles
- Deputy director of National Eye Health Education Program, National Eye Institute

Naturally, we are proud of the achievements of our alumni, but a list such as the one above does not constitute a clear picture of what our alumni, as a collective group, did with their public health training.

But, thanks to the participation of hundreds of GSPH alumni in our career survey, we now have a rich source of data about the people who studied at GSPH and the places they went after they graduated.

“This survey was my first major charge from the dean when I joined GSPH,” said Joan Anson, who became GSPH’s director of career services in December 2007. “Knowing the career trajectories of our alumni is a vital tool in our ongoing efforts to improve our academic programs.” In addition, knowing where alumni are currently working helps Anson provide more effective career services to current students and recent graduates.

The survey, completed on-line and on paper by 21 percent of GSPH alumni, asked questions such as:

- Where did you go to work when you finished your degree?
- What other degrees or training did you undertake?
- What accomplishments and awards have you earned along your career path?
- How did GSPH make a difference in your career?

“We have all the raw data and are in the process of analyzing it and putting it into a format that will be the most useful as we move forward with academic and career services initiatives,” Anson said. “We will have a full, formal roll-out of the results in the spring. We are very excited to be able to share this information with our alumni.” Anson added that the survey appears to be a first among schools of the health sciences at Pitt and perhaps the most in-depth University-wide. A paper about the survey process might result in the future.

“According to the dean, the GSPH Career Trajectory Alumni Survey is one of the most important initiatives the school has ever undertaken,” Anson said. “Never before have we been able to get a sense about the leadership positions that many of our graduates have enjoyed or the extent of their impact upon global health issues. We were pleasantly surprised by the support that our alumni gave to the effort. I want to personally thank everyone who participated, including those who participated in the pilot project and those that volunteered to talk with us at a later date about their accomplishments and career history. You have done a great service for the school, and we are grateful.”

## A FEW FASCINATING FACTS FROM THE SURVEY

Can't wait until spring for the full buffet of survey results? Here are a few appetizers to hold you over until the whole meal is served.

Alumni from every department—existing and past—participated in the survey.

### Department Distribution Among Responding Alumni (N=891)

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES | RESPONSE NUMBERS.

**Health Services Administration** 24.4% 217

**Epidemiology/Epidemiology and Microbiology** 19.1% 170

**Behavioral and Community Health Sciences** 11.6% 103

**Environmental and Occupational Health** 7.7% 69

**Human Genetics** 6.6% 59

**Biostatistics** 6.6% 59

**Multidisciplinary Master of Public Health** 4.6% 41

**Health Policy and Management** 4.4% 39

**Infectious Diseases and Microbiology** 4.2% 37

**Public Health Practice** 3.7% 33

**Industrial Environmental Health Sciences** 2.8% 25

**Radiation Health** 2.4% 21

**Microbiology** 1.0% 9

**Biochemistry and Nutrition** 1.0% 9



**17%** of GSPH alumni reported working on international/global public health activities in more than 65 countries.



Following graduation from GSPH, **94%** of graduates found employment, 5% pursued further education and another 5.6% served as postdoctoral fellows.

**Work Status Following GSPH Graduation (N=921)\***

RESPONSE PERCENTAGES | RESPONSE NUMBERS.

**Employed Full-Time 82.4% 759**

**Employed Part-Time 6.0% 55**

**Postdoctoral Fellow 5.6% 52**

**Enrolled in a Degree Program Part-Time 4.3% 40**

**Caring for My Home/Family Full-Time 1.3% 12**

**Enrolled in a Degree Program Full-Time 0.7% 6**

\*Some respondents chose more than one answer.

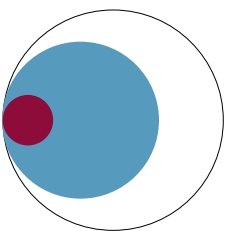


More than **30%** of GSPH graduates worked with underserved populations or on correcting health disparities during their careers.

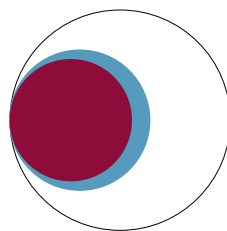
(Photo courtesy of Annie Nagy, current GSPH student and returned Peace Corps volunteer.)

**58%** of responding alumni report that their current or most recent positions are of a senior level

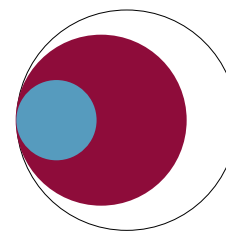
FIRST JOB (N=871) | MOST RECENT/CURRENT JOB (N=545)



Entry-Level  
**42% 8%**



Mid-Level  
**38% 34%**



Senior-Level  
**19% 58%**

## GLOBAL TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENTS PRESENT RESEARCH RESULTS

On September 30, 2009, as part of Pitt's International Week, six students who were recipients of Student Global Travel Grants gave poster presentations of the results of their research, which took place over the summer. The grants are administered by the University's Center for Global Health and partially support travel expenses for master's and doctoral students enrolled in one of the six health sciences schools, the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and the School of Law who want to conduct research internationally. Grants are awarded competitively to proposals that address a compelling global health issue, with priority given to projects conducted in low- and middle-income countries or resource-poor settings.



The six students who presented and their research project titles are:

**Kristina Bacon**, Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, "Assessment of Parental Acceptability of School Administered Mass Treatment of STH [Soil-Transmitted Helminth] in the Philippines"

**Meghan Byrne**, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, "Medical Oppression and Cervical Cancer Screening Rates in the Women of Patzcuaro, Michoacan"

**Andrea Dunlavy**, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, "Patterns and Risk Factors for Childhood Injuries in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania"

**Julie Lauffenburger**, School of Pharmacy, "Community Clinic Pharmacy Formulary Development in Mangochi, Malawi"

**Annie Nagy**, Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, "Socio-demographic Predictive Factors for Condom Use Among Military Personnel in Cameroon"

**Margaret Whalen**, Department of Epidemiology, "Determinants of Low Birth Weight in a Rural Indian Cohort"

From left, Joanne Russell, director of the Center for Global Health; Julie Lauffenburger, School of Pharmacy; Kristina Bacon, Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology; Meghan Byrne, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences; GSPH Dean Donald S. Burke, MD, who is also the associate vice chancellor for global health; Andrea Dunlavy, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences; Annie Nagy, Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology; and Margaret Whalen, Department of Epidemiology.

“As usual, the quality of the students’ work was outstanding, and I consider the Global Student Travel Grants programs to be one of the true early success stories of the Center for Global Health”

**Joanne Russell, MPPM, RN, CCRC**

Director of the Center for Global Health.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We are pleased to announce the awarding of the following scholarships for the 2009-10 academic year:

### **Infectious Diseases and Microbiology Public Health Scholarship to:**

*Sarah Romano*, an MPH student in the bioscience of infectious diseases concentration.

*Derek Sippel*, an MPH student enrolled in the IDM community and behavioral health intervention concentration as well as the Peace Corps Master’s International program

### **Bernard D. Goldstein Student Award** in Environmental Health Disparities and Public Health Practice to:

*Jill Diesel*, MPH, who is pursuing a PhD in the Department of Epidemiology and who has volunteered with the Center for Public Health Preparedness and the Student Public Health Epidemic Response Effort

If you would like to contribute to an existing GSPH scholarship fund or create one of your own, please contact Apryl Eshelman, GSPH director of development, at [eshelman@pitt.edu](mailto:eshelman@pitt.edu) or 412-624-5639.

## HUGEN STUDENT’S WORK IS RECOGNIZED

Qi Yang, a PhD candidate in the Department of Human Genetics, has been invited for oral presentations by three prestigious national conferences for her research work in early hematopoiesis in 2009. Hematopoiesis is the formation of blood or of blood cells in a living body. These conferences to which she received invitations are the Keystone Symposia for Molecular and Cellular Biology, the American Association of Immunologists (AAI), and the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB).

Qi was awarded 2009 AAI Abstract Trainee Award for her presentation, “The Transcription Factor E47 Controls the Cell Cycle Quiescence and Development of Multipotent Hematopoietic Progenitors.” This award recognizes outstanding research work from student and post-doc trainees that has been selected for oral presentation.

Her other two presentations were “The Transcription Factor E47 Controls the Cell Cycle Quiescence and Development of Multipotent Hematopoietic Progenitors During Progression to B Lineage” at Keystone Symposia and “Essential Role of E47 in Hematopoietic Stem Cells” at the FASEB annual meeting.

As a third-year PhD student, Qi has recently published her first first-author paper and co-authored three others in high-impact journals. She is now laying the groundwork for potential postdoc opportunities, while preparing her second first-author manuscript.



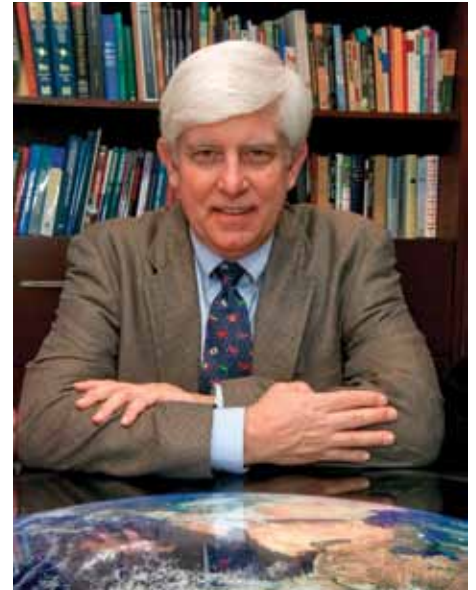
## DEAN BURKE ELECTED TO INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

Donald S. Burke, MD, GSPH dean, has been elected to the prestigious Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies, one of the highest honors in health and medicine. The selection was announced on October 12, at the IOM's annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

"Election to the Institute of Medicine is highly selective, bestowed only on those physician-scientists who have made remarkable contributions to the fields of health and medicine," said University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. "Given Dr. Burke's groundbreaking work in the mitigation of infectious diseases of global concern and his commitment to improving the lives of others around the world, his selection is a great honor not only for him, but for the University of Pittsburgh."

Burke has focused his research on HIV/AIDS, tropical viruses, hepatitis, influenza, and emerging infectious diseases. His life-long mission has been to prevent and lessen the impact of epidemic infectious diseases around the world.

"I can think of no one more deserving of this high honor than Dr. Burke," said Arthur S. Levine, MD, senior vice chancellor for the health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. "His career-long dedication to improving our understanding of infectious diseases



has had a far-reaching impact on public health, giving us insight into the best methods to predict and prevent diseases that affect people around the globe. The vision and commitment he has displayed over the years secure his legacy as one of the world's foremost scientists."

Burke's expertise spans laboratory research, field studies, vaccine trials, and implementation and evaluation of programs to control infectious diseases. He has led major vaccine research and development efforts for Japanese encephalitis, dengue, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, and biodefense threats. The diagnostic assays he developed for epidemic viral encephalitis and for HIV/AIDS have become worldwide standards.

Burke's epidemiological studies of HIV among incoming military recruits first revealed the magnitude of the epidemic in the United States, and his international molecular epidemiology studies of HIV unraveled its emergence, evolution, and global spread. He was instrumental in launching HIV/AIDS vaccine trials in Thailand, leading to the recent first-ever successful vaccine trial in that country. Additional studies he led in the Congo basin in Africa demonstrated the key role of the hunting of wild animals for their meat in the emergence of new epidemic viruses.

Prior to joining the University of Pittsburgh, Burke had a distinguished 23-year career at the Walter Reed Army Institute, where he last served as associate director for emerging threats and biotechnology and retired from active duty at the rank of colonel in 1997. He then assumed a leadership position in public health as director of the Center for Immunization Research at Johns Hopkins University. At Pitt, he assembled and is leading an international team of epidemiologists and computer scientists who are evaluating pandemic influenza control strategies.

Burke also has served on World Health Organization expert steering committees for HIV/AIDS vaccines and dengue vaccines, and as president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. While at Johns Hopkins, he won the Golden Apple public health teaching award, and throughout his career, has mentored students who have gone on to become leaders in infectious disease research and vaccine development worldwide.

Established in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences as a national resource for independent, scientifically informed analysis and recommendations on health issues, the IOM provides unbiased, evidence-based information and advice concerning health and science policy to policy-makers, professionals, and leaders in every sector of society and the public at large.

## QUINN PRESENTS AT NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Sandra Quinn, PhD, associate dean for student affairs and education and associate professor of behavioral and community health sciences, was invited to be a panelist at a September 14 meeting on Advancing Behavioral and Social Research on the Elderly in Disasters at the National Academy of Sciences. Quinn presented on disparities in exposure, susceptibility, and access to health care in the H1N1 pandemic, including willingness to accept an Emergency Use Authorization vaccine. The meeting was sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Population and the National Institute on Aging.



## ZHANG RECEIVES \$1 MILLION CHALLENGE GRANT

As part of the NIH Challenge Grants in Health and Science Research program, Yuting Zhang, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy & Management, has been awarded a \$1 million grant to evaluate the most cost-effective methods to pay for psychotropic medications among Medicare beneficiaries. Major depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia are costly and disabling illnesses, which affect more than 15 percent of Medicare beneficiaries and cost \$165 billion annually in the U.S. More than half of Medicare beneficiaries with these mental disorders spent more than \$2,250 on pharmacy expenditures in 2006, and many were fully exposed to the coverage gap under current Medicare Part D benefit design. Zhang's study will assess the most cost-effective, potentially cost-saving, methods to pay for psychotropic medications for Medicare beneficiaries. Co-investigators include Judith R. Lave, PhD, chair of the HPM department; Charles F. Reynolds III, Bruce L. Rollman, and Kenneth J. Smith from the Pitt School of Medicine; Jennifer Shang from Pitt's Katz Graduate School of Business; and John Mullahy from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.



## HAIR TODAY... HEALTH TOMORROW

Center for Minority Health hosts eighth annual  
Take a Health Professional to the People Day

Regular visits to the doctor's office are an important part of staying healthy, yet many people do not have a primary care physician for routine checkups. To address this need, the Center for Minority Health (CMH) at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health held the eighth annual Take a Health Professional to the People Day on September 17 at 10 barber-shops and beauty salons throughout Pittsburgh.

The event creates a unique opportunity for African-Americans who lack a medical home or may be hesitant to visit the doctor's office, to talk about health in the comfort of their local barbershop or beauty salon.

"Historically, barbershops and beauty salons have been where African-Americans gather not only to get haircuts and styles, but to network, debate politics, socialize and exchange information through the grapevine," said Angela Ford, PhD, executive director of CMH. "It just makes sense that health promotion and disease prevention would work well in this trusted environment."

This year, teams of volunteer physicians, nurses, public health educators, dentists, and pharmacists from Pitt's schools of the health sciences, Duquesne University School of Nursing, Gateway Health Plan, Mayo Clinic, University of Colorado, and University of Wisconsin, and health advocates from across the city will join CMH's innovative community outreach effort. Many of the participating barbers and salon operators have been trained by CMH as lay health advocates. By providing free blood pressure screening and education about diabetes, cancer, hypertension and HIV/AIDS, the event seeks to build trust and promote health and prevent disease in African-American communities.



# EVENTS

## JAY L. FOSTER MEMORIAL SCIENTIFIC LECTURE IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

October 16 marked the latest in the Foster Lecture series. Rudolph E. Tanzi, PhD, spoke on the topic, "Alzheimer's Disease: From Genes to Novel Therapeutics." Tanzi is the Joseph P. and Rose F. Kennedy Professor of Neurology at Harvard University Medical School and director of the Genetics and Aging Research Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital. He worked on the isolation of the first familial Alzheimer's disease gene in 1987, and much of his research has centered around two genes accounting for up to half of early-onset familial Alzheimer's disease and the

biochemical mechanisms by which defects in these genes cause neurodegeneration. Tanzi is chairman of the Research Consortium of the Cure Alzheimer's Fund, which has funded the entire Alzheimer's Genome Project, named by Time Magazine/CNN as one of the Top 10 Medical Breakthroughs in the world in 2008. The Cure Alzheimer's Fund was started in Pittsburgh five years ago by Jeff and Jacqui Morby. Jeff Morby is a member of the GSPH Board of Visitors.

The Foster Memorial Lecture Series in Alzheimer's Disease was established by the family of Jay L. Foster to promote collaborations among researchers focused on Alzheimer's Disease and to educate family members, caregivers, and others who are faced with the daily struggle of dealing with the illness. Foster passed away from Alzheimer's disease in July 2000 at the age of 83.



From left, Jeff Morby, founder of the Cure Alzheimer's Fund; GSPH Dean Donald S. Burke, MD; Rudolph Tanzi, PhD; Lee Foster, founder of the Foster Lecture series; and Steven Albert, PhD, professor in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences and chair of the Foster Lecture Committee.

## ONE BOOK, ONE COMMUNITY



GSPH recently concluded its first One Book, One Community program with a lecture by D.A. Henderson, MD, author of *Smallpox: The Death of a Disease*, which chronicles the 10-year effort to eradicate smallpox, considered one of the greatest achievements in the history of public health. Through the generosity of The Pittsburgh Foundation, all students who matriculated at GSPH this fall were provided with a signed copy of the book. All members of the GSPH community were invited to join together in reading and discussing the book over the first few weeks of the fall term.

“Having Dr. Henderson come for our One Book, One Community event was an extraordinary opportunity for our students to be inspired by one of the foremost leaders in public health history,” said Sandra Quinn, PhD, associate dean for student affairs and education. “They were thrilled to hear the challenges and successes of the smallpox eradication campaign and to meet Dr. Henderson, who has literally changed the history of mankind.”

Quinn conceived the idea for One Book, One Community to acknowledge the shared history of public health professionals and examine its implications for future public health efforts. One Book, One Community was integrated into the core curriculum as part of the Public Health Overview course to present an opportunity for a larger dialogue that is becoming too rare given the increasingly specialized disciplines within public health.

“As an incoming GSPH student, I really enjoyed the One Book, One Community program,” said Jennifer Jones, an MPH student in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences (BCHS). “Reading D.A. Henderson’s first-hand account of the eradication of smallpox was inspiring. Before reading the book, I didn’t know anything about smallpox, except that my parents had a scar on their arm from being vaccinated many years ago. The perseverance shown by hundreds of thousands around the globe coming together for a joint cause truly defines public health. It was an honor to meet Dr. Henderson and bring the book to life. The priceless investment made by many chartered new territories and opened many doors for public health professionals, like myself.”

“Today we are fighting a different battle, against people who fear vaccines more than they fear disease itself,” commented Bonnie Gewanter, also an MPH student in BCHS. “The success of Henderson’s smallpox eradication was partially due to public opinion and general fear of getting smallpox. This is something that we see today with the H1N1 outbreak, and its coverage in the media. *Smallpox: the Death of a Disease* demonstrated that while one person can lead an eradication program, it takes a global community to accept it and effectively implement a strategy. As a student of public health, it is crucial to recognize that we work with the public to create a healthy society, and that they play as big a role as we do in the outcome of a public health initiative.”

## OPEN HOUSE



Potential public health students gather information about GSPH at the annual Open House, which took place on Monday, October 26.

Students line up to have their copies of *Smallpox: The Death of a Disease* autographed by D.A. Henderson, MD, following the lecture he delivered about the book.

## NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

GSPH welcomed new students with a full-day orientation on the Friday before classes began. The Office of Student Affairs designs this annual program to provide students with the information and resources they need for a successful experience at GSPH. One of the most popular aspects of orientation is the Plunge into Public Health and Pittsburgh, in which students choose from a variety of lectures, activities, and field visits designed to showcase public health practice at GSPH and in the city of Pittsburgh. Students are encouraged to sign up for activities that are outside of their departments or areas of study. Plunge activities offered this year included:

- Center for Vaccine Research Tour
- Community Water Quality
- Global Links Presentation and Warehouse Tour
- Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Presentation and Tour
- Plunge into Healthy Aging
- Tour of the Allegheny County Health Department with the Student Public Health Epidemic Response Effort
- Smoking, Chromosomes, Cancer, and Biomarkers: A Tangled Web and Community Resources for Tobacco Prevention and Control
- Urban Community Gardens and Farms with Grow Pittsburgh



In the foreground, Sandra Quinn, PhD, associate dean for student affairs and education, chats with new students. In the background, Dean Donald S. Burke, MD, also welcomes new students to GSPH.



## UPCOMING GSPH EVENTS

**Visit GSPH: A Day for Accepted Applicants**  
**Friday, March 19, 2010**

**Internship and Career Fair**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2010**

Alumni who are interested in attending, either as job seekers or to offer internship or employment opportunities, should contact Joan Anson, director of career services at [anson@pitt.edu](mailto:anson@pitt.edu).

**Dean's Day**  
**Friday, April 9, 2010**

**Annual Alumni Dinner**  
**Saturday, May 1, 2010**  
University Club, Oakland

**60th GSPH Convocation**  
**Sunday, May 2, 2010**  
Carnegie Music Hall, Oakland



# DEVELOPMENT

It has been a fabulous year...considering the economy. As Dean Burke noted at the recent meeting of our Board of Visitors, GSPH is healthy. Gifts from individuals to GSPH were up slightly for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and the number of you who are supporting GSPH increased 2.5 percent.

We are grateful to all who have responded or who intend to respond to our recent request for scholarship support. Your gift is critical.

For the current academic year, fewer than one in 10 of our master's students have been awarded scholarship support. Most are graduating with considerable debt. Unlike times past when government scholarships were readily available and most of our students were covered by such awards, public health students today do not have access to this resource.

Mike Evans, MPH '80, commented that he benefitted from a government-funded award and credits his GSPH education for the success he has enjoyed in his career. He is now the chief operating officer of a powerful consulting firm in the healthcare industry, Revenue Cycle Solutions, LLC. "It is both a duty and a privilege to support the Health Policy and Management program," Mike contends. "Not only am I giving back, but I am helping to enhance the program which, in turn, increases the value of my degree from Pitt." This is an often repeated sentiment.

Your gift may be directed to the department or existing fund of your choice. Or you could start a fund to commemorate your career—a career made possible by your GSPH education—or to honor your family who instilled in you the passion and work ethic that allowed you to achieve your success. The minimum amount to endow a student award fund is \$10,000. Endowed scholarship funds may be created for as little as \$75,000. You may take up to five years to complete your pledge. We will work with you to help you identify the most tax advantaged way for you to make this gift.

There are many, many ways to structure your gift to GSPH depending on your financial and philanthropic goals. Certain gifts to the University provide you with a quarterly payment for the balance of your life, or for the balance of your and your spouse's lives. Depending on your age, an annuity may be purchased from the University which carries an annual percentage rate higher than what is available in commercial certificates of deposit. If you are 70 years old, the current indicated rate paid to you is 5.7 percent. If you are 80, the rate is 7.1 percent. A 60-year-old person may purchase an annuity from the University, defer the first payment for 10 years, and be guaranteed a rate of 8.6 percent. The balance in the fund may be directed to provide scholarships to students from your graduating department, for example. There may be significant current and ongoing tax benefits for you. Experts here at the University are happy to work with you and your advisors to structure the gift that is best for you.

GSPH has a proud tradition of educating public health professionals. You and your classmates have risen to prominent positions as noted in the Alumni Career



Survey discussed in this issue of *Public Health Quarterly*. Prospective students are attracted to GSPH in part by the reputations of you, our graduates. Similarly, the value of your degree is influenced by the quality of the students who are progressing through GSPH now. The abilities of these students are strong and are trending to being even more competitive. With your help, GSPH can attract the best and the brightest applicants.

Please make your gift today to continue the legacy of GSPH.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2010,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Apryl Eshelman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Apryl Eshelman**  
Director of Development  
eshelman@pitt.edu  
412-6245639

## PHOTO OF THE QUARTER

# A Picnic Kick-off

Students enjoy food, friendship, and lovely weather at the annual GSPH picnic, the traditional beginning to every academic year. This year, new and returning students, and GSPH faculty and staff gathered on August 31 on the lawn of the William Pitt Union.



### Here are some interesting facts about GSPH's newest students:

When asked what historical figure they would most like to meet, the most common answer was Jesus (7 responses), followed by Albert Einstein (5), Mahatma Gandhi (4), Martin Luther King Jr. (4), and John Lennon and Michael Jackson (both 3).

When asked what their favorite film is, the most common answer was Forrest Gump (6 responses), followed by Lord of the Rings (5), The Shawshank Redemption (4), and Blazing Saddles (3).

When asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, the most common answer was doctor (25 responses), followed by scientist (9), teacher (8), veterinarian (7), and astronaut (6). One student answered, "Epidemiologist." GSPH is happy to help him or her live a childhood dream.



# University of Pittsburgh

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A600 CRABTREE HALL

130 DESOTO STREET

PITTSBURGH, PA 15261

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PITTSBURGH, PA  
PERMIT NO. 511



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE THIRD ANNUAL GSPH INTERNSHIP AND CAREER FAIR

**March 24, 2010**

Visit [www.publichealth.pitt.edu/careerfair](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/careerfair) to register as an employer or as an attendee. Alumni are especially encouraged to attend, either as job seekers or as potential employers.