



Letter from Nancy



Hello everyone,

We hope you enjoy reading this addition of the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program Newsletter. It is always a pleasure for us to use this as an opportunity to connect with many of our graduates.

Thanks to all of you who submitted updates, and to those of you who stay in touch by phone or email throughout the year. I was very glad to have a chance to visit with many of you at the NSGC meeting this year. It energizes me to hear of what you are doing both personally and professionally. I am excited about your opportunities, and the leadership that many of you are showing as you take the profession forward and in new and exciting directions.

This is also a great chance to thank our colleagues who contribute to the program in many important ways—our guest lecturers, clinical supervisors, capstone project mentors and members of our advisory committee. A growing number of UNCG alumni are serving in these roles. Know that all is well at UNCG and that Randi, Pam, Sally and I continue to enjoy our time with current students and our ongoing friendships with our graduates.

We wish you all health and happiness in the coming year.

Nancy

Current Students



Class of 2015

Taylor Zuck, Lauren Baldwin, Caitlin Troyer, Samantha Caldwell, Liz Francisco (back row); Alexandra Henshaw, Juliann Koenig and Briana Lubben (front row).

Class of 2016

Rebecca LeShay, Erica Cousins, Katie Garbarini, Chelsey Burden, Rachel Veazey, Kayla Boggs (back row); Megan Ensinger and Victoria Roth (front row)



Congratulations Class of 2014!



Sarah Hart, Lauren Masso, Becca Johnson, (back row)
Natalie Poullard, Aimee Brown, Jordan Dix, (middle row)
Heather Rocha, Elizabeth Sengstock (front row)

Class of 2014 Capstone Projects at NSGC

Platform Presentations

Poullard, N., Hardy, M., Williams, E., and Callanan, N. Career Advancement in Genetic Counseling: Perceived Opportunities. Platform Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

Poster Presentations:

Brown, A., Stewart, R., McConnell, T., and Wienke, S. The Impact of Testing Minors for α 1-Antitrypsin Deficiency from the Perspective of Adults Tested as Children. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

Dix, J., East, K., Lee, K., and Stewart, R. Impact of Increased Education on Career Interest in the Genetic Counseling Field Among High School Students. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

Hart, S., Schoch, K., Shashi, V., and Callanan, N. Communication of Psychiatric Risk in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

Masso, L., Paulyson Nunez, K., Stewart, R., and Wells, D. Understanding Patient Motivation and Factors that Influence Decisions on Prenatal Testing. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

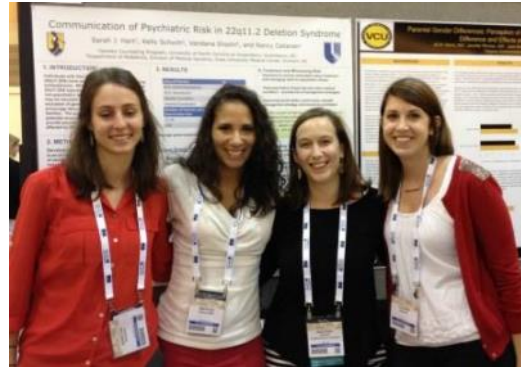
Rocha, H., Sullivan, J., Callanan, N., and Austin, S. Developing an Early Transition Program for Adolescents with Glycogen Storage Disease Types I and III. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

Sengstock, E., Stewart, R., Nagappan, S., and Reitnauer, P. Prevalence of Genetic Conditions Among Emergency Department Visits for Poison Ingestion. Poster Presentation, NSGC, Annual Education Conference, 2014.

UNCG Alumni and Students at NSGC September 2014 in New Orleans, LA



Courtney Kiss, Melanie Hardy and Michael Osborne



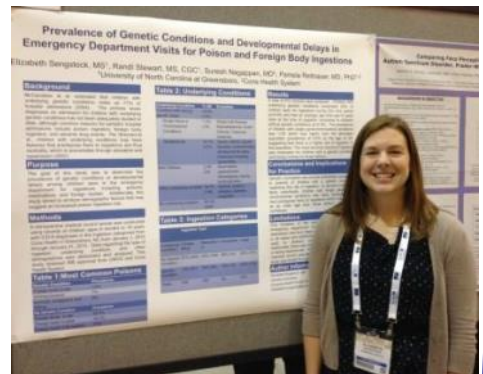
Becky Okashah, Natalie Poullard, Heather Rocha and Lauren Masso



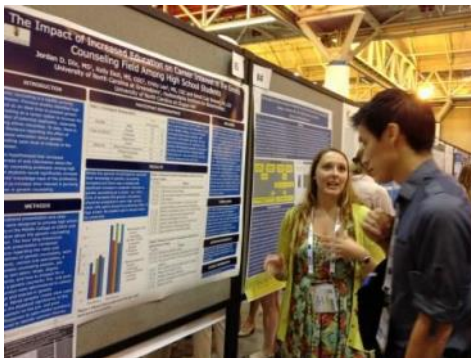
Class of 2015 at UNCG Reunion



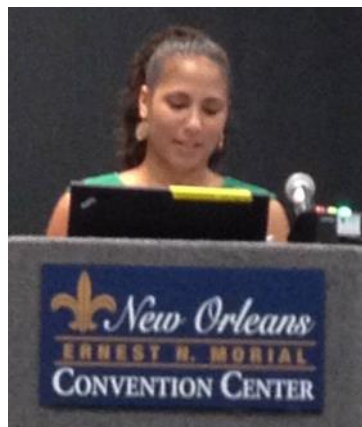
Liz Francisco—NSGC Outreach Event



Elizabeth Sengstock at her poster.



Jordan Dix at her poster



Natalie Poullard gives her platform presentation



Melanie Hardy Receives NSGC New Leader Award



Kelly East, Kristen Cornell, Alexis Carere, Emily Walsh, and Melanie Hardy at UNCG Reunion

The Evolution of Family

By Melanie Hardy

My introduction to the genetic counseling profession was unique. I was working as a high school teacher when I learned about an opportunity at the Greenwood Genetics Center (GGC) for a summer genetics education program. There, I met Kristy Lee who taught us about the genetic counseling profession and led us through some mock sessions with the other GGC genetic counselors. The program provided an exclusive insight into the world of genetics, and I returned for two more summers because I had such a great time learning.

I was intrigued about genetic counseling. I remember talking to Kristy about UNCG, a program that I was particularly interested in attending. From that conversation, I remember two things clearly: 1) she was very enthusiastic that UNCG was the very best place for me, and 2) she mentioned something about the family-like feel of UNCG. A few years later, I applied. In the interview at UNCG, the concept of family came up again. I remember feeling, unlike any of the other programs I had considered, that there was a unique support network at UNCG – this program would help me feel like I was an important part of a greater whole and a sense of connectedness to other students and alumni. Happily, that is exactly the experience I continue to have to this day (thank you, Kristy!!).

I am proud of the education I received at UNCG, including the opportunity to meet and work with some of the greatest genetics professionals in the country. As education has always been a huge part of my life, I have looked for ways to help others feel that same sense of support and encouragement in the field of genetic counseling as I felt through my own journey in this field. I found opportunities in several places. First, I got involved in NSGC through the Student/New Member Special Interest Group (SIG), where we coordinated education for high school and college students about the field of genetic counseling in a variety of ways. I've also been part of genetic counseling student education through presentations at the Annual Education Conference (AEC), coordinating board exam study groups across the country, developing a mentoring program within the SIG and supervision of genetic counseling students in clinic. Through connections I made in the SIG, I transitioned to participation in the NSGC Membership Committee. There, I've had the great fortune to help plan and implement the Orientation sessions at the AEC and to co-chair the Mentor Program for NSGC. I've also been able

to maintain connections I made at UNCG: supervisors and mentors have helped through participation in the above events, as well as I've had the pleasure of serving on capstone committees of UNCG students.

I've learned so much from individuals that I met in these activities and feel so fortunate to have a great variety of mentors, leaders, colleagues, and friends in my professional life. It has been a dynamic give-and-take that has, ultimately, built my own genetic counseling 'family' across the country.

One of the tough things about working in a relatively small career field is the potential for feeling isolated. I've been lucky in my job as a prenatal genetic counselor in that I have two other genetic counselors to collaborate, to commiserate, and to share the workload. We support each other and encourage continuous professional development. Together, we've not only developed genetic counseling within our Perinatal Centers, but also expanded our impact by forging connections with community and health care professionals through education and partnerships. These interactions have helped my job develop in new directions, keeping it interesting and dynamic. Relationships with other genetic counselors have been crucial to helping me learn and improve as I move forward in my career.

I encourage anyone working in genetic counseling to identify and seize opportunities to make connections with others in and around the field. One of the best ways I've found to do that is through the NSGC Mentor Program (www.nsgcmentor.org). This program helps counselors of all experience levels connect with others, communicate, and share. There are also plenty of other ways to share the many experiences and insights we received through our education at UNCG. For those interested in finding ways to get involved, please feel free to send me a note at mwhardy47@gmail.com!



Finding New Challenges

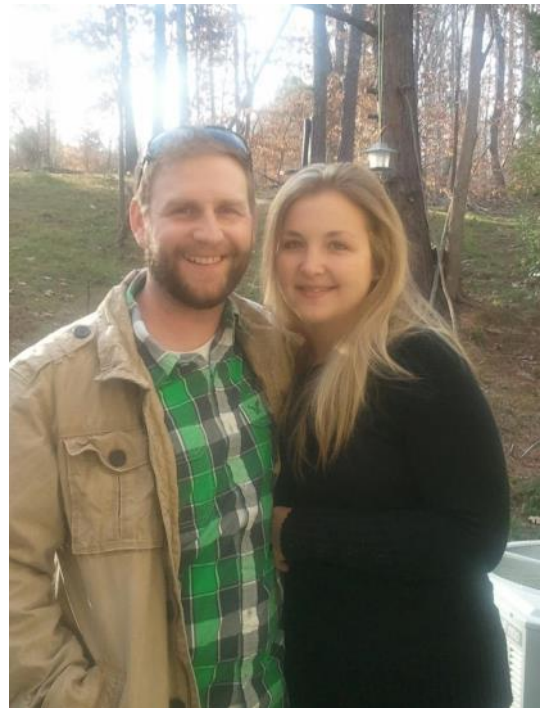
By Sara Wienke

You could say that becoming a genetic counselor was “in my genes.” My father, a biologist himself, piqued my interest in genetics in middle school. I wanted to turn this interest into a career that I could love and nurture that would love and nurture me back. People always say that when you do what you love its not work, and that’s exactly what genetic counseling is to me (minus the dreaded paperwork).

During school I toyed with the idea of a nontraditional role and even spent a week with InformedDNA and three weeks at LabCorp during the summer in between first and second year. Ultimately, I chose a position that moved me to Charleston, SC because it seemed like a nice place to live, and the role was interesting. Dr. Strange, my supervisor at MUSC, was also interesting. As the Program Coordinator for the Alpha-1 Association’s Genetic Counseling program housed at the Medical University of South Carolina I had opportunities that I couldn’t have dreamed of. In addition to providing telephone based counseling, I was a speaker at many of their education days, which “forced” me to travel to places like Denver, Chicago, and San Francisco. I was able to collaborate with various research partners at Penn State, at MUSC, and even become a committee member for a student at USC and a committee chair for a student at UNCG. Lastly, about 20% of my time was spent in the pediatric and adult cystic fibrosis clinics. I imagined in school that I wanted to be a pediatric counselor and working in the CF clinic filled that need and more. I can’t tell you how much I looked forward to Wednesday mornings in pediatric CF clinic.

Alas, I needed more of a challenge. I still wasn’t sure what I was looking for but being a pediatric counselor in Charleston seemed unattainable, and I have made Charleston my home. I kept my eyes and ears open and an opportunity became available to me at Pathway Genomics. I had no idea how much this new position would change my life for the better. Pathway is an up and coming genetic testing company that is in the process of launching several hereditary cancer tests. Being a member of the marketing, sales and genetics team utilizes many skills that I didn’t even know that I had. Growing up in a family owned tropical fish store, I had more marketing experience than I thought.

I may have only graduated from UNCG two short years ago but my life has changed dramatically in that short time. I have purchased my own home in Charleston with a large back yard for my pups, Oliver and Lola, as well as their step-pup siblings, Zero and Quietman. I have also become an integral member of the community. As a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters, I meet with my little sister, Karmen about 4-5 times per month for the past year and a half. I also work with Team in Training to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. I truly feel fulfilled by all of these activities. Working with Pathway I am able to stay home with my pups and travel about 35% of the time. I am looking forward to the many opportunities that will open as I continue my career with Pathway. For all of those new graduates and soon to be new graduates: remember, sometimes what you thought you wanted changes, so be flexible. Always try new things; they can only improve you and add to your skillset.



2014 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award: Kelly Schoch

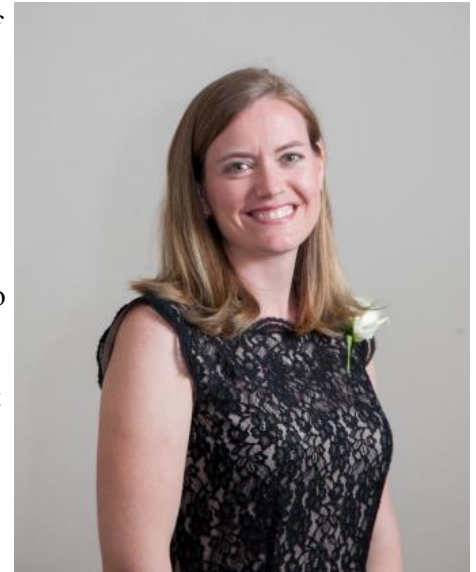
The School of HHS presents the Pacesetter Award to an outstanding alumnus who has received local, state, or regional recognition by showing a dedication to scholarship, leadership or service either in their career or through civic involvement. This year's award goes to Kelly Griffin Schoch, who graduated with an undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2002, followed by completion of her MS in Genetic Counseling from UNCG in 2005.

While at UNCG, Ms. Schoch's Capstone Project was entitled, "Behavioral Differences in Individuals with Prader-Willi Syndrome Due to Deletion, Maternal Disomy and Imprinting Defects." She presented the results of this study at the 2005 National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Education Conference. Evident even in this early work, Ms. Schoch has always shown interest in both pediatric genetic counseling and behavioral phenotypes associated with chromosome disorders, as well as a talent for conducting clinical research.

Kelly's first position upon graduation was as a laboratory genetic counselor at LabCorp in Research Triangle Park, where she served as a liaison between LabCorp and their clients through education, and communicating and interpreting genetic test results to healthcare providers.

In 2008, she joined the Division of Medical Genetics of the Department of Pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center as a genetic counselor and clinical study coordinator. Kelly describes her position at Duke as a, "really nice mix of clinical and research responsibilities." Her role at Duke involves coordinating the multidisciplinary 22q11 Deletion Syndrome clinic, which is held twice a month, as well as the Duke Sequencing Clinic. In the 22q11 Deletion Syndrome, she is constantly challenged to work with the geneticist to create solutions to help the 22q community, such as creating online modules and photo-based booklets. Kelly describes the exome sequencing study she has been working on as, "challenging but also very rewarding at times; in fact, we were excited that two of our patients who received diagnoses have been featured on national media!" In addition to these roles, she also provides clinical genetic counseling and participates in the development

and implementation of clinical research studies also involving Down syndrome patient populations. She is currently working with a colleague, Becky Spillmann, for Duke to be a clinical site for the Undiagnosed Diseases Network. "It is hugely rewarding to be able to help families even in small ways, since they go through so much with their diagnosis," reflects Kelly.



Kelly serves as a shining example of how genetic counselors can apply his or her knowledge, skills, and expertise in a variety of ways. In addition to her roles as a clinical genetic counselors and researcher, she also continues to play a prominent role in mentoring students. She provides expert clinical supervision for genetic counseling students who rotate through the Duke Pediatric Clinics, and shares her expertise in research by participating as a member of student capstone research project committees. In addition to these individual supportive roles, she has served as a member of the program's External Advisory Committee. During UNCG's most recent accreditation, she chaired the Capstone Project Self-Study Committee. She is appreciative for the opportunities and education she received through attending UNCG, and hopes to give back to future genetic counseling students, "I remember specific comments and supportive gestures from my clinical supervisors and the program staff that really encouraged me to become a better counselor. I hope that by supervising students during their clinical rotations and Capstone projects I am able to encourage them in this way."

In the nine years since her graduation from the program, she has grown professionally and has established herself as an expert in clinical practice, research, advocacy, and education. She serves as not only a role model, but great mentor to our program and students, and we are very proud to recognize her as the 2014 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award Recipient.

2014 ASAHP Elwood Scholar Award: Samantha Caldwell

The Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP) sponsors a scholarship program to recognize outstanding students in allied health professions who are achieving academic excellence and have significant potential to assume leadership roles in allied health professions. The most exemplary Scholarship of Excellence recipient receives the “Elwood Scholar” Award. Last year marked the inauguration of this award named for ASAHP’s former Executive Director Thomas W. Elwood who retired from the position in 2012. One student from any of the 10 departments and programs in the School of Health and Human Sciences is chosen to represent UNCG per year in this competition.

We are honored to recognize current second year student **Samantha Leigh Caldwell** (Class of 2015) who was first be chosen to represent UNCG in the ASAHP scholarship program. **Ultimately, Samantha was selected from 41 highly qualified nominees representing various universities nationwide to be the 2014 ASAHP Elwood Scholar. Congratulations, Sam!** “I am so excited to be receiving the Elwood Scholar award through the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professionals (ASAHP),” says Samantha. “I feel quite honored to represent and bolster the genetic counseling field in the scope of allied health professions.” As the Elwood Scholar, Samantha will receive a scholarship and attend the 2014 ASAHP Annual Conference in Las Vegas where she will be formally recognized as the award recipient.

Samantha came to UNCG from Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University (ASU) where her passion for research and the field of genetic counseling began. At ASU, she participated in the School of Life Sciences Undergraduate Research (SOLUR) program at the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen.). She published her research findings as first author in the American Journal of Clinical Oncology. During her time as an undergraduate, and in parallel to her high academic achievements, Samantha demonstrated the depth of her interpersonal, counseling, and psychosocial skills by her work with vulnerable populations, first as a volunteer with Planned Parenthood, and later by spending the summer in Ghana as a volunteer with Unite for Sight.

Sam graciously commented “My mentors at UNCG have genuinely encouraged me to pursue these interests and have given me such a breadth of experiences to draw upon.” This past summer Samantha was selected to participate in a prestigious NIH Research Intern program. “During my summer at the NIH, I was better able to contribute to various genetic counseling studies and provide insights I wouldn’t have had without my UNCG education and the opportunities it has provided thus far” she said. Sam continues to hone her research skills as she pursues her Capstone Project “Identifying Significant Variants for Undiagnosed Bleeding Disorders Using Whole Exome Sequencing.” “I truly hope my current Capstone Project on exome sequencing and other ongoing collaborations at the NIH are only the beginning. Actively pursuing research questions that directly impact community health is a goal I intend to keep throughout my career. Fingers crossed!” said Samantha.

We have no doubt that Sam will achieve her goals in both clinical genetic counseling and in pursuing research to enrich the profession, influence policy, shape guidelines and directly improve genetic health for the community. Her insight and passion are reflected as she shares “The idea of being a pioneer in any field is extremely enticing and genetic counseling really gives you that opportunity. The rapid expansion of genetic information available to the public and the dearth of evidence based practices supports the need for further genetic counseling discovery.”



Supervisor Spotlights

The UNCG Genetic Counseling Program is fortunate to have devoted clinic supervisors that are personally invested in the development of our students. We are honored to feature two supervisors this year; each were nominated by students from the Class of 2014!

Erin Eaton

Nominated by: Becca Johnson

“Erin was one of my supervisors at UNC Prenatal. I had known Erin as a student as she was in the class above me at UNCG but getting to have Erin as a supervisor was really amazing. Erin immediately made me feel welcomed and a part of the team at UNC. She focused on what goals I wanted to accomplish and provided me the support and encouragement to take on any indication that presented. She provided wonderful feedback that not only helped me to learn areas to work on but also highlighted what I did well in a session. Her feedback continued to encourage my development and definitely made me a better genetic counseling intern. Getting a chance to work with Erin as a supervisor was a great experience!”

Erin graduated from the UNCG genetic counseling program in 2013, and soon found a passion in student supervision. She reflects that she had such a good experience she had with her own supervisors in the program, and how she strives to emulate them and give students the same type of experience she herself had. Her recent graduation is a strength of hers, as she remembers what it is like walking into a new rotation, and tries to, “ease students into their rotation by being transparent, open, and welcoming.” In addition to Erin’s enjoyment of working one-on-one with people who love to learn, such as genetic counseling students, she finds it fun to be on the other side of supervision. She describes, “I find myself seeing patients and sessions through a new lens and it’s a privilege to see students grow in their skills and confidence throughout their rotation.” A huge thank you to Erin for her passion for supervision, and the kindness and guidance she provides to our current students!



Updates from Alumni



Class of 2002

Class of 2003

Tracy Leedom: Tracey Leedom is now working for Ambry Genetics as a cancer reporting genetic counselor. She is working remotely from her home in Durham. After almost 11 years as a clinical cancer genetic counselor at Duke, she is enjoying the challenges of her new job. She is also enjoying spending more time at home with her husband, Mark, son Derek (almost 10), and daughter Morgan (7).

Heidi Cope: Though I continue to work at Duke, I recently joined the Center for Human Disease Modeling and will be relocating to a new office off campus in one of Durham's trendy converted tobacco warehouses. I continue to coordinate the Hereditary Basis of Neural Tube Defects and The Genetics of Chiari Type I Malformation studies. In addition, I am part of the Duke Neonatal Genomics Task Force, which is a team of clinicians and researchers collaborating on an exome sequencing study for neonates and young children with unexplained congenital anomalies.



Class of 2003

Class of 2002

Randi Culp Stewart: See Faculty Updates.



Class of 2004



Class of 2005

Class of 2005

Shannon Morrill-Cornelius: This year I published a paper with three colleagues in JGC on the use of cancer genetic panels in our practice. I also published in Connecticut Medicine on our service delivery model. I was recently promoted to Manager of Genetic Counseling Services at Western Connecticut Health Network and now oversee the genetic counseling program across three hospitals. I am supervising students in clinic from Sarah Lawrence and welcome the opportunity to work on Capstone projects with UNCG students as well. I continue to live in Southbury, Connecticut, raising our two sons and a new puppy.

Class of 2005

Kelly Schoch: I continue to enjoy our research and clinical work with 22q11 deletion syndrome, and have really enjoyed working with families through our whole exome sequencing studies over the past 4 years. We're excited to be part of the Undiagnosed Diseases Network and will see our first patients in early 2015. (For more information about Kelly, see HHS Pacesetter Award article!)

Andrea (Durst) Lewis: I am currently living in Louisville, KY, and completing a clinical doctorate degree in public health at the University of Kentucky. Graduation is in sight — May 2015! I recently completed an internship with the Michigan Department of Community Health where I worked on a project involving FH. My dissertation will be on a state needs assessment for implementation of CDC Tier 1 Genomic Applications.

Courtney Rowe-Teeter: It's hard to believe I have already been practicing in the Stanford Cancer Genetics Clinic for over a year! Exciting progress has been made in our clinic over the last year, with genetic counselors finally billing in our own names while still collaborating and seeing many patients with our physicians. Stanford will be opening a complete multidisciplinary cancer center in the San Jose/South Bay area in the summer of 2015, and I am excited to transition into being the full time genetic counselor in this clinic. We anticipate the demand will grow quickly to necessitate the addition of a second counselor. It has been especially rewarding to be an integral part of developing what Cancer Genetics services will look like in this new clinic, with effective administrators taking the time to truly understand our services and brainstorming to determine how to deliver our services more effectively. I have also enjoyed working with and supervising Stanford genetic counseling graduate students. On a personal note, this year Ben and I celebrated our 13th wedding anniversary and Sophia turned 5 and started kindergarten!



Class of 2006

Class of 2006

Gayle Patel: Hi Everyone! I am still living in Austin, Texas. I changed jobs about 2 years ago and am working for a large community oncology practice called Texas Oncology. I manage our GREAT Program (Genetic Risk Evaluation and Testing Program) and provide educational and operational support to our providers across the state. I still do some direct patient care in Austin. I'm loving the change! Outside of work my husband and I are busy chasing after our two girls. Amelia who is sassy and opinionated is almost 4 and Lila, our laid back baby, is 8 months old. [see photo of Gayle and her children on page 22]

Class of 2007

Rebecca Crimian Spillman: I am still working at Duke on whole exome sequencing research. Scott and I have survived year one of marriage, and we recently purchased a house in North Raleigh with a big fenced yard for our 3 dogs.

Kasey Platky Warren: I am still in Louisville working in prenatal with some pediatric/lab work. I have been married to Keith for 2 years now; we have a house and one dog, Holly Berry. I enjoy quilting; check out my blog:
www.littlehouseinvinecrestwoods.blogspot.com.

Shana Merrill: I am still working at UPenn in adult genetics. I recently returned from a 2 month hiatus during which I drove cross country and back; I highly recommend it! I am enjoying opportunities to expand into neurogenetics from rare cancer and cardiogenetics by starting new programs. I am also appreciating my increasing roles with Arcadia students, including a recent lecture for the board review course.

Amanda Noyes: see family photo on page 22



Class of 2007



Class of 2008

Claire Healy-Hibbard: I am still working at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston coordinating and seeing patients in our various satellite and affiliate sites. I am involved in a study evaluating the frequency and effect of germline T790M mutations in the EGFR gene. My husband and I are celebrating our 5 year anniversary this year, and our daughter is now 3 and a half!

Jackie Powers: I am engaged to a wonderful guy who has kept me laughing and on my toes for nearly 4 years! We are getting married in June 2015 in a refurbished barn in Lancaster, PA. Arrival by horse n buggy is encouraged! I am still at Penn, and now have close involvement with the Bassett Research for BRCA. I am still coordinating our IMPACT and whole exome studies. I am also still madly in love with my ASPCA Kitty (Gus Gus) who I adopted while in Greensboro. He is very handsome and full of attitude.

Emily Rettner: I continue to work for UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, formerly Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland. I am working on the Pediatric Medical Genetics Division. I am a genetic counseling supervisor for a local genetic counseling masters program. My husband and I have lived in our new home for just over 1 year. We adopted 2 kittens in December 2013, which has been fun. I continue to bake / decorate cakes / cupcakes occasionally. I have been active with daily running and enter a local 5K now and then.

Rachel Mills: I am still at Duke working as a Clinical Research Coordinator but my department has been rebranded as the Center for Applied Genomics and Precision Medicine. I've been continuing my work with Dr. Susanne Haga and we have published a number of articles about our research in the Journal of Genetic Counseling and elsewhere. We have recently set up a new program called the Community Pharmacists Pharmacogenetics Network to develop and provide resources for pharmacists implementing pharmacogenetics in their pharmacies. We are continuing to write grants focusing on education and genomic medicine and we've had the wonderful opportunity to work with other awesome UNCG alum including **Adam Buchanan** and **Beth Hudson**. I am still living in Durham, NC with my dog Beau and my boyfriend Justin. We have had a fun year around Durham and on weekend trips including a visit to Nashville for my 30th birthday (and ACMG).

Leah Williams: I just celebrated my 5 year anniversary at GeneDx, and this year took the position of Assistant Manager of Genetic Counseling Services. I still enjoy being a part of the Cardiogenetic Testing team, writing genetic test reports and providing client support. This year, I also worked to launch the remote genetic counseling program at GeneDx, which involved the recruiting, hiring and training of a large team of genetic counselors. In personal news, myself, Ryan, and Ainsley Jo welcomed Emmett Ryan Williams to our family in September. We are all completely in love! [See photo of Emmett on page 22]

Class of 2009

Diana Smith: I don't have a lot of professional updates (I am still working as a Genetic Specialist with the Cleveland Clinic's online family history tool program called "MyFamily". I have been employed here just over a year and enjoying my first non-traditional role), but I do have an exciting personal update as I got married on 9/20/14! My now husband, Rick, and I got married in his hometown (which is less than 10 minutes from my hometown!) and had a wonderful day spent with many close family and friends. [see wedding photo on page 21]



Class of 2009



Class of 2010



Class of 2010 Beach Reunion

Class of 2010

Whitney (Cogswell) Dobek: I've had a change in positions over the last year. I am now working with the University of South Carolina Genetic Counseling program. I'm primarily involved in the care of prenatal patients, but will be helping out with cancer referrals soon. It has been a fun, new challenge supervising genetic counseling students. So far, I have already been involved with the development of a future course, and I'm looking forward to assisting in teaching the cancer genetics class for the first year students in the spring!

Deanna Alexis Carere: I am in the fourth (and final!) year of my doctorate in Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health. My research is focused on the impact of direct-to-consumer genetic testing, and clinical applications of whole genome sequencing for hereditary cancer. I have been fortunate to find a research group at Harvard Medical School/ Brigham & Women's Hospital called Genomes2People, which focuses on research in translational genomics and health outcomes, and includes 5 genetic counselors! In the last year, I've had the opportunity to speak or present posters at the ASHG, ACMG, NSGC, CAGC, CGA-ICC, and APHA conferences, which has meant a lot of travel to amazing places. Most recently I presented my doctoral research at NSGC in New Orleans - a trip that was made even better when my boyfriend John proposed in the beautiful City Park Sculpture Gardens. In Spring 2015, I am planning to graduate, move home to Ontario with John, find a job, and never go back to school again!



Class of 2011

Melanie Hardy: See Alumni Feature Article on page 4

Emily Walsh: I am starting my third year at Labcorp working with the molecular genetics and biochemical genetics labs. I am also very excited to be having my first child early in 2015.

Mallory Sdano: I am still living in Salt Lake City and working at Lineagen. This year I have stayed very busy as President of the newly formed Association for Utah Genetic Counselors (AUG). Earlier this year we hosted a Career Camp for individuals interested in learning more about genetic counseling as a career and a one-day Education Conference with CEUs for local GCs. Matt and I are still avid gardeners and have done lots of hiking/camping trips this summer. [See photo of Mallory and her husband on page 23]

Here is a recent publication of mine:

Sdano MR, Vanzo RJ, Martin MM, Baldwin EE, South ST, Rope AF, Allen WP, Kearney H.
Clinical Utility of Chromosomal Microarray Analysis of DNA from Buccal Cells: Detection of Mosaicism in Three Patients. *J Genet Couns.* 2014 Aug 15. [Epub ahead of print]

Michael Osborne: In July of 2014, I transitioned out of clinical practice and into industry. I am working as pediatric genetic specialist (medical science liaison) for Ambry Genetics. I cover a fairly large territory (8 states in the Southeastern US). Luckily, I did not have to move, so I am still living in downtown Raleigh. My puppies, Taco and Helix, remain just as spoiled as ever. Professionally, I remain actively involved in the NSGC Student and New Member SIG. I have served on the NSGC AEC Planning Subcommittee for the past couple of years. I think that covers all of the big updates! No love interests for me (yet), but hooray for marriage equality in North Carolina!

Class of 2012

Ryan Noss: I work at the Cleveland Clinic where I work in our pediatric genetics clinic as well as the main genetic counselor for our main campus multidisciplinary breast cancer center. - Research studies you are involved in: Risk Factor Analysis of Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer - Professional organizations you participate in: NSGC- Publications in the last year: *The incorporation of predictive genomic testing into genetic counseling programs* within the Journal of Genetic Counseling .

Meagan (Wiesenhart) Farmer: I am working at UAB as the director of cancer genetic counseling, GCTP supervisor, instructor, and medical genetics residency supervisor. I established the task force on familial cancer at UAB, and I am also a NCCN breast and ovarian cancer panel member.

Julie Jesiolowski: I am still working as a clinical laboratory liaison at Sequenom Laboratories. It's been a busy year with the expansion of our NIPT content! I continue to provide clinical support and education about prenatal genetic testing to healthcare professionals. I also travel along the east coast, facilitating educational presentations and collaborating with key academic leaders on publication of abstracts and manuscripts. This past September, I launched our first "day program" and hosted UNCG first year students as part of their graduate school curriculum. I am a member of NSGC, NCMGA, and Women in Bio.

Brittney (Guerrero) Goetsch: After starting out with a part time prenatal position in January of 2013, I transitioned to a full time cancer position at Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers, where I work with 3 other genetic counselors to cover 10 sites. We have recently launched a billing pilot under a 2 visit (assessment and result) model. I now live just outside of Denver with my husband Brian. We were married December 1st 2012. I don't think I was able to update you last year so I'll include a belated wedding picture. No babies on the horizon for us but we did rescue a puppy who we've named Bow (as in Te-bow:)). He is a very energetic handful, so we spend a lot of our free time running and training him. He is pictured with a Bronco's bandana on the deck my husband built this summer. I also became an aunt to 4 baby girls last year and am having fun spoiling them. [see Brittany's photos on page 21 and 22]

Courtney Kiss: I continue to work as a genetic counsellor at Kingston General Hospital in Kingston, Ontario doing a combination of prenatal and general genetics. For the second year in a row I have been involved with the Canadian Association of Genetic Counsellors Annual Newsletter subcommittee and participated in the Queen's University pathology and molecular medicine enrichment course, spreading awareness of the genetic counselling profession. In my spare time I play in a volleyball league and do kickboxing and kayaking. I recently adopted a kitten named Leonard. [See photo of Courtney's kitten on page 23]

Sara Wienke: See Alumni feature article on page 5.





Class of 2013

Erin Eaton: See supervisor spotlight, page 8 and wedding photo on page 22.

Rebecca Okashah: Rebecca (Becky) Okashah works at the Children's Hospital of San Antonio as a pediatric genetic counselor and serves several clinics including Hematology Oncology, Cystic Fibrosis and Genetics. She was an invited guest speaker at the national 5p- Society Conference. She participates in events with the local Down syndrome association.

Ledare Finley: I recently joined the Cancer Genetics Program at Greenville Health Systems in Greenville, South Carolina. I enjoyed working with the Gynecologic Oncology group in Arkansas, but I really missed being close to friends and family in Tennessee and North Carolina. GHS has a great Cancer Survivorship program so we have lots of resources for our cancer patients and their families. I will have the opportunity to supervise GC students from the South Carolina program as well, so that will be a new experience for me in this position. I am looking at ways I can contribute to the Survivorship team and will be working on community outreach projects as we grow our program. Greenville is a nice place to live with a renovated downtown area with lots of restaurants and shops, and I am looking forward to getting to know the area better.



Class of 2014

Aimee Brown: I am currently working at the University of Alabama at Birmingham as a pediatric and cancer counselor. I have recently begun supervising genetic counseling students in the UAB genetic counseling training program and will most likely be a primary supervisor next semester. My UNCG capstone project was accepted as a NSGC poster presentation which was presented by my wonderful capstone chair, Sara Wienke. I am officially an ABGC board certified counselor as of August and I am enjoying my extra free time by exploring more of Birmingham!

Jordan Dix: I accepted a laboratory genetic counselor position with LabCorp in July of this year after graduation. I am working in the molecular and biochemical department. I presented my capstone project, "Impact of Increased Education on Career Interest in Genetic Counseling Among High School Students," at the spring meeting of NCMGA. I will also be presenting my capstone as a poster at NSGC this year.

Rebecca Johnson: I started working at Sanford Health in May 2014 as a pediatric genetic counselor. In addition to seeing patients in general pediatric clinic I am coordinating a pediatric Down syndrome clinic as well as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders clinic. Recently I took over the role as principal investigator for Sanford on the Inborn Errors of Metabolism Collaborative, collecting data on individuals diagnosed with Inborn Errors of Metabolism and long-term outcomes. Outside of work I have been settling into life back in South Dakota and planning my wedding for May 2015.

Sarah Hart: I am currently working at the Duke University Department of Pediatrics as the coordinator for the Comprehensive Down Syndrome Clinic. In my position I also serve as a clinical research coordinator for a longitudinal study of the natural history of Down syndrome. I am very excited to also be representing our clinic at the Triangle Down Syndrome Network Buddy Walk in Raleigh, NC on October 12 this year. Although I was sad to miss NSGC this year, I had a poster presentation at the conference for my capstone project, "Communication of Psychiatric Risk in 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome". I will also be presenting the findings from my capstone project at this fall's North Carolina Medical Genetics Association meeting at Duke University. In personal news, our daughter Elle turned three this past summer. She was very excited to recently learn that she will be a big sister! We are due to have our second child in February of 2015.

Faculty and Staff Updates

Sally Sprague



Hi everyone, well this year's trip was not quite as exciting as last year. We went back to New York and New Jersey as we had a family wedding, a nephew, to attend. We managed to visit with old friend and also family and did get in a little sightseeing. We went to the 9/11 Memorial and that was a very moving experience and well worth the time, if you are ever in New York City. We also went to Liberty Park in New Jersey and strolled around for a while on the way to lunch with friends.

We also went to the Bronx Zoo (opened in 1899), which I had not been to since I was much younger. It was Fred's first time and we both enjoyed it. The zoo is so large with 265 acres and 6,000 animal that we could not cover the entire thing in one day. We missed the entire African side. The architecture of the original buildings is really something to see as well as the promenade at the original entrance. We also went back to Baltimore to go the aquarium, visit the harbor and also the Baltimore Museum of Art for a couple of days on the way back home.

Sonja Eubanks Higgins

Life on the coast of South Caroline with my family is good. Connor is 9 months old (a year in December) and just about walking. He is so much fun. My step daughters are 15 and 12 now and both thriving. Life has really changed of course with a baby. My days are much different than they were as a practicing genetic counselor as you can imagine! But I am enjoying this season in my life and the time I am able to give to Connor, my husband Robert and my step daughters. I have worked on various projects since leaving UNCG. The most recent project was the publication of a chapter on ARTs in a new book entitled *Ethical Dilemmas in Genetics and Genetic Counseling*. I am also currently considering joining a company to work part time from home. I think of the program and former students often and enjoy seeing updates on all of you.



Faculty and Staff Updates

Randi Culp Stewart

This year has been an exciting one! Will, Ryleigh and I welcomed little Dylan to our family on October 7, 2014. It has been a joy to be his mother and see him and Ryleigh begin to grow up together. He is already playing Barbies and vet hospital with her...yes, Dylan is typically one of the stuffed animals in need of a checkup.



It is enjoyable to work with such amazing students. I so am proud of our recent graduates and those that just passed the board exam! Thank you to all of you that have reached out and stayed in touch with us this year...it makes my day to hear from you. Our current students are fantastic too and I have missed them so much during my maternity leave this fall. There continues to be many new learning opportunities for students in our program which helps to make this such a wonderful atmosphere to work in. Thank you to all of you (including many program graduates) that have contributed to these efforts!

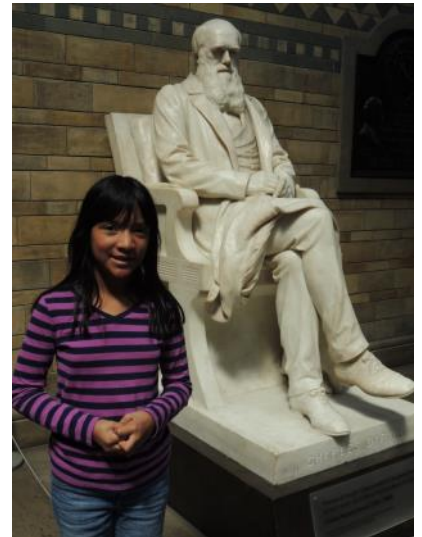
Wishing you happiness this holiday season and always!

Pam Reitnauer

It has been a nice year professionally and at home. Sofia is now a 5th grader and enjoys the geography club and "battle of the books" club. She participates in soccer, gymnastics and takes piano lessons. Sofia's science project this year is focusing on a genetic question with regard to taste preferences (a budding geneticist/genetic counselor?). We had the best time in London and surrounding area this past summer as well as a trip to NYC and Disneyworld with extended family.

I appreciate the opportunity to have our students participate in the Cone Medical Genetics rotation. It is always nice to interact with students in the classroom and clinic.

I truly enjoyed seeing some of our graduates and students at the American College of Medical Genetics meeting in Nashville this past year. Thanks so much for keeping connected with the program.



Sofia with Charles Darwin at the British Museum of Natural Sciences

The UNCG Student Enrichment Fund: An Opportunity to Make a Difference In Memory of Steven Randall Culp

There are many that aspire to make a difference in their life but few that achieve this on a large scale and in individual lives. Steve Culp did and continues to do just that.

Steve Culp lived a life of service through his 32 year career in law enforcement in the state of Kansas. He retired from the Kansas City Kansas Police Department in 2006 as Deputy Chief of Police when he was appointed to direct the newly established Kansas Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (KS-CPOST). Steve was dedicated to his work and never lost sight of individuals in the communities in which he served. Health complications contributed to Steve's departure from KS-CPOST in 2012.

While he began to experience symptoms many years before, Steve did not receive a diagnosis of Hemochromatosis until 2009. Hemochromatosis is a genetic condition resulting in an accumulation of iron in various organs, which can lead to organ failure and death if untreated through phlebotomy (routine blood draws). Steve's daughter attended the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program from 2000-2002 and began to urge him to be tested for this condition given his symptoms and family history. Genetic testing for Hemochromatosis was not performed until Steve was admitted to the hospital in critical condition in 2009. After one week and a battery of testing, a cause for his symptoms remained a mystery to his healthcare team; he was not expected to live more than a few months. At the family's insistence, Steve was finally tested and received a diagnosis of Hemochromatosis. Steve and wife Linda Culp credit the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program for playing a pivotal role in his diagnosis.

Like many genetic conditions, an accurate diagnosis can lead to an improved outcome due to tailored medical management and/or treatment; it can also enable an accurate risk assessments and testing for at-risk family members. Steve's diagnosis allowed for treatment to begin which extended his life span and improved his quality of life. He found great joy in attending his son's wedding, celebrating his 37th wedding anniversary and living to see the birth of his two grandchildren, all of which occurred after his diagnosis.

Given the extent of organ damage that had occurred prior to his diagnosis, Steve suffered complications from Hemochromatosis that led to liver cancer and ultimately his death on November 10, 2014 at the age of 60. He will be missed dearly. However, his service to others did not end at this time.

Steve's diagnosis resulted in the testing and diagnosis of other symptomatic relatives; given their earlier diagnosis and treatment the family is hopeful for milder disease presentation. Given the personal impact of his diagnosis, Steve and Linda Culp requested that Steve's memorial contributions be made to the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program in order to give back to the program that they credit for his diagnosis and pay it forward. It is through these donations that they hope to enhance the educational experience of future genetic counselors so that they may continue to make a difference in individual lives such as his.

On behalf of the UNCG Genetic Counseling Program, we would like to express our condolences to the Culp family and our sincere gratitude for recognizing the program in this way. We would also like to thank the many friends, family members and colleagues of Steve Culp that have so generously given memorial contributions in his honor which is a testament to the lives that he touched.



You may make a tax deductible contribution to the Student Enrichment Fund online [[Click here](#)] or by mailing a check payable to the "MS Genetic Counseling Program Student Enrichment Fund." Checks should be mailed directly to: Sally Sprague, UNCG Genetic Counseling Program, 119 McIver Street, Greensboro, NC 20412.

Personal Updates



Erin (Eaton) and Chase's wedding this past June



Brittney Guerrero's wedding to Brian Goetsch in December 2012



Diana Smith and new husband Rick at their wedding



Class of 2015 at Liz (Decker) Francisco's Wedding



Leah's new son: Emmett Williams



Mallory and Matt Sdano at the summit of Wheeler Peak



Gayle Patel and her kids at the beach



Sara Wienke, Megan Farmer, Pam Reitnauer, and Julie Jesiolowski at ACMG meeting in Nashville, TN



Ryleigh and Dylan Stewart



Noyes family photo - April 2014



Courtney Kiss' new kitten Leonard



Brittney Guerrero's dog Bow on the deck her husband built this summer!



Nancy with Kelly East, Kristen Cornell, and Alexis Carere at NSGC



Kelly Schoch at 22q day at the zoo awareness day

Thank you to first year student Rebecca LeShay (Class of 2016) for her help in creating this newsletter!