

Message from Student Committee Chair

Kayla Fitzgerald, BS
PHCNPG Student Committee Chair

Hello PHCNPG Students and welcome to the fall edition of *The Student Digest*! This is an exciting time of year as school has begun and FNCE® is just around the corner. The Student Committee has already been working hard on several projects that we're very excited about. One of those projects is the [Student Survey](#). Your voice matters to us and we want to ensure that we are providing you with member benefits that are important to you. And, as a thank you for taking time to complete the survey, we will randomly select one student who will win FREE membership to the PHCNPG for next year. We are also working on

ways to help students connect with each other and with professionals in our practice group, so be sure to check your emails for updates from the PHCNPG Student Committee. In the next issues we will be featuring a column called "Ask an RD." Send us your questions so a public health expert RD can respond. Questions can be sent to [Kayla Fitzgerald](#), Student Committee Chair. Comments and suggestions about improving the newsletter and your experience with the PHCNPG are always welcome—please email me any time.



Kayla Fitzgerald

CURRENT NEWS

A Day in the Life

Submitted by Becky Roberts, BS

After receiving her BS in Foods and Nutrition from Mundelein College (now Loyola), [Mary Ellen Rivero MS, RD, CLE](#) spent five years in Papua New Guinea teaching Home Ec and Nutrition. Upon return to the US, she worked in hospitals as a diet technician. While working full time, she earned a Master's Degree in Nutrition from Northern Illinois University. After graduating, she completed the Master's practice internship with NIU. It was during this time that she began a 24 year career with Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in Gary, Indiana. Her struggle to earn the RDN credential created a passion to recognize and mentor community nutritionists by starting a state-sponsored dietetic internship for WIC nutritionists in Arizona. She later accepted the position as Director of Dietetic Internship with WIC in Yavapai County. Once she retired from WIC, she served with the Peace Corps for 3 years in Zambia as a community health and development worker.



Mary Ellen Rivero

Peace Corps-Zambia also invited me to adapt an international program called Positive Deviance (PD) Hearth for use by Peace Corps volunteers in Zambia. This program employs behavior change techniques to teach mothers how to rehabilitate their malnourished children using only locally available foods in healthy recipes that we developed.

After completing my two year contract with Peace Corps, I extended another year to work for the National Food and Nutrition Commission and I wrote the first "Nutrition Guidelines for Zambians." This was truly an honor for which my two years living in solidarity with the villagers prepared me well. Otherwise, I wouldn't have thought to include caterpillars, rats, and crocodile in the food composition tables.

BR: In what ways did being a Peace Corps RD differ from your other RD positions?
MER: It was a shift from talking about intakes, feeding schedules and foods, to teaching farming practices and animal husbandry. I learned about these practices from consulting resources and experts. It was a delight for me to work with the villagers and teach them farming methods to produce crops year-around to eliminate "hungry time."

BR: What kind of work did you do as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zambia?
MER: My projects were focused on felt needs and sustainable changes. In the village, I trained the community health volunteers how to teach water sanitation, HIV prevention and management, malaria abatement, TB prevention, and maternal and child nutrition. I worked with farmers on permaculture, animal husbandry, and water harvesting.

BR: What advice would you give to dietetics students who want to work in international nutrition and public health?

MER: If you are interested in international nutrition, get a Master's in Public Health. This will give you a world view and credibility. Work in WIC or Head Start for good education models and diverse populations. Learn from other cultures to smash your assumptions. Breastfeed and or learn from those who have breastfed long-term. These concepts will be important in an international setting.

Hot Topic in Public Health: Caffeine

Submitted by Annabella Bruzual, BS

Caffeine is popular among students and professionals. Many of us have morning rituals that involve brewing coffee or stopping at a coffee shop. Caffeine is found in many food and drink products, and has made its way into the headlines this year though not in regards to the health benefits we hear so much about. One teaspoon of pure powdered caffeine contains the same amount of caffeine found in 25 cups of coffee. The FDA has issued a [warning](#) about the health risks associated with powdered caffeine products that states pure powdered caffeine is a "potentially dangerous product that has already resulted in the death of two young people in the past year."

There are many evidence-based articles that glorify caffeine's health benefits and there is no risk in your daily cup of coffee. However, in its pure form it could be extremely harmful to your health. The reason this product is so dangerous is because caffeine is a familiar substance to the public and is perceived to be safe since it is found in many products we consume. While the FDA regulates marketing of dietary supplements, manufacturers are not required to get FDA approval before producing or selling their products. Progress on this issue has been made. This year Ohio banned powdered caffeine sales, and a similar legislative measure was introduced in Illinois. Advocacy groups and public health officials across the nation continue to lobby for public safety through legislative measures and creating public awareness.

Student Resources

Submitted by Brandi Stein, BS

Volunteering in the community is an excellent way to learn more about the field of Community Nutrition and Public Health. Volunteering with a variety of programs helps direct you to your field of interest. While gaining real world experience, you are also building your resume and networking with professionals. There are many programs eager for volunteers, here are a few opportunities that can be beneficial and rewarding:

Food Banks

Connect with the community and learn about food insecurity. Volunteer tasks usually include stocking, organizing, and distributing food to individuals. Some may have nutrition education programs that you can get involved with.

Cooking Matters

Cooking Matters is a program that strives to improve the nutrition habits of families by teaching them how to purchase and cook healthy foods.

Opportunities include being a store tour guide, course instructor, or course assistant.

Volunteer Abroad

For those that may have a semester off, this can be an informative and eye opening experience. You may work with various food systems and work to alleviate malnutrition and provide nutrition education in at-risk populations.

Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)

Volunteering with your local WIC office can provide you with knowledge about government food assistance programs and nutrition needs of different groups. Duties may include creation of educational pamphlets and presentations, and assistance with nutrition classes.

Volunteering gives students the opportunity to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in the real world with the help of a professional in the field.

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Sea Mar Community Health Center

Submitted by Sarah M. Mencia, BS

Location: Seattle, WA

Focus: Community Nutrition

Sea Mar Community Health Center is a non-profit health organization that serves a primarily Latino clientele, along with clients from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The 40-week, full-time community-based internship offers learning experiences in a multicultural and bilingual setting, where students benefit from a comprehensive learning environment that supports their passion for community nutrition.

Qualified applicants are evaluated based upon their GPA, personal statement, experience in community nutrition and a multicultural population, and interview. The selected eight interns pay \$6,500 in tuition and complete over 1,200 hours of practice experience working under registered dietitians and other preceptors. Graduates of the internship who go on to work for Sea Mar or other community health centers in the state for a minimum of one year, receive a \$1,000 tuition reimbursement at the end of that year.

For more information, please visit Sea Mar's website: www.seamar.org or contact the Dietetic Internship director, Rana Nelson at rananelson@seamarchc.org.

FOOD & NUTRITION CONFERENCE AND EXPO

FNCE[®] 2015 Tips and Events Music City Center | Nashville, TN | October 3-6, 2015

Submitted by Peggy Gomez, BS and Kayla Fitzgerald, BS

Whether you're a FNCE[®] pro or this is your first time attending, these tips will help you to make the most of your time.

- **Have a Plan A, B, & C** – sessions you go to may not be what you expect.
- **Note 1-3 things you want to accomplish each day** (session/product at expo/etc) the night before; one gets side tracked with networking, catching up with old friends, etc.
- **Jot notes** on each business card you take (can use voice memo on phone too); follow-up via email a few days after conference is over.
- **Download the FNCE[®] app** for all the latest information.

The following are events that you will definitely want to check out while at FNCE[®]! [Education Sessions](#) for students are Sunday and Monday.

Student Internship Fair

Omni Nashville Hotel, Room TBD
Sunday, October 4, 5-7 pm

PHCNPG Networking & Business Meeting

Renaissance Hotel, Room Fisk 1
Sunday, October 4, 6-8 pm
[RSVP here](#)

Center for Career Opportunities

Music City Center, Exhibit Hall C
Monday, October 5, 9 am-3 pm

Member Showcase

Music City Center, Exhibit Hall C
Monday, October 5, 9 am-12 pm



Thank You!

to the following collaborators for this issue of *The Student Digest*.

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