

e-IHPS NEWSLETTER!



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In this issue of *e-IHPS*, we focus on some of our colleagues who have international roots, and how they came to IHPS. Some are in-person interviews, Others via e-mail. We appreciate how forthcoming our colleagues have been in response to our request for stories. We also appreciate how much our lives are enriched by being fortunate enough to work alongside such a fine caliber of colleagues. If you would like to add your name and birthplace to our map, located on the wall just outside the copy room, please e-mail your info to: annie.larson@ucsf.edu

Thanks again to Richard Kite for his map-making skills!!



Helen Tran, Administrative Assistant, IHPS core

Birthplace: Saigon, Vietnam

“By 1954, Vietnam was divided between the North under Communist control, and the South which was democratic. The South was under the French dominion at the time of my birth, and I attended French schools, because it would mean better job prospects. After graduation, I got a scholarship to go to New Zealand to teach English as a second language, but the salary wasn’t good.

In 1975, the Communists took over Saigon, literally through a system of underground tunnels. I worked for the government at the time, which was dangerous, and my father was a well known lawyer who also worked with the government.” It was only a matter of time until Helen’s father was imprisoned and killed. Helen and her husband planned to get out as soon as they could, or also risk being killed by the Communists. Their plan had to be so carefully orchestrated as not to be discovered, so the timing was crucial.

For several months, Helen would venture out to the markets near the sea. There she would scope out the vendors, in her search for the “right person” who would help her to organize a way out of the country. Since there were spies everywhere, one had to be extremely careful who to talk to. She came to trust a woman who sold fish, and, eventually, she decided to tell the woman her plans. The woman said that she and her husband were also planning to leave, and that they knew someone with a boat, but that they needed money to pay the boatman. Helen paid the woman a deposit in order to secure the boat that would take them out of the country. The Trans weren’t told when they would leave, only that they needed to prepare themselves and to be ready to go when the signal was given. One night a man appeared telling them only to “follow me.” Helen, her husband and five year old son left Saigon, with only the clothes on their backs.

They disguised themselves as country peasants, wearing the traditional straw hats of the Vietnamese farmers. Since they couldn’t travel as a group, they had to keep a safe distance from the man they were following, while maintaining him in their view. Arriving in a remote part of the country, near the coast, they slept in the bushes during the day till nightfall, doing their best to keep a chattering five year old quiet. As soon as night fell, they were awakened by a sudden “let’s go!” As they leapt to their feet, they were surprised to see so many other people, also hidden in the bushes, all running towards the sea, to the first of two boats which would take them out of Vietnam. With no food, no water, and adrift at sea, the 38 people eventually began to run out of fuel. Vessel after vessel cruised by, all of them ignoring the group’s cries for help. Eventually, a crew of Italians, who worked for Chevron, on their way to Saudi Arabia, slowed down to offer the boat rescue. Only accepting the women and children first, they eventually allowed the men on board. Just as the last passenger boarded the Italian liner, the Vietnamese boat sank under the fierce storm that had been threatening during the hours that passed during the rescue effort. Although there was respite under the care of the Italians, they couldn’t very well bring their passengers to Saudi Arabia with them. The group was taken first to the Philippines, then to Japan, but neither country was able to take them in. Finally, landing in Seoul, South Korea, (who prior to this hadn’t been able to take in refugees), the group found welcome with the International Red Cross. Helen and family stayed in South Korea for the next 9 months, being treated very well by the Koreans. Obtaining sponsorship through relatives in California, the Tran’s relocated to the US, first to San Jose, California, and eventually to San Francisco. Helen Tran has been with UCSF for 14 years, first with the Urban Health Study, and, for the past 10 years, with the IHPS Core. We are lucky to have Helen here and be a part of what makes IHPS such an interesting place to work. In spite of what she has been through, she always exudes an attitude of patience, calm, and humor.

Jim Calvert - Mt. Kilimanjaro



IHPS PROFILE –INTERNATIONAL COLLEAGUES

Samira Soleimanpour-Project Director / Researcher

Birthplace: Tehran, Iran

I was born in Tehran, Iran and moved to the US with my family in 1979 after the revolution. We settled in Maryland, by way of Ohio, and I lived there until I moved to San Francisco in 1999. I just visited Iran for the first time since we left last year and it was an amazing experience; one that I wish I hadn't put off for so long. It is a beautiful country and I'm looking forward to many more trips to explore my roots.

I'm currently working on several evaluations of school-based health programs with Claire Brindis' group, including an evaluation of the Alameda County School-Based Health Center Coalition, and a participatory research project training youth to conduct health research in their communities.

Antonia Biggs-Project Director / Researcher

Birthplace: Santiago, Chile

I was born in Chile to two Chilean parents. We moved to Bethesda, MD in 1970, because of a job my father got at the Inter-American Development Bank, in Washington DC. The plan was for us to stay in the US a year or two, but a Fascist dictator took over the country and my parents decided to stay nearly two decades. With a restored democracy in Chile, my parents decided to retire and return home. Antonia is the Project Director for the IHPS Family PACT Evaluation.

Stephen Crane-Administrative Assistant- Dudley

Birthplace: Saigon, Vietnam

Stephen's father was with the USIS, (United States Information Service) so Stephen has lived all over the world. During the first 5 or 6 years of Stephen's life, the family lived in Taiwan, Japan, then in Bethesda, MD for Stephen's 1st & 2nd grades. He spent the next 6 ½ years in Munich, Germany, where he became quite the competitive skier, then back to the states, to Palo Alto, for 9th grade. Returning to Japan for 10th and 11th grades, studying dance, among other things, finally back to Bethesda, for his senior year of high school, graduating, with a "lily white" student body, and going from a class size of 72 to 748.

Attending UC Santa Cruz and USC, Stephen took 10 years to achieve an undergraduate degree as he was very busy pursuing his "education," traveling to Spain, going to various parties, and doing the usual things young people did in the early 1970's.

Settling in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, Stephen developed even more skills as a contractor, building houses, and going to hear live music, loving the bluegrass music that sprung up out of West Virginia. After getting his MBA, Stephen worked at UCSF in oncology, for 7 years, and for the past 4 ½ years here at IHPS. He and his "bride," Jennifer, (fabric artist, fashion designer, non-practicing attorney) spend time together in pursuit of live music, climbing, sailing, cycling, reading and enjoying the good things in life. Stephen works with Adams Dudley and Mitzi Dean.

Jennifer Yu- Research Fellow

Birthplace: Seoul, South Korea

I was born in Seoul, South Korea and immigrated to the U.S. with my parents when I was four. Jennifer is completing her IHPS Fellowship.

Abigail Pablico

Birthplace: Philippine Islands

Administrative Assistant, I was born in the Philippines, then lived in Brunei for a couple of years, and finally here to the beautiful U.S. of A! I was 7 years old when I came and settled in the East Bay. Abigail works with the Brindis group assisting with the evaluation of the Community Challenge Grant/Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Project.

Chi Kao-Biostatistician

Birthplace: Taiwan, Taipei

Chi came to the U.S. to pursue graduate education in Biostatistics, as it was not offered in Taiwan. Although she didn't plan to stay, she has remained here ever since, because of the complicated political situation in Taiwan, on advice from her parents.

Chi spent 7 years at the Institute for Health and Aging as a research assistant. She was looking for a mentor, and, as fate would have it, she met Carol Korenbrot at a panel at UC Berkeley. Being inspired by Carol's work on Native American Health, Chi approached Carol and asked her if she was looking for a research assistant. She began working with Carol's project here at IHPS. Currently, Chi's role has expanded to that of Biostatistician and Data Manager on the California Tribal Epidemiology Collaborative project with Carol. (see April issue). In her spare time, Chi loves singing in her choir, photography, film, and travel.

Helen Gonzales- Senior Administrative Analyst, IHPS core

Birthplace: Philippine Islands

My family roots are in the Philippine Islands. The southern region—called the Visayas. I was hired as a Senior Clerk for Ambulatory & Community Medicine (now Family & Community Medicine) in October 1972.

Six years later Health Policy was looking for an administrator to work with Dr. Al Jonsen, who headed the Ethics component of Health Policy, so I applied for that job. Phyllis interviewed me. However, Lew Butler (then the Associate Director) and Paul Newacheck (Lew's junior researcher at the time) were also looking for someone to replace their administrator and Health Policy needed a course coordinator, so Phyllis steered me to that opening instead (since I handled courses for my department). A few years later our payroll person transferred to the Chancellor's Office, so I took over payroll and eventually personnel and gradually detached from Butler/Newacheck projects as academic work increased.

When I came to IHPS in 1978, I had just been reclassified in my old department and actually took a demotion because I liked the work that was going on at the Health Policy program. Compared to my former department, it was more dynamic and they were doing great things in the world of health, trying to get important folks (with money) to listen and pay attention to their findings. I liked the chemistry and the way folks interacted with and supported each other. They had just received a huge grant award and were set for a few years and since my old department was undergoing significant changes, including a move to San Francisco General Hospital, it was a no-brainer.

So I've been here almost 28 years. Amazing, eh?



by *Jocelyn Lehrer, Ph.D.*

From December 5 to 13, 2005, I participated in an American Jewish World Service (AJWS) trip to Uganda, along with 14 other Bay Area teachers, health professionals and others. The purpose of the trip was to visit several HIV/AIDS prevention and care organizations that are supported in part by the AJWS, and to assist with a small amount of manual labor. My own goal in participating was to gain a direct introduction to realities of HIV/AIDS in a part of Africa, and to learn and gain ideas from the work of NGOs there - with the idea of possibly returning to Africa in future years to work on the development and evaluation of HIV prevention initiatives.

We visited several organizations, each of which is doing compelling work. These included: 1) The Foundation for the Development of Needy Communities (FDNC). <http://www.wougnnet.org/Profiles/fdncug.html>. Based in a rural area, this organization focuses on vocational training for men and women (tailoring, carpentry, art, an impressive brass band), as well as community-based health work and preventive health education. 2) The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). <http://www.tasouganda.org/>. This large and growing organization is considered to be a model for HIV/AIDS prevention and care in Africa; their services include HIV/AIDS counseling, a medical clinic with plans for scale-up of their antiretrovirals program, medical home visits, family planning, community HIV prevention programs, training foster parents for AIDS orphans, food assistance, vocational skills training for people living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable youth, and training of community HIV counselors and health workers. 3) Kamwokya Christian Caring Community. http://www.kamccc.org/index_main.htm. This organization operates in poor areas of Kampala and provides services including HIV/AIDS and other medical care, voluntary counseling and testing, vocational skills training, community mental health services, community sexual health education, micro-credit and enterprise development activities, and pastoral care. 4) THETA. <http://www.thetauganda.org/index.php>. This innovative organization aims to increase collaboration between traditional African healers and Western medical practitioners in the treatment and prevention of HIV and other illnesses.

I also visited public hospitals in Mbale and Kampala where antiretrovirals are becoming accessible for free, but where other medicines, if available, are provided only to patients who can pay, and where technology and physical space are severely limited. I additionally visited two impressive domestic violence prevention organizations - one which provides trainings throughout Africa on how to develop domestic violence prevention campaigns in communities (<http://www.raisingvoices.org/>), and one community-based organization which uses a wide variety of approaches to reduce gender-based violence as a means to reduce HIV incidence among Ugandan women (<http://www.raisingvoices.org/cedovip.php>).

Overall, human need in Uganda is overwhelming and everywhere, and it was particularly striking to witness the need there with the understanding that Uganda is doing better than many sub-Saharan African countries in terms of economy and HIV prevalence. Each project I visited was a compelling universe in of itself, many lifetimes of work in of itself. Each was a proactive and hopeful place, working steadily with limited resources in the midst of much challenge. Among many lessons, I left Uganda with an enhanced interest in education and vocational training as a public health intervention, and with an increased interest in learning about micro-credit enterprises for enhancing self-sufficiency among women and vulnerable youth. I also left with a greater sense of the unmet need for mental health and psychosocial support programs for people living with or affected by HIV. The experience also led me to consider the question of how we define and prioritize our circles of obligation regarding work, giving and volunteerism. Are we first obligated to our family? Neighborhood? Spiritual or race/ethnic community? Those in most dire or immediate need, regardless of where they may be in the world? I'd be glad to talk more with anyone about the trip - please feel free to contact me at jocelyn.lehrer@ucsf.edu.

UCSF COMINGS AND GOINGS

Our beloved **Gail Wiley** is retiring!

"I've worked at IHPS for about 18 years and, in that time, I've gotten to know an amazing variety of people. When you get a new job, you arrive with your education and work experience and whatever you've learned in life up to that point. You show up the first day with a brave smile and some idea of what your responsibilities will be. But one's job description barely touches on what work is all about. I joined UC at 40 and had had many jobs, in the States and other countries. But working at UC has been my longest stint and, like any long-term relationship, one learns more by sticking around. The best part about working here has been learning how to be with people, keeping communication lines open, dealing with day-to-day problems and coming up with practical solutions. Not always an easy process but an immensely human one. Now my Big Day is coming. Pretty soon I'll be able to take cheap Muni rides, daytime drawing classes and wander SF museums with mobs of school kids. Maybe I'll take another trip or two. Wherever I am, though, I'll never forget the many friends I've made at IHPS." Gail Wiley

Jon Showstack - has been asked to assume a leadership role in a new campus organization, the Office of Academic and Administrative Information Systems, to develop campus initiatives related to research and educational information systems. As of July 1st, Jon will be stepping down as IHPS's Associate Director for Administration. Jon will remain a member of the IHPS faculty, albeit with much less involvement than in the past. As he told Hal, Phyllis, Claire, Dan, and Eunice, "I will always be available to lend a hand if needed."

We wish Jon the very best in his new role.

IHPS strategic plan update - Over the past several months, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Executive Committee have launched a variety of activities to advance the goals of IHPS' Strategic Plan. We had a successful site visit by distinguished Drs. David Mechanic (Rutgers), Steve Shortell (UCB School of Public Health), and Nancy Milliken (UCSF), who spent a day meeting with us and reviewing our proposed Strategic Initiatives. Based on faculty and site visitors' input, our current/near-term priorities will be: renaming IHPS as the Philip R. Lee IHPS to accompany celebrations of our 35th Anniversary, developing a business plan to raise additional funds for IHPS, and coordinating our efforts in the areas of training and population health with other UCSF groups. Stay tuned for additional details, particularly planning for the 35th Anniversary!

AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

Michael Cabana, MD, MPH - 2006 Nemours Child Health Services Research Award for Young Investigators

Claire Brindis, Dr. Ph - California's Family Planning Champion Award, California Family Health Council, Inc. For vision and commitment in creating and sustaining the California Office of Family Planning and the Family PACT Program.

Medicare Part D Could Work if Pharmacists Recognized and Reimbursed

Pharmacists are essential to the successful implementation of Medicare Part D, according to **Helene Levens Lipton, PhD**, professor of health policy in the department of clinical pharmacy, UCSF School of Pharmacy and UCSF Institute for Health Policy Studies. If policymakers would recognize and reimburse pharmacists for their rational approach to prescribing medications, patients would be better served and drug costs would be better controlled.

Full story: [A Prescription for Medicare Part D: Pharmacists Can Play a Critical Role in Making This Beleaguered Program Work](#).

Go To: [UCSF School of Pharmacy News](#)

(Helene's article also appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle's Open Forum, May 19, 2006).



Claire Brindis and Margie Fitz-Simile

Trial of Infant Probiotic Supplementation to Prevent Asthma (Tips Study)

In the first effort of its kind in the United States, scientists at the University of California, San Francisco, have launched a study to determine whether giving active probiotic supplements to infants can delay or prevent the development of asthma in children.

The intervention is a novel method for the primary prevention of asthma with enormous potential to have public health impact, said Michael Cabana, M.D., chief of the Department of General Pediatrics at UCSF Children’s Hospital and principal investigator for the study. There are no known methods to prevent the onset of asthma, he said.

“It would be a great thing to be able to prevent this disease before it happens,” Cabana said. “We think that using probiotics is a safe and effective way to do that.”

Some 4 million U.S. children have asthma, making it among the most common chronic diseases of childhood and the most common cause of school absenteeism. Asthma is an inflammation of the bronchial tubes that causes airway obstruction, chest tightness, coughing and wheezing.

Called the Trial of Infant Probiotic Supplementation to Prevent Asthma, or TIPS, the study is based on the ‘hygiene hypothesis,’ which says that little or no exposure to bacteria and viruses during infancy can lead to an imbalance in the immune system and result in disease, especially in at-risk groups.

The study seeks to determine whether stimulating the immune system by giving an active probiotic supplement, lactobacillus GG, can prevent or delay the appearance of early signs of asthma, such as wheezing, frequent runny nose, and eczema.

The three-year-long study will include about 280 healthy full-term babies with either a mother or a father with asthma, since parents with asthma are more likely to have children with asthma. During the first six months of life, half the infants will receive a once-daily dose of active lactobacillus GG and half will receive a placebo. Lactobacillus GG is a common bacterium found in yogurt and many other foods and often is given to treat diarrhea.

The babies will be followed for a total of three years, with six follow-up visits at UCSF Children’s Hospital or an outpatient center starting at one month old. Researchers will analyze the data from the visits to see if the active supplement prevented or delayed the appearance of the early signs of asthma.

According to the American Lung Association, an estimated 4 million children under 18 years old have had an asthma attack in the past 12 months, and many others have “hidden” or undiagnosed asthma.

Other study co-investigators include Joan Hilton, ScD; Cewin Chao, MS, RD, MBA; Homer Boushey, MD; Lawrence Fong, MD, PhD; Aaron Brandon Caughey, MD, MPP, MPH, all of UCSF.

The study is being supported through a grant from the National Institutes of Health.

The TIPS study is currently recruiting women who are pregnant and have a history of asthma or a partner with asthma to participate in the study. To find out more about the study, visit <http://www.tipsasthmaresearch.org/>; call 1-866-913-TIPS, or e-mail TIPS@ucsf.edu

We Want you!

- Please send in material for Issue #4 by July 21, 2006
- Feedback on our newsletter? We want your input!
- Writers for e-IHPS columns
- We’d like to assemble a small IHPS team to explore how we can improve/enhance our IHPS website. Please contact: annie.larson@ucsf.edu



Welcome! Elisa, born May 2, 2006, to Nancy Berglas & Ben Highton

June 2006

- ♣ Health Policy Seminars Mondays 12-1:30 PM
- ♦ IHPS Grand Rounds Monthly at Noon Room 263

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 ♣ 10:30-Peter Kundstadter, Ph.D. ♣ 12:45-Stan Glantz,	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 ♣ 12-Daniel Cortese, Ph.D. ♣ Martin Otanez,	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 ♣ 12-Caitlin Ryan	20	21 IHPS Giants game 12:35	22	23	24
25	25	26	27	28	30	