

nih record



ABOVE • Caricatures were only part of the fun at recent CFC events—see back page.

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Fall Is a Time of Transitions at NIH

The late fall is bringing a number of leadership changes in Bldg. 1 and elsewhere that will have an effect on many aspects of the agency. Eight NIH officials recently changed job status.

The biggest change occurred Oct. 24, when HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt announced that Dr. Raynard Kington would become acting NIH director following the departure of Dr. Elias Zerhouni. Kington had been principal deputy director of NIH since Feb. 9, 2003. He has shared in the overall leadership, policy direction and coordination of NIH biomedical research and research training programs since that time. Prior to this appointment, he had been NIH associate director for behavioral and social sciences research and from January 2002 to November 2002, he served as acting director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Before coming to NIH, Kington was director of the Division of Health Examination Statistics at the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a senior scientist in the health program at the RAND Corp.

Kington attended the University of Michigan, where he received his B.S. with dis-

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Visiting Scientist Fenster Wins Women's Marathon

By Rich McManus

Dr. Cate Fenster, a professor of biology at the College of Wooster in Ohio who is spending the fall semester on sabbatical at NIH, will have more to take back with her than new knowledge about neuroscience when she returns home at Christmastime. On Oct. 26, she won the women's division of the Marine Corps Marathon in a time of 2:48. It was her first marathon ever.



Dr. Cate Fenster

Fear of injury and stories of the "horrors of recovery" from other runners had prevented her from running the marathon distance of 26.2 miles in the past. "I love running," she said, "and wouldn't want to risk an injury that might keep me off the road for any length of time." But Fenster, 37, was encouraged to enter the Marine event after running respect-

NICHD Collaborates with Women's Group On Children's Weight

By Robert Bock

NICHD recently held a 1-day instructional session in health education for more than two dozen regional leaders from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

Attendees were instructed in how to present—and teach others to present—two NIH health education programs that help children maintain a healthy weight.

The programs emphasize improving food choices, increasing physical activity and reducing screen time. Adapted by NICHD from existing NIH educational materials, the programs have been tailored to meet the needs of NCNW participants.

NCNW is composed of 39 national affiliated African-American women's organizations comprising 4 million members. As reflected on its web site, NCNW seeks to "lead, develop and advocate for women of African descent as they support their families and communities." A total of 31 regional, or cluster, leaders attended the session. When they return home, they will present each program in their communi-

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briefs

STEP Forum on Post Traumatic Stress

The staff training in extramural programs (STEP) committee will present a Science in the Public Health forum on the topic, "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: What Are the Facts?" on Tuesday, Dec. 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Lister Hill Auditorium, Bldg. 38A.

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) affects millions of Americans every year—and not just from combat. Anyone who has gone through a natural disaster or other overwhelming stress can develop PTSD. This condition is devastating and costs millions of dollars in lost productivity and medical treatment. What are the causes and clinical manifestations of PTSD? Are there biomarkers for diagnosis? What are the treatments? Join us to discuss these timely questions with a panel of military, disaster relief and medical experts.

FAES Announces Spring Courses

The FAES Graduate School at NIH announces the schedule of courses for the spring 2009 semester. The majority of the evening classes sponsored by the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences will be given on the NIH campus.

Courses are offered in biochemistry, biology, biotechnology (daytime courses), chemistry, immunology, languages, medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, statistics, technology transfer, alternative medicine and courses of general interest. A technology transfer certificate program is also being offered.

It is possible to transfer credits earned to other institutions for degree work, with their approval.

Classes will begin Jan. 26; mail registration ends Jan. 2. An open house will be held Jan. 5 from 4 to 7 p.m. in Bldg. 10, Rm. 2C116 (Medical Board Rm.); walk-in registration will be accepted then and also from Jan. 7-14. Tuition is \$115 per credit hour and courses may be taken for credit or audit. Courses that qualify for institute support as training should be cleared with supervisors and administrative officers as soon as possible. Both the vendor's copy of the training form (SF-182) and the FAES registration form must be submitted at the time of registration. Note that FAES cannot access training forms entered in the NIHTS system; a signed hard copy (vendor's copy of SF-182) is needed in order to process registrations for classes. Asking your institute to pay your tuition is a preliminary step to registra-

tion but does not constitute registration with the FAES Graduate School.

Class schedules and course catalogs are available in the graduate school office in Bldg. 60, Suite 230; the Foundation Bookstore in Bldg. 10, Rm. B1L101; and the business office in Bldg. 10, Rm. B1C18. To have a catalog sent, call (301) 496-7976 or visit www.faes.org.

Compostable Cups Come to Cafeterias

Beginning on Monday, Dec. 1, NIH cafeteria contractor Eurest will replace its Styrofoam cold cups with a single size 100 percent compostable cup. The new cup is a 20-ounce Greenware cup. The eco-friendly cups come at a cost, however. Eurest will raise prices by 10 cents, said John Crawford, NIH food service programs manager. "Cost for the cup is 11 cents plus the cost of the lid. This is roughly double the cost of the foam product. We are continuing to work with them to find suitable alternatives to their remaining foam service items such as those used at the salad bars."

Bookstore Welcomes Customers

Come visit the Foundation Bookstore in Bldg. 10, Rm. B1L101. It is open to everyone at NIH and welcomes patients and visitors. The store carries a selection of fiction and nonfiction books and can order anything not in stock. Books can be shipped anywhere in the world, for a modest fee. For more information call (301) 496-5272.

Credit Union Program To Benefit Children's Inn

The NIH Federal Credit Union will provide its members with the option of donating rewards points accumulated on their NIHFCU credit card to the Children's Inn at NIH.

Members can normally redeem rewards points obtained by making purchases with their NIHFCU credit card for a variety of brand-name merchandise and travel packages. However, during the month of December, members can also choose to make a tax-deductible donation to the inn by transferring any number of their accrued points to the inn. The inn can then redeem the donated points for patient gifts, furnishings, appliances or other community-wide needs.

"The NIH Federal Credit Union and the Children's Inn are both long-standing and important parts of the NIH community," said Steven Levin, NIHFCU vice president of marketing. "Providing our members the opportunity to give back to the NIH in this manner, especially during the holiday season, is a natural fit."

More than 10,000 families have stayed at the Children's Inn since it opened in 1990.



Dr. Neil Charness of Florida State University

Early Practice Builds Chess Expertise Across the Life-Span

If you are well into middle age, you might want to cross off “work at becoming a chess champion” from your list of goals for retirement. That is, unless you have been studying and competing in tournaments since you were a child. And even then, your winning ways will start to decline at around age 43. Even world chess champion Garry Kasparov knew to call it quits at age 42.

Dr. Neil Charness is a professor of psychology and an associate of the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy at Florida State University. He has spent much of his academic career studying the factors that enable people to develop and maintain expert performance across the life-span, particularly master chess players. His research—which he described at an Oct. 24 lecture sponsored by the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research—shows that competitive chess players typically peak by age 43, but that top players’ skills decline with age at slower rates than those of less accomplished players. And while older players have stored more knowledge than their younger counterparts, their ability to activate that knowledge slows with age.

Charness uses a multi-faceted framework for understanding how expertise in chess develops, then declines over the life-span. His research has benefitted from the highly structured rating and ranking system used in international chess tournaments. These datasets have allowed him to analyze the skill trajectories of high-level performers; they have been augmented by practice data from questionnaire studies of European and North American players, experimental studies of early perceptual processes and studies using computer programs to simulate connections between neurons to examine age-knowledge trade-offs relevant to chess and other expert skills.

The good news is that the age of peak playing has increased since similar studies were conducted in 1986 by Arpad Elo, suggesting that as a population we are aging better. And at age 65, master players are still as good as they were at 21. Age is slightly kinder to the initially more able, said Charness. As for how to achieve that initial leg up, his work has found that the number of hours young players spend in serious solitary study and practice is the greatest predictor of future high rankings. Private instruction and hours of tournament play also contribute to better performance early on. Similar results have been found in studies of elite musicians.

Charness’s research interests involve age and human factors and age and expert performance. His research was funded by grants from the National Institute on Aging and the Florida department of transportation.

Part of OBSSR’s Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Lecture Series, Charness’s lecture and past lectures are videocast and available at <http://videocast.nih.gov/PastEvents.asp?c=82>. The next lecture on Thursday, Dec. 11 from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Neuroscience Center, Rm. C, will feature Dr. Linda C. Mayes discussing reward systems and risk-taking in adolescents and the implications for developing substance abuse. 🗣️

Panel Looks at Health Effects of Climate Change

With increasing attention focused on climate change, a working group representing 16 institutes, centers and offices has been formed under Fogarty International Center leadership to help NIH assess the relevance of its basic health research portfolio to the subject.

Because the approximately 800 projects initially identified as relevant are scattered among portfolios in 24 institutes and centers—and because most grants support basic research only indirectly linked to global warming—the group’s first task is to analyze the research in the context of probable health effects of climate change.

The group’s goal is to use the existing science base at NIH to “evolve a coherent strategy, including the identification of gaps and priorities for future investments,” says chair Dr. Joshua Rosenthal, deputy director of FIC’s Division of International Training and Research.

“It appears almost certain HHS and the NIH will be asked to provide such a strategy,” he said at the first meeting of the trans-NIH working group on global health and climate change. “Health research and the scientific rigor that NIH can bring will be critical to inform the growing number of climate change programs among agencies.”

The group plans to produce a research agenda in the next year for use by the new administration based on portfolio analysis, literature surveys, interagency discussions and possibly one or more public conferences.

TRANSITIONS

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tion and his M.D. After completing his residency at Michael Reese Medical Center in Chicago, he was appointed a Robert Wood Johnson clinical scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. There he completed his M.B.A. with distinction and his Ph.D. with a concentration in health policy and economics at the Wharton School and was awarded a Fontaine fellowship. In 2006, Kington was elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

His research has focused on the role of social factors, especially socioeconomic status, as determinants of health.

On Nov. 12, Kington announced that NIDCR director Dr. Lawrence Tabak would become the new acting NIH principal deputy director. Tabak will continue to direct NIDCR and run a lab in NIDDK.

Tabak was appointed the seventh director of NIDCR in September 2000. As director, he leads a team of some 500 scientists, administrators and support staff with an annual budget of around \$389 million.

Prior to joining NIH, Tabak was senior associate dean for research and professor of dentistry and biochemistry and biophysics in the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester.

He was elected a fellow of the AAAS and a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Tabak received his undergraduate degree from City College of the City University of New York, his D.D.S. from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

In other leadership changes, Dr. Norka Ruiz Bravo, who had been NIH deputy director for extramural research since October 2003, announced that she would transition to a new role as special advisor to the NIH director. She recently named Dr. Sherry Mills, who had been her senior policy advisor from 2005-2007 and OEP acting director, the OEP director.

As Ruiz Bravo changed roles, Dr. Sally Rockey, who had been deputy director of the Office of Extramural Research for the past 3 years, became acting NIH deputy director for extramural research.

Implementing the next step of the NIH Reform Act, the Division of Program Coordination,

Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) became a reality and Kington named Dr. Lana Skirboll acting director of what is colloquially known as “D-Poughkeepsie.” Skirboll had been director of the Office of Science Policy. DPCPSI is composed of four program and other offices. Filling in behind Skirboll as new acting director of OSP is Dr. Amy Patterson, who had directed the Office of Biotechnology Activities in OSP.

Finally, Dr. Alan Krensky, former OPASI director, is moving to an NCI laboratory and will also serve as senior advisor to the NIH deputy director. ●

Etcheberrigaray To Lead New CSR Division

The Center for Scientific Review has named Dr. René Etcheberrigaray as director of its new Division of Neuroscience, Development and Aging.



“Dr. Etcheberrigaray will vitalize this key division with his keen management skills and a strong commitment to peer review and the neuroscience community,” said CSR director Dr. Toni Scarpa.

The new Division of Neuroscience, Development and Aging (DNDA) includes all four of CSR’s neuroscience integrated review groups, which were previously dispersed across three divisions. DNDA also includes the biology of development IRG.

Etcheberrigaray has been the chief of CSR’s brain disorders and clinical neuroscience IRG as well as scientific review officer of the clinical neuroscience and disease study section.

He obtained his M.D. from the University of Chile in early 1987, and later that year came to NIH as a postdoctoral fellow in the intramural research program at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. He continued in its intramural program as visiting associate and then visiting scientist. Etcheberrigaray later joined the faculty of Georgetown University’s department of neurology. He has an extensive publication record.

Prior to coming to CSR in 2002, he was laboratory director of a biotechnology company in Rockville. His research focused on molecular and cellular mechanisms of memory and their implications for Alzheimer’s disease.



NIAMS director Dr. Stephen Katz (r) welcomes new deputy director Dr. Robert Carter.

NIAMS Names Carter as Deputy Director

Dr. Robert H. Carter, former director of the division of clinical immunology and rheumatology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, has been selected as deputy director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. He joined the institute on Oct. 1.

"I am delighted to welcome Dr. Carter to the NIAMS," said Katz. "His stellar credentials as a scientist and his broad experience in NIH extramural activities will contribute to NIAMS's long history of excellence in biomedical research."

Carter was professor of medicine at UAB and principal investigator of the NIAMS-supported UAB Rheumatic Disease Core Center. He was also PI of an Autoimmunity Center of Excellence supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. He served as staff physician at the Birmingham Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Carter is board-certified in rheumatology and internal medicine and has numerous achievements in the fields of rheumatology and immunology. He and his colleagues have been leaders in contributing to the understanding of molecular regulation of B lymphocyte activation to identify targets for therapeutic control of autoantibody production. A major focus of his work has been on signal transduction by the B cell surface molecule CD19.

Recently, Carter and his group expanded their focus to include target identification in human lupus and the study of B cells in the immune response of healthy individuals.

Carter received his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1978, *magna cum laude*, in biology. He received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1982. He trained in internal medicine at the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center. In addition, he was a fellow in rheumatology and immunology at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and in molecular and clinical rheumatology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Army, NIMH Partner to Study Suicide

By Colleen Labbe

In an effort to address the rising suicide rate among its soldiers, the U.S. Army has partnered with the National Institute of Mental Health to conduct the largest research project ever undertaken on the subject of suicide risk and prevention.

NIMH director Dr. Thomas Insel, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on Oct. 23 to launch a new, multi-year initiative to study the mental and behavioral health of soldiers across all phases of Army service. The main goals of the study are to identify the risk and resilience factors relevant to suicidal thinking and behavior, with the intention of developing tools to protect soldiers from suicide. Family members and family relationships will be included in the study where appropriate.

At a media roundtable held Oct. 29 to discuss the MOA, Geren lauded the partnership as the first of its kind. "We are hopeful and optimistic that this partnership between the Army and NIMH will result in a quantum leap ahead in our understanding of suicide and methods to prevent it," he stated.

Insel noted that the Army has been active in working to better understand suicide and help prevent it among its soldiers. "The Army is already engaged in a broad surveillance program and is developing and disseminating suicide interventions," he said. "They've asked us to develop a program that can identify risk factors and protective factors following the approach used to identify cardiovascular risk in the classic Framingham study. This is a great opportunity to better understand and mitigate suicide in a large population." The ongoing Framingham study, begun in 1948, has led to extensive information on the effects of heart disease risk factors.

Insel said the project not only will provide critical information that will save soldiers' lives, but also will help civilians. "Outside of the military, suicide is a major public health problem. More than 30,000 suicides occur every year, almost twice that of the homicide rate. In a sense, the Army population could be seen as a microcosm of the nation. Understanding how to reduce suicide in this one population will allow us to help the nation as a whole."

The MOA calls for the Army to fund the project up to \$50 million over 5 years. The details are still being worked out within the extramural Division of Services and Interventions Research at NIMH.



Present at the MOA signing were (seated, from l) Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., chief of staff of the Army; Secretary of the Army Pete Geren; NIMH director Dr. Thomas Insel. Standing are (from l) Lt. Gen. Edgar E. Stauton, Lt. Gen. Stephen M. Speaks, assistant secretary of defense Dr. S. Ward Casscells and Drs. Philip Wang, Robert Heinszen and Michael Shoenbaum of NIMH.



FENSTER

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Fenster, a professor at the College of Wooster who is spending the fall semester on sabbatical at NIH, wins the women's division of the Marine Corps Marathon in a time of 2:48.

ably in an invitation-only 8K U.S. Track and Field Association national championship race in Akron at the end of September.

"I finished second to last in an elite field, but I was really excited just to be there," she said. Fenster entered the Marine Corps Marathon, "I guess because I was here." Leading up to the race, she mixed speed work with a couple of 20-milers. On race day, she faltered near the end but gutted out a victory by 11 seconds over her closest competitor.

"There's a hill at the end of the race that's like a sick joke," she said. "I wanted to walk up the hill."

Born in Germany and reared all over the map—from Neenah, Wisc., to Texas, South Carolina, Georgia and Indiana (her dad worked for paper giant Mead)—Fenster began running while in high school in Wisconsin.

"I began as a sprinter," she said. "As a freshman, I ran the 100-yard dash and just started getting longer after that." While an undergraduate biology major at Furman University, she competed in cross-country (5,000 meters) and in three track distances—5K, 10K and 1,600 meters.

"I qualified for the NCAA Division 1 national finals in cross-country," she said. She is also in the Furman athletic Hall of Fame for a school-record 16:51 in cross-country. "For me that's a fast time," she said. "Nowadays I run an 18:00 5K."

Encouraged by her success in October, Fenster says she "will probably make a goal of doing one or two marathons a year." She was back to daily running just 3 days after her first marathon and felt fine. She says both running and science

depend on an ability to focus; both endeavors are "pretty all-consuming."

She was attracted to NIH by the work of Dr. Andrés Buonanno, chief of the section on molecular neurobiology at NICHHD's Laboratory of Developmental Neurobiology. "The overall goal of research conducted by his lab is to understand some of the mechanisms that regulate excitatory neurotransmission, which matched my research interests," said Fenster. "He was listed [in an online fellowship database] as a potential mentor, and when I called him, I was impressed by his enthusiasm and excitement regarding his research. He was also very receptive to the idea of forming a research collaboration."

Fenster is using electrophysiological techniques to determine how the growth factor neuroregulin influences the function of glutamate receptors. She hopes her 5-month NIH stint results in "at least part of a research paper" and/or preliminary data for a research proposal that might enable her to purchase equipment to continue her electrophysiological experiments when she returns to the College of Wooster.

Fenster teaches undergraduate classes in neurobiology, human physiology and an introductory course called Gateway to Cellular and Molecular Biology. "We also just started a neuroscience program," she noted.

Undergraduates at the C of W are required to complete a research project and a written thesis. This allows students to substantially engage in a field of interest. In order to better mentor their students, professors are allowed to take generous paid sabbaticals to gain expertise in their subjects. Fenster hopes to be as inspiring to the kids she teaches as the profs at Furman who encouraged her to complete a Ph.D. at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The one thing she will not be able to provide her students when her sabbatical wraps up on Dec. 21 is a look at an undamaged Marine Corps Marathon trophy, which is a replica of the Iwo Jima Memorial statue. "I accidentally dropped it while taking the Metro back home after the race," she said, sheepishly. "This is the one trophy that I had really hoped to keep." 17

feedback

Want to know about some aspect of working at NIH? You can ask questions anonymously at www.nih.gov/nihrecord/index.htm (click on the Feedback icon) and we'll try to provide answers.

Feedback: I am just curious: Could you explain NIH's tulip poplar tree replacement procedure? It seems that the procedure is to prune them periodically until they become unsightly, and at that point the remaining crown is cut off and the rest of the tree (relatively tall trunk and roots) is allowed to die. Such a "topless forest" is located immediately north of the Bldg. 21 parking lot; another one south of that lot, as well as one north of the Vaccine Center, have trees in various stages of aging.

Response from Lynn Mueller, Office of Research Facilities landscape architect: First of all, ORF does all it can to keep all our campus trees alive and healthy. However, trees are living organisms and even under the best of growing conditions, all have a maximum life-span. ORF will prune and feed trees seen to be in distress. ORF does preventive and protective procedures too. Trees located along a construction edge are deep-root fed and crown-cleaned to help resist the possible environmental changes that may occur during and after construction. The Wilson Dr. tulip poplar trees were cared for prior to the Bldg. 33 utility tunnel project. Apparently the deep-tunnel excavation changed the groundwater flow causing the down-grade grove of poplars to eventually die back. No other cause could be determined. The Bldg. 40 poplars were also likely impacted by a nearby tunnel project.

Trees that die can be either cut down or turned into "snags" and used as wildlife attractants. Snags are the standing trunks of dead trees. Creating snags, where appropriate, also saves ORF at least half of the removal cost. Removal costs of a large mature tulip poplar can be \$3,000 or more. Dead trees that are not near a "target" (parking lot or building, for example) can be used to attract wildlife such as woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds like titmice, nuthatches, wrens and bluebirds. These insect-eating birds will then help ensure that other nearby trees are cleaned of insect pests, thereby eliminating the need to spray pesticides. ORF has not had to spray any tree with an insecticide since 1989, possibly due in large part to this effort under the ORF Integrated

Pest Management Program. The one exception was the application of Bt on selected oak trees in 1992 to control an outbreak of the invasive gypsy moth.

Under the NIH Master Plan's tree preservation policy, ORF must replace any tree lost due to natural or man-made causes on a minimum one-to-one basis. Snags are considered lost trees and are replaced with native nursery-grown trees.

Starting in 1991, ORF began keeping records of trees lost and replaced. The count as of the end of 2007 was an overall campus gain of nearly 3,500 trees, with the current campus count at approximately 7,500 trees. Of those 7,500 trees, we have 152 different species not counting the numerous cultivars that some species have. Of those 152 species, 94 are native trees, or approximately 62 percent. All trees greater than one inch in caliper are tagged and identified on a GIS campus map. The maintenance history of each tree is kept.

ORF has been proactive in the management of our trees and has been recognized over the past years by several state, local and national arborist organizations for our innovations and management practices. 🌳



Two NICHD Mentors Honored

Two researchers were the first to receive the NICHD intramural program's Mentor of the Year Award. Dr. Richard Maraia (l), senior investigator in the Laboratory of Molecular Growth Regulation, was recognized for his emphasis on working with junior investigators to write and publish their results, for helping them to resolve difficult technological and methodological questions and for imparting his unbridled scientific enthusiasm to his trainees. Maraia's lab studies how RNA is manufactured and processed by cells. Dr. Itai Tzchori, a postdoctoral fellow in the Laboratory of Mammalian Genes and Development, was honored for his role in mentoring post-baccalaureate fellows. He was cited for his patience and understanding, straightforward feedback, providing encouragement and fostering enthusiasm. The laboratory employs advanced gene targeting and transgenic technologies to study genes that control specific stages of mouse development.



COLLABORATION

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Above:

Dr. Dorothy Height (l), president emerita of the National Council on Negro Women, recently met with Dr. Yvonne Maddox, NICHD deputy director.

ties, then train other facilitators to do the same.

The event marked the beginning of a collaboration between NIH and NCNW to deliver health education materials to the community.

“The professionals at NIH are working with us,” said Dr. Dorothy Height, chair and president emerita of NCNW. “We have the volunteers who know their communities and can reach into them to carry the health message.”

“All groups of America’s children have been affected by childhood overweight,” said NICHD deputy director Dr. Yvonne Maddox. “African-American children are at a slightly higher risk than other groups, and so we appreciate the NCNW helping us get our information to the families who can benefit from it.”

She added that one out of every six American children ages 2 to 19 is overweight, and one out of five African-American children is considered overweight.

Dr. Pierre Vigilance, director of the D.C. health department, also spoke at the event. He said the problem of obesity in the African-American community is complex; solving it will require changes in both society and individual attitudes. For example, people in poorer neighborhoods may lack the extra money required to purchase many health foods. People may also find it difficult to prepare healthy meals after a long day, and often opt for high-calorie fast foods.

Attendees were instructed in Energize Our NCNW Families: Parent Program, which provides parents and caregivers practical, research-based information to help their families maintain a healthy weight. They also received training in Media-Smart Youth: The Essentials, a program that teaches youngsters ages 11 to 13 how to analyze and understand media messages about nutrition and physical activity so they can make healthy choices for themselves.

The programs are adapted from curricula offered in NIH’s We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition) education program. We Can! is a highly adaptable, science-based program for families and communities to help children maintain a healthy weight. More than 900 community sites across the U.S., and in nine other countries, are providing We Can! activities. Information on the program is available at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/.

Each month until May, representatives from NICHD will use virtual meeting software to gather online with cluster leaders to provide assistance as they implement the programs in their communities and recruit and train others to do the same.

Deborah Tucker Barrow, a cluster leader from New York City, said that when she returns home, she will set up an instructional session for representatives from each of the 22 NCNW sections in her state. Each section leader will train 20 or so additional members from their respective groups, who will train still more members, and so on, until a substantial number of NCNW members in the area are trained in the curricula.

“This is a good start,” she said. “Hopefully, we can begin to fight obesity among all children, but especially in our community. Initially, we’ll be working with the African-American ethnic group, but we’re not going to turn any child away.”



Community building: NEI fellows and students interact with senior scientists during the Focus on Fellows luncheon roundtables.

NEI Hosts 2nd Annual 'Focus on Fellows'

By Allyson T. Collins

NEI scientists packed a Twinbrook campus conference room recently for the institute's second annual Focus on Fellows event, coordinated by Dr. Sarah Sohraby, NEI deputy scientific director. The 2-day meeting involved presentations by fellows and invited speakers, training sessions, a career development panel and roundtable discussions.

"This is an extensive event with a wide range of activities that are designed to allow you to communicate with your colleagues more completely," said Dr. Sheldon Miller, NEI scientific director, during welcoming remarks.

Sohraby's goals in organizing these meetings are to stimulate peer feedback on scientific projects, expose fellows to various career possibilities, encourage collaborations and networking and, most importantly, unite clinicians and scientists—an effort underscored by NEI clinical director Dr. Frederick Ferris's opening talk on the history of clinical trials.

During his keynote lecture, NHGRI scientific director Dr. Eric Green emphasized the widespread relevance of genomics research, while illustrating fundamental elements of a successful career in science.

Focus on Fellows concluded with an awards presentation, which included two \$1,000 travel awards for best oral presentations. The first went to Dr. Yan Li, who spoke about the roles of microRNAs in regulating eye development.

A fellow in NEI's Laboratory of Molecular and Developmental Biology, Li said that since the meeting, she and colleagues from other NEI labs have been discussing future collaborations.

The other travel award honored Dr. Zhijian Wu of NEI's unit on ocular gene therapy. His presentation described a gene therapy method for treating a genetic eye disease known as X-linked juvenile retinoschisis.

"I found it a beneficial experience," Wu said. "This was a good chance for me to present my work to NEI faculty members and fellows, and I received a variety of responses to my project that will be very helpful to my research."

Sohraby also presented Scientific Director's Awards to Dr. Anna Hansen, a member of the NIH immunology interest group steering committee, and Dr. James Friedman, leader of the retinal disease interest group.

"With Focus on Fellows, we are highlighting the importance of strong science and also recognizing fellows' efforts outside the lab," Sohraby said. "As this event becomes an NEI tradition, I hope that it will foster both a scientific and a social community within our institute." 🗨️

OEO's Lucas Designs Artwork To Benefit NIH Charities

Carl Lucas, an EEO manager in NIH's Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, recently signed sweatshirts and tees bearing his original artwork. On sale at R&W stores, the shirts feature two different designs. Proceeds benefit the Children's Inn at NIH, Friends of the Clinical Center and the CC Patient Emergency Fund. "I began drawing around the age of 10," Lucas said. "My artistic abilities eventually led to the offer of a scholarship from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. I chose not to pursue a career in art, but instead entered the world of health care in the field of cardiac nursing." He also has created media from oil paintings to laminated wood sculptures. His latest works include stained glass art. The NIH design project came about during a talk with the purchasing director for the R&W, he noted. "During the discussion about designs, I offered to donate two new shirt designs with the understanding that all profits would support NIH charities."



NIH Training Center Program Update

The NIH Training Center recently evaluated internal leadership development programs available throughout NIH and benchmarked scientific organizations with stellar leadership development programs within government, academia and private industry across the country. Armed with this information, the center is collaborating with NIH senior management and several advisory councils and committees to offer more leadership development programs for the NIH community to complement the existing NIH Senior Leadership Program. Stay tuned.

The NIH Senior Leadership Program is accepting nominations for the FY 2009 program. If you are a GS 14-15, SES, Title 42 or 38 high-performing manager, you may be eligible to participate. You must be nominated by your executive officer. Each IC has an established process in selecting teams of 4-6 employees, representing both the scientific and administrative communities. Contact your supervisor or EO for details. For general information about the program, contact Keisha Berkley at (301) 451-7303 or berkleyk@od.nih.gov. Information is also available at <http://learningsource.od.nih.gov/NIH-SLP.html>.



One of the things young people have heard at programs organized by Dr. Marian Johnson-Thompson at NIEHS and elsewhere is an admonition to follow their dreams. "Do what you love," she says, "and the money will follow."

PHOTO: STEVE MCCAWE

NIEHS's Johnson-Thompson Retires

On Sept. 30, microbiologist Dr. Marian Johnson-Thompson began a well-deserved hiatus from her work as a researcher, science educator, mentor and advocate for women and minorities in science when she retired from NIEHS after 16 years of service. Her immediate plans include enjoying time with her family and pursuing other interests as she decides where next to put her talents and energy to work.

During her career at NIEHS, Johnson-Thompson served as director of education and biomedical research development in the Office of the Director. She was responsible for identifying the environmental health research and training needs of underserved populations and organizing programs and partnerships to address them. She was particularly interested in the unique biomedical research needs of women of color and the potential they have for reducing health disparities.

As the institute's lead person for science education collaborations with schools, universities and organizations on the local and national levels, Johnson-Thompson developed programs that included the Bridging Education, Science and Technology Program, the extramural K-12 Environmental Health Science Education Program and the Advanced Research Cooperation in Environmental Health Program.

Johnson-Thompson also chaired the NIEHS institutional review board for protection of human subjects. She served as a member of the NIH human subjects research advisory committee and the trans-NIH human microbiome working group.

Prior to joining NIEHS in 1992, Johnson-Thompson was professor of biology at the University of the District of Columbia and adjunct professor of pharmacology at Georgetown University Medical School. A Florida native, she received her post-secondary education in Washington, D.C., at Howard University, where she earned a B.S. and M.S. in microbiology, and Georgetown University, where she received a Ph.D. in molecular virology.—Eddy Ball

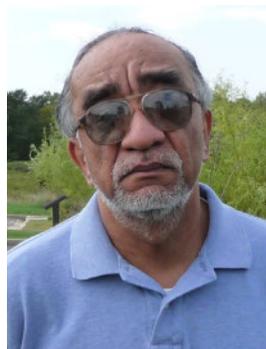


NICHD's Stratakis Named 2009 Oppenheimer Awardee

Dr. Constantine Stratakis, head of NICHD's Program on Developmental Endocrinology & Genetics and direc-

tor of the institute's Pediatric Endocrinology Fellowship Program, was named the 2009 Ernst Oppenheimer Award recipient. The Endocrine Society bestows the award each year to an investigator under age 45 in recognition of meritorious accomplishment in the field of basic or clinical endocrinology. Stratakis will receive the award at the society meeting June 10-13, 2009, in Washington, D.C. His research has focused on understanding the molecular basis of inherited diseases involving the endocrine glands.

Stratakis was honored for identifying genetic defects associated with multiple endocrine neoplasias and related genetic associations, among them Carney-Stratakis syndrome, a disease that now bears his name. He was also cited for his contributions to the understanding of familial glucocorticoid resistance and deficiency (triple A syndrome), inherited aromatase excess, primary pigmented nodular adrenocortical disease and other forms of adrenal hyperplasias. Stratakis has also devised methods to improve diagnostic testing and treatments for Cushing syndrome and other diseases of the pituitary and adrenal glands.



ORS's Harvey-White Mourned

Verlon "Bobby" Harvey-White, a long-time surgery technician in the Division of Veterinary Resources, ORS, died Oct. 8 of an intracranial hemorrhage he suffered 3 days earlier due to

malignant hypertension. He was 57 and had battled hypertension for 20 years.

Harvey-White started his career in the Army as a dental hygienist in May 1972 at Ft. Monroe, Va. In December 1976, his unit, the 8th Division Artillery, was transferred to Germany where he served as a medical aids worker in charge of medical records, teaching health and first-aid classes. He was also the emergency

medical technician at the local medical facility serving about 17,000 people.

In August 1980, he returned to the U.S. and was assigned as a medical specialist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. There he worked on a urology and general surgery ward, providing surgical support and patient care. Later he worked in the immunization clinic, where he gave immunizations and maintained the medical record files for the facility.

In May 1984, he came to NIH and began working as an animal caretaker for the National Institute of Mental Health. In September 1987, Harvey-White began his tenure in the Division of Veterinary Resources as a laboratory animal technician in Surgery Services, where he worked for 21 years.

Harvey-White used many of the skills he had acquired as a dental hygienist and medical specialist to provide comprehensive anesthetic, radiological and surgical support for a variety of surgical procedures such as heart and kidney transplants, fetal surgery, thoracic, neurosurgery, orthopedic and soft-tissue surgery in support of investigators from many NIH institutes.

He is survived by his wife Judith Harvey-White, his son Shawn, his daughter Vercera and niece Seiako Shaw. The family asks that, "In memory of Bobby, please check your blood pressure and take your medicine if you have hypertension."

Harvey-White did not want funeral services, but a memorial fund has been set up to benefit the Ciccarone Center at Johns Hopkins for research and education projects on hypertension. Donors should note on the check or in a note: "In memory of Verlon 'Bobby' Harvey-White" and that the donation should go to the Ciccarone Center. Checks can be made payable to Johns Hopkins University and sent to: The Johns Hopkins Heart & Vascular Institute, 100 N. Charles St., Suite 433, Baltimore, MD 21201. ●



The NIH Emerging Leaders Class of 2010 includes (from l) Elizabeth Tsai, Kimberley Eccles and Jessica Hancock.

NIH Welcomes 'Emerging Leaders'

Three new interns from the HHS Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) joined the NIH community recently.

The ELP is a 2-year competitive internship that recruits qualified young professionals for fast-track career development and leadership training. Interns are admitted to home offices throughout HHS where they work during their first and last 6 months of the program. Interns also have the opportunity to do four 3-month rotations anywhere within HHS to gain a broader understanding of the department.

The class of 2010 competed with thousands of highly qualified candidates from all over the country. The new NIH interns are part of a class of 18 emerging leaders with positions at HHS, IHS, HRSA, FDA, SAMHSA and CDC. They bring to NIH a diverse set of educational backgrounds and experiences.

Kimberley Eccles has a B.S. in electronic business from Towson University and an M.S. in technology management along with a certificate in human resource management from the University of Maryland. She is interested in improving the management and personnel services for information technology at NIH. Her home office is in the Division of Customer Support at CIT.

Elizabeth Tsai, whose home office is the Office of the Director at ORE, graduated from Duke University with a B.A. in public policy and holds an M.B.A. with a special emphasis in health care administration from Cleveland State University. After graduating from Duke, Tsai received a Fulbright scholarship from the Department of State to teach English in South Korea. She is interested in international development and global health, developing future leaders in the advancement of science and technology and improving access to quality health care both domestically and internationally.

Jessica Hancock holds a B.A. in international relations and B.A. in economics from Michigan State University. In addition, she has specializations in bioethics, humanities and society and political economics. She is excited to learn more about NIH and discover where she can best work to improve the health care and lives of people the world over. Hancock will be working in the Office of the Director at ORS.

The new class joins five interns from the NIH class of 2009, approximately 25 ELP alumni and a vibrant administrative intern community at NIH.

For more information about the NIH-ELP, contact Dr. James Peterson at the NIH Training Center, (301) 451-7302 or visit <http://hhsu.learning.hhs.gov/elp/>.



CFC Events Enliven Neuroscience Center, Rockledge Building

The spirit of CFC has emerged with creative NIH events. On Nov. 6 at the Neuroscience Center, NIH'ers were invited to play games and win prizes at the CFC Funland. Teams of four played skee-ball, basketball, miniature golf and darts. NIDA was the big winner, but there were other board games on the table to add to the fun. A discounted lunch was provided and charities were on hand to raise awareness of their efforts.

On Nov. 13, CIT hosted the "Wii Will Will Rock You" event at Rockledge, and even though it rained, it brought out the energy of youth in everyone who participated. Wii and PlayStation video games were set up and people danced, played tennis and bowled. Several drawings were held and winners won a Wii video game, a framed autographed picture from Brian Mitchell, who played for the Washington Redskins, and a gift certificate.

The CFC is at 41 percent of its goal of \$2.2 million and there is one month left. Be sure to locate your keyworker to pledge. A cash or check pledge this year can be deducted from your 2008 taxes, and a payroll deduction pledge can be deducted from your 2009 taxes. With more than 4,000 charities in the catalog, there is bound to be something of interest for everyone.

If you pledge by Dec. 17, your name will be submitted by your keyworker to the R&W drawing held on Dec. 19. A list of prizes can be found on the NIH CFC web site at <http://cfc.nih.gov>. You will also learn more details about NIH participation and can browse photos from CFC events.

PHOTOS: ERNIE BRANSON



At CFC Funland (a.k.a. the Neuroscience Center) Nov. 6: NCI's Robyn Bason (above, l) hawks the raffle. Above right, NIDA's Albert Avila putts as Sharon Duncombe (c) of NINDS and Aida Klun of NIDA watch. Below (from l) CFC faces include NCI's newly caricatured Danielle Fenwick (l) and Thuy Morzenti; at right, several charities that benefit from CFC donations offer information on their services.



Rockledge rocks for CFC on Nov. 13: At left, the CIT band jams; at right, CIT's Steve Hazen and Sharon Abdullah handle the raffle drawing. Below left, Scot Ryder of NIDCD and Sheila Faucette of CIT tackle Dance Dance Revolution, a PlayStation 2 game. Below right, CIT staffers (from l) John Schoeb, Brenda Hardy, Patti Mellinger, India Robinson, Susan Chaffee, Al Whitley and Greg Burnett kick it on the dance floor.

