New State Adolescent Health Coordinator
Center for Adolescent Nursing Graduate Sarah Nafstad

Sarah Stoddard Nafstad is a 1999 graduate of the Adolescent Nursing Master's program and recently became the Adolescent Health Coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Health. We reviewed her pathway to this challenging new position and discussed some of the milestones along the way.

After she graduated from Mankato State University in 1994 with a BS in Nursing, Sarah worked for Blue Earth County as a public health nurse in Maternal Child Health, primarily with pregnant and parenting teenagers. “I loved that population,” she recalls, “often feeling as though I had made a difference. At the same time I felt as though I still didn’t know enough to do this work. I decided to pursue a Master’s degree and the CAN program was perfect – it combined my two passions: public health nursing and adolescent health.” While at the University, Sarah also completed the pediatric nurse practitioner program and a...
fellowship in adolescent health through the Department of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health in the Medical School.

Over the past three years Sarah has worked for several adolescent clinics, including Healthstart, Inc., Minneapolis school-based clinics, and Teenage Medical Services (TAMS). “All were rewarding,” she says, “as I got to work directly with youth and get experience in direct patient care. Through these experiences, I gained a greater understanding of the needs of youth and the programs that serve them.”

In January of this year Sarah made the difficult decision to leave TAMS and become the Minnesota State Adolescent Health Coordinator. “While I loved working directly with youth, this position would provide me the opportunity to impact adolescent health at a greater level” she reflects. “This was the type of position I had been trained for through the CAN program and the adolescent health fellowship.”

When asked what the State Adolescent Health Coordinator does, Sarah explained, “I have three primary functions. The first is to work on strategic planning efforts in Minnesota so that policy and program development effectively address the health needs of the adolescent population. The second is to provide technical assistance regarding adolescent health issues, policies and programs to adolescent health services and programs. And third, I provide leadership, both at MDH and in local communities. In this way, efforts to address the health needs of adolescents are integrated and coordinated across the state, promoting a shared vision of healthy youth development for all Minnesota youth.”

Sarah credits the Adolescent Nursing program for providing the opportunities to master many of the skills she uses in her current position, from community assessment to program evaluation. “The program provided these skills, all within the context of public health nursing and adolescent health. I came away from CAN and the University of Minnesota with strong leadership and advocacy skills – a strong voice for youth and understanding the needs of youth serving programs.” She added, “CAN provided
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Currently, Scott is finishing up the dual degree track, with adolescent health nursing in the School of Nursing and maternal-child health in the School of Public Health; both are supported by the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau. His program should be completed by December 2002, which allows time for a career search while completing an adolescent nursing fellowship in the Division of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.

When asked how he applies adolescent nursing at St. Joseph’s, Scott explains, “Everything I’ve learned in graduate school is reflected in my work at St. Joe’s. I see protective factors, risk factors, developmental assets, and treatment options in action. Kids at St Joe’s come from tough situations where they face multiple risk factors, such as abuse and neglect by parents addicted to drugs. However, counterbalancing these negative aspects are a number of protective factors such as their love of school, good connections with their teachers and/or a focus in the arts or music. These wonderful strengths and talents can be fostered as developmental assets. Helping kids to identify and focus on these assets is emphasized in my graduate studies and gives me a powerful tool in the face of great adversity.”

Scott was also quick to point out that his graduate program provided a number of practical as well as theoretical approaches in areas such as grant writing, management, and interviewing. “Interview skills with young kids and adolescents is key in this setting,” says Scott. “Kids come to St. Joe’s in a crisis situation, without parents. You have to be able to build good rapport very quickly, create a health history out of nothing. The younger the patient, the more difficult this is. A number of kids don’t necessarily know the name of their conditions, even fewer know the name of the medication they take. Then, there is the added challenge of earning trust and confidence of kids in order to discuss such things as sexual or physical abuse. I feel that I’ve grown a lot with this very rich experience.”

Also while working at St. Joseph’s, Scott gained valuable experience in quality management, accountability, conflict resolution, the power of contractual relationships, and grant writing. During his tenure there, St. Joseph’s was selected as one of six former Community-University Partnership for Education and Service (CUPES) sites, where health science students went for field experience in an urban community setting. Scott wrote and presented the proposal for St. Joseph’s to become a part of CUPES, and served as site co-coordinator and primary instructor.

“When orienting students,” says Scott, “I emphasize keeping an open mind. Kids in protective custody aren’t necessarily victims of bad parenting. For example, some very good parents find themselves homeless and the county takes their kids because homelessness can be considered neglect. In addition, trainees are going to see kids who arrive in handcuffs and leg shackles from Hennepin County Juvenile Detention; these are the kids who they’re going to see make improvements in leaps and bounds, given this new structured and secure environment. I tell my trainees to measure their experience at St. Joe’s in ‘dog years’: every year they spend at St. Joe’s is going to be 5 to 7 growth/learning years.”

Perhaps the greatest barrier to health care, Scott feels, is the number of systems that children and families must navigate.
Adolescent Nursing

AWARDS & CONGRATULATIONS!

Linda H. Bearinger was requested by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) to serve on their Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Group for MCH training. MCHB assembled an interdisciplinary group of consultants from around the nation to help design a national MCH training plan, objectives and delineating goals. This initiative aims to help the nation achieve significant, measurable and sustained improvements in training a new generation of leaders to provide children with quality clinical and public health services, to teach and conduct research that benefits children and families, and to advocate for children.

In addition to being elected President of the University of Minnesota Organization of PhD Students in Nursing (OPSN) Carolyn Garcia, teaching specialist, CAN master’s graduate and current doctoral student is growing accustomed to going to the podium to receive awards. This year she is the recipient of three service awards. The Emergency Services Volunteer of the Year Award from the Greater Minneapolis Chapter of the American Red Cross. Second, The 2002 President’s Student Leadership and Service Award recognizing the efforts of outstanding student leaders, presented to approximately 0.5 percent of the student body for exceptional leadership and service to the University of Minnesota and its surrounding community. Third, The Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International’s 2002 Public Electronic Award, following a Channel 45 interview with Harris Faulkner during the 9 O’clock News. The program, “A Nursing Response to 9-11 at the Pentagon,” documented her volunteer experience with the Red Cross in the aftermath of the 9-11 tragedy. This award is one of eight International Media Awards presented to individuals and groups who have pursued excellence in communicating nursing’s rich and diverse stories and in sharing nursing’s knowledge with the nursing community or general public. We’re in complete agreement with Sigma Theta Tau’s President May L. Wykle, RN, PhD, FAAN who said, “your exceptional work in nursing is an inspiration to all society members and to nurses everywhere.”

Congratulations to Linda Halcón who has been named the A. Marilyn Sime Faculty Research Fellow. This prestigious two-year fellowship award is given to a faculty member committed to developing an interdisciplinary program of research in complementary therapies and healing practices. The fellowship was created by School of Nursing Emeritus Professor Marilyn Sime, who pioneered interdisciplinary research and helped found the doctoral program. The award provides Linda with support to pursue her scholarship in the area of complementary therapies and to build on her pioneering work in clinical aromatherapy.

Linda Halcón received an Academic Health Center seed grant for her study, “Melaleuca alternifolia essential oil for treatment of wounds infected with Staphylococcus aureus.” (The common name for Melaleuca is Tea Tree Oil.)

Kim Nollenberger, current CAN masters student, was awarded a study abroad scholarship for Summer 2002. The J.W.G. Dunn Jr., Scholarship for Foreign Research in International Peace was developed to provide an award for a University of Minnesota student to pursue research abroad dealing with issues of direct relevance to international peace. Kim will be studying school-based STD prevention in Tbilisi, Georgia.

PRESENTATIONS

Linda Bearinger presented “Adolescents’ vulnerability to STIs/pregnancy: Can they be protected against risk?” at the 16th National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in Atlanta, Georgia, February 2002.


Renee Sieving presented “‘Attitude is everything’… or is it? A longitudinal study of adolescents’ contraceptive use,’ at the 16th National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control in Atlanta, February 2002 and at the Society for Adolescent Medicine Conference in Boston, March 2002.


CENTER FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES

Linda H. Bearinger

Carolyn Garcia

Linda Halcón

Kim Nollenberger

Elizabeth Saewyc

Renee Sieving

Renee Sieving
A PASSION FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
CURRENT GRADUATE RACHEL OLSON

Rachel Olson graduates this year from The Center for Adolescent Nursing’s masters program. She recalls discovering her passion for adolescents while getting an undergraduate degree from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul: “It seemed that everyone else in my nursing program knew exactly what type of illness they wanted to work with. I only knew what population I wanted to work with - adolescents!” After graduating from St. Catherine’s in 1999, Rachel went to work in Abbott Northwestern Hospital’s Station 37, a locked, behavioral health unit for children and adolescents. “I learned as much from the youth who were on the unit as I did from my incredibly wise colleagues. It was a rich experience that made my desire for further education undeniable.”

In the fall of 2000, Rachel started her Master’s degree in the School of Nursing in public health nursing with a focus on adolescent nursing and a minor from the School of Public Health. In the fall of 2001 she began a Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH) Fellowship. This one year interdisciplinary training program, offered by the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, selects fellows from nursing, medicine, nutrition, psychology and social work. “I enjoyed the wealth of information brought to the sessions by the fellows,” says Rachel, “This program allowed me to develop a wider knowledge base and a deep respect for the interdisciplinary (as opposed to multi-disciplinary) approach.”

Rachel’s master’s research focused on the protective nature of family mealtime in the lives of adolescents. “My special interests include the impact of family in the lives of adolescents, health promotion, and mental health for adolescents,” she says, “I hope to find an outlet for this interest in my next position.”

During her intervention practicum, where students are placed in clinical settings to gain field experience, Rachel joined the management team of the Teens Take Action on Health (TTAH) program, a collaboration between the Center for 4-H Youth Development University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health at the University of Minnesota. This program for youth, ages 9-18, supports youth in developing of projects to address a health issue in their community. As project directors, youth carry out a research, advocacy or education project with the assistance of two mentors and the TTAH staff. “This program demonstrates how youth can, and should, be involved in and leading efforts to promote health and well-being for all ages,” says Rachel. “It really allowed me to put into practice all of the skills I have learned through my master’s coursework, specifically, creating and managing a budget, program evaluation (both process and outcome), leadership and marketing skills, attracting youth leaders, and creating an effective orientation that encourages on-going participation.”

Rachel’s plans for the future include a position working with youth and, one day, continuing her studies, seeking a Ph.D. in adolescent public health. As she looks back on her masters’ experience, Rachel comments, “My professors have been exceptional and I still smile every time I do a literature search on-line: their names dominate my computer screen. I will always fondly remember these two spectacular years with the Center for Adolescent Nursing.”

Rachel Olson, MS, MPH, RN
To evaluate its masters program the Center for Adolescent Nursing recently surveyed former graduates. The survey, conducted by CAN graduate Lyanne Yates, was designed to assure participants' confidentiality. Fifteen of nineteen graduates (79%) participated in this evaluation, completing both written surveys and telephone interviews.

**OUR GRADUATES: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

All but one (93%) of the former students interviewed were currently employed. Some of them work solely with adolescents and others work with populations that include adolescents.

### Mix of Population Served

**Race / Ethnicity**

- African American 10 - 70%
- Asian American 5% - 40%
- Whites 10 - 95%
- Hispanic 2 - 40%

Graduates hold such positions as Director of Nursing/ Clinic Manager of a community pregnancy center working with medically underserved populations in Southern California and Clinical Nurse Specialist at Mayo Medical Center working in child and adolescent mental health. As an Adolescent Parent and Child Care Nurse, another works in St. Paul schools with teen mothers and their children, providing health education, advocacy and referrals to community organizations. Former students perform a wide array of professional activities in their current employment, ranging from clinical responsibilities, advocacy and teaching to administration (see "Professional Roles" table to the right). The majority of graduates are active in professional organizations. Over half have worked with policy committees focused on youth issues.

### Program Effectiveness

CAN graduates rated the program’s effectiveness in providing educational preparation to help the address common adolescent issues and concerns. The program received its highest ratings in providing: frameworks for adolescent health behavior, approaches to adolescent health behavior change, ethical issues related to adolescents, and adolescent perspectives on health and health promotion. All of the graduates rated the program highly in preparing graduates to design and implement health interventions with youth.

### Content Areas

Examining 27 adolescent content areas in the CAN curriculum, former students described their skill/knowledge level and interest in training in each area using low, moderate, or high. Graduates felt they had the most knowledge/skill in the areas of suicide risk, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual education/ contraceptive counseling, sexually transmitted disease, adolescent pregnancy, adolescent parenting, counseling pregnant adolescents regarding adoption-abortion and counseling adolescents with family problems. Those areas with lowest knowledge/skill scores were: working with gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender youth, behavioral problems, gang related activities, attention deficit disorder, mental retardation and learning disabilities (school problems). There were eleven areas where interest in training was rated high: suicide risk, delinquency/violence prevention and how to integrate ethnocultural issues into practice.

### Professional Roles of Graduates

- Clinical responsibilities: 93%
- Advocacy: 87%
- Teaching: 87%
- Administration: 73%
- Community Health Promotion: 73%
- Program Planning / Evaluation: 60%
- Research: 46%
- Legislative initiatives: 40%
- Management: 40%
- Grant writing: 27%
- Writing for publication: 20%

If you are one of our program graduates you have probably spoken to Lyanne Yates who conducted our evaluation. Lyanne hails from Canada and has recently completed a the dual degree tract earning a Masters of Science in nursing with a focus in adolescent health and Masters in Public Health. We want to thank Lyanne for her wonderful work in completing this evaluation of Center for Adolescent Nursing’s training program. As principle investigator conducting the evaluation, Lyanne was able to assure the confidentiality of all participants and write an objective overview of the program as viewed through the eyes of our graduates.
These include not only direct barriers to health care, but also barriers imposed by insurance groups, rules stipulating health care access, or lack of knowledge about appropriate health care use, from a failure of education by health care providers along the way. “Protocols need changing,” says Scott. “For example, it is hardest to see kids removed not only from their homes but from the schools, where they may be thriving. Also, the county system sometimes breaks up sibling groups, which is very hard on kids, especially when an older sibling is also the caretaker of the younger ones.” These are all issues Scott hopes to help remedy over the course of his career in public health.

Scott currently looks forward to an internship this summer and fall at the Hennepin County Center for Health and Human Services Policy with policy guru, Lu Anne Nyberg. “Graduate study has shown me a lot about how to advocate for kids. Now I feel prepared to use what I have learned from my experience at St. Joe’s to advocate for new and better public policy.” From Hennepin County, Scott hopes to step into the public sector and work as a leader in a public health department at the local or state level. In addition, Scott looks forward to more opportunities to teach. “I’ve always believed it is important to pass knowledge on, so I hope I will be able to teach public health concepts - with an adolescent health focus! - in an undergraduate nursing program,” Scott concludes. “A part-time instructorship with a full-time public health nursing consulting position… that is a dream job!”

NEW CAN MASTERS AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Joan Brandt, M.P.H. graduated from the College of St. Catherine with a B.A. in nursing and received her Masters in Public Health from the University of Minnesota. Other than taking 2 years off to be a full-time mom, Joan has spent her career working in public health nursing. For the past 13 years, she has worked as a school nurse in Roseville, primarily in High Schools. Currently, Joan is on leave from that position to begin working on her doctorate, as well as teaching part-time in the nursing program at The College of St. Catherine. Her area of interest and the focus of her doctoral thesis will be teen pregnancy prevention.

Nyeba Manston, B.S.N. is from Liberia, West Africa and moved to the United States in September of 1992 to escape the tragic civil war that disrupted her homeland. In May of 2000 she earned a BSN in Nursing with a minor in Psychology at the University of Rhode Island. While at the University of Rhode Island, she gained experience with high risk populations in clinical settings; working with agencies like the Women’s Correctional Prison in Cranston RI, and the Butler Mental Health Center. She also interned at Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT for eight weeks on the infectious disease unit; caring mostly for HIV/AIDS patients. Nyeba considers herself to be a strong patient advocate and enjoys caring for patients in vulnerable groups. It is her life long goal to work for the United Nations, WHO or any non-profit agency whose goal is to provide adequate health, education and self-pride to vulnerable/high risk groups around the world. She is currently a Registered Nurse and Public Health Nurse working at Fairview-University Medical Center, Riverside Campus, in the float department and is seeking a masters degree in Public Health/Adolescent Nursing.

Lisa Martin-Crawford, M.S. earned her B.S. in Nursing from Augsburg College and a M.S. degree in Nursing Administration from the University of Minnesota. She has many years of experience as a public health nurse in home health care and community-based long-term care management. She currently works for Hennepin County in Minneapolis as Project Manager for the federally funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) project, providing public health nursing and other home visitor services to pregnant and parenting adolescents and other families enrolled in county welfare programs. She is looking forward to pursuing her research interests and doctorate with the Center of Adolescent Nursing in the use of traditional healing and health promotion in Ojibway adolescents.
Do you enjoy working with adolescents? If so, consider a Master’s of Science (M.S.) or Doctorate (Ph.D.) with a major in nursing at the University of Minnesota, where you can focus your graduate work in adolescent health. Within the public health nursing area of study, coursework prepares nurses for lead adolescent health positions in management, education, clinical practice, policy development, research, and advocacy.

Students take interdisciplinary courses taught by faculty from the Schools of Nursing, Medicine and Public Health. Our faculty have expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research. We collaborate with practicum settings such as community-based teen clinics, county and state public health departments, and state and regional advocacy agencies. Both masters and doctoral students can work on ongoing local, national, and international research projects.

Completion of the master’s coursework in public health nursing with a focus on adolescent health can be accomplished in 16 months of full-time study. Doctoral study, including dissertation, takes on average 4 years to complete. Students can also earn a Master’s in Public Health (M.P.H.) or certification as a nurse practitioner concurrently with our program.

For more information, contact the Center for Adolescent Nursing at (612) 626-7085, or e-mail us at adolnurs@tc.umn.edu. Through a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA, DHHS), stipend and tuition support are available for select graduate students.

*We look forward to hearing from you.*