

Alumni Focus

A newsletter for public health alumni of the University of Tennessee

Alum Arranges Visit to CDC for 26 Students and Faculty

On January 19, nearly half of UT public health students and faculty carpooled to Atlanta to visit the CDC Emergency Operations Center.

The visit also included a 5-person CDC career panel, tour of CDC's history museum, followed by an alumni mixer



at a nearby restaurant.

Our CDC host, **Jennifer Brooks, MPH '88**, (far left picture) Deputy Chief, Global Emergency Management Capacity Development Branch, describes what inspired her to host the visit, **"I consider it an opportunity to pay it forward since UT and my field practicum at CDC got me a foot in the door."**

Special thanks to CDC career panelists: **Ashley Brooks, Catherine Espinosa, Kenneth Gerlach, Joseph Ralph and Anniece Weaver.**



~40 alumni & friends gathered in Atlanta

We are a family: We will even give you the clothes off our back

By Julie Grubaugh

As an alum, I have long-felt what distinguishes our program is its family feel. Small in-person classes allow faculty and students to build relationships. This spring, I witnessed two acts of kindness that I wanted to share.

How do you feel about used clothing?

During our alumni mingle in Atlanta, Department Head, **Dr. Paul Erwin** (right), surprised us all when he removed his orange bow tie and gave it to **Quinten Ash** (left), a UT MPH intern at CDC this spring.



Sense of Nostalgia While Cleaning Her Closet Prompts Alum to Give



Chelsea Hagan, MPH '17, (left) donated her graduation hood, \$50 value, as a door prize at our student mock interview event. The winner, **Jennifer Schablik** (right), will be the first in her family to earn a graduate degree.



Connecting you

This newsletter, issued every fall and spring, keeps public health alumni informed about news and opportunities.

As graduates of the program, your continued involvement strengthens the foundation and traditions for graduates to follow.

Send success stories, requests for interns, jobs postings, or other news to Julie Grubaugh
 Phone: 865-974-9277 Email: jgrubaugh@utk.edu

Alums Hire Alums



Stephanie Armbrister Strutner (left), MPH '06 Executive Director at [ASAP of Anderson](#), hired alum **Jennifer Burnette** (right, maiden name Graham), MPH '13, as a Prevention Coordinator. ASAP of Anderson prevents and reduces substance misuse among youth and adults in Anderson County.



Speaking of Clothes

Click [here](#) to order a shirt



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Alumni and Faculty Spotlight

Career Story: From Public Health to Public Policy

By Julie Grubaugh

Congratulations to **Stephanie Welch, MS-MPH '97**, elected in November 2017 as one of four women to the Knoxville City Council. She represents District 1 in South Knoxville.

Stephanie is Interim President of the Great Schools Partnership (GSP), a local non-profit that works to make our schools the best in the South.

While speaking to MPH students at the Graduate seminar this spring, she reflected, **“Coming to UT’s MS-MPH was the best decision of my life.”** Stephanie described how the internship field experiences were the most valuable because they allowed her to apply theory to practice and to develop relationship that led to her first job.

Stephanie cited grant writing and learning how

to apply an evidence-based framework to public health as the most valuable skills from the MPH.

She reflected on her twenty year public health skill progression, which began with regional and local public health experience in planning,

partnerships, community engagement, assessment and grants; followed by supervisory, management, operations, logistics and personnel issues as VP of Operations at GSP. More recently as a councilwoman, she does board development, politicking, city budget, constituent issues such as land use and affordable housing, navigating the complexity of local policies to promote healthy communities and economic vitality.

Stephanie regularly hosts MPH interns and has hired our graduates. In

2009, she was recognized as an Outstanding Preceptor. Read [more](#) about Stephanie’s career path.



Stephanie Welch, in her South Knoxville district

Image source: City of Knoxville website

Faculty Hosts LGBTQ Health Equity in Appalachia Symposium

On April 6, UT Public Health Professor **Jennifer Jabson, PhD, MPH**, hosted a lesbian, Gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Health Equity symposium that drew more than 70 professionals and stakeholders to campus. Panelists described the impact of stigma on LGBTQ health.



For example, a national study found LGBTQ people who live in higher prejudice places die, on average, 12 years sooner, with the top 3 causes of death being suicide, cardiovascular disease and violence/homicide.

The Interim Director for Philadelphia's [Mazzoni Center](#), a comprehensive health and wellness center in an LGBTQ-focused environment, described

Mazzoni’s early start as an AIDS service organization, similar to [Knoxville’s Positively Living organization](#).

The symposium was intended to spark discussion about needs and desires of the LGBTQ community in Appalachia for a potential LGBTQ center for healthcare, research and training.

On March 27, Dr. Jabson was interviewed on WUOT’s HealthConnections radio show where she discussed the [challenges of LGBTQ healthcare](#). Common concerns include fears of discrimination, a reluctance to seek treatment and higher risks for certain illnesses. Want to learn more? Contact Dr. Jabson at jjabson@utk.edu