



alert:



Scott Kobner talks to students at South Cobb

GEORGIA

High Schools Say YES to Epidemiology

Epidemiology took center stage in Atlanta last October when YES alumni Michelle Krakowiak and Scott Kobner visited South Cobb and Dunwoody High Schools to share their passion for public health with hundreds of local students. The visits coincided with Georgia becoming the first U.S. state to adopt state standards for high school epidemiology, approving the course for students to take to fulfill state science requirements.

Michelle and Scott, who both plan to pursue careers in public health, talked to large student assemblies about their award-winning YES research, their current academic work, and the wide range of career options available in the field of public health. [continued on page 2]

Inside the CDC

YES Scholars visited Atlanta in September for an inside look at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009-10 YES Scholars Carl Nist-Lund, Jeffrey Wang, Shoshanna Goldin and Gazelle Zerafati began their visit with a tour of the Global Health Odyssey Museum, viewing exhibitions on the history and work of CDC and giving hazmat suits a trial run.

The scholars then attended an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) seminar where they heard about an investigation into a hepatitis B outbreak at an assisted living facility in Virginia. [continued on page 3]



Carl Nist-Lund dons a hazmat suit

White House Honors YES Scholars

2009-10 YES Scholars attend the first-ever White House Science Fair. [Back cover]

Paths to Public Health

YES Scholars are eight hundred alumni strong and making their mark in the world of public health. [Page 2]

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOLS SAY YES TO EPIDEMIOLOGY

[continued from front cover] “I want students to understand that research is a good career to pursue,” Michelle told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, which covered the events. “It’s not just about old guys in lab coats.” The presentation at South Cobb High School was a homecoming for Michelle, who graduated from there in 2006. She talked about her interest in immunology, microbiology and cancer research, and described some of the many professional disciplines – from mathematics to anthropology – that can lead to a public health career.

A graduate of Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Michelle is currently a Ph.D. student in biological sciences at Vanderbilt University. She was a 2005-06 YES Regional Finalist and her research was titled, “Determining the Knowledge and Understanding High School Students Have of Antibiotics and Their Functions.”

Scott Kobner and Michelle Krakowiak join Dr. Erika Ijames and students at South Cobb High School

A biology major at Emory University, Scott spoke passionately about his commitment to public health, telling the Atlanta students, “The best part of YES is that it empowers you to affect change in your own community.” Scott was selected as a National Finalist in the 2007-08 YES Competition for his research on community-associated methicillin resistant staphylo-

PATHS TO PUBLIC HEALTH

What started as a high school research project for many has led to numerous public health-related degrees and work that impacts the well-being of people around the globe. Have you ever wondered what your YES peers are doing now?



KATRINA DIAZ (2005-06) always intended to pursue a career in medicine, but the YES Competition fueled her passion for research,

leading her to eventually work toward an M.D./M.P.H. degree. Her interest in public health stems from the global view it offers. An undergraduate at the University of Michigan, Katrina is currently majoring in Biology and Honors English. She has applied to medical school and has her sights set on emergency medicine with a focus on research.

“YES and my high school research experience opened many doors for

research opportunities in college to which I otherwise wouldn’t have had access,” she said. She is currently involved in a study at the University of Michigan Medical Center Emergency Department in which she surveys back pain patients about the cause, duration and pertinent background information about their pain.

“YES taught me that no data is ever too trivial. When I realized that the doctors I work with had no intention of using these surveys as data in the study analysis, I suggested the information would be useful to understand public knowledge and attitudes about back pain.” Previously, Katrina participated in a university study on the natural history of central line catheters.



For his YES project, **JOSH PEPPER** (2004-05) studied air quality in California’s Central Valley and its impact on asthma incidence. More

than six years later, he continues to investigate this topic. “I’m helping a Ph.D. student with an air quality monitoring research project that focuses on the Central Valley,” he said. “While air quality in Berkeley is good, the Sacramento and San Joaquin air basins host some of the worst air quality in the country. My research will help us understand what control efforts can best help mitigate this environmental hazard and public health problem.”

Josh is majoring in civil and environmental engineering while completing the 3/2 dual degree engineering program at UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz, where he majors in environmental studies.

Since the fall of 2009, he has worked with a consulting group that specializes

coccus aureus and the efficacy of prevention education among athletes. In his presentation, he explained how his YES research was used by communities in his home state of New Jersey. He also talked about his experiences in Honduras helping to establish health clinics and secure clean sources of water.

Joining Scott and Michelle was the College Board's Director of National Recognition and Scholarship Programs, Diane Tsukamaki, who gave an overview of the YES Competition and encouraged students to enter. She also introduced the Epidemiology Calendar (www.epicalendar.com), a new online resource for exploring historic moments in public health and related research by YES Scholars.

During the question and answer sessions, students asked about everything from what it takes to be an epidemiologist to practical questions on how to get started on the seemingly daunting task of preparing a YES research paper.

"I'm here to say that if I can finish that program and win a scholarship in the YES Competition, then so can any of you," Michelle told the assembly at South Cobb.

"It can be hard to convince a high school student that they can be a research scientist," said Dr. McKay, biology teacher at Dunwoody High School. "Today our students came away seeing that it is possible."

in the chemistry of pesticides, industrial organics, inorganics and heavy metals. Josh has found many connections to his YES experience. "My first exposure to GIS and map-making was in my YES report. The experience helped me develop fundamentals I now use to create maps of pesticide use with industry standard software."

ANDREEA SEICEAN (2004-2005) graduated from Case Western Reserve University in 2008 with a B.A. in public health and also completed her M.P.H. She is working towards an M.D./Ph.D. in health service research. Andreea is currently mentoring a teen who is conducting a study focused around breast cancer education in her high school for the YES Competition.

"Mentoring this student is of great pleasure to me," said Andreea. "She really is exceptional, and I am thrilled about being able to spread the word about YES, and apply my Epi/Biostats and Public Health knowledge."

BEVIN COHEN (2003-04) first developed an interest in epidemiology while working on a summer research project observing hand hygiene practices in hospital neo-



natal intensive care units, which became her area of study for the YES Competition. "As an undergraduate at the University of Vermont, I was able to broaden my interests in public health, taking different classes related to the field," she said. Today, Bevin holds an M.P.H. from Columbia University, concentrating in epidemiology, and has recently enrolled in the Ph.D. program there.

Since 2007, Bevin has worked as a coordinator at Columbia University's Center for Interdisciplinary Research to Reduce Antimicrobial Resistance. "The studies that I now design and implement are very similar to those I did as a high school student for YES." Future plans include continuing her education in epidemiology and furthering her involvement in research related to infection prevention in hospital settings. Bevin will be the first YES alumna to serve as a YES judge in the upcoming competition.

INSIDE THE CDC

[continued from front cover]

Jeffrey Wang joined in during the Q&A, asking the presenters a question about educational training at the facility.

Next came a tour of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), CDC's command center for coordinating responses to domestic and international public health threats. Equipped with state-of-the-art communications technology, the EOC features a massive wall of 16 video screens monitoring areas of interest across the globe.

Former CDC Director Dr. David Sencer joined the scholars for lunch, sharing stories of his distinguished service at CDC and asking questions about their research. After traveling to another CDC complex in Atlanta, Shoshanna and Gazelle presented their YES research to a group of CDC professionals.

After a lively conversation with Dr. Stephen Thacker, Deputy Director for Surveillance, Epidemiology and Laboratory Services, the students attended a panel presentation on CDC career paths. It was a fitting end to a day of discovery at one of the world's leading public health institutions.

Carl Nist-Lund, Shoshanna Goldin, Jeffrey Wang and Gazelle Zerfati at CDC



DEADLINE REMINDER

Young Epidemiology Scholars
Competition

FEBRUARY 1

ENTER YES AND EARN MONEY FOR COLLEGE

It's not too late to enter the YES Competition and get involved in health issues that matter to you. Each year, YES awards college scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000 to high school juniors and seniors for original research in public health. Entries in the 2010-11 YES Competition must be received by 9 AM EST, February 1, 2011. Online registration and guidelines are available at www.collegeboard.com/yes.

YES in the press

TEEN
KIDS NEWS

The media spotlight continues to shine on YES Scholars as they are featured on national television, praised at the White House, and hailed as role models for raising awareness about careers in public health.

John Di Capua, 2009-10 Regional Finalist, was the focus of a recent Teen Kids News TV segment about YES. The award-winning television program is broadcast on more than 200 stations nationwide and seen by more than eight million people.

In October, **Shoshanna Goldin and Jeffrey Wang** received media fanfare after meeting with President Obama. The same month, **Michelle Krakowiak and Scott Kobner** made headlines in Atlanta for speaking to high school students about YES and the exciting range of career opportunities in public health.

AND THE WINNER IS... EPILOGUE

Congratulations to **GABRIELLE MILNER**, 2008-09 RF, winner of the September YES newsletter Epi Quiz. Gabrielle correctly identified Broad Street in Philadelphia for its connection to an outbreak of Legionnaires disease in 1976.



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WHITE HOUSE HONORS YES SCHOLARS

WHITE HOUSE



YES Scholars honored at the
White House Science Fair

The Obama Administration hosted the first-ever White House Science Fair on October 18 to celebrate the winners of a broad range of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competitions. Among the honored guests were 2009-10 YES Scholars Shoshanna Goldin and Jeffrey Wang, who attended with winners of other leading science competitions ranging from Science Olympiad to the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology.

At the event, President Obama viewed project exhibits and gave a speech congratulating the students on their diligence, desire to tackle hard problems, and drive to invent and discover. In addition to meeting the president, the students had the chance to rub shoulders with Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman of Discovery's popular "MythBusters" series.