

# University at Buffalo Health Impact

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

[SPHHP.BUFFALO.EDU](http://SPHHP.BUFFALO.EDU)

## FBI Director's Community Leadership Award

Paul Wietig receives national award

3

## National Public Health Week

Events scheduled to highlight and celebrate public health efforts

6

## Associate dean named

Gaspar Farkas appointed associate dean for academic and student affairs position

7

## International project

OT student travels to her native India during winter break to help cerebral palsy patients

12

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

WINTER 2015

# Snowvember

HISTORIC BUFFALO SNOWSTORM "KNIFE" RAISED  
PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES AND UNIFIED COMMUNITY *Page 4*



Photo by AARON BOBECK [www.aaronbobeckphotography.com](http://www.aaronbobeckphotography.com)

## Reflecting on an historic winter, looking forward to spring activities

This winter in Buffalo has certainly been memorable. November brought with it “Storm Knife” a historic lake-effect snowstorm that turned portions of Western New York into a winter wonderland.

Known simply as “Snowvember” by locals, the storm raised important public health issues, unified our community and truly revealed why Buffalo is known as the “City of Good Neighbors.” You can read more about the storm and see incredible photos on pages 4 and 5.



As the calendar year moves toward spring, our school continues to stay busy in the areas of learning, teaching, research and with a number of planned activities and events.

We are hosting a series of events and activities from April 3–12 to celebrate public health efforts across our community, the nation and the world for National Public Health Week. I invite you to join us, especially if you haven’t been to UB in a while. A listing of events can be found on pages 6 and 7, and detailed information can be found online at <http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/nphw>.

Exciting things continue to happen in our school. One of our own has been recognized by the FBI with a national award; a new associate dean has been named; our dietetic students had an exciting collaboration with the Buffalo Bills; and an occupational therapy student traveled to India for an ongoing research project. I hope you enjoy reading more about all of this and more in this issue of the Health Impact Magazine.

We’re looking forward to the excitement that will come with the close of the 2014–2015 academic year in the School of Public Health and Health Professions at UB. Your next issue of Health Impact will arrive this summer!

**Jean Wactawski-Wende**

Interim Dean

Professor of Epidemiology and Environmental Health



Suman Sarker and Donald W. Rowe

### School and Community Partners Recognized for Program that Cuts Costs for Rural Health Departments

Rural health departments across the country are under considerable economic constraints as they try to maintain essential health services. A model program designed to assist rural counties in cutting costs by sharing health services has helped two Western New York counties realize health care savings approaching \$840,000 over two years without loss of services or jobs. The project, “The Cross Jurisdictional Sharing Program,” was devised collaboratively by SPHHP, the health departments of Orleans and Genesee counties, and the Lake Plains Community Health Care Network, a nonprofit agency that fosters shared efforts to improve health care. Donald W. Rowe, PhD, director of the Office of Public Health Practice in SPHHP, helped develop the project and alumnus Suman Sarker, MPH, provided invaluable hands-on assistance to those putting this program into action.

### New Master of Science Program

The Department of Community Health and Health Behavior recently added a Master of Science Degree Program. The program prepares students to address community and behavioral factors that impact health and wellness; work on research teams conducting community health and health-behavior research; and succeed in careers within academia, government agencies or private/nongovernmental agencies. The program is research-based and takes approximately two years to complete.

For more information, visit <http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/community-health-and-health-behavior>

## Student Receives \$18,000 National Fellowship Award

Tejal Shelat, a physician and graduate student, has been awarded an \$18,000 fellowship by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) through its international fellowship program. Shelat is enrolled in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health, where she is pursuing a master's degree in public health with a concentration in health services administration.

"I am very grateful to the AAUW for helping to fund my graduate education, which will further my goal of working for the betterment of women in developing countries," she says.



Tejal Shelat

Shelat is a graduate of Lady Hardinge Medical College—a medical college for women and part of the University of Delhi Faculty of Medical Science. She is a registered medical practitioner and has worked as a primary care doctor in rural India. Shelat was a contributing author of "Dietary Practices and Physical Activity Performed by School Children in Selected Districts of India," published last year in the Indian Journal of Community Health.

## Public Health Student Ambassadors Named

Each academic year, SPHHP selects three graduate students as ambassadors who work to improve the visibility and prestige of the school, while gaining leadership and communication experience. Ambassadors attend the American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting, which includes spending time at the school's exhibit booth, attend the school's reception at APHA and promote the school and its programs. Ambassadors also represent SPHHP at selected regional recruitment events and other activities, such as open houses. The Public Health Ambassadors for the current academic year are Alexandra Baker, MPH Epidemiology; Kristina Kalyan, DPT/MPH Community Health and Health Behavior; and Robyn Mazur, MPH Biostatistics. Congratulations!



Alexandra Baker



Kristina Kalyan



Robyn Mazur



NATIONAL AWARD WINNER // PAUL WIETIG <<

## Recognized by FBI for Community Leadership



Paul Wietig, EdD, received the FBI's 2014 Director's Community Leadership Award (DCLA). The award, which honors individuals and organizations that have made a significant difference in the community, recognizes Wietig for his success in bringing together law enforcement, public health officials and members of the health care community, and encouraging them to collaborate.

Brian Boetig, special agent in charge of the Buffalo office of the FBI, presented Wietig with the award during a ceremony on Dec. 17 in the local FBI office. FBI Director James Comey will present the award formally during a ceremony in May at FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. Wietig is one of 58 individuals across the country selected to receive the DCLA.

Wietig, assistant vice president in the Office of Interprofessional Education (IPE), says he was pleased and surprised to receive this recognition, noting he shares the award with the schools of UB's Academic Health Center, particularly the School of Public Health and Health Professions, as well as the School of Social Work, the School of Management and the FBI.

"We are working together for the present and future well-being of our community," he says. "The Buffalo office of the FBI has clearly established a commitment and provided leadership for interprofessional education and service in our community."

Interprofessional education, considered by many to be the wave of the future, stresses collaboration of all health and community professionals to ensure the best patient care possible. Wietig's mission in the Office of Interprofessional Education in UB's Academic Health Center is to offer educational/training experiences that help to break down "silos" that keep health care professionals functioning only within their respective disciplines.

# Historic “Snowvember”



The eye of the storm: snow clouds rolling in over Lake Erie at the start of the storm. Photo by Aaron Bobeck [www.aaronbobeckphotography.com](http://www.aaronbobeckphotography.com)

**T**here is one undeniable truth about winters in Buffalo—it snows and sometimes, it snows a lot. Case and point, the historic lake-effect snowstorm that impacted the area in November 2014.

During a five-day period from November 17–21, several communities to the south and east of Buffalo received nearly 80 inches of snow. Even more spectacular was the fact that some locations received more than 60 inches of snow in one day, potentially breaking the New York State record for 24-hour snowfall totals.

The resulting impacts of the storm were undeniable. Numerous schools and businesses were closed, including a two-day closure of the UB. Individuals became stranded in their cars and major roadways were closed.

**“In the face of this severe weather, New Yorkers from every corner of the state came together to help their neighbors...”**

—ANDREW CUOMO, NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR

Ultimately, a state of emergency was declared for several Western New York counties. The tragic weather event claimed the lives of 13 individuals.

With so much snow, first responders, National Guard members and snow-removal crews worked around the clock to assist citizens and communities impacted by the unprecedented storm. This, according to John Violanti, PhD, research professor of epidemiology and environmental health and internationally known expert on police stress, resulted in a major health concern for those individuals due to increased stress levels and fatigue.

“The biggest problem that first responders face is fatigue,” said Violanti, an expert on police culture, psychological stress, illness and mortality. He has federal funding to study and measure police-officer fatigue and the impact of shift work on health and performance.

# Storm

STORM "KNIFE" RAISED PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES AND SOLIDIFIED WHY BUFFALO IS THE "CITY OF GOOD NEIGHBORS"



“The New York State troopers and all first responders worked endless shifts, not getting home to care for their own families, sleeping at the barracks and eating whatever they could find,” said Violanti. “The second issue was the overwhelming multitude of emergency calls to first responders that were virtually impossible to handle.”

The ‘Snowvember’ storm even prompted President Barack Obama to sign a disaster declaration, ordering that federal aid through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) be provided to assist in recovery efforts.

But for every story the storm spawned of misery, frustration and even tragedy, there were equal the amount of stories that showcased the perseverance and strong sense of community among those who call Western New York home.

“In the face of this severe weather, New Yorkers from every corner of the state came together to help their neighbors in Western New York and the North Country in their time of need,” said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo in a statement soon after President Obama signed the disaster declaration for the area.

These included hundreds of volunteers coming together to form a “shovel brigade” to help dig out their fellow community members, many of whom had been trapped in their homes for five straight days.

While snow is an almost certainty during the winter months in Buffalo, so, too, is the unwavering commitment of Western New Yorkers to offer a helping hand to their friends and neighbors during times of need. Especially during such an historic lake-effect snowstorm. Buffalo is truly the “City of Good Neighbors.”



1. View of the storm rolling in from Kimball Tower, UB South Campus (photo courtesy of Katie Crosby); 2. View from Depew, NY vehicle of Tracey Gawron, Office of the Dean; 3. The calm in the City of Buffalo the day after the storm first hit; 4. Clean-up after Winter Storm Knife. Photo credit: John Hickey / Buffalo News; 5. Aerial photo of a suburb near Buffalo of the snow covered homes, driveways and streets. Photo credit: David Niedbala / Buffalo News

# Faculty and Students Attend Annual APHA Meeting in New Orleans

**F**ACULTY MEMBERS AND STUDENTS from the School of Public Health and Health Professions participated in the annual American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference in New Orleans. The conference, which took place on Nov. 15–19, brought together public health students and professionals to learn, network and engage with peers within the field.

Faculty and students from all five departments attended the conference. In addition, the three public health student ambassadors were in attendance.

APHA showcased the diversity of the projects that SPHHP faculty, staff, and students are involved through presentations and poster sessions.



**Pictured (from the top):** Faculty, staff and students of the SPHHP gather while attending the annual American Public Health Association (APHA) Conference in New Orleans on Nov. 15–19, 2014.

Heather Orom, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior and a guest at her presentation.

Megan Saddleson, a PhD candidate in Community Health and Health Behavior, and a guest at her presentation.

## NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Our school will recognize National Public Health Week with a series of events to highlight and celebrate public health efforts across our community, the nation and the world.

### 2015 SPHHP National Public Health Week Events

#### Annual Saxon Graham Lecture

Nutrition and Cancer: Personal Reflections on 40 Years of Slow Progress

**SPEAKER:** Tim Byers, MD, MPH professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of Colorado, associate director, Cancer Prevention and Control, University of Colorado Comprehensive Cancer Center, associate dean for public health practice and director, Center for Public Health Practice, Colorado School of Public Health

**DATE:** Friday, April 3, 2015 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
**Location:** 144 Farber Hall (UB South Campus)

#### Community Health Promotion

A collaboration with the Community Health Center of Buffalo  
**DATE:** April 6–10, 2015  
**LOCATION:** 34 Benwood Ave.

#### UB Global Health Club Meeting

**DATE:** Wednesday, April 8, 2015 from 8–8:50 a.m.

#### Community Health & Health Behavior Brown Bag Seminar

Person-Centered Care: From Practice to Theory to Practice  
**SPEAKER:** Davina Porock, PhD, RN, director, Center for Nursing Research, director, Institute for Person-Centered Care, UB  
**DATE:** Thursday, April 9, 2015 from noon to 1 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** 111 Kimball Tower (UB South Campus)

#### Refugee Health Summit

**DATE:** Thursday, April 9, 2015 from 12:30 to 5 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** Educational Opportunity Center, 555 Ellicott St.

# Farkas Named Associate Dean

**G**ASPAR FARKAS, PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXERCISE AND NUTRITION SCIENCES, assumed the position of associate dean for academic and student affairs for the School of Public Health and Health Professions on Jan. 3.

"It was an unexpected honor to have been asked by Interim Dean Wactawski-Wende to take on the position of associate dean of academic and student affairs," says Farkas. "History has some odd ways of repeating itself. When I first started at UB, I assumed the teaching responsibilities for the neuroscience and neuroanatomy courses from Dale Fish. Jump some 20 short years later, and here I am again following in his indelible footsteps."

Farkas brings considerable experience to his position. After earning his PhD from McGill University, he completed post-doctoral training at the University of Virginia and Erasmus University in Belgium. Prior to joining the faculty at UB in 1994, Farkas was a researcher at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. In addition to his research and teaching responsibilities at UB, Farkas has served in key roles, including associate chair for graduate studies in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences and as interim chair of the department.



Gaspar Farkas

"In the time since assuming my new role, I've certainly gained an awareness of the bigger systems at work and am humbled at my limited understanding of the numerous layers that comprise university academic operations," says Farkas. "More importantly, I have gained a profound appreciation and respect for the number of truly dedicated individuals, not only in the dean's office, but also in the academic units, all of whom are genuinely committed to providing excellence to our students. As my predecessor before me, I, too, share in our collective commitment to provide all of our students with a first-class educational experience. I look forward to participating in the future academic growth and development of our school."

### 5th Annual Global Health Day

DATE: Friday, April 10, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
 SPEAKERS: Brian King, MPH, PhD, and Cheryl Healton, MPA, DrPH  
 LOCATION: Lippschutz Room (Biomedical Education Building, UB South Campus)

### Department of Rehabilitation Science Seminar Series

Caregiving & Stroke Seminar  
 SPEAKER: Dr. Jill Cameron  
 DATE: Friday, April 10, 2015 from 2-3 p.m.  
 LOCATION: 111 Kimball Tower (UB South Campus)

### Interprofessional Education Event

"Alive Inside" Documentary Screening  
 DATE: Friday, April 10, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
 LOCATION: North Park Theatre, 1428 Hertel Ave.

For more detailed event information, visit [sphhp.buffalo.edu/nphw](http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/nphw)

## Healthiest Nation 2030

### April 3-12, 2015



## National Public Health Week

[www.nphw.org](http://www.nphw.org)

AN INITIATIVE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

## The “Jewels in our Genes”

### STUDY LINKS NEW GENETIC ANOMALIES TO BREAST CANCER IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILIES



The “Jewels in our Genes” study, led by researcher **Heather Ochs-Balcom**, has uncovered previously unknown segments of DNA shared by African-American family members who have breast cancer.

“The discovery of these regions supports our hypothesis that there are still undiscovered breast cancer genes that may be unique to African-

Americans,” says Ochs-Balcom, PhD, a genetic epidemiologist in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health. “We can now focus on these specific chromosomes to learn if they house genetic mutations linked to breast cancer.

“We also need to determine whether those mutations are found in other racial groups or if they are unique to African-Americans. If they are unique, it could explain why young African-American women have a higher risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer compared to other groups,” she says.

“Our study used linkage analysis, a powerful tool that helps to detect the chromosomal location of disease genes by examining genetic markers across the entire human genome. Our family-based gene hunt is similar to the groundbreaking study among women with European ancestry done in the early 1990s that led to the discovery of BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, which greatly increase susceptibility to breast and ovarian cancer.”

African-American women can also carry the BRCA mutations, but Ochs-Balcom suspects there may be additional, undiscovered mutations linked to breast cancer in this population.

“Family studies like this one have been difficult to conduct in the past,” Ochs-Balcom says, “in part because it’s difficult to get multiple family members to commit the time needed to participate. We found here that approaching the recruitment of African-Americans by using a multi-pronged approach that included collaboration from our community partnerships greatly facilitated success.”

She points out that African-American women have a higher incidence of pre-menopausal breast cancer and a higher breast-cancer mortality rate than European Americans. They also are



more likely to develop early-onset cancers that are aggressive and difficult to treat. Some of these may be caused by unknown genetic anomalies that if found, could lead to early screening, detection and treatment.

The study was funded by a grant from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation and is the subject of two recent papers published by the team in the journal *Cancer, Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* and the *Journal of Community Genetics*.

It was conducted between 2009 and 2014 by researchers in the UB School of Public Health and Health Professions, Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, Roswell Park Cancer Institute and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

The study examined the DNA of 106 African-American families not known to carry BRCA mutations tied to hereditary breast-ovarian cancer syndrome. Participants included 179 women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer and 76 of their sisters who never had the disease.

“Perhaps the most important motivating factor in their decision to participate in our study,” says Ochs-Balcom, “was the potential to prevent suffering in their daughters and granddaughters.”

She says the investigation was spurred by Veronica Meadows-Ray of Buffalo, an African-American woman involved in Roswell Park’s breast-cancer survivor programs. Ray asked if a study could be undertaken to look into why her mother, aunt and several cousins developed breast cancer although they do not carry the BRCA mutations. She suspected that their cancer was hereditary and provoked by genetic mutations unique to African-Americans.

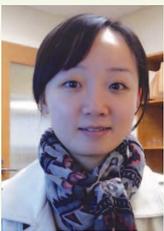
“Our exciting results suggest that family-based studies are a great strategy to use when searching for new breast cancer genes,” Ochs-Balcom says, “and these findings may pave the way for further family-based research in this understudied population.”

Ochs-Balcom’s co-authors are Xiangqing Sun, PhD, and Yanwen Chen, PhD, Jill Barnholtz-Sloan, PhD, and Robert Elston, PhD, of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine; Deborah Erwin, PhD, and Lara Sucheston-Campbell, PhD, of Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and Lina Jandorf, MA, of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital.

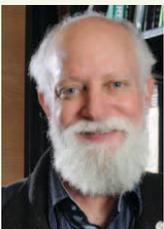
**Pictured above:** Heather Ochs-Balcom’s research linking new genetic anomalies to breast cancer in African-American families was spurred by Veronica Meadows-Ray, far right. Also pictured are, from left, Meadows-Ray’s aunt, Evelyn; Ochs-Balcom; and Meadows-Ray’s mother, Mary. Photo credit: Douglas Levere



**Elizabeth Gage-Bouchard, PhD**, assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, was the lead author on the study “Factors Influencing Patient Pathways for Receipt of Cancer Care at an NCI-Designated Comprehensive Center.” The purpose of the study was to focus on understanding how sociodemographic factors influenced patient choice of where they received cancer care. While previous research has revealed that the facilities where patients receive their cancer care have implications for cancer outcomes, there has been little understanding of how patients decide where to seek cancer care. This study found that when it comes to cancer treatment, both education and income levels can influence a patient’s pathway to care at a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center. In addition to Gage-Bouchard, co-authors of the study include several researchers from Roswell Park Cancer Institute including: Dr. Elisa M. Rodriguez, Frances G. Saad-Harfouche, Dr. Austin Miller, and Dr. Deborah Erwin.



**Jingjing Yin, PhD**, who earned her doctorate degree from the Department of Biostatistics, recently published a study on the improved symptoms and health status of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) when they used a hand-held respiratory device called the Lung Flute®. The Lung Flute, manufactured by Medical Acoustics, in Buffalo, uses sound waves to break up mucus in the lungs. The device allows patients to clear lung mucus simply by blowing into the hand-held respiratory device, which produces a low-frequency acoustic wave. The research was funded by Medical Acoustics and by the UB Center for Advanced Biomedical and Bioengineering Technology, which is funded by NYSTAR and Empire State Division of Science, Technology and Innovation.



**Peter Horvath, PhD**, associate professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, was the lead author of a study on the health effects of mushroom ingestion. The study found that healthy male and female subjects who consumed mushrooms with glucose had a significant decrease in glucose responses compared to those who consumed glucose alone and that mushrooms may moderate postprandial glucose-related responses, which seems to be exaggerated in a young, healthy female population. In addition to Horvath, authors of the study include: Harry Marsales, graduate student, Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences; Todd C. Rideout, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences; Brian T. Williams, graduate student, Department of Physiology and Biophysics; and Zach M. Lamacchia, undergraduate student, School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.



**Heather Orom, PhD**, assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, and colleagues from SPHP recently published a study in the international academic journal *Ethnicity and Health*. The studies show that African-Americans perceive their risk for getting cancer to be lower compared to Whites, despite cancer incidence being higher among African-Americans. The study is one of a few that have examined minorities’ reasons for their level of perceived risk for cancer.



**John Violanti, PhD**, research professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health and internationally known expert on police stress, was lead author of a study on how personal traits may help shield police officers from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the aftermath of a natural disaster. The study found that symptoms of PTSD significantly decreased among subjects as personal traits such as resilience, satisfaction with life and gratitude increased. The research was conducted using a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Violanti and several NIOSH researchers are among the authors. The cross-sectional study, “Positive Psychological Factors are Associated with Lower PTSD Symptoms in Police Officers: Post Hurricane Katrina” was published online in a December 2014 special issue edition of the journal *Stress and Health*.



**David Tritchler, ScD**, research professor in the Department of Biostatistics, is the co-investigator on a new award from Kaiser Permanente for the project entitled “Diet and Lifestyle in a Prospective Study of Bladder Cancer Survivors.” Tritchler will assist with the genetic statistical analyses and implementation of data models for the project that will investigate the role of diet in recurrence and progression of bladder cancer. Tritchler is also principal investigator on a continuation award from Health Research Inc. for the project titled “Flaxseed Effects on Hormones and Lignans: Role of Race, Genes and Gut Microbiome.” Tritchler will continue to provide statistical analyses of the associations between the composition of gut bacterial communities and the baseline level of lignans and steroid hormones.



# Fuel Up to Play 60

Nearly 200 middle-school students and teachers from Western New York were at the Buffalo Bills ADPRO Sports Training Center in December for the annual NFL Fuel Up to Play 60 “Be the Change” forum. Participating students gathered to learn how healthy eating and physical activity can benefit them, not just in school, but for a lifetime.

Eight dietetic graduate interns and one post-dietetic internship graduate from the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Science teamed up with Buffalo Bills’ running back C.J. Spiller, Bills’ nutritionist Dan Liburd and dairy farmer Jason Kehl, from Strykersville, NY to help encourage local children to eat healthy and be physically active.

“It was awesome to see how excited the kids were to engage in the event and develop skills regarding leadership, health and wellness,” said dietetic internship student Alyson Onyon.

Fuel Up to Play 60 is a national partnership between the National Football League and the American Dairy Association, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to encourage students to eat healthy foods (fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat and fat-free dairy products) and exercise 60 minutes daily. The participants received leadership and communication training to help find their voice in order to drive healthy change within their schools.

“It was a wonderful opportunity for nine of our dietetic internship students to

participate in the promotion of overall health alongside the NFL Fuel Up to Play 60 program. They were able to apply their knowledge base about nutrition and how it translates into good health for our youth,” said Barbara Schultz, the department’s internship program director.

SPHHP students were assigned to groups of children, and took them through four specially designed stations—each dedicated to a specific food group—where they were taught how to make selections of foods that nurture and fuel the body, maintain energy and support a healthy weight. The children also received nutrition and exercise lessons at each station. The middle school students were from Orchard Park, Niagara Falls, Grand Island, Buffalo, Rochester and Rush Henrietta schools.

Pictured above (clockwise from left): Kristen Perrella leading three students to their Play 60 station; Elizabeth Machnica running with students through the Buffalo Bills fieldhouse; Kaitlyn Summers and Alyson Onyon with Billy Buffalo; Group photo: Jenna Rath, Rhianna Wagner, Kristen Perrella, Rebecca McKeown, Elizabeth Machnica, Kaitlyn Summers, Alyson Onyon, Courtney Gallagher; Jessica Scordino with her student group

## Helping patients “get their life back”

**“BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TREATMENT AND PREVENTION”** are the words printed on Kristina Kalyan’s student business card. While Kristina is enrolled concurrently in the doctorate of physical therapy (DPT) and master of public health (MPH) programs concentrating in community health and health behavior, she is doing just that.

Her ambitious quest started in 2008 when Kristina decided she wanted to study something that gave her an opportunity to help others. “When I was looking at schools, at first the University at Buffalo wasn’t on my radar. But, when I came to visit, I liked the campus, the program set-up, the affordability factor and I immediately felt comfortable here.”

Kristina enrolled as a freshman, completed coursework in exercise science and was accepted into the DPT program. She then went on to become the school’s first DPT/MPH student, beginning coursework for the MPH program in 2013. In 2014, she was appointed by the school to serve as a public health student ambassador, working to improve the visibility and prestige of the school, while gaining leadership and communication experience.

While pursuing her degrees, Kristina has worked the last three years at Buffalo Cardiology and Pulmonary Associates (BCPA) in Williamsville. This afforded her the opportunity to complete her DPT capstone and MPH integrative projects, all while working with patients on customized lifestyle and behavior-modification programs.

“The team at BCPA provides outcomes-focused plans to individuals to help with everything from physical activity, to eating habits, to their overall well-being,” she says. “Giving people the chance to get their life back is a very rewarding job.”

Kristina noted the faculty were instrumental in her decision to be a DPT/MPH student. “Recognizing the need for broader public-health knowledge, Kristina sought me out to determine how she could complete the MPH in Community Health and Health Behavior while working on her doctorate of physical therapy,” says Greg Homish, PhD, Associate Professor, Director, MPH Concentration and Co-Director of Graduate Studies, in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior. “This clearly demonstrates her strong drive, motivation and forward thinking to improve health outcomes. We were able to work



Kristina Kalyan is a MPH public health student ambassador.

collaboratively with the Department of Rehabilitation Science to make this collaborative degree a reality. Kristina has excelled in the program and serves as a model for others to follow a similar path.”

Kristina completed DPT clinical rotations in Central New York and Western New York. She will spend her last few months as a student practicing at an in-patient setting within a Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital in Syracuse. She is expected to graduate in May.

To say she has been successful with her studies is an understatement.

What is Kristina looking for in her first job? “An opportunity that allows me to use the skills I have learned at UB to help bridge the gap between treatment and prevention,” she says.



## Extending a hand in India

During the month-long hiatus between fall and spring semesters, when many students look forward to much-needed rest and relaxation, Sutanuka Bhattacharjya dedicated herself to helping patients in her native India.

As a doctoral student in the Department of Rehabilitation Science, she couldn't think of a better way to spend her time than by trying to help others.

As part of an on-going project with Janice Tona, PhD, and Arthur Goshin, MD, MPH, Bhattacharjya has worked to develop a video-based training module for community rehabilitation (CBR) workers in rural, under-developed areas of India. The project—which is part of a larger initiative in the school's Office of Global Health Initiatives and funded by Goshin's own HealthyWorld Foundation—has developed a partnership with the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (ICP) and Dimagi, a technology company specializing in providing mobile technology to

underserved communities across the globe.

In rural areas of developing countries, where professionals such as occupational therapists are not as involved, CBR workers become very important. However, CBR workers are often volunteers that lack the necessary training to provide sufficient support to families that have children with cerebral palsy.

That's where Bhattacharjya and project supporters like Goshin and his HealthyWorld Foundation come in.

In August 2013, Sutanuka made her first trip to India. On that trip, she observed CBR workers and families to assess their training needs.

"I interviewed CBR workers, individuals with disabilities and their parents regarding their experiences in managing daily activities of living such as feeding, dressing and toileting," said Sutanuka. "It was refreshing to see their hope and constant encouragement to find new and innovative ways to help these children."

From there, she worked with IICP to develop scripts that would be used to create video segments to be used by CBR workers.

"These videos are being planned so that when CBR workers go into rural communities and interact with a mother whose child has, say, difficulty eating, they can show the video to them and also provide that hands-on support that is often needed," explains Sutanuka.

On her most recent trip, Sutanuka traveled to West Bengal, India, to capture video and photos to be made into a training module focused on meal-time management.

“It was refreshing to see their hope and constant encouragement to find new and innovative ways to help these children.”

“More specifically, I focused on the feeding aspects of child care for children with oral motor difficulties,” she said. “We focused on feeding as a whole, then moved into more details, such as chewing, so that we could show various techniques that would allow parents to help facilitate chewing or swallowing of food.”

Since returning, Sutanuka has been working with a UB team to edit the raw footage, place the photographs, and add narration to the segments in Bengali—the native language to the portions of India that she worked in. “Once the video is edited and the photos have been selected, they will be sent off to Dimagi to create the final video segment module.” That final product will then be available through mobile technologies, such as cell phones.

It is Sutanuka’s hope that this will be the first in a series of video segments that can be used to help further aid CBR workers and parents whose children have cerebral palsy.



Sutanuka Bhattacharjya

“Additional segments could be more focused on identification of disabilities,” says Sutanuka. “Meaning children can reach typical milestones as it relates to areas of physical or cognitive development and then showing deviations from that milestone to help future planning.”

“This project, while not a part of her dissertation, is still a labor of love,” said Janice Tona, PhD, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Sutanuka’s faculty advisor for the project. “It really speaks to her level of commitment.”

“I envision this project helping families not only in India, but in other developing countries,” noted Tona. “We are so fortunate in the U.S. to have learned so much about managing the symptoms of cerebral palsy through research and now we are able to share this with families that were previously isolated.”

To learn more about the Office of Global Health Initiatives and how you can support its efforts, visit <http://sphhp.buffalo.edu/global-health.html>



EVENT // ANNUAL PERRY LECTURE <<

## 2014 Perry Lecture Addressed Vaping and E-cigarettes



Lynn Kozlowski, PhD, professor in the department of Community Health and Health Behavior and former dean of SPHHP, presented the school’s 26th Annual J. Warren Perry Distinguished Lecture on Oct. 9. Kozlowski’s extensive research focuses on tobacco use and related behaviors, and his talk, “Thoughts and Data on the Hot Button Issues that Divide Us on Vaping and E-cigarettes,” addressed the fierce public health dispute over their relative safety.

Kozlowski has long been a proponent of accurate reporting of health data. He has criticized misleading information about smokeless cigarettes on both sides of the issue and maintains that these products are not a causal gateway to tobacco use, although they may pose other problems. His earlier work called for the proper labeling of tobacco products, and pointed out that harm-reduction options in cigarettes were misunderstood by smokers due to misleading health information. Most recently, Kozlowski has studied whether tobacco-caused addiction is a tobacco-caused disease in and of itself. In addition, he has reported on variations in nicotine intake in U.S. cigarette smokers over the past 25 years, and examined nicotine dependence and withdrawal among smokers with a history of childhood abuse and among those with mental illnesses.

The J. Warren Perry Award and Distinguished Lectureship is the School of Public Health and Health Professions’ lecture series honoring the late J. Warren Perry, PhD, founding dean of the School of Health Related Professions. Perry, a pioneer in the field of allied health, served as dean from 1966 until his retirement in 1977.

# Alumni Events



UB alumni happy hour on Feb. 5 at the 2015 American Physical Therapy Association Combined Section Meeting in Indianapolis, Ind.



UB alumni in Rochester celebrate their alma mater together at ArtisanWorks.

## UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS:

Tuesday, April 21, 2015  
All Alumni Event in Washington, D.C.,  
at the Smithsonian Castle

Thursday, June 18, 2015  
All Alumni Event in NYC at the  
Madison Square Garden Theatre

Thursday, September 17, 2015  
All Alumni Event in Buffalo  
at HarborCenter

For a complete listing of upcoming  
alumni events and information, visit  
<https://alumni.buffalo.edu/events>

### STAY CONNECTED!



Visit the UB Alumni Association's  
UB Connect page and let us know what  
you've been doing since graduating.

>> [sphp.buffalo.edu/alumni/connect](https://sphp.buffalo.edu/alumni/connect)

#UBSPHHP IN SOCIAL MEDIA

facebook

Pinterest



YouTube

flickr



*I'm thankful.*



***William Stendardi***

arrived in Buffalo from Brooklyn knowing little about his new city, including its pro sports teams—he thought the Sabres were a lacrosse club. The UB undergraduate preferred bodybuilding to hitting the books, and lacked an academic game plan. After trying several majors, he broke a leg playing handball, later calling it “the best thing to happen to me.” While recuperating, he regrouped, became an exercise science major and took an anatomy class that helped him realize he wanted to be a doctor. A privately supported scholarship helped him afford UB medical school. “Without this university, without this city, I don’t know where I would be,” William says.

The **best public universities** have the strongest private support.

# UB Health Impact

The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York system. The School of Public Health and Health Professions is one of 12 schools that make UB New York's leading public center for graduate and professional education and one of five schools that constitute UB's Academic Health Center.

Interim Dean: Jean Wactawski-Wende

Director of Communication and Alumni Relations: Jackie Hausler

Communications Specialist: Glenn Waldron

Contributing Writers: Patricia Donovan, Ellen Goldbaum, and Sara R. Saldi

Designer: David P. Donati

15-SPH-001

[sphhp.buffalo.edu](http://sphhp.buffalo.edu)

School of Public Health and Health Professions  
401 Kimball Tower  
3435 Main St.  
Buffalo, NY 14214

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Buffalo, NY  
Permit No. 311

QUICK LOOK << .....

## NFL Fuel Up to Play 60

A group of children and a woman are running on a green field. The children are wearing blue t-shirts with a logo and white headbands. The woman is wearing a red t-shirt and black pants. They are all smiling and appear to be participating in a physical activity.

DIETETIC INTERNSHIP STUDENTS TEAM UP  
WITH THE BUFFALO BILLS TO TEACH CHILDREN  
ABOUT LIVING HEALTHY LIVES

*Full story on page 10*