

The Lattice

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH ALUMNI AND
FRIENDS

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As more recent world events remind us, our global society is impacted by change and challenge. Now, as in the past, opportunities must continue to be cultivated for communication and the sharing of unique perspectives. In our Master of Public Health (MPH) program, we are fortunate to have candidates who are representatives from around the world. Individuals who have had an array of health-related experiences already in their own countries, and now wish to focus on the principles and practices of population-based health enhancement. As the first Master of Public Health program in the University of Wisconsin System, nationally accredited since 1992, an openness and encouragement of diverse perspectives, public health without borders, and authentic cultural sensitivity have been at the core of the educational experience since its inception. In this issue of the Lattice, we have a unique opportunity to highlight three MPH candidates who represent the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. They come to us with distinct backgrounds and interests. All aspire to return to their homelands to make a difference in the health and well-being of their respective populations. In addition to demonstrating a dedication to discovering the principles and practices of public health while in our program, they have positively impacted other candidates, faculty, staff, and citizens with their determination to make the world a safer and healthier place in which to live and interact.

Gary D. Gilmore, MPH, Ph.D., CHES, Director

CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT: LIUDMYLA DMYTRIIEVA

Liudmyla Dmytriieva, or Luda as she is fondly known by her colleagues and professors, entered the Public Health program after completing her Masters in Linguistics and Literature from her homeland in Ukraine. She received the prestigious Edwin Muskie Fellowship from IREX in order to study at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Having worked as a manager/coordinator for an international non-governmental organization in areas such as; health management, HIV/AIDS prevention, STD prevention encouraged her to pursue a Masters degree in Public Health. As she puts it, "Practical knowledge was not enough. I needed a theoretical background to enhance my skills" and thus enrolled in the nationally accredited Master of Public Health program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

When asked to share her experiences about being a student at this University, she said the diversity of the students in her classes was the most striking feature as it helped her understand the different perspectives regarding health issues from an international point of view. When asked about the differences that existed in the learning environment at the University, she said that the faculty members encouraged the students to get involved in various issues regarding Public Health, providing a wide array of opportunities. As the number of students in each class was small, it provided an opportunity for the professors to be better acquainted with each student, thus helping to communicate at a more personal level, along with having opportunities to share personal experiences. Also, while working for a non-governmental organization she became more aware of the challenges that exist in engaging communities and developing a workforce to manage health-related issues. Part of her Public Health curriculum covered these principles of community-based health education and promotion in depth, thus giving her a better understanding for future applications.

Having a keen interest in South Asian countries and Africa, she was most delighted to meet a fellow classmate from the Southeastern part of Uganda, Pamela Mukaire, with whom she shares a special bond. Having similar backgrounds in education and professional work, they found common interests and inspired each other to better learn about the international issues that exist in the field of Public Health. Luda plans to graduate by May, 2009 with her MPH degree, and she then plans to return to Ukraine where she aspires to be a leader working with non-governmental organizations primarily concerned with the needs of underserved populations.

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Luda (center) with her colleagues at the fundraising event *World of Chocolate* organized by AIDS Foundation of Chicago, where she is currently having her preceptorship experience.

CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT: PAMELA MUKAIRE

Pamela Mukaire comes to us from Ginga district, a part of Southeast Uganda. After completing her Bachelors in Linguistics and Masters in Educational Leadership she continued with her mother's legacy and was involved in health education, working mainly with rural populations. She did voluntary work in areas of Malaria, HIV/AIDS prevention and enjoyed social community education. When asked why she chose the Public Health program, she said "I want to learn how to change behavior and enhance my community interaction skills, so that I can better understand the basic foundation of Public Health and implement it in a rural setting".



Coming from a unique cultural background she has enjoyed her experience as a student at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. It gave her an opportunity to connect and work together with fellow classmates from various backgrounds helping her look beyond her own culture and outside the book thus immersing herself in other cultures to better understand ways of empowering the community. Another experience of studying at this University was that "the lectures keep you interested, as the teaching staff is so passionate about their work; it helps you to engage with your coursework and facilitates interaction".

Being friends with Luda, gave Pamela an opportunity to better understand the cultural distinctions that exist in different populations. Their friendship also provided a much needed "peer support" which not only motivated her in her studies but also provided her with a chance to unwind and take a break from her busy schedules.

Pamela is planning to graduate by May, 2009 and planning to return to her country to continue in the footsteps of her mother. In this sense, she will serve rural populations by applying her Public Health skills to better educate and manage the underserved communities in Uganda.

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THE FORTH LATTICE EDITOR : RAJIV CHOUDHARY (2009)

My own journey to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse has been quite an interesting one. Having completed my Bachelor degree in Medicine from India, I moved on to get hands-on experience in the field of General Surgery from St. Petersburg, Russia, where I completed a post-graduate certificate course. After returning to my hometown of Mumbai, India, I worked extensively in the field of breast cancer for almost three and one-half years. During my work, I realized the importance of Public Health and the role it played in serving the community. Being interested in community-based research and health promotion, I realized the need to pursue a professional degree in the field. The reason I chose UW-La Crosse is because of its accreditation and overall ranking in the community health majors. After completing a year at the University, I had the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant to Dr. Gilmore who is highly renowned and respected in the field of Public Health. I truly consider myself to be honored and blessed to have had this opportunity. My responsibilities have included facilitating undergraduate classes, being involved with the La Crosse Wellness Project, and involvement with the Public Health Community Advisory Council of UW-La Crosse. I also had the opportunity to have my Preceptorship experience with the Community and Preventive Care Services Department at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center where I have been involved in developing community-based interventions and strategies for a healthier Wisconsin. I intend to graduate by May, 2009, and hope to return to my country and apply my skills to improve the health of the people there, both as a physician, as well as from a public health perspective.

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MPH-CHE Mission Statement

The mission of the MPH-CHE graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is to prepare professionals using advanced-level health education competencies and public health core areas who will address quality of life enhancement through health education and health promotion, realizing the dynamic and interdependent nature of human systems and their interactions with the environment.