

# Health Professions Alumni Connection

Health Professions Alumni Association News

Winter 2014

## Mary Knepper Welcomed as Alumni Director

The Health Professions Alumni Association is pleased to welcome Mary Knepper, who brings a wealth of experience in fund and donor development, to the position of alumni director.

Mary was grants manager at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center for 12 years where she helped secure \$28 million through more than 200 awarded grants, and worked with the College of Nursing's faculty and staff on many projects including tuition assistance, simulation equipment and facility improvements. Her expertise was included in Jana Hexter's 2012 book, "Grant Writing Revealed – 25 Experts Share Their Art, Science, and Secrets."

Prior to St. Joseph's, she initiated successful revenue campaigns as director of marketing and public relations for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and the Spokane (WA) Symphony Orchestra. Mary holds a BA in music

education and has completed training programs in grantsmanship.

"I'm very excited to be on board with the terrific team at Upstate. I have a tremendous amount of respect for allied health professionals – your work is so important to the future of health care! And I'm impressed with the members of the alumni association board and their commitment to service; they set a great example. I look forward to getting to know our alumni, faculty and students and working with the alumni association to create new ways to engage with graduates of all generations."



## Success in State Licensing for Perfusionists

Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law on October 22 a bill advanced by SUNY Upstate Medical University that will create a pathway for all cardiovascular perfusionists to be licensed by 2016. The signing marks the culmination of almost a decade long campaign to make perfusionists the 51st profession to be licensed by the state Department of Education (DOE). In addition to local legislators' leadership, College of Health Professions Dean Hugh Bonner, PhD, and Cardiovascular Perfusion Department Chair Bruce Searles, CP '93, both played strong roles in keeping the issue alive. The overall coordination for the activity was done by Dan Hurley, director of the Upstate Office of Government and Community Relations.

"The law's passage is significant for setting a legal scope of practice for perfusionists and maintaining



Cardiovascular Perfusion Program Chair Bruce Searles (right) provides instruction to Nonin Medical employees visiting Upstate's Perfusion Simulation Lab.

patient safety," noted Searles, who is president of the NYS Society of Perfusionists. "It sets entry-level criteria that practicing perfusionists must now meet in this state."

Approximately 20 percent of NYS perfusionists are not certified and have no continuing education requirement. "Licensure of perfusionists in New York will set a minimum bar for initial and continuing education for our profession," said Searles.

Upstate is the home to one of only two perfusionist training programs in the state.

It is expected that perfusionists will be able to apply for a NY license starting in 2015 and if practicing in state, will be required to have a NY perfusion license starting in 2016.

## Health Professions

### Alumni Connection

The SUNY Upstate Medical University Health Professions Alumni Association publishes Alumni Connection quarterly. Distribution is free to college alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends.

**Alumni Director:** Mary Knepper

**Writer/Editor:** Lois Hickey

**Design:** Marketing & University Communications

#### Board of Directors

##### **President:**

Josephine Przepiora, MT '00/  
MS '10

##### **Vice President:**

Anthony Kurec, CLS '82

##### **Treasurer:**

Kenneth Galbraith, MIS '84

##### **Secretary:**

Allison Ferris, PA '12

Meyyappan Arunachalam, CP '12

David Clemente, MIS '93

Jennifer Davis, PA '11

Elton Garvin, RT '93

Thomas Grady, RT '88

Joseph Nicoletti, RESP '76

Michelle Pisik, MIS '72

Carol Recker-Hughes, PT '79

Robert Sunheimer, CLS '74

Nicole Tomasello, CP '11

Jim Vossler, MT '81

##### **Student Representative:**

Anne Reilley

##### **Ex-Officio Members:**

Hugh W. Bonner, PhD

Dean, College of Health Professions

Gregory L. Eastwood, MD,  
Interim President,  
Upstate Medical University

Eileen M. Pezzi, MPA  
VP for Development,  
Foundation for Upstate Medical University

##### **Address Corrections to:**

Health Professions Alumni Office  
Upstate Medical University  
750 E. Adams Street – CAB 326  
Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-464-4416

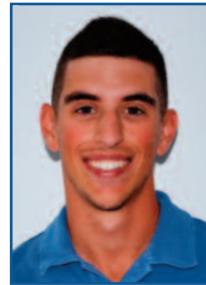
##### **Connect online at:**

[www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni)

## \$22,000 in Alumni Scholarships Awarded

The College of Health Professions Alumni Association awarded \$12,000 this fall in admission scholarships to deserving students entering Upstate to pursue careers in the health professions. Arriving from hometowns spanning New York State and one from Canada, these 12 students – each receiving \$1,000 awards – are being assisted thanks to alumni-supported funds. An additional 14 students continuing in the college were given renewed scholarships totaling \$10,000.

This note of appreciation is from



Class of 2015 medical biotechnology major Joseph Ciccarelli:

*"When I received my scholarship from the alumni association, I was truly grateful that those who have graduated from SUNY Upstate considered me an outstanding candidate for the award. I will use the money for books and other school supplies necessary. Scholarships like these take some of the economic burden off of students and their families so that they can focus on learning the ins and outs of their craft."*

Alumni, you truly make a difference in the lives of our CHP students! Please support scholarships by giving online at [www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni), or by responding to the annual fund letter. You may also call 315-464-4416.

### Q & A CORNER

President of the Health Professions Alumni Association Board and Clinical Laboratory Science Instructor Josie Przepiora, MT(ASCP), MT '00/MS '10, answers this question:

**Q:** *How can clinical laboratories equip themselves to handle the expected rise in demands in the near future?*

**A:** Clinical laboratories are beginning to see an increase in workload because of: increased testing due to an aging population; decreased staffing due to the retirements of many in the profession; and an anticipated rise in workload with the adoption of the Affordable Care Act. This makes it imperative that high quality training of future laboratorians be supported not only by academic programs but by their clinical affiliates. Many of us work in laboratories that support clinical rotations for medical lab

technology students.

When working with these students, it's important to "go the extra mile" while instructing them in procedures, protocol and professionalism. After all, we are teaching those who will probably be performing tests on our own specimens someday. To help ensure a well-equipped laboratory workforce, also become an ambassador for the profession! Reach out to the high schools, science teachers and youth centers in your community by offering to speak at career days or be a judge at science fairs. Help bring laboratory science into the limelight! How many degree programs can boast a 100 percent placement on or before graduation? Together, we can ensure that laboratories will be able to keep up with the looming workforce challenges.

### FACULTY UPDATES

**Jill A. Merluzzi, BS, PA-C**, joined the Physician Assistant Studies program this fall as clinical instructor, teaching courses in general medicine, human physiology, and advanced physical diagnosis and clinical procedures. From Syracuse and a Le Moyne graduate, Jill has practiced since 1999, first in general and thoracic surgery at St. Joseph's,



then as an orthopedic practice PA. She continues clinical practice part-time in urgent care while teaching. She has a special interest in treating/diagnosing osteoporotic patients.



*continued on back cover*

## Imaging Grad Helps Honduran Children Stay in School

Sam Robbins, MIS '13, returns yearly with a group from his church in Corning to what is known as the most dangerous city in the world to help children there who are forgotten and hungry.

For the past three summers, with members of Border Buddies Ministries, Sam has gone to Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital riddled by street gangs and corruption, to help build kitchens in the public schools. The organization has started working kitchens providing students with a hot meal during the day, so that they would not go hungry or eat unhealthy. Beyond that, they also build classrooms, repair roofs, and interact with the children.



Sam Robbins with school children in Tegucigalpa

Interacting with the children – showing them people care – is the most important part of the trip, according to Sam. “Many times these children feel alone and forgotten and do not understand why we would come to their country to help. They are even more in awe when they see some of us returning each summer or when they realize we don’t get paid for all the work we do

there. It is crazy to see the poverty and horrible living conditions they have, yet see the joy and thankfulness in their faces every morning we arrive at the school. It is something I can’t even describe. I definitely plan on going back several more times.”

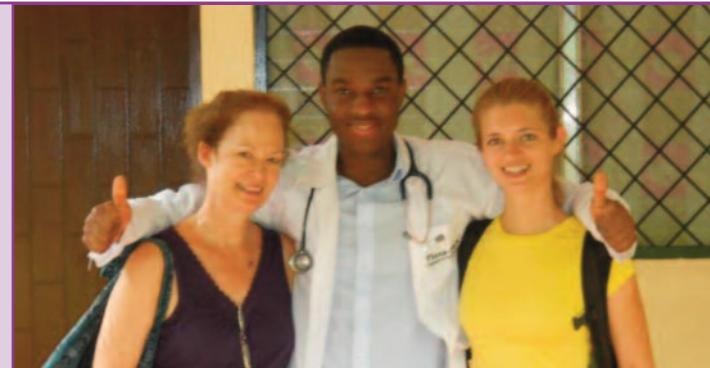
### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## RESP Student Reflects on Mission to Nicaragua

The following is an excerpt of a personal account by Adlin Noel, Upstate respiratory therapy senior:

“As a trained respiratory therapy student who also plans to become a doctor, I took part in one of the greatest experiences in my life through a medical trip organized this summer by Upstate’s Center for Civic Engagement. Along with four medical students and a nursing student, I spent two weeks in El Sauce, Nicaragua. I had the opportunity to observe and learn different medical procedures, and put them into practice.”

“We worked with local physicians, who know the cultural and economic aspects of the community very well. ...I had a great foundation in many aspects of health, specifically in the respiratory system. I was able to assist with vital signs, physical examinations and vaccine administrations... On my first day, I was quickly able to diagnose a patient with symptoms associated with pneumonia. Under the supervision of one of the Nicaraguan doctors, I interviewed the patient and came up with an appropriate intervention. A chest X-ray was not done due to lack of equipment, but the information



Respiratory Therapy's Adlin Noel with nursing student Joanne Speicher (left) and medical student Rachael Kuch in Nicaragua.

was enough to proceed with a treatment plan.

“As someone who was born and raised in an under-served country (Haiti), I understand the hardships many people face. I love doing humanitarian work... In 2011, I traveled to Haiti to participate in an ethnographic study of the impact of the major earthquake which struck there in 2010.”

Adlin authored “Lack of Transparency, Accountability, and Victims’ Participation in Decision Making: Haiti’s Major Threat,” published this summer in *Practicing Anthropology*, a journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology.

Adlin’s entire account is posted by Jim McKeever at: [www.blogs.upstate.edu/withdistinction/](http://www.blogs.upstate.edu/withdistinction/)

# Alumni Connection

Health Professions Alumni Association News

SUNY Upstate Medical University  
326 Campus Activities Building  
750 East Adams Street  
Syracuse, New York 13210

[www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni/](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni/)

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 110  
Syracuse, NY

## Make a difference today!

Call 315-464-4416 or donate online at  
[www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni)

### Have you presented, been promoted or published?

Share your story with fellow alumni!  
Send information to: [hickeyl@upstate.edu](mailto:hickeyl@upstate.edu)

#### ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

During the Lung Cancer Candlelight Vigil held November 14 at the Upstate University Hospital circle, student **Amelia Weimar, RT '14**, joined radiation therapist/faculty member **Elton Garvin, '93**, to sing a duet of "The Lord is my Shepherd," accompanied by student/guitarist **Hal Appleby, RT '15**.



**Bruce Searles, CP '93**, Upstate's Cardiovascular Perfusion program chair, spoke at the University Hospital of Zurich and National Perfusion Conference in Geneva, Switzerland in September; served as an external examiner for the National University Hospital of Singapore for a perfusion training program in October; and, was keynote speaker/facilitator at the Medical University of South Carolina's "Update on Perfusion Devices" also in October.

**Meyyappan Arunachalam, CP '12**, cardiovascular perfusionist at the Montefiore Medical Center, presented a

pro-con debate at the American Society of Extracorporeal Technology's Best Practice Meeting held October 10.

**Ron Angona, CP '00**, was promoted to chief perfusionist at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Some Medical Imaging Sciences faculty members/alumni are on the run, taking part in recent area marathon events: **Ken Galbraith, '84**, ran his first marathon October 27 in Buffalo; and **Kerry Greene-Donnelly, '95**, and **Dave Clemente, '93**, both participated in the Empire State Half Marathon in Syracuse on October 20.

#### FACULTY UPDATES, CONTINUED

**Paul R. Johnson, PhD, MBA, MT(ASCP)**, joined the Clinical Laboratory Sciences program in Fall 2012 as assistant professor, teaching laboratory and research statistics, laboratory instrumentation and clinical chemistry. He holds a doctoral degree in biochemistry and molecular biology from the University of Louisville. He was a clinical laboratory manager for

Boston Heart Diagnostics in Framingham, MA, and a technical specialist for clinical chemistry proficiency testing for the College of American Pathologists in Northfield, IL. A member of the ASCP, ACS and the AACC, last fall he won a Travel Award from the Society for Young Clinical Laboratorians to attend the AACC Annual Meeting in Houston.

