

# University of North Carolina Greensboro Genetic Counseling Program Newsletter

**Volume 10, Issue 1**  
**Fall 2018**



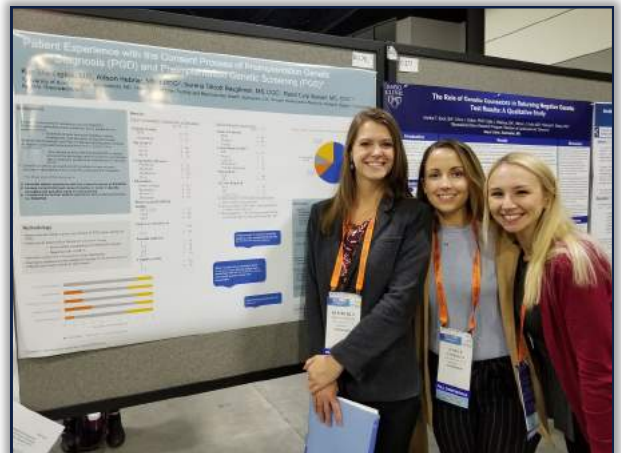
**UNC GREENSBORO**

*Find your way here*

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## From the Director's Desk



This season and throughout the year, I have been in awe. In awe of the incredible accomplishments of our students, alumni, supervisors and lecturers. Of the overwhelming support of professionals throughout the entire state of North Carolina, both in the education of our students and in the betterment of the program as a whole. Of how many people have stepped in to volunteer, to offer their expertise, to participate in the generation of the work into which we invest ourselves. To ensure that the future of genetic counseling, and the program, is brighter than ever.

I am recognizing how fortunate I am, how fortunate we all are, in this moment. To live and work. To be working in a time of genomic medicine, to do what we love, to serve people during some of their most challenging times. Even when we experience our own struggles, setbacks, challenges, stressors, roadblocks, losses or personal tragedies, we are still surrounded by opportunity and fortune. I am undoubtedly fortunate to do this work, to be a part of the community at UNCG, in the Triad, in North Carolina. To be a part of the genetic counseling field and this family, surrounded by talent and promise that amazes me on a daily basis.

No matter what we are facing, each day affords a new opportunity. A new moment to choose. I am a firm believer that there are not necessarily second chances in life. There are infinite chances. Infinite opportunities to choose. Thank you for choosing us, and to do what you do. We are honored to be a part of such a strong community with unwavering commitment to the greatest good.

With gratitude and wonder for what is to come,  
Lauren



## Congratulations Class of 2018!



### Capstone Projects:

**Emily Anderson:** Pediatric Perspective: Genome Sequencing for Newborn Screening\*

**Katie DeLong:** Evaluation of Parents' Experiences When a Child Receives a Positive Newborn Screening Result for Mucopolysaccharidosis Type I (MPS 1)\*

**Kelly Kemak:** Experience of Youth and Families with Special Healthcare Needs in Transition to Adult Healthcare Services\*

**Lauren Loffredo:** Genetic Counselors' Implementation of Self-Care and Self-Awareness\*

**Gretchen Rosso:** A Qualitative Study of the Utilization and Outcomes of Personal Counseling for Genetic Counseling Graduate Students

**Katie (Sanders) Broyhill:** An Analysis of Information Captured in Genetic Counseling Cancer Pedigrees of Hispanic-American Patients\*

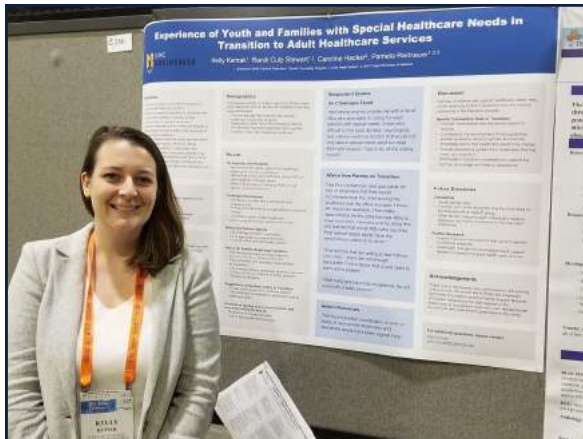
**Melissa Shelkey:** Genome-Wide Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening: Providers' Experiences and Perspectives

**Kim Skellington:** Patient Experience with the Consent Process of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and Preimplantation Genetic Screening (PGS)\*

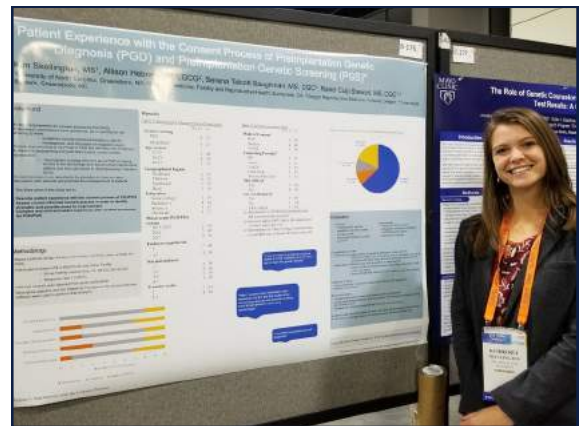
\*Designates poster presentation at the 2018 NSGC Annual Conference



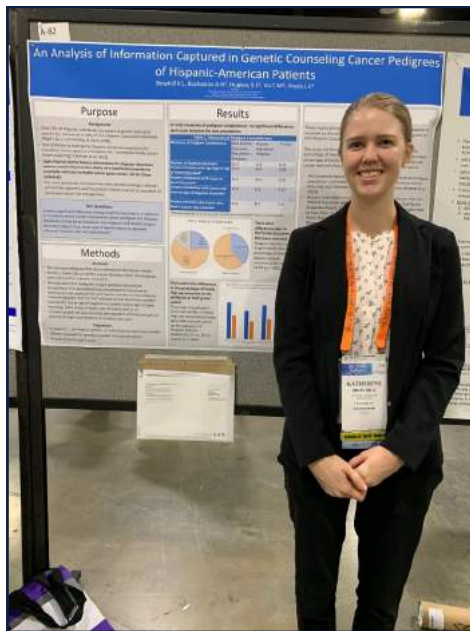
## Class of 2018 Capstone Research accepted for Poster Presentations 2018 NSGC Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA



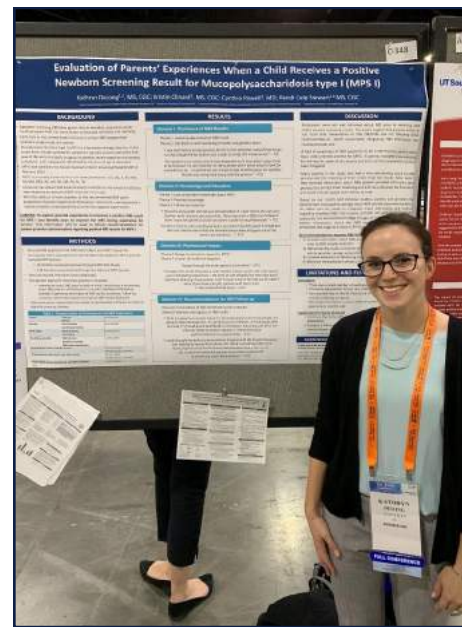
Kelly Kemak



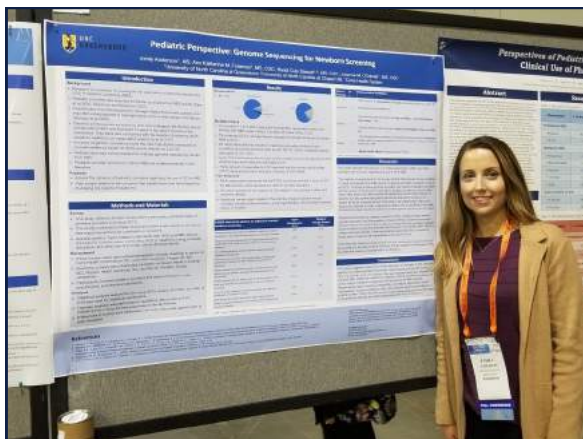
Kim Skellington



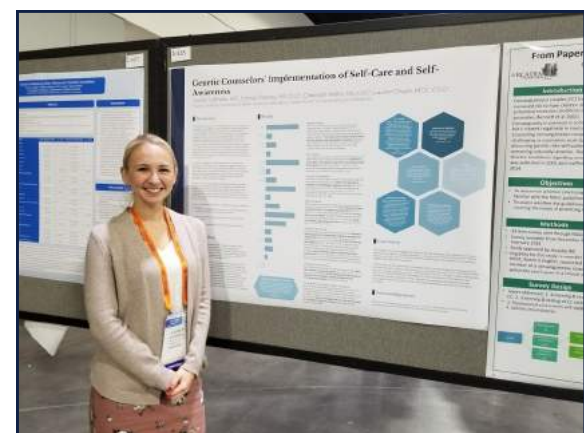
Katie Broyhill



Katie DeLong



Emily Anderson



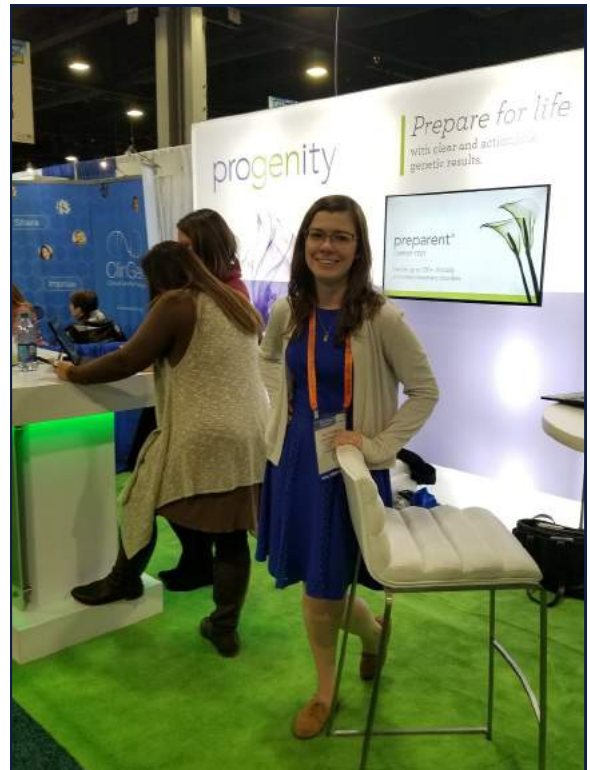
Lauren Loffredo

# 2018 NSGC Annual Education Conference

Atlanta, GA



Kristy Lee (Class of 2002) and Jules Savatt (Class of 2015) at the ClinGen booth



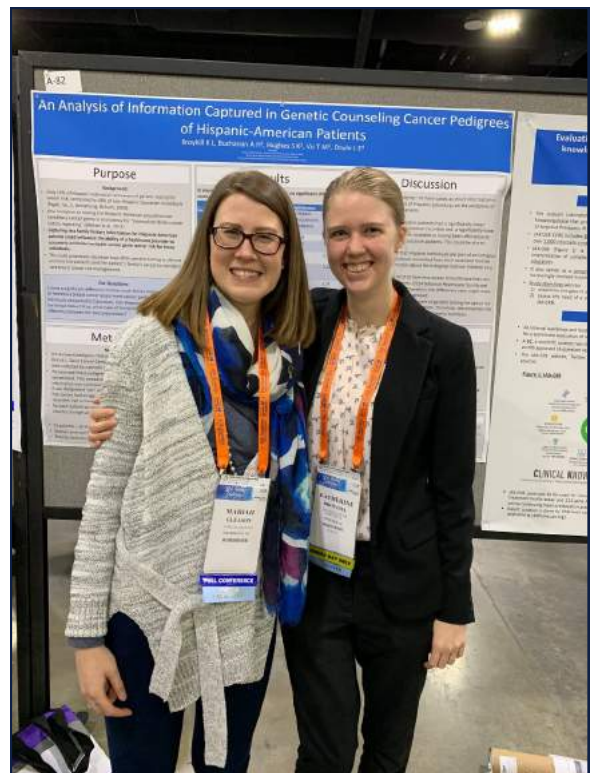
Victoria Haverbusch (Class of 2016) at the Progenity booth...loving her new job!



Program Director Lauren Doyle, Kristy Lee (Class of 2002), second year students Sam Miller and Ryan Hartman, and Tomi Toler (Class of 2008)



Michael Osborne and Melanie Hardy (Class of 2011) at the alumni reunion



Mariah Gleason (Class of 2017) and Katie Broyhill (Class of 2018) posing in front of Katie's poster!

# 2018 NSGC Annual Education Conference

Atlanta, GA



Amanda Padro (Class of 2008) and Becca Johnson (Class of 2014) were all smiles at the alumni reunion!



Leah Williams, Rachel Mills, and Claire Healy having their own Class of 2008 reunion at the program reunion!



Thank you to all who came to the annual UNCG Genetic Counseling Program alumni reunion! We loved seeing you!

## 2018 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award

### Melanie Hardy, MS, CGC

The HHS Pacesetter Award honors outstanding alumni who have attained local, state or regional recognition through their achievements in scholarship, leadership or service, during their career or through civic involvement. This year we are proud to announce Melanie Hardy as the 2018 UNC Greensboro School of Health and Human Sciences Pacesetter Awardee!

Melanie received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in 1998 and her Secondary Teaching Certification in 1999 from Michigan State University. Her passion for education led her to become a high school science teacher from 1999-2007. Melanie discovered genetic counseling while teaching and ultimately obtained her Master of Science degree in Genetic Counseling from UNC Greensboro in 2011. Melanie's Capstone project was entitled "Increasing Undergraduate Student Awareness of Genetic Counseling as a Career Choice." She was competitively selected to present her research at the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) Annual Education Conference in 2011. Her findings were also published in *The Advisor*, a publication of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions.



Upon her graduation, Melanie worked as a prenatal genetic counselor in Richmond, VA where she also helped develop a genetic counseling program within Richmond-region HCA Perinatal Centers. While there, she oriented, supervised, and trained new genetic counselors and genetic counseling students. She also designed and implemented patient, provider, and community education and resources, including a palliative care program and bereavement initiatives.

Melanie transitioned to the JScreen Program at Emory University School of Medicine in 2015 where she currently practices as a telehealth genetic counselor and serves as Assistant Director of Genetic Counseling Services. She is licensed to practice in 21 states. At JScreen, she provides genetic counseling on carrier screening results, family and medical history, and testing options by phone or video. Her job is multi-faceted in that she also supervises and trains genetic counselors, develops and maintains operating procedures for genetic counseling services, aids in marketing, education and fundraising efforts, and collaborates in planning and executing research at JScreen. Additionally, Melanie reviews test and lab options, makes recommendations for updating test panels, and develops education resources. Melanie states, "I love my job at JScreen because it allows me flexibility to work with patients, work with students, explore new avenues in the genetic counseling field, and to be active in our profession... I wish all genetic counselors could experience, as I do, a workplace where ideas and opinions are valued, everyone shares in the workload and supports each other, innovation is the norm, and you have the freedom to grow and learn as a professional. I'm very lucky!"

*See next page*

## 2018 HHS Alumni Association Pacesetter Award (cont.)

The roots for Melanie's passion for education and scholarship run deep. She has Adjunct Faculty Member status at Emory where she supervises and instructs genetic counseling graduate students. She is also Co-Instructor for a public health course taught in the program. Furthermore, Melanie was an Affiliate Graduate Faculty Member in the VCU program, where she supervised and trained genetic counseling students. Melanie has presented and published on the topics of telemedicine, genetic counseling licensure, reproductive carrier screening, and perinatal palliative care. She continues to mentor genetic counseling students on their Capstone projects and was a panelist and organizer of student outreach events at NSGC Annual Education Conferences from 2011-2014. Melanie remarks, "As a teacher, I have a passion for working with students: helping them recognize their inherent abilities and build their skills as a genetic counselor. Their enthusiasm and fresh perspective keeps me re-assessing my methods and looking at situations in new ways."



HHS Award winners at the HHS Awards Reception on October 13, 2018

On a national level, Melanie has been an active and recognized member of NSGC. Melanie first got involved in NSGC through the Student New Member Special Interest Group, for which she received the Outstanding Leadership & Activism Scholarship Award in 2014. She now participates in the NSGC Membership Committee where she has helped plan and implement Orientation sessions at the Annual Education Conference. She has also co-chaired NSGC's Mentor Program and received the NSGC New Leader Award Winner in 2014. When reflecting on her experiences within professional organizations, Melanie states, "I appreciate and try to take advantage of the many opportunities to be involved. I

find that involvement in my profession keeps me learning and allows me to explore new roles and learn from other genetic counselors across the country. There are some really amazing and inspiring innovators out there!"

Melanie has positively impacted countless of individual lives and families. Each year, Genome Magazine and NSGC publish a Code Talkers book to honor genetic counselors who communicate with compassion and care. Recognized genetic counselors are nominated by a patient and finalists are competitively selected. Melanie was selected as a finalist in 2017 and her nominating family shared the following about her: "No words can describe the feeling of helplessness in seeing one's children cope with a genetic diagnosis. Melanie was unbelievably patient and kind... She always managed to combine professionalism with kindness, and no question was ever too small or insignificant. Melanie is a credit to her profession, and those of us who have been lucky enough to work with her have been blessed. Thanks so much, Melanie, for being the special soul that you are."

Melanie Hardy has been a true Pacesetter! We are so impressed with what she has accomplished and grateful for how she represents UNC Greensboro and our program. We are proud to recognize Ms. Melanie Hardy with the 2018 HHS Pacesetter Award!



## 2018 AGCPD Outstanding Clinical Supervisor Award



In 2018, the Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors (AGCPD) created a mechanism to recognize the invaluable contributions that supervisors make to genetic counseling student training. Recent graduates were allowed to submit award nominations to programs highlighting how and to what extent the nominated supervisor demonstrated published genetic counseling supervision competencies. Programs then select one award winner to submit to AGCPD and all awardees are recognized at the National Society of Genetic Counselors' annual meeting and on the AGCPD website among other program-specific platforms.

The UNCG MS Genetic Counseling Program is honored to present Suzanna Schott, MS from Fullerton Genetics Center in Asheville, NC as our program's 2018 Outstanding Clinical Supervisor Awardee! Per her AGCPD award letter, Suzanna "was selected because of her ability to establish a supervisory relationship through which students are both supported and challenged, to provide constructive feedback that promotes student growth, to provide student with excellent learning opportunities while maintaining high quality patient care, and for serving as an example of what a genetic counselor should be." Please join us in congratulating Suzanna on receiving this award! We are grateful for her exceptional supervisory efforts and contributions to the genetic counseling profession.

## Our New Branding Initiative!



## Supervisor Spotlight

Stefanie Finch, MS, CGC

Nominated by: Emily Anderson, Class of 2018

*"Stefanie was an exceptional supervisor, and I feel lucky that I had the opportunity to work with her. She encouraged me to believe in my own abilities and challenged me to take on new roles in sessions. She always provided thoughtful feedback and a safe, open space to process cases. She took the time to check in with me and see how things were going throughout the rotation. I felt that she genuinely cared about helping me improve my counseling skills, and I know that I grew as a counselor because of her support and supervision style. I hope that many students have the chance to learn from and work with her in the future."* -Emily



"I am honored to be nominated for the Supervisor Spotlight! Supervision is one of the things I enjoy most about my job. I learn so much from working with students, whether it's helping them troubleshoot a tough case or brainstorming on their rotation project. While students rotate with us, I try to make it a safe space so that they feel comfortable trying out new techniques and strategies, and can begin to find their own voice. I also encourage students to take a patient-centered approach and to always know the purpose of every question they ask of a patient or family. During my training, I got to work with many different clinical supervisors, each with their own counseling and supervision style. I learned something from each one of them, and it is a privilege to "pay it forward" and be part of the team that helps our future colleagues find their feet in clinic."

- Stephanie



### Alumni Accolades!

Congratulations to two of our outstanding alumni for their accomplishments! Ryan Noss, MS (Class of 2012), pictured left, was selected as the **AGCPD 2018 Outstanding Clinical Supervisor Award** by Case Western Reserve University. Rachel Mills, MS (Class of 2008), pictured right, received the **National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) 2018 Out-**



**standing Volunteer Award!** We are so proud of Ryan, Rachel and the significant contributions of all of our program alumni!

## When Worlds Collide

By: Michael Osborne, Class of 2011

When Randi initially contacted me with a request to share my perspective on genetic counseling, I suspect that she wanted me to comment on some of the unique ways that I have put my 'MS, CGC' to work. In total, I spent three years in direct patient care at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, then spent four years at Ambry Genetics representing their whole exome sequencing and cardiogenetics product lines. Although I could certainly construct an entire essay on my experiences working in both clinic and industry, I instead decided to share how a personal crisis changed my perspective on patient care and genetic counseling.



*Baby Landyn in the hospital*

In August of 2017, I found out that I was going to be an uncle. Having made the decision many years ago not to have children of my own, this was to be my first-born. After a mostly uncomplicated, low-risk pregnancy, 'Landyn' Noel Doss was born on the early morning of Sunday, April 15, 2018. However, joy and excitement were quickly replaced with fear and uncertainty – Landyn did not cry. Landyn appeared to be struggling to breathe. Landyn was blue. Serendipitously, for unrelated reasons, the NICU team was present in the delivery room and feverishly began to work on Landyn. In the minutes that followed Landyn's birth, wires, monitors, tubes, and a CPAP machine substituted for the lifeline provided by the umbilical cord only a short time earlier. Before my sister or brother-in-law were able to hold their son, Landyn was whisked away to the NICU.

Shortly after being informed of Landyn's dramatic entry into the world, I tracked down one of the NICU doctors. With my experience in high-risk pregnancies at UNC and with cardiogenetics at Ambry, I wanted to inquire about the planned follow-up for my nephew. Given the 'blue baby' label, I falsely assumed that my nephew would be evaluated for a congenital heart defect. Instead, when I was able to visit Landyn in the NICU for the first time, I was told that 'the NICU team has babies born all the time that just require a little initial assistance with breathing', and that 'Landyn would be taken off of the CPAP in 24-48 hours'. Landyn appeared stable in the NICU and had turned a rosy pink color while on CPAP, so I (regrettably) did not press the issue any further.

The next day, I received a text message from my sister stating that one of the NICU nurses had noted a murmur when listening to Landyn's heart. A follow-up echocardiogram confirmed my initial suspicion: Landyn had been born with a constellation of life-threatening heart defects.

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## When Worlds Collide (cont.)

Without further explanation, my nephew was transferred to Duke University Medical Center by helicopter. In addition to being mentally exhausted, my sister and brother-in-law were now physically separated from their son by over 100 miles and a two-hour drive.

Upon arriving to Duke, Landyn was officially diagnosed with (1) an ascending aortic coarctation, (2) a descending aortic coarctation, (3) a ventricular septal defect, (4) a bicuspid valve, and (5) a tethered mitral valve. The CT Team at Duke, unlike the providers that cared for my nephew during the first 24 hours of his life, met with my sister and brother-in-law on numerous occasions after Landyn's admission. These providers took ample time to explain the diagnosis, the required treatment, possible complications, and expected prognosis.

When I had questions about the genetic testing that was going to be ordered on my nephew, the CT surgeon elicited my expertise in cardiogenetics and ordered the microarray and panels that I recommended. My family was armed with the necessary information to make informed decisions surrounding my nephew's treatment and management.

Landyn underwent open-heart surgery at eight days of life. I am happy to report that the surgical correction was a resounding success. The surgery was curative, and all follow-up cardiac evaluations have been normal. No additional operations are anticipated at this time. Landyn is meeting all of his developmental milestones, and all genetic test results returned 'normal'. Perhaps even more miraculous, since being discharged Landyn has survived multiple solo babysitting adventures with me, his adoring 'Uncle Momo'.



*Landyn and Uncle Momo are all smiles after a successful surgery!*

I never imagined that my training and experience with crisis management would intersect with my personal life. But it did, and I was forced to learn new lessons in resiliency, coping, and empathy – lessons that I can now incorporate into any role to which I apply my genetic counseling degree. One of the outstanding facets of genetic counselors is our desire to educate patients. I think back to my days in MFM clinic, and how easy it became to breeze through my 'AMA spiel' without pausing to check for understanding or elicit questions. The Duke CT Team that cared so tenderly for my nephew consulted many patients each day, yet the counseling my family received did not feel rushed or forced. I now have such an appreciation for this caliber of patient care.



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## When Worlds Collide (cont.)

If I find myself in direct patient care again in the future, I hope that I can remember that sentiment. No matter how many times have uttered a particular explanation, it had not been previously heard by the family in front of me. We have the opportunity – and the privilege – to increase patient understanding, alleviate patient anxieties, and contribute to informed decision-making. What an honor.

In addition, we need to remember that we are advocates – for our patients, and for our families. Even with my education and relevant experience, I was bullied into silence when I suggested a possible structural defect after Landyn's birth. To this day, I regret this. Most patients do not have our clinical backgrounds, and as such, are likely even more vulnerable during times of crisis. Their questions may be swept under the rug, lost in the shuffle – or they may not even know which questions to ask. In addition, patients may not have access to health insurance, or may have insurance policies with genetic testing exclusions. I see patient advocacy in action in the diverse work of all of my classmates – whether they continue to work in direct patient care, have infiltrated the managed care landscape to promote for genetic coverage, or serve to increase appropriate utilization of genetic testing by non-genetics providers in the industry setting.

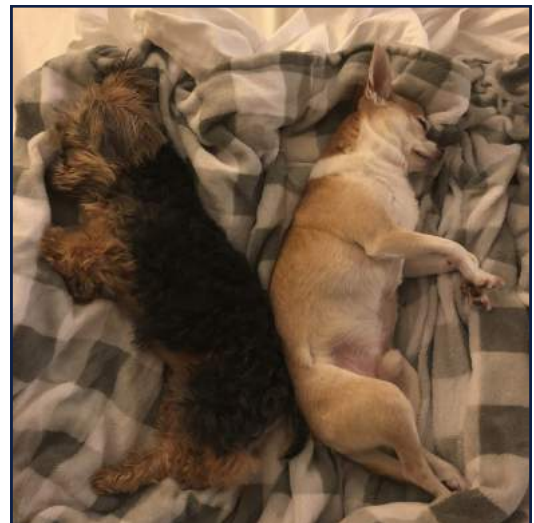
On an unrelated note, a final unique perspective that I bring to the table is my experience as a male in the female-dominated genetic counseling field. To put it succinctly, I consider it a gift to collaborate with intelligent, compassionate women in science every day. Keep advocating for yourselves, and for our field. I promise to do the same.

Keep voting –

Michael

PS – Taco and Helix send their love.

*Michael can be contacted at [cmichaelosborne@gmail.com](mailto:cmichaelosborne@gmail.com)*



*Taco & Helix snuggled up*



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Genetic Counseling

## “I’m Not Looking For a Lab Job” – Famous Last Words

By: Samantha (Caldwell) Brovold, Class of 2015

Back in my UNCG days, I certainly would have been surprised to see myself now, heading into my fourth year as a laboratory genetic counselor. Whenever I’m asked how my job is going or how I’m liking it, I always respond that I truly love it more and more every year, which is a pretty amazing feat in and of itself. As a student, I imagined myself choosing between the three pillars of genetic counseling – cancer, prenatal, or peds – and even thoughtfully declined vying for the laboratory rotation offered. Irony at its best. Even in the first few days [weeks] of starting my laboratory role, I wasn’t quite sure what the job description really entailed – what would I actually ‘do’ all day - or how I could apply all my cultivated skills from graduate school and clinical rotations.

Again, famous last words.

Having high level conversations with clinicians, collating data for publications, being at the forefront of genome-wide cfDNA screening, and working closely with lab directors regarding data interpretation, reporting rules, and bioinformatics have been some of the most rewarding components of this career track. Of course,



*Opie & Ralph (my canine co-workers) hard at work.*

working from home is a major perk too. Though admittedly personal hygiene suffers, as my canine co-workers don’t set high expectations in that department and packing ‘real’ clothes for NSGC becomes a real struggle. While I can fully appreciate that work from home life isn’t for all-comers, the perks far outweigh the cons. Thankfully I am part of a close-knit, amazing team of genetic counselors and even though we don’t physically work together, the group texts and inside jokes make it feel otherwise. Working in this kind of a setting also lends itself to establishing professional relationships with other providers and counselors across the country. When NSGC rolls around you’re able to put faces to the voices you’ve been chatting with for years and realize your professional network is so much larger than previously realized.



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## “I’m Not Looking For a Lab Job” – Famous Last Words (cont.)

With the geographic flexibility afforded when working from home, I’ve really enjoyed being able to stay in Greensboro. I was a speaker at the recent NCMGA meeting and presented about challenges in cfDNA screening with a focus on leveraging bioinformatics tools that aid in data interpretation. I’ve been able to stay better connected with the UNCG program too, which I’ve loved. While at UNCG, I had such a phenomenal experience during my rotations and built lasting relationships with my supervisors. After graduating, I had looked forward to maintaining a connection with the program through clinical supervision. With educational lectures and capstone committees, I was able to still maintain that connection in the laboratory role. This past fall was my third year hosting the annual UNCG NIPT Day (suggestions for a snazzier name appreciated) where I get to present interesting cases, complex discordant results, and dive into technology and data interpretation with the current students.

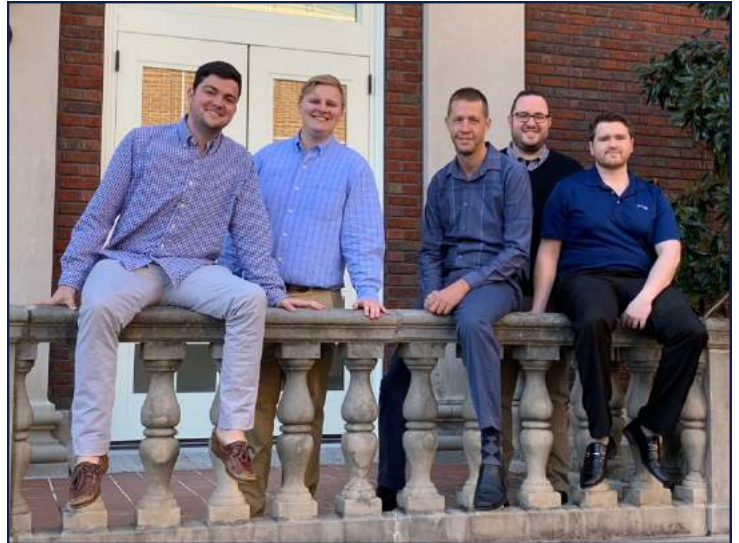
In just these few short years, I’ve been lucky to be involved in such a rapidly expanding field with endless new opportunities. There is always more data to be crunched or crazy cases to write up, which makes it easy to be involved in numerous posters presented at both domestic and international conferences, with topics ranging from complex monosomy X discrepancies to biologic rescue mechanisms like telomere capture and segmental UPD. I’m currently working on a case series manuscript and have had a few papers published from my NIH summer rotation, including a first author systematic review. With the acquisition by LabCorp, I’ve been able to cross-train with the cytogenetics group (including other UNCG alum!) and their lab directors to become a part of the microarray review team - often seeing the steps following prenatal screening. In 2017, I was truly honored to be nominated and awarded LabCorp’s Laboratorian of the Year.

Last year an opportunity with a telegenetics company, GeneMatters, presented itself. I was able to join a fantastic team of genetic counselors and provide phone counseling for a wide variety of pre and post-test counseling. I had to dust off a few cobwebs on all things non NIPT, especially non prenatal, but it was a nice way to keep a toe in the water and interact directly with patients. Though I’ve realized the bridge between clinical and lab work is short, with lots of overlap. Just like in clinical genetics where there are exceptions to every rule and variability reigns supreme, in the laboratory you learn to appreciate data interpretation and reporting nuances. I’ve found talking with clinicians vs. patients has more similarities than differences. Knowing your audience, using shared language, and meeting someone where they’re starting are all clinical counseling skills that I find myself using in every single conversation – clinician or patient. I’m happy I didn’t listen to myself and instead kept an open mind exploring different avenues of our profession, especially since these ‘non-traditional’ roles aren’t always so non-traditional. *Sam can be contacted at [samanthabrovold@gmail.com](mailto:samanthabrovold@gmail.com)*



## Amplifying the Male Voice: Preparing for a Female-Dominated Profession

The genetic counseling profession continues to be a female-dominated field, as women comprise about 95% of the workforce (Smith et al. 2009). We must encourage graduate programs to lead the force in increasing male representation in genetic counseling. UNCG's genetic counseling training program has the greatest number of male students in the country, with five men currently pursuing a genetic counseling degree. Here, second-year students Ryan Hartman, Clayton Mann, and Sam Miller and first-year students Dan Serber and Matt Skorski describe their perspective on the male experience, both within the UNCG genetic counseling program and in the genetic counseling profession at large.



From left to right: Ryan Hartman, Matt Skorski, Sam Miller, Dan Serber and Clayton Mann

### How did you hear about genetic counseling?

- **Clayton:** I heard about genetic counseling from a professor in my sophomore year of undergrad.
- **Matt:** I was in the postbaccalaureate IRTA program at the NIH when I got an email about a genetic counseling career seminar being led by Barbara Biesecker, the director of the JHU/NHGRI program. A quick Google search of genetic counseling piqued my interest, so I attended the seminar. I was hooked listening to her talk about the profession; the rest is history.

### What inspired you to pursue a career in genetic counseling?

- **Ryan:** The fundamental fulfillment I knew that I would get from connecting with patients and providing care to them. I knew the challenge that would come with the ever-expanding field and highly emotional toll it may bring; however, it was something I was passionate about and knew I would love doing. I had always liked science and had the desire to understand/help/guide people. Genetic counseling combined that beautifully.
- **Sam:** My love of human biology has been a constant in my life. Even when I was working in an unrelated field, I found myself lost down Wikipedia hyperlink holes related to genetics. When I learned there were careers in the field that allowed me to talk genetics with people who need the information most, I knew I had to go for it.
- **Dan:** My passion for genetics developed the moment I stepped into the research lab, which led me to pursue genetic research as a career. While I found bench work exciting, once I found out about genetic counseling as a career field, I felt like I finally discovered a natural way to funnel my passion for genetics in a more interpersonally focused way. This combination serves to connect these two seemingly disparate aspects of my personality and the career change involved has been extremely rewarding.

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## Amplifying the Male Voice (cont.)

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### Were you aware of the gender discrepancy in the GC profession prior to applying? If so, what did you think/ how did you feel about this?

- **Clayton:** I wasn't aware of the gender discrepancy until I actually started applying to schools. The gender gap really never made me feel different about it.
- **Matt:** When I was learning about the profession, I happened to come across a statistic that said it was 96% female, which I thought was from old data. When I started looking at student bios from various programs, I swiftly realized that the vast majority of students were still women and some programs didn't have any males at all. It made me nervous, as it seemed like this profession wanted a certain type of person and I was outside that mold. I spent a few days working through my feelings before coming to the conclusion that yes, this was the career for me and it was okay to be different from most of the others in it.

“It seemed like this profession wanted a certain type of person and I was outside that mold.”

### What do you think you have to offer the profession? Your patients?

- **Sam:** I have a background of diverse experiences that make me comfortable with technical information, linguistics, and social engagement. I believe my aptitudes will converge in a way that helps patients navigate the complexities of genetics.
- **Ryan:** I think I have the ability to see people as they are and understand what their needs are. I want to bring a sense of calm to my patients and let them tell their stories in order to cope.
- **Matt:** I think I can offer the male perspective and provide a safe space for male patients to open up. I've noticed that when I get a new doctor I am always asked if I am okay having a female doctor. By being in the profession I can offer men an option of talking to a fellow man if that makes a difference for them.

### What do you plan/hope to do as a practicing GC to ensure that the male GC voice/perspective is represented?

- **Clayton:** I want to spread the word and be seen in the profession to let other men know that this isn't something that only women can do. There is a certain type of rapport you have instantly when there are similarities between you and the person you are talking to, including gender. Having that type of rapport with patients can not only lead to better understanding of particular issues but possibly a better overall session experience.
- **Sam:** I would love the opportunity to speak publicly on this topic and raise awareness of the field in general. If a male voice is the one bringing public attention to genetic counseling, then it may help to erode preconceptions that it is an inherently female vocation.

“I want to spread the word... that this isn't something that only women can do.”

## Amplifying the Male Voice (cont.)

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- **Ryan:** There has to be more of an element of outreach by the GC community. Outreach and education have to be at the forefront of our mission if we desire to expand the profession to other diverse groups. As a male I want to make intentional strides to be a mentor for other males interested in the profession. This may mean setting up formal groups for males interested or forming a diversity SIG within NSGC to reach underrepresented populations.

### What would you like to make sure others know about being a male entering this profession?

- **Dan:** As someone who came to genetic counseling later than most, I think it's incredibly important to spread the word about the career to those who may be interested but are not typically included in the career. I want to make sure that those potential genetic counselors, especially those who come from nontraditional backgrounds, have a place in the career and know that their different perspectives are valuable both to the profession and ultimately, the patients.

“Those who come from nontraditional backgrounds have a place in the career and... their different perspectives are valuable.”

### What made you choose UNCG over other genetic counseling programs?

- **Ryan:** UNCG was where I felt most at home. I felt the leadership was very receptive of me as an individual. I knew there was an atmosphere here that fostered success and that the people I would work with would only want to see me grow as a professional and person.
- **Matt:** I had a great interviewing experience with UNCG and left with a good gut feeling. I think going with your gut is a good metric for putting one program above others. My subconscious was trying to tell me something and I listened to it.

### Did knowing that there would be other males in your class/program impact your perception of your training experience at UNCG? If so, how?

- **Clayton:** It surprised me that there were going to be any other males at all. It made a positive impact knowing that there would be other males in the class to connect with and talk through things with both GC-related and not.
- **Dan:** Truthfully it did not. From my experience, those interested in genetic counseling seem to be generally supportive and caring people, and I trusted that this would also be true of the UNCG program regardless of the specific gender distribution within the ranks.

### What unique perspectives do you have as a male in UNCG's GC program?

- **Ryan:** I think the fact that there are five of us now gives us the unique ability to understand each other. We understand our similarities and differences for pursuing a career in genetic counseling and we know that it isn't universal by any means.

*See next page*

## Amplifying the Male Voice (cont.)

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- **Dan:** I think that each person in the program has a specific perspective that differs from everyone else. My perspective is influenced by being a former researcher as well as being a male. These aspects work in coordination with all the other experiences that have served to shape my particular voice. The exciting part is that this is true of everyone in the program, and our unique perspectives lead to a well-rounded educational atmosphere.

### Have you noticed any unique challenges that come with being a male GC student in clinic vs. your female peers?

- **Ryan:** There is always an aspect of challenge in connecting with patients after you meet them for the first time. This may be more difficult for a male-female relationship. That doesn't mean I automatically fail as a counselor for that patient, but it may make connecting and breaking down walls a bit more difficult. However, that has made me develop strategies to do that more efficiently and to eliminate the male stereotype of not wanting to discuss emotions or be involved in deeply empathic situations.

### What would you like to make sure others know about being in our program?

- **Sam:** I would like people to know that being in our program means you are part of a close knit family, backed by mentors who fiercely advocate for you, and you are groomed by some of the world's finest medical geneticists and genetic counselors. Being a male is no impediment on this journey.
- **Ryan:** I think anyone in the program would thrive in the atmosphere and culture that is present here. Being a male, you know that there may be others you can relate to uniquely here due to the higher proportion of males in the program. But in general, this program just wants to see you become the best genetic counselor you can be and anyone would be lucky to have the opportunity to be a part of that.
- **Dan:** One thing that has stood out to me since arriving at UNCG, and about the career of genetic counseling more generally, is that everyone has a different set of experiences from which they have the ability to speak, both to colleagues and patients. Recognizing and embracing these differences provides strength to any training program, and I highly recommend choosing a program that values the unique contributions of each individual.

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Thank you to program graduate assistant (GA) and first year student Haley Hill for her work on the 2018 Program Alumni Newsletter! Thank you also to Laura Bulmer and Christina Maziarz for their newsletter contributions. This newsletter would not be possible without our wonderful GAs!



UNC  
**GREENSBORO**  
Genetic Counseling

## Psychosocial Seminar

By: Laura Bulmer & Christina Maziarz, Class of 2020

In the UNC Greensboro Genetic Counseling Program, we have the unique experience of being able to come together with both cohorts during a class called Psychosocial Seminar. This is an hour-long class that meets once a week where first- and second-year students can discuss topics in genetic counseling, personal experiences in clinic, and individual perspectives on important issues. It is an informal class setting with assignments that encourage deep thinking about topics such as diversity in genetic counseling, leadership, and personal values. It is a perfect supplement to the rest of the curriculum as it gives students a chance to



*Classes of 2019 and 2020*

think critically about the topics learned in other courses. This class also provides an environment for sharing genetic counseling student perspectives among both cohorts. Many students appreciate having this time together, as first-year students can learn from the second-year students and vice versa.

For the first-year students, Psychosocial Seminar is a great opportunity to gain deeper insight into clinical experiences and address concerns about their future in the program. In the first year, students do mostly one-time observational work in various clinic settings. With less tangible time in clinic, it can sometimes be challenging to imagine personally using material in that setting. The interaction between cohorts provides the first-years with an opportunity to learn from the second-years' experience and explore topics through a clinical lens. This ultimately helps foster growth in the field before even getting through the clinic doors. But this course offers so much more than just an insight to clinic. The majority, if not all, of the assignments challenge students to reflect and introspect. We are then encouraged to discuss what we discover in doing so with our classmates. Sometimes this manifests as sharing a personal revelation, and sometimes this leads to sharing of opposing views or perspectives that initiate important conversations. As one first-year recalls, the fondest memories came from those days "when opposing viewpoints led to discussions that challenged each of us to examine our incoming assumptions."

The second-year students seem to share this sentiment and see Psychosocial Seminar as a chance to share perspectives and grow alongside their first-year classmates. For some, it is an opportunity to impart knowledge to the first-year students by sharing clinical experiences and providing insight as more seasoned students. However, both the first-year and second-year students have valuable input that fosters a deeper understanding of topics that can lead to heightened professional development among all students. One second-year student suggested, "this deeper understanding ultimately helps us to create stronger connections with patients."

*See next page*

## Psychosocial Seminar (cont.)

Because the class is offered during all four semesters of the program, everyone can witness the growth of their fellow students and the development of their points of view throughout their time in the program.

There seems to be a general consensus between cohorts that the favorite and one of the most memorable assignments was the podcast assignment that was completed for the Fall 2018 semester. Students worked in first–second-year pairs to develop an idea for a brief podcast episode and then recorded that episode to share with classmates. Topics covered everything from 23&Me to genetics and privacy to H.R.7083. It was a fun and engaging assignment that, at its core, initiated important discussions about communication. Both cohorts feel like the assignments themselves are generally active and engaging ways to explore serious and important topics. As a whole, participating in Psychosocial Seminar is a powerful and enlightening experience. In addition to fostering collaboration - a skill that will no doubt prove invaluable in all of our futures in genetic counseling - it has challenged us to keep choosing to push our own boundaries and continue to grow as people and as future genetic counselors.



## Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Student Enrichment Fund

### “Find Your Roots Here”

The Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Student Enrichment Fund was created due to a lack of money in the budget to directly benefit students in ways that were important to the program. This fund has supported genetic counseling students in their professional development such as travel to the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) meeting, financial assistance for Capstone projects and bringing in outside speakers.

I imagine most people would agree that such investments are important for students and for the program to be able to offer to students. However, do you really understand the impact of each dollar given to support a student? At a time in your life when you might still need support from family to survive, when you hoped and prayed that someone would offer you a free lunch, when there is little or no time to work outside of studying to bring in a little money to support yourself? During the holidays? Hopefully we all can dig deep and remember that time in our lives.

UNC Greensboro released the new “Find Your Way Here” campaign this year. This messaging demonstrates the focus on the student experience and reaching each student where they are in order to best position them for success, fulfillment and impacting the world in meaningful ways. “Find Your Way Here” ties in beautifully with the Genetic Counseling Program. We strive to do just this with our students and the broader genetics community in North Carolina. Our hope is that this program helps us all to continuously re-discover who we are and then provide ample opportunity and support to be the best that we can be and find our roots here. Our program has adopted the flexible tagline “Find Your Roots Here” and we encourage all program alumni, friends, supporters and community to embrace this program as your own. Re-discover your own roots and invest in the roots of those that are just beginning their journey, at a time when they truly need it. Every dollar makes a difference.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund, you may do so online at <http://gen.wp.uncg.edu/make-gift/>. If you donate online, click the “online” link from text narrative, then select the “Other” designation and enter “Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund”. You may also mail a check payable to the “Nancy P. Callanan Genetic Counseling Enrichment Fund directly to the program at:

UNCG Genetic Counseling Program  
Attn: Marcia Griffin  
996 Spring Garden Street  
Greensboro, NC 27412



Thank you in advance for your donation of any amount!

## Alumni Updates

### CLASS OF 2018

#### **Emily Anderson, Lauren Loffredo & Kim Skellington**

We are in love with our jobs at Orlando Health! Emily works with two cancer GCs at the UF Health Cancer Center. Lauren and Kim joined a team of four prenatal genetic counselors at Winnie Palmer Hospital.

We've been able to start our careers among friends, share our love of the profession with prospective students, and have group study sessions for boards in the short time that we have been at Orlando Health. The city itself has been a welcoming and exciting place to explore. Favorite places include the natural springs, nearby beaches, numerous lakes, and downtown restaurants and bars. Kim lives essentially inside a Target, while Emily and Lauren live two floors apart from one another. It has been easy adjusting to a new city and new jobs with one another nearby. It is hard to imagine a better situation! All would love to have visitors so feel free to reach out if you find yourself in the central Florida area!



#### **Kelly Kemak**

Kelly is loving her job as a pediatric genetic counselor at Nemours Al DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, DE! She works in a position split between Medical Genetics and Developmental Medicine and enjoys the challenge of offering genetic counseling services within a new department. Kelly likes to spend her free time exploring a new city with her husband Zach, and her fur-babies, Chance and Enzo.

#### **Gretchen Rosso**

I have been a pediatric and adult genetic counselor at Wake Forest Baptist Hospital for just over six months now (time flies when you're having fun!). I feel very much at home in North Carolina and it has been wonderful to be working alongside some of my supervisors from graduate school as a colleague. I am also grateful that I get to continue seeing familiar genetic counselors and providers from the area, as well as students and faculty from the UNCG program. In other news, my husband and I added to our family in August when we adopted our sweet little dog, Remy. He is about a year and a half old and he makes us laugh every single day with his underbite and one-of-a-kind personality (we look forward to doing some Doggie DNA Testing in the future to determine what breeds he comes from!). Best wishes!

## CLASS OF 2018 (CONT.)

### **Katie Broyhill**

Katie Sanders is now Katie Broyhill -- she got married in June! She's now living in Concord working as a cancer genetic counselor with Levine Cancer Institute. She's enjoying exploring the area and learning from her new coworkers.

## CLASS OF 2017

### **Mariah Gleason**

I continue to work for Atrium Health as a genetic counselor for the Levine Cancer Institute. It is wonderful to be part of a program that houses 12 cancer genetic counselors! I love working in small town Valdese, NC, seeing more than half of my patients at other sites by telemedicine. This November, I presented a poster at the NSGC conference entitled, "Experience of Telehealth Cancer Genetics Practice in a Large Community Healthcare System" based on the beginning and growth of our telemedicine program. When I'm not working, I enjoy hiking, reading, and watching British cooking shows.



### **Lillian Howard**

I've been at the University of Iowa a year and half now. I spend most of my time in pediatric neurology, but twice a month I coordinate the Huntington disease interdisciplinary clinic. When not in clinic, I've been working on some projects. Most recently, I've partnered with two SLC students for their capstone on the HD predictive testing protocol and with Columbia University to assist in CURE's Epilepsy Genetics Initiative. I also help run our local HD support group, so I've been keeping plenty busy!

### **Ruth Lehan**

I work at Duke University as an Adult Cardiovascular Genetic Counselor. I also had a baby! Kathleen Elizabeth Lehan was born on June 8, 2018 - 8 lbs 5.5 oz and 18 inches long. She is a happy baby and we are so blessed! She and Rosie (our dog) have been getting along well also! My classmates and I who are still in NC met for brunch one day when I was pregnant! One of my classmates (Mary) and I also went to see a reading of the play "Informed Consent" by Deborah Zoe Laufer.



## CLASS OF 2016

### Rebecca LeShay

I am celebrating my first year work anniversary as a faculty member and prenatal genetic counselor within the UCI genetic counseling training program, and I am still loving it! My first article in *Perspectives* also recently was released with the most recent issue.



## CLASS OF 2015

### Jules Savatt

I presented on GenomeConnect, the ClinGen patient registry that I coordinate, at several national and international conferences this year (Curating the Clinical Genome 2018 and ASHG 2018). I also was first author on a publication related to the registry. The registry enables patients to share their genetic and health information to inform genomics.

Personally, two of my classmates married their now husbands this year, Lauren Baldwin and Alexandra Henshaw. It was wonderful to get to see classmates at both of their celebrations!

Below are the presentations/posters Jules had at NSGC this year:

- **A Collaborative View of Genomic Variant Interpretation: Clinical Genetic Counselors, Laboratories and Patients**  
Karen Wain, MS, LGC; Emily Palen, MS, LGC; Ana Morales, MS, CGC; Kami Wolfe Schneider, MS, CGC; Kristy Lee, MS, CGC; Jessica Mester, MS, LCGC; Tina Pesaran, MS, MA, CGC; Sara Barnett, CGC; Casie Genetti, MS, CGC; Amanda Buchanan, MS, CGC; Juliann Savatt, MS, LGC
- **Patient-derived Genomic Data from ClinGen's GenomeConnect: Advancing Genomic Knowledge and Keeping Patients Informed of Variant Classifications**



## CLASS OF 2015 (CONT.)

### Caitlin Troyer

I've continued working as a pediatric genetic counselor at the University of Virginia in beautiful Charlottesville. My colleagues and I are now both licensed and credentialed! I see both pediatric and adult patients in Charlottesville and at three satellite locations around the state, as well as working with multidisciplinary Hemophilia and Cleft/Craniofacial clinics. We have recently become a clinical rotation site for the VCU genetic counseling training program and it has been exciting to finally get to work with genetic counseling students! On a personal note in the past year I've done some traveling to Italy and Ireland, and I recently got engaged!

## CLASS OF 2014

### Jordan Dix

I had three posters at NSGC this year! Two other program alums, Michelle Burch and Emily Walsh, were also authors on two of them. The posters were:

- Genetic counseling for carrier screening and prenatal diagnosis involving a Tay-Sachs disease variant of uncertain significance and possible pseudodeficiency allele in the East Asian population**  
Jordan D Dix, MS, CGC; Suzette M Huguenin, PhD, FACMGG; Charles J Macri, MD; Jill S Fonda Allen, MS, CGC
- Exploring Positive Diagnostic Results after Receiving "Aneuploidy Suspected" Screen Results via Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening**  
Jordan D. Dix, MS, CGC; Michelle Burch, MS, CGC; Amy C. Dexter, MS, CGC; Emily Walsh, MS, CGC; Christine Vaughan, MS, CGC; Chevonne D. Eversley, PhD, FACMG
- Pregnancy Outcome Information after Receiving an "Aneuploidy Suspected" Screen Result via Non-Invasive Prenatal Screening**  
Jordan D. Dix, MS, CGC; Michelle Burch, MS, CGC; Amy C. Dexter, MS, CGC; Emily Walsh, MS, CGC; Christine Vaughan, MS, CGC; Chevonne D. Eversley, PhD, FACMG



## CLASS OF 2014 (CONT.)

### Heather Rocha

I work at Geisinger as a Lead Cancer Genetic Counselor and a Clinical Research Counselor with MyCode. I am also working with a clinical population-based exome screening test through internal medicine. This year, I was an author on Manickam M, *et al.* (2018). Exome Sequencing-Based Screening for BRCA1/2 Expected Pathogenic Variants Among Adult Biobank Participants. I am working on a project to implement a genetic screening test of 59 genes in internal medicine clinics at Geisinger. One of my major roles is to network with physicians throughout our system to make genetics more accessible to non-genetic practitioners. We've developed the country's 4th Lynch syndrome management clinic where patients with Lynch syndrome meet with our expert physician team and have same-day endoscopy with results disclosed from all procedures and screenings same day. Last month, a patient was identified through MyCode to have a pathogenic MSH2 variant. She visited her PCP to discuss the result. Her PCP wasn't familiar with Lynch syndrome and suggested she follow up with another provider. The patient contacted our Clinical Genomics department for an appointment and we saw her the same week. She attended our monthly Lynch clinic just 2 weeks later, where we coordinated relevant screenings, and were able to identify and remove a 40mm polyp with high grade dysplasia. Cancer prevented.

## CLASS OF 2013

### Anna Villa

Anna was an author on the following poster that was presented at NSGC this year:

- **Adherence to NCCN Guidelines Within One Hospital System: Comparison Between Sites and Genetic Counselor Utilization**



## CLASS OF 2012

### Meagan Farmer

I accepted a position as the Genetic Counseling Business Manager for My Gene Counsel, a digital health company founded by genetic counselors. I also got engaged- wedding scheduled for December 2019.

### Courtney Kiss

I continue to work as a clinical genetic counselor in prenatal and general genetics at Kingston Health Sciences Centre. Travel highlights of the past year include a trip with G Adventures to Costa Rica, a trip back to NC to visit friends, and weekend camping trips at local Provincial Parks. After much anticipation, I am excited to welcome my new puppy Logan- an adorable (and mischievous) Welsh Springer Spaniel. His big (cat) brother Leonard is still adjusting...

Recent publications I've been involved in include:

- Baldassari et al. (2018). The landscape of epilepsy-related GATOR1 variants. *Genetics in Medicine* online publication August 10, 2018

### Julie Stella

I've been working as the senior medical science liaison at NxGen MDx for the past two years and am still living in Raleigh, NC. NxGen MDx is a private laboratory specializing in women's health options and mainly focusing on carrier screening. Expanding our MSL team this past year been a blast, including hiring UNCG alumni and friend Michael Osborne. We are both enjoying the education and teaching opportunities this job provides throughout the country, despite a few occasional crazy travel hiccups along the way (ask us for stories!). The life of an MSL is never boring!

Personally, this year has been full of exciting changes. I married my best friend, Mike Stella, in April of 2018 in OBX. I've included a picture from our wedding with UNCG alumni friends and former Duke colleagues Amanda Padro, Amy Mottola, and Courtney Yerxa. Mike and I bought a house in north Raleigh in July and are expecting our first baby (a boy) in January of 2019. Our Pomeranian, Pocket, is very excited to be a big brother!



## CLASS OF 2012 (CONT.)

### **Ryan Noss**

I continue to work at the Cleveland Clinic working in cancer genetics. I specialize in providing genetic services to the Cleveland Clinic's multidisciplinary breast cancer team as well as provide telegenetic services to three satellite Cleveland Clinic cancer centers. Recently, I have gotten involved in our hematologic cancer services; including recently submitting for a research grant as a co-investigator. This grant seeks to explore referral criteria for patients with potentially germline mutations identified on a somatic gene panel. Beyond clinical care, I am the main clinical supervisor for the Cleveland Clinic cancer genetics rotations for 1st and 2nd year students at Case Western Reserve University. Also with Case, I sit on their advisory board and give 1-2 lectures a year to their second year students. Additional educational roles for myself include being a faculty member for the Cleveland Clinic Surgical Breast Fellowship. I remain an active member of NSGC and I am a member of NSGC's Access and Service Delivery committee. 2018 publications and presentations include:

- Pederson, H, Gopalakrishnan, D, Noss, R, Yanda, C, Eng, C & Grobmyer, S. Impact of multigene panel testing on surgical decision making in breast cancer patients. (2018). J Am Coll Surg
- Pederson, H, Hussain, N, Noss, R, Yanda, C, O'Rourke, C, Eng, C, & Grobmyer, S. Impact of an embedded genetic counselor in breast cancer treatment. (2018). Breast Cancer Res Treat
- Greenberg, S, Noss, R & Cohen, S. Changes in Service Delivery Model Use Among Genetic Counselors from 2010 to 2017. National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Education Conference, Atlanta, GA. November 2018
- Hnatiuk, M, Noss, R, Mitchell, A & Matthews, A. The Current State of Genetic Counseling Assistants. National Society of Genetic Counselors Annual Education Conference, Atlanta, GA. November 2018

Lastly, I am proud to say I am the Case Western Reserve University's recipient of the 2018 Association of Genetic Counseling Program Directors' Clinical Supervisor Award.

### **Sara Wienke**

Since the birth of my son last October, I decided that a travel position was no longer working for my family and have started a home based position with Guardant Health as a Senior Genomic Specialist assisting providers and staff with report interpretation. Guardant Health is a company that has a clinical liquid biopsy test for patients with advanced cancer. I've now been there 3 months and can say that it was intense training (felt like I was back in graduate school! Lots of journal club...) but very interesting to learn a new application of genetic testing. With this career move, we were also able to take our son out of daycare and he is thriving with a part time sitter and part time family care.

## CLASS OF 2012 (CONT.)

### Sara Wienke (cont.)

Below is the poster that Sara presented at NSGC this year:

- **When Do Clinicians Cast a Wider Net? Utilization of the Largest Comprehensive Cancer Panel at One Commercial Laboratory**

## CLASS OF 2011

### Melanie Hardy

I'm still working as a telehealth genetic counselor and Assistant Director of GC services for JScreen at Emory University. We are working on multiple research projects involving interest in and development of population-level screening for BRCA mutations, and another on effectiveness of telehealth GC for high-risk patients identified through carrier screening (those with high personal or reproductive risk.) I also continue helping with the Down Syndrome Society of Greater Richmond (DSAGR). My classmates and I had a reunion this past spring and celebrated that three of our classmates were pregnant at the time (only two of those could make it to the reunion, but another announced her pregnancy just after this!)



Melanie was also a part of the following presentation at NSGC this year:

- **Learning to Lead: Becoming a Courageous Leader through Self-Assessment and Practical Application**  
Leah Williams, MS, CGC; Melanie Hardy, MS, MS, LCGC; Holly Taylor, MS, CGC; Leslie Bucheit, MS, CGC; Patricia Page, MS, LCGC; Nancy Palmer, MS, CGC

### Mallory (Schultz) Sdano

Our daughter Nora was born on August 3, 2018! We also moved to Wisconsin in September 2018.

## CLASS OF 2010



### Alexis Carere

2018 was a very busy year for me! This was my first year on the Board of Directors for CAGC, where I am currently President-Elect and slated to start as President in January 2019. In May 2018, I was also fortunate to welcome (together with my husband John and son George) a new member to the family - Nora Jane Elizabeth. In October we took our first big family trip to Holland to visit my husband's 40 aunts and uncles (and dozens of cousins). It was quite an adventure! Nora also attended her first scientific conference when she joined me for the CAGC meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland, where I presided over the Annual General Meeting for the first time. I am still working as a Clinical Genetics Analysis Specialist at the London Health Sciences Centre in London, Ontario, where my work is focused on variant interpretation for next-generation sequencing in both clinical testing and research projects.

### Kelly East

I celebrated my 10 year anniversary at working at HudsonAlpha and lead a team now four genetic counselors strong. Clinical, research, and educational activities continue to grow and expand in really exciting ways. Earlier this year I presented a platform presentation at the Orphan Drug World Congress and this fall I am looking forward to sharing our work at HudsonAlpha on stages at ASHG, NSGC, and the Global Genomic Medicine Collaborative (in Cape Town, South Africa). Personally, my oldest, Perry, started Kindergarten this year and little sister turned one in April. We just returned from a fun family fall break vacation to Paris, France.

Kelly had the following platform presentation at NSGC this year:

- **Leveraging Scalable Genetic Counseling Tactics to Meet the Needs of a Statewide Genomic Screening Initiative**

## CLASS OF 2009



No updates this year!  
(What? Really guys?!)

## CLASS OF 2008



### Rachel Mills

Below are the presentations/posters Rachel had at NSGC this year:

- **Referred a pharmacogenetics case, now what?**  
Rachel Mills, MS, CGC; Heather Zierhut, PhD, MS
- **Development and Initial Assessment of a Pharmacogenetics Education Module for Genetic Counseling Students**

## CLASS OF 2007

No updates this year!  
(That means extra updates next year!)





## CLASS OF 2006

### Christine McPhillips Odom

After 4 fulfilling and challenging years staying home with my children (now 6 and 8), I have returned to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN but I'm working remotely as a lab genetic counselor from beautiful Savannah, GA. I was their first genetic counselor in 2008 and now I make six with another position posted. I work for the clinical genomics lab in molecular pathology and I'm excited to be part of the effort to better understand the genetic changes causing pediatric cancer! Christine was also a panel member for an NSGC student outreach event titled "A Day in the Life of a Genetic Counselor"



### Gayle Patel

Gayle was a part of the following presentation at NSGC this year:

- **Collaborative and Efficient Service Delivery Models that Leverage Health Technology to Improve Access to Genetic Counseling** Stephanie A. Cohen, MS, LCGC; Brian Reys, MS, CGC; Megan Frone, MS, CGC; Courtney Cook, MS, LCGC; Hilary Kershberg, MS, LCGC; Gayle Patel, MS, CGC

### Alice Tanner

Alice was a part of the following presentation at NSGC this year:

- **Next Generation Prenatal Testing: Challenges, Utility and Application** Neeta L. Vora, MD; Kelly E. Ormond, MS, CGC, LGC; Alice Tanner, PhD, CGC; Connie Schultz, MS, CGC

## CLASS OF 2005



No updates this year!

(We have already started writing next year's updates!)

## CLASS OF 2004



No updates this year!

(We are too busy doing amazing things to write updates!)

## CLASS OF 2003



No updates this year!

(We love UNCG!)

## CLASS OF 2002

### Randi Culp Stewart

See "Faculty Updates"

### Kristy Lee

Kristy was a part of the following presentation at NSGC this year:

- **A Collaborative View of Genomic Variant Interpretation: Clinical Genetic Counselors, Laboratories and Patients**

Karen Wain, MS, LGC; Emily Palen, MS, LGC; Ana Morales, MS, CGC; Kami Wolfe Schneider, MS, CGC; Kristy Lee, MS, CGC; Jessica Mester, MS, LCGC; Tina Pesaran, MS, MA, CGC; Sara Barnett, CGC; Casie Genetti, MS, CGC; Amanda Buchanan, MS, CGC; Juliann Savatt, MS, LGC



## Faculty Updates

### Marcia Griffin

It is 2018 and we are now considered Empty Nesters! Both of our boys have moved out. My youngest son and his wife finally finished their little house and are enjoying living



Marcia's dog Angie is spreading holiday cheer!

there. We recently enjoyed a fabulous family vacation on a cruise to Cozumel. I really needed a vacation to recover from that so luckily NC got a great snow storm the day after we returned so I was able to be "snowed in" for several days.

Please continue to update the program with your current contact information for our alumni database. You can share with Lauren, Randi or email me at [mmgriffi@uncg.edu](mailto:mmgriffi@uncg.edu). Thank you!



### Randi Culp Stewart



Hi friends!

2018 has been a wonderful year of experiencing, learning and growing. Each patient, student, colleague, friend and situation, whether judged as "good" or "bad," offers a unique gift which is my gift to accept, discover and embrace for what it is, or not. I will always accept whatever gift that you bring for us to discover and learn together and be grateful for that.



This has also been a year of trust, trusting others as well as myself. I so admire each student on their path to bravely



face their fears and challenges head-on as they self-actualize and blossom into the genetic counselor and human being that they are meant to become and already are. It is a true honor to see them learn to trust each other, themselves and us in this process.

May you all have a wonderful holiday season and year ahead. May you identify and receive the true "gifts" that life has in mind for you, and then be the gift for those that surround you. Please remember how valuable and special you are to every single person you meet, how valuable you are to our program family. Be that which you are! - Randi



## Faculty Updates

### Sonja Higgins

Hello all! It was wonderful to see so many of you at ACMG in Charlotte earlier this year. It is exciting to see all the activities the alumni of the program are involved in. And the meeting has grown so much since the last time I was there! Our profession is growing and strong. I continue to work very part time as a contract employee for MetisGenetics while my kids are in pre-school. I am also keeping my eyes open for interesting projects to participate with as the kids get older and I have more time to get back to genetic counseling. I continue to provide student education to genetic counseling programs on various topics. My son Connor is almost 5 and will start kindergarten next year. Brielle is 3. As seen in this photo, he was a doctor this year for Halloween and she was Rainbow pony. We continue to live on the coast of SC until my step daughters are both out of high school (2 more years) and then maybe we will return to NC.



### Sally Sprague



We went to New Jersey in May to attend a graduation for Sara, Fred's granddaughter. She received a PhD in Physical Therapy, this was the first class who graduated from this 3 year program. We saw some family and friends in New Jersey for a few days. We did some reminiscing in NJ, as we drove past our old home and around the town we had lived in before we moved to NC. We then drove to Long Island a few days after to attend my nephew's wedding. Again we saw more family at the wedding, we had a great time. On our return we stopped in Hershey, PA to visit with Heidi, Fred's daughter, and her family.

When we arrived home Fred was having a problem with his left knee and went to the doctor and they found that they did not have an x-ray of his knees on record. The radiologist found an aneurysm behind his left knee and scheduled surgery for June 28. The surgery took 5+ hours and 64 staples in three places in his leg as they had to find a vein in the same leg to do a bypass. The recovery is still in progress, much longer than his heart bypass surgery in 2017 both in length of time of the surgery and the recovery.

We did head back to Long Island on August 28 as we had another wedding to attend on August 30th for my niece, Andrea and her husband Ron. When we left New Jersey we headed to Baltimore to have a Sunday lunch with Fred's family. Then we took a trip down to Beaufort, NC and spent a few days along the coast.

Naturally we are still feeding feral cats daily here in Kernersville as well as all of the cats [and 3 small dogs] we have at home.

## Faculty Updates

### Dr. Pamela Reitnauer



Sofia is now a 9th grader! Here is a photo from a spring break trip to Maui.

To our alumni and soon to be grads: Please continue to keep in touch with the program. We brag about our wonderful grads all of the time.



### Nancy Callanan

Hello UNCG Alumni, colleagues and friends. I am looking forward to reading your updates in this issue of the newsletter. Roger and I are enjoying doing the things that retired folks are supposed to do - becoming more engaged in our local community and church, exercising more regularly, traveling a bit, making some new friends and enjoying more time with old friends. We enjoy spending time with our son who still lives in Durham. I don't miss the stress of working full time, but I do miss the students. A lot.



I am still working part time for Genetic Metabolic Dietitians International (GMDI), the professional organization for metabolic dietitians. I feel right at home since these healthcare professionals have so much in common with genetic counselors. This past year I also enjoyed collaborating with my friends Bonnie LeRoy and Pat Veach on the updated edition of "Facilitating the Genetic Counseling Process". It was a ton of work, but very rewarding. We are currently working together on the second edition of the "Advanced Skills and Practices" book. So, in some small way, I hope my work will still be a positive influence for genetic counseling students.

I hope you will stay in touch – I really appreciate the occasional emails and phone visits. Best wishes to you and yours during this holiday season.

## Faculty Updates



**Dr. Heather Gert**

Dr. Heather Gert has taught Medical Ethics for approximately two decades. She is also a long term member of the Ethics Committee for Cone Health; participating in Ethics Consults, and teaching Continuing Education courses at a number of its hospitals. From time to time Dr. Gert teaches in the Graduate Program in Bioethics at Wake Forest University. Her primary interests in medical ethics center around informed consent, and her publications include: “Avoiding Surprises: A Model for Informing Patients”, and “How Emergencies are Different”. When not teaching medical ethics, Dr. Gert teaches a wide variety of Philosophy courses, including Crime & Punishment, and The Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

**Dr. Terry McConnell**



I said last year that retirement is not boring; that is still true. I still serve on the Ethics Committee at the Cone Health System and on the Admissions Committee in the Genetic Counseling Program. I am beginning to form the hypothesis that those are lifetime appointments.

I still “traverse” daily, but I do more walking than running; unfortunately, walking burns fewer calories than running. I use the library in the Philosophy Department regularly for reading and writing. I continue to publish essays related to gratitude and moral psychology, and I expect to put them together in a book.

Marilyn and I took a vacation to Oregon this summer. We went to scenic Crater Lake, saw much of the beautiful coast, drove along the Columbia River Gorge, and partook in some activities in Portland. We also visited Mt. St. Helens in southern Washington.

I have been reading a lot – philosophy, history, politics, and literature – embracing my inner dilettante. I still read some literature related to ethics and genetics. I recently worked through *A Crack in Creation*, a book that very helpfully explains recent developments in gene editing.

In short, retirement is all that it is cracked up to be!

## Personal Updates



Class of 2011 reunion! : Michael Osborne, Mel Hardy, Jessica Bogacik, Mallory Sdano, Emily Walsh and Dana Faux (above)



Kathleen "Katie" Elizabeth Lehan, Ruth Lehan's daughter, born June 8th, 2018 snuggling with puppy sister Rosie! (above)



Alexis Carere (Class of 2010), daughter Nora Jane Elizabeth, husband John, and son George. (left)



Katie Lehan modeling the Class of 2018's program gift! (left)



Adam Buchanan (Class of 2004), Amanda Noyes (Class of 2007), and Ledare Finley (Class of 2013) at ACMG (above)



Emily Walsh and Mallory Sdano celebrated expecting babies at the same time! (above)

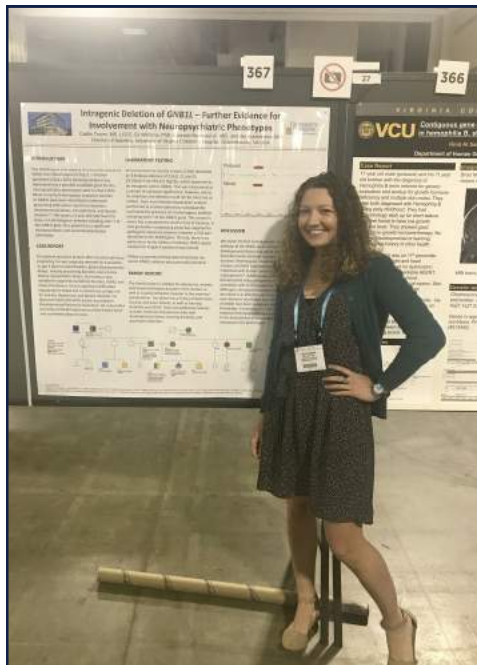
## Personal Updates



Amanda (Gordon) Noyes, Rebecca (Crimian) Spillman, and Kimberly (Guthrie) Harris, alumni of the Class of 2007, at ACMG (above)



Ruth Lehan (Class of 2017) and family (above)



Caitlin Troyer (Class of 2015) presenting a poster at ACMG! (above)



Katie Sanders Broyhill (Class of 2018) joins Mariah Gleason (Class of 2017) and Alexandra Henshaw (Class of 2015, not pictured) at Levine Cancer Institute! (above)



Courtney Kiss (Class of 2012) and new puppy Logan (above)



## Personal Updates



Second year students Sam Miller and Mercedes Zoeteman, first year students Laura Bulmer, Matt Skorski, and Christina Maziarz, and puppy Samoa celebrate Christina's birthday (right)



Lauren Loffredo, Kim Skellington, and Emily Anderson (Class of 2018) loving their jobs at Orlando Health (left)



Second year student Margaret Hill teaching kids about karyotyping at UNCG's Science Everywhere event (right)



Gretchen Rosso (Class of 2018), her husband, and their new puppy Remy! (above)

Nora Sdano, Mallory Sdano's newest addition, born August 3rd, 2018! (above)

## Personal Updates



Mary Hricik, Maggie Powell, Ruth Lehan, and Mariah Gleason (Class of 2017) met for brunch in March before the arrival of Ruth's daughter (above)



Kelly East (Class of 2010) and family during a trip to Paris (above)



First year students Haley Hill and Haley Fischman dress up for Halloween (above)



Melanie Hardy's (Class of 2011) puppies! (above)



First year students Matt Skorski and Dan Serber at the annual program holiday party (above)

# Personal Updates



Julie (Jesiolowski) Stella with UCG alumni friends and former Duke colleagues Amanda Padro, Amy Mottola, and Courtney Yerxa at Julie's wedding! (above)



Julie Stella, husband Mike (above), and puppy Pocket (below) are expecting a baby boy in January 2019!



First year and second year students attend a Sickle Cell Symposium at Charlotte Motor Speedway (left)



Fun at the program's annual holiday party!



## Personal Updates



Sara Wienke (Class of 2012), husband Christopher, and son Calvin (above)



Former Assistant Program Director Sonja Higgins, Kimberly Harris, and Amanda Noyes (Class of 2007) at ACMG (left)

Taylor Zuck, Sam Caldwell, Liz Francisco, Caitlin Troyer, and Lauren Baldwin at Alexandra Henshaw's wedding (Class of 2015)! (bottom left)

Class of 2015 at Lauren Baldwin's wedding! (below)





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