Year Four: BHDC Summer Internship 2013

In 2004, the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, in partnership with the SUNY Downstate Medical Center, and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President created the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center to reduce health disparities among minorities and new immigrants in Brooklyn, New York through clinical and community based research, education, outreach and training. Through its community engagement core, the Center, funded by the National Institutes of Health – National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) has implemented an engaging health disparities summer internship program for high school students for the past four years.

The Brooklyn Health Disparities Summer Internship Program (HDSIP) provides a community engaged health disparities summer course for students recruited from the Institute’s Health Science Academy, a three-year after-school science enrichment program. In addition to didactic training on health disparities, students conduct research projects in collaboration with members of participating community-based organizations (CBOs).

Building on the success of the previous years, 17 teenagers participated, during the month of July 2013, in the 4-week Brooklyn based internship program, designed to engage minority youth while building the capacity of CBOs to conduct Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) on health equity issues. The students were placed at eight local community based organizations and performed research projects on various topics related to the social determinants of health, resulting in advocacy and policy recommendations for local decision makers. Their internship experience culminated with oral and poster presentations of their projects to local leaders and legislators at the Brooklyn Borough Hall.

In June 2013, I was awarded a Fulbright Research Specialist Fellowship to develop and implement a five-week summer internship program on climate change and public health in the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago. This program, conducted in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI), Faculty of Science & Technology, builds upon an earlier Fulbright Fellowship, which was awarded to the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health’s CEO, Dr. Ruth C. Browne. Similar to the summer internship program in New York, the climate change and public health program in Trinidad & Tobago included community-based research projects conducted at local organizations. 18 students conducted seven research projects on the impact of the environment on public health. Their research findings were highlighted in oral and poster presentations at a closing ceremony held at the UWI in August 2013. This publication features the projects of both the US and Trinidad & Tobago based summer projects.

Marilyn Fraser-White, MD
Deputy Director, AAIUH
Fulbright Research Specialist, 2013

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BHDSIP

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Oral Health Disparities in Low-Income Brooklyn Neighborhoods
Students: Chioma Onianwa, Jean Poulard

An Assessment of Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities (Flatbush Ave. Brooklyn)
Students: Francine Burns, Marcell Howard

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Fitness for Flatbush: A Collaborative Effort to Address Fitness Barriers in Central Brooklyn
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Perceptions of Hookah Smoking on Health
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An Investigation of Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) & Oilfield Workers’ Health
Students: Predesh V. Boodoosingh, Shekeema Frederick, Lisa Webb

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Students: Jonathan Crevelle, Akizar Bascombe

Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change through Reforestation with Fondes Amandes Community as a Case Study
Students: Rodorna McDonald, Shane Musai

Social Media and its Role in Climate Change Knowledge amongst Adolescents 15-19
Students: Naimah Mohammed, Enzo Kinsiona

The Environmentally Conscious Disposal of Pacemakers & Defibrillators
Students: Renee Browne, Sherissa Rajh
The Social Determinants of Health impact health care delivery as well as health outcomes. Having adequate access to care involves access to health information and the resources necessary to make informed decisions regarding one’s health care. Some of our students worked in collaboration with members of participating organizations to research various issues related to access including lack of insurance, access to alternative farming, and inadequate services for persons with disabilities.
Assessment of Health Resources in Brownsville and Coney Island
Students: Cierra Bennett, Esther Louis
CBO: Diaspora Community Services
Supervisors: LeRonda Sharpes, Stephanie Medrano
Research Mentor: Ho Ki Mok

Hydroponic Farming as an Alternative Method of Food Production in Urban Communities
Students: Gwendolyn Etienne, Mustafa Gadelrab
CBO: CAMBA
Supervisors: Lucille Santana, Nadie Stubbs
Research Mentor: Kulpreet Kaur

Oral Health Disparities in Low-Income Brooklyn Neighborhoods
Students: Chioma Onianwa, Jean Poulard
Supervisors: Merlyn Dorsainvil, Audrey Neff, Tawny Lowe, Betty Boyle-Duke
CBO: NYU College of Nursing Mobile Health
Research Mentor: Dr. Preenu Varkey

An Assessment of Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities (Flatbush Ave. Brooklyn)
Students: Francine Burns, Marcell Howard
Supervisors: Michael Godino, Gabriela Amari
CBO: Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled
Research Mentor: Ho Ki Mok

CAMBA
Hydroponic Farming as an Alternative Method of Food Production in Urban Communities

(L - R) Student interns Gwendolyn Etienne and Mustafa Gadelrab and Research Mentor Kulpreet Kaur
Our students had a great opportunity to explore behavioral health choices related to various issues and health topics of importance to our community. Student researchers interviewed a diverse group of individuals in their attempts to obtain information on perceptions and attitudes to topics related to HIV/AIDS, physical fitness, early sexual activity and hookah smoking. Their recommendations for improving health outcomes focused greatly on the need for increased awareness and strict policies that would empower individuals to be advocates for their health.
Educating and Empowering Communities on HIV/AIDS: Emphasizing the Importance of Prevention and Testing
Students: Joshua Germain, Kenyatta Smith
CBO: African American Coalition Against AIDS
Supervisor: Ese Oghenejobo
Research Mentor: Widlyne Melle

Fitness for Flatbush: A Collaborative Effort to Address Fitness Barriers in Central Brooklyn
Students: Elijah Joseph, Michael Onitiri
CBO: Haitian American Community Coalition
Supervisors: Fuljens Henry, Pierry Benjamin
Research Mentor: Dr. Preenu Varkey

Perceptions of Hookah Smoking on Health
Students: Ghazi Ahmed, JiaMin Chen
CBO: Arab American Family Support Center
Supervisor: Maha Attieh
Research Mentor: Kulpreet Kaur

Perceptions Regarding the Impact of Early Sexual Activity on STDs/STIs & Mental Health in Adulthood
Students: Imani Pickering, Ramel Wilson, Zekaiah Fox
Supervisor: Myriam Lamothe
Research Mentor: Widlyne Melle

Haitian American Community Coalition
Fitness for Flatbush: A Collaborative Effort to Address Fitness Barriers in Central Brooklyn

(L - R) Student interns Michael Onitiri and Elijah Joseph
Trinidad & Tobago Summer Internship 2013

The Summer Internship Programme on Climate Change & Public Health introduced secondary school students to public health and climate change issues and tools needed to effect change, inspiring them to pursue a career in public health.

The Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health conducted this program in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine’s Campus (Trinidad & Tobago). The Institute’s successful Trinidad-based Social Determinants of Health Internship Programme for Caribbean Secondary Students, conducted in 2012, was adapted to focus on the impact of climate change on public health in Trinidad and Tobago. The collaborative program development process resulted in a five-week community engaged program to provide training, public health career exploration and community-based internships in local organizations for current or recent secondary school students. These students were exposed to activities related to the following:

- Information on health and climate change; risk management
- Public health surveillance and opportunities to use climate information
- Core concepts in public health and epidemiology
- Emergency preparedness
- Systems for surveillance and support and interagency cooperation
- Environmental justice

This internship culminated with presentations at a closing ceremony on August 16, 2013.
An Investigation into Adverse Effects Associated with the Use of Rain Versus River Water
Students: Keon Mitchell, Tiffany Richards, Ricardo Sampson
NGO: Toco Foundation
Supervisor: Wendy Diaz

An Investigation of Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) & Oilfield Workers’ Health
Students: Pradesh V. Boodoosingh, Shekeema Frederick, Lisa Webb
NGO: Oilfield Workers’ Trade Union
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An Investigation of the Awareness of Marine Litter Policies Among Coastal Residents of the St. Patrick’s & Victoria Districts
Students: Jheuel Carter-Guy, Rinelle Cozier, Diana Persad, Samantha Raman
NGO: Caribbean Youth Environment Network
Supervisor: Riana Gonzales

Special Thanks to:
Principal Professor Clement Sankat, Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Wayne Haute, Deputy Principal Professor Rhoda Reddock and her staff, especially, Ms. Lynette Joseph-Browne for their support. Thanks to Professor John Agard and Dr. Judith Gobin for hosting the Fulbright Fellow, and the staff of the Science & Technology Faculty, especially Ms. Paulette Belfonte. Presenters: Ms. Kathy-Ann Lewis, Dr. Bernice Dyer-Regis, Mr. Omar Mohammed, Ms. Lynette Joseph-Brown, Professor Rhoda Reddock, Dr. Rohan Maharaj, Dr. Judith Gobin, Professor John Agard, Dr. Eldonna Boisson, Dr. Elaine Joseph, Dr. Azad Mohammed, Mrs. Dennise Demming, Mr. Rubadiri Victor, Dr. Alan Williams, Mrs. Ginelle Yearwood-McDonald, Mr. Salome McDonald, Mr. Gregory Sloane-Seale, Ms. Monica Jordan. Special thanks to Ms. Myrna Ellis (Coordinator).
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NGO: Cropper Foundation
Supervisor: Omar Mohammed

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NGO: Heartbeat International of Trinidad & Tobago
Supervisor: Farouk Khan Hossein
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A Partnership between the SUNY Downstate Medical Center,
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NYU College of Nursing
Mobile Health Van Program
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Climate Change & Public Health Summer 2013 Internship Programme: Trinidad & Tobago

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