



During her summer internship, public health nutrition student Kristen Carney (pictured here with youngsters from Berkeley Youth Alternatives) used the community-based organization's extensive garden for impromptu experiential teaching about nutrition.

*The catalyst for close to 100 collaborations each year is the School of Public Health's Center for Public Health Practice, which plays an important role in fulfilling the school's commitment to partnering in the community. "We are an arm of the school designed specifically to provide links between teaching and research and the practice of public health in the community," says the center's executive director, Jeff Oxendine, M.B.A., M.P.H. '80.*

*Explains Oxendine, "Students work with a full range of community partners that reflect different sectors of public health and health care, as well as all concentrations across the field of public health." Most sponsors are in the Bay Area*

*or California, but some are in other U.S. regions or other countries. Recent international settings have included Nicaragua, India, China, and Cuba.*

*Alumni often serve as internship preceptors and, in many cases, generously provide for financial sponsorship of the intern's work, says Oxendine, crediting internship sponsors with the vitality of the program. Students consistently report that the high point of their master's level education is this challenging opportunity to do meaningful work, to apply past experience and what they've learned in the classroom to the mission of these organizations.*



# INTERNS EFFECT CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY

By Johanna Van Hise Heart



**Kristen  
Carney  
Berkeley  
Youth  
Alternatives**

At the end of a long day, a single mother arrives at Berkeley Youth Alternatives (BYA), tired, hungry, and feeling guilty because she hasn't seen her children since dropping them at school that morning. Often such evening pick ups end at the local fast food restaurant two blocks away. Tonight, however, the family's indulgence will take a healthier turn. While the children stay half an hour longer in childcare, the mother will take a BYA-sponsored cooking class. Then she and her children will enjoy the quick, healthy, inexpensive meal she prepared, incorporating the principles of nutrition the children have been learning in BYA's after-school program.

This idea of helping parents incorporate healthy eating into their family lives by offering cooking classes was the inspiration of public health nutrition

student Kristen Carney, R.D., and is central to a grant she wrote during her internship at BYA this past summer. The recent news that the grant will be funded is the ideal culmination of this successful collaboration.

Capacity building is a popular concept at Berkeley Youth Alternatives, where staff provide a secure and nurturing environment that promotes the innate potential of children, youth, and families. BYA offers an after-school program, summer day camp, counseling center for families in crisis, teen center, youth employment in their gardens and offices, and sports programs.

The School of Public Health's role in supporting this capacity building is longstanding. "In 1998 an M.P.H. intern named Jennifer Shaw really helped us think about how we could create curricula surrounding nutrition education, combining our garden with our physical activity designs," explains BYA's development and policy director Kevin Williams, J.D., M.P.H., who is also a lecturer at

the School of Public Health and a field supervisor for the Center for Public Health Practice.

"What we came up with is a program called Team Nutrition, where we train teenagers in nutrition education and health promotion. They, in turn, conduct workshops for the younger kids—on topics including the food pyramid, carbohydrates, fast food and soda beverages," says Williams. A percentage of Carney's time was spent working with these teen peer educators. Parental influence, however, was undermining the effectiveness of BYA's nutrition intervention.

Drawing upon both her experience as a practicing registered dietician and M.P.H. coursework in oral history, Carney suggested a new approach to BYA's social marketing efforts. She recognized that people love to talk about their food traditions. Therefore she proposed involving parents in discussions about these traditions and then offering them cooking classes in BYA's new kitchen

that would, for example, revise traditional recipes to use healthier ingredients.



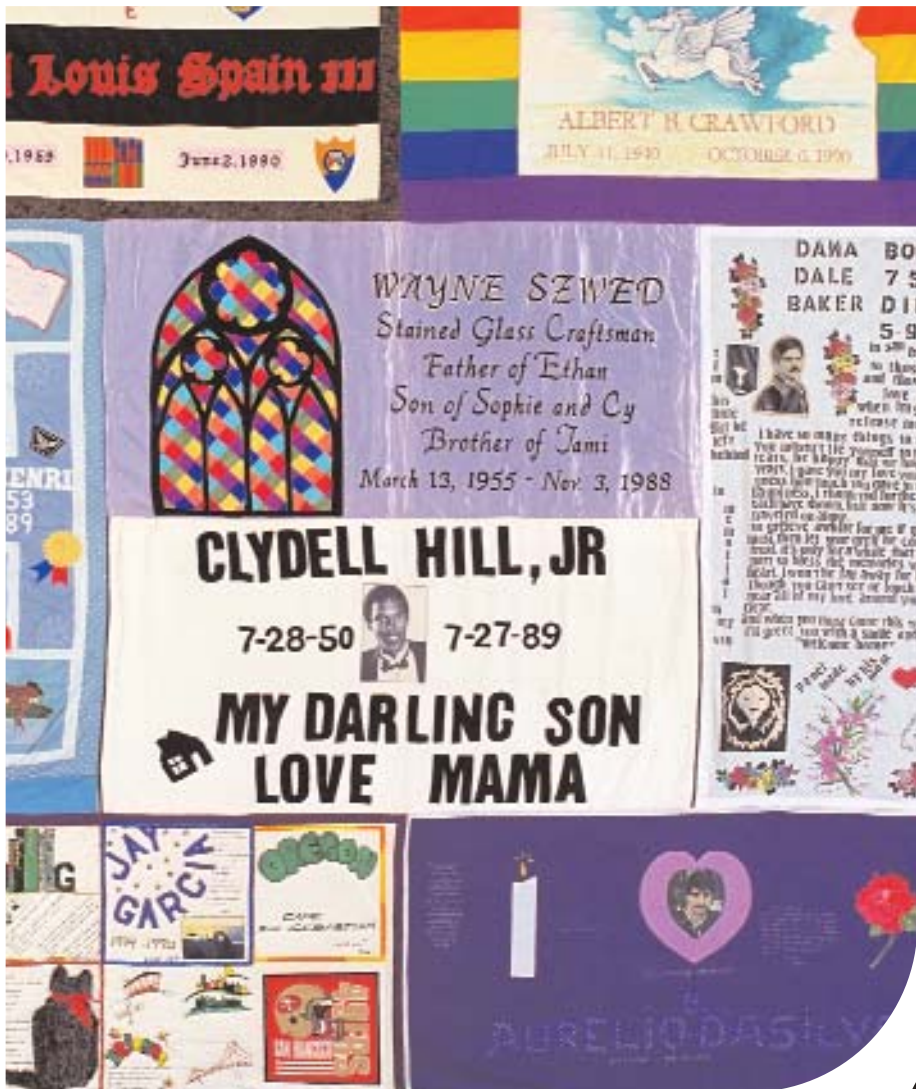
**Arsen Aslanyan**  
AIDS Project  
East Bay

Before coming to Berkeley as a Muskie Fellow to study health policy and management, Arsen Aslanyan

worked for Doctors Without Borders in his native Armenia, educating people about STDs and HIV/AIDS. In his largely homogenous homeland, high-risk behaviors are much less apparent than they are in the United States. Aslanyan readily admits that his summer internship at AIDS Project East Bay (APEB) greatly expanded his world view.

APEB is a community-based organization in Oakland providing high-risk populations in Alameda County with AIDS prevention outreach, basic medical care and treatment, and client services such as food, housing, transportation, and financial assistance, as well as referrals to other organizations that provide mental health, legal, and other services. The majority of APEB's clients are African Americans; many of them are men who have sex with men. Aslanyan notes that clients' HIV- and AIDS-related concerns are often compounded by homelessness and substance abuse problems.

What Aslanyan makes clear, however, is that the internship was not only culturally but also professionally enriching. "I have a wide range of interests," he offers. "Because I am studying health policy and management, I wanted to get experience managing financial and human resources and working with data analyses that can result in HIV/AIDS prevention policy recommendations."



A portion of the AIDS Memorial Quilt

Aslanyan sifted through thousands of paper intake files in order to create a comprehensive client database. After the gargantuan effort of designing the system and entering the data, the job of analyzing the demographics of those who use APEB's services was relatively simple, supremely satisfying, and highly valued by APEB's management team, which will use the results to assess their allotment of resources and to bolster future funding proposals.



**Kelly Abbett**  
Miller, Owen  
& Trost

Kelly Abbett, a third-year student in the joint masters program with the Goldman School of Public Policy, arranged for an internship in Sacramento with the government relations branch of a law firm specializing in health policy advocacy.

Abbett worked directly with Goldman alumna Maureen O'Haren during what turned out to be a historically chaotic budget season. She attended all the state budget hearings, following specific issues for the firm's clients—largely nonprofit organizations, HMOs, and other interested entities that are not specifically health focused. Abbett produced semi-weekly reports of issues not being covered in the newspapers, and after becoming an accredited lobbyist, found herself speaking before the committee.

Abbett felt privileged to witness the budget process and was impressed by the collaborative effort of stakeholders. Her work also gave her a sense for the interconnectedness of seemingly unrelated issues—low income housing, for example, as a public health issue. “The plan of a housing development has a lot to do with how much exercise people get, whether the air they breathe is smoggy, whether it is a stressful place to live,” she says, “and, after paying rent, whether they have enough money left over for health insurance.”



The California State Capitol, Sacramento

## Research Partnerships Bridge Cultures to Enhance Community Health

This fall, **Robert Spear, Ph.D.**, professor of environmental health science, will travel to China to be honored by the provincial government of Sichuan with its inaugural Jin Ding Award.

The award will acknowledge Spear's decade-long commitment to understanding and controlling the incidence of schistosomiasis, a debilitating water-borne disease. According to the World Health Organization, schistosomiasis affects 200 million people worldwide and poses a threat to 600 million more in 76 countries.



Robert Spear (left) visits Ertan Dam in Sichuan Province, China, with Gong Peng of Berkeley's College of Natural Resources (right) and a local official.

Spear's collaboration with the Sichuan Institute for Parasitic Disease involves the collection of data using new technologies, such as global positioning systems for mapping and geographic information systems for managing epidemiological and ecological data in an integrated data model. The work is of increasing relevance in China because of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, which will create new waterway links between previously isolated areas of schistosomiasis infection.



Korean-language information brochures encourage women to be screened for breast and cervical cancer.

In another research collaboration, the CDC-funded “Health is Strength” Korean Women's Health Project connects the school's Center for Family and Community Health with Asian Health Services, a Bay Area nonprofit. The project's goal is to investigate the ability of culturally sensitive, community-empowering interventions to improve breast and cervical cancer screening practices among Korean women in Alameda County.

Center director **Joel Moskowitz, Ph.D.**, along with his colleagues on campus and at Asian Health Services, has collaborated closely with the Korean community, meeting regularly with an advisory board since 1993 to explore culturally appropriate ways of increasing effectiveness. With their input, the project team has developed bilingual educational materials and presentations on issues of women's health. Team members have worked hard to establish relationships with Korean churches, where volunteer health counselors are enlisted to host informational gatherings and offer friendly prompting to fellow congregants. They have incorporated some use of Korean print media and are involved in an exciting new website project with the Korean Community Center of the East Bay, creating content for the health pages of their “virtual village.” 🌐

## Recognizing and Training Exemplary Senior Leaders

“Seniors have been called our only expanding natural resource, yet society continues to cast them as burdens rather than the tremendous assets that they are,” says Meredith Minkler, Dr.P.H., professor of health and social behavior and founding director of the school’s Center on Aging.

Minkler serves as principal investigator for California Senior Leaders and Healthy Aging, an ongoing two-year project that seeks to honor 35 seniors who exemplify healthy aging through their sustained outstanding volunteer contributions to their communities. “Seniors are often the engines that drive community change,” says Minkler, “yet they are rarely recognized as such.”

The seniors come from throughout California and range in age from 60 to 102. Some work with youth to prevent violence, educate against racism, and enhance college readiness; others work to combat racial and ethnic health disparities, feed the homeless, foster healthy aging, and promote community building.

The project, funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation, began last fall with an awards event and two-day retreat. Awardees were provided training in media advocacy, fundraising, influencing policy, and healthy aging, and took part in networking workshops.

Since the awards ceremony, the seniors have been receiving encouragement and technical support for their work from six graduate students, who check in regularly to receive updates, offer assistance, and find out if the training has been beneficial.

A generally self-sufficient group, the seniors will occasionally request help in writing a grant proposal or procuring letters of support. “Often student participants learn as much as the seniors,” says doctoral student and project coordinator Lisa Romero, applauding the intergenerational, service-learning component of the project. “After all, they are learning from the masters.” 🍷



One of 120,000 Japanese Americans interned during World War II, Chizu Iiyama speaks to groups about the impacts of prejudice and racism.



96-year-old Maria Rifo, former secretary to labor organizer César Chávez, co-founded the national nonprofit organization Alternatives to Violence.

Preceptor Maureen O’Haren was grateful for the help. “Kelly is the kind of gal that can walk into a room, listen, and not be intimidated,” she says, noting that Abbett’s past work for the Health and Human Services Agency in Sacramento made her especially self-sufficient. “She didn’t need hand-holding. She could just do it.” Abbett, in turn, is grateful for introductions to Sacramento’s inner circle and feels much more confident about being able to take part in this echelon of state policy and politics.



**Amanda Schmutzler**  
Genentech

Amanda Schmutzler’s public health internship is atypical in several ways. Not only has it lasted twice as long as most internships, but it is also set in the for-profit atmosphere of one of the nation’s leading biotech firms. Yet it is quite clear to Schmutzler that her work is truly about patient access to quality health care.

Schmutzler’s main project at Genentech in South San Francisco has been to develop a set of standard operating procedures for an internal audience—those who market Genentech’s products to managed care providers. “We are interested in specific knowledge of

*Continued on page 8*



Genentech’s corporate headquarters

## Collaborating for a Culturally Competent Future

Demographic trends reflect a U.S. population that is becoming simultaneously older and more culturally diverse with growing disparities in health status and outcomes. Who will step forward to meet the increased demand for culturally competent care? The School of Public Health is taking steps to ensure that well-trained health care professionals from diverse backgrounds will be ready to assume leadership. Working with community-based programs, the school is coordinating a comprehensive pipeline—a linked, sequential pathway of initiatives through which young people from underrepresented communities are exposed to the possibilities of working in public health, from elementary school through graduate school.

“Unfortunately, for many young people, public health career opportunities are a well-kept secret,” says **Jeff Oxendine, M.B.A., M.P.H. ’80**, director of the school’s Center for Public Health Practice. “Students are not aware of them in the same way that they know about doctors and nurses. We’re working to get the word out about public health careers.”

The school collaborates with individual programs that specialize in working with students at the intermediate, high school, and undergraduate levels, leveraging the combined efforts of all programs to help students progress towards their goals. Fundraising efforts are under way to extend the pipeline to the elementary school level. The collaborative approach makes it possible to track students effectively from one level to the next and make successful matches between students and programs.

At one end of the pipeline, the **Health Professions Partnership Initiative** (HPPI), led by the school’s Center for Community Wellness, works with students in local middle and high schools to help them explore health careers, build academic skills, expand their horizons, and increase their self-esteem. The program helps them to view college as an attainable goal. This past summer, for example, Oakland middle school students participated in HPPI’s first Summer Academic and Enrichment Program. They spent mornings on the Berkeley campus, studying math, English, and art; in the afternoons, they developed science projects or participated in internships at Highland Hospital, where they donned lab coats and clipboards to job-shadow health professionals.

Another pipeline collaborator, the **FACES for the Future** program at Children’s Hospital & Research Center of Oakland, is a three-year internship program that introduces underrepresented high school youth to careers in the health sciences. The students participate in hands-on internships and receive mentoring and support



Students participating in the Health Professions Partnership Initiative’s Summer Academic and Enrichment Program created a mural entitled “What is Health?” The mural depicts five aspects of health: fitness, nutrition, medical care, family, and friendship.

services, including tutoring, SAT and college preparation workshops, case management services, and a strong psychosocial program. The program started in 2000 with 30 students; out of that inaugural class, 26 graduated from the program, and 13 were accepted to University of California campuses. All of the graduates plan to pursue careers in health care. **Barbara Staggers, M.D., M.P.H. ’80**, is co-founder and co-director of the program.

Farther along the pipeline, **Health Career Connection** (HCC) engages undergraduate college students, bringing them together with the information, experiences, and support they need to discover and make well-informed choices about health care and public health career options. HCC matches students to internships, mentors, professional networks, and web-accessible information on health care management careers and educational options. HCC was founded by Oxendine and three other School of Public Health alumni.

“What’s powerful and unique about the pipeline strategy are the linkages developed between programs and students at all levels and the coordination of outreach and support efforts,” says Oxendine, noting that students who are farther along in reaching their career goals offer support to those who are at earlier stages. For example, 11 Berkeley M.P.H. students are currently serving as mentors for FACES students.

“The pipeline program is win-win for all participants,” says Oxendine. “Students get to discover and realize goals, organizations and individuals get to help and gain access to diverse talent, and the school contributes to future students and professionals who can address future public health challenges.”

— *Michael S. Broder*



what's going on in health care today," explains Schmutzler's preceptor Becky Foster, M.P.H. '98. "My group is charged with understanding these trends."

Foster, who was an intern at Genentech herself six years earlier, specifically looks for students from Berkeley's Health Policy and Management program. "The program is educating students on larger forces in the health care marketplace that put in place barriers for access in terms of new, expensive technologies," she says. Arriving armed with knowledge of current trends and issues makes interns from this program quite valuable.

Schmutzler suspects she will return to the private sector after graduation. Before graduate school, she had been riding an exhilarating high-tech industry wave, but she felt somehow dissatisfied. Product launches seemed constant; product life cycles were a matter of months rather than years. Recently, however, Schmutzler had an experience that confirmed she'd made a good career move. She met a breast cancer survivor who was thankful that Genentech's research and products had prolonged her life. "That was good for me to hear," Schmutzler

remembers. "It's what drives you at the end of the day."



### Jessica Jeffrey Violence Prevention in Los Angeles

This summer, Jessica Jeffrey was engaged in two internships under the watchful eye of

Billie Weiss, an expert on injury and violence prevention who was honored by the school as a Public Health Hero in 2001. An epidemiologist by training, Weiss directs the Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP) for Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and founded the Violence Prevention Coalition (VPC), an umbrella organization supporting groups that seek to reduce violence and its impact on the residents of Los Angeles. Jeffrey interned for both organizations.

In the weeks before she began her internships, Jeffrey had been reading about the relationship between childhood asthma and violence. Serendipitously, she came across data at IVPP that allowed her to compare data for Greater Los Angeles.

Using hospital discharge summaries indicating hospitalization rates for asthma among children and police reports indicating prevalence of violent crime, she was able to establish an association. She will present her findings at the American Public Health Association meeting this fall and perhaps transform her work into her master's thesis.

Her other internship, working with the Violence Prevention Coalition, coincided with a growing realization at the organization that there was a need for better communication among its coalition members. Jeffrey embraced the idea and took it upon herself to fully research the editorial and production processes and costs associated with producing a four-color magazine.

"Working with both organizations has opened my eyes to the importance of incorporating business skills into my education and has helped to shape my research interests," says Jeffrey who is now looking at joint M.D./M.B.A. programs. She hastens to add her thanks for the generosity of the Max Factor Family Foundation, which funded her VPC internship. 📍