

Welcome to the Class of **2016**

We are thrilled to welcome the UMGCP Class of 2016 to our community and look forward to working with them over the next 2 years.

Shenin Dettwyler earned her B.S. in Biochemistry from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and gained genetic counseling experience by shadowing prenatal, pediatric, and cancer genetic counselors in Pittsburgh. After earning her undergraduate degree, she worked as a research assistant at the University of Pittsburgh Departments of Neurobiology and Developmental Biology. Shenin's advocacy experience includes serving as a volunteer for a rape crisis center, grief support groups, and participating in BuddyUp Tennis, an adaptive program for individuals with Down syndrome.

Carol Ko earned her B.S. in Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics from the University of California, Los Angeles. She was a founding member and Speakers Committee Chair of the UCLA Genetic Counseling Student Interest Group. After graduating, she worked as a genetic counseling intern and study coordinator at St. Joseph Cancer Center in collaboration with City of Hope National Medical Center. Carol's advocacy experience includes serving as an advisor to at-risk high school students in Los Angeles County and as a site coordinator for a public health advocacy group.

Mary Oliver earned her B.A. in Biology from Kalamazoo College. As an undergraduate, Mary served as a teaching assistant, resident assistant, and student researcher at the Van Andel Institute, studying breast cancer. Since graduating, she worked as a research technician at the MPI Research Institute. Mary's advocacy experience includes serving as a crisis hotline volunteer for Gryphon Place, answering several hotlines for Southwest Michigan.

Lynn Pais earned her B.S. in Biotechnology from St. Aloysius College and her M.S. in Biomedical Genetics from the Vellore Institute of Technology in India. Her master's thesis focused on the

cytogenetics and genetic counseling of individuals with disorders of sex development. Prior to her graduate work at UM, Lynn worked in a molecular biology laboratory at St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences as a junior research fellow. Lynn's advocacy experience includes volunteering at Unit of Hope, a clinic for children with disabilities, and at a fertility clinic.

Parker Read earned his B.S. in Genetics from Texas A&M University. As an undergraduate, Parker worked as a student researcher in the Texas A&M Department of Biochemistry, studying renewable biofuels. Since graduation, Parker worked as a genetic counseling assistant at the UT Southwestern Simmons Cancer Center. As part of his work at UT Southwestern, he aided in the organization of patient awareness events for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer.

Linford Williams earned his B.S. in Cell and Molecular Biology from the University of Michigan. As an undergraduate, he participated in the LSA Honors Program and served as a student research assistant at the Wayne State University Medical School. He gained genetic counseling experience by shadowing genetic counselors at the University of Michigan Cancer Center and at Sutter Medical Center in Sacramento, CA. His advocacy experience includes serving as a crisis hotline volunteer for runaway and homeless youth and their families.



Parker Read, Lynn Pais, Shenin Dettwyler, Mary Oliver, Carol Ko, Linford Williams.

Congratulations to our 2014 Graduates!

Julie Frank, MS
Genetic Counselor
University of Maryland: Baltimore, MD

Lauren Hipp, MS
Genetic Counselor
University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, MI

Christine Hong, MS
Research Coordinator
University of Southern California: Los Angeles, CA

Deanna Julian, MS
Genetic Counselor
Baylor College of Medicine: Houston, TX

Emily Moe, MS
Genetic Counselor
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin: Milwaukee, WI

Dana Schlegel, MS, MPH
Genetic Counselor
University of Michigan Kellogg Eye Center: Ann Arbor, MI

Caroline Weipert, MS
Genetic Counselor
Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard: Boston, MA



Back Row: Caroline Weipert, Emily Moe, Lauren Hipp.
Front Row: Christine Hong, Deanna Julian, Julie Frank, Dana Schlegel

Congratulations to Meg Hefner: 2014 Diane Baker Alumni Award Recipient

The tradition of excellence that distinguishes our genetic counseling program alumni owes a great deal to our founder and first Program Director, Diane Baker, MS, CGC. The annual Diane Baker Alumni Lecture honors Diane's vision and commitment to the profession.

We are excited to announce that Meg Hefner (Class of 1980) is the recipient of the 5th Annual Diane Baker Alumni Award. Meg is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Division of Medical Genetics at the Saint Louis University School of Medicine. She is an internationally recognized expert in CHARGE syndrome and has dedicated most of her professional life to helping patients and families affected by this diagnosis.



Meg has demonstrated excellence in activism as the founder of the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation. She also co-authored CHARGE Syndrome, a book focused on the description of the sensory, physical, and behavioral findings of the condition, as well as numerous peer-reviewed manuscripts, and family-oriented educational materials. Clinically, Meg founded the first US CHARGE Syndrome clinic at the Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center in St. Louis, where she continues to provide education and support to patients and their families. Meg has also developed an international CHARGE Syndrome Database and Registry that promises to be an invaluable resource for researchers' contributions to our understanding of this condition.

Meg will be giving her lecture in the Department of Human Genetics on November 18, 2014 from 3-4 pm in 3813 & 3817 MedSci II.

Previous awardees include Barbara Biesecker, Jill Stopfer, Amy Sturm, and Stephanie Cohen. Nominations for the 2015 recipient will be requested in the spring of 2015.

Kudos to Our Award Winning Student Researchers!

Our research program is driven by the interests of the individual student and takes advantage of the wide variety of genetics initiatives on the University of Michigan campus and within the state of Michigan. Student research is well-funded by grants from University, state, and national resources. This fall, we bring your attention to awards received by two members of the UMGCP Class of 2015, Katlyn Partynski and Samantha Greenberg.

Katlyn Partynski is the 2014 recipient of the Michigan Association of Genetic Counselors Student Research Award *and* a Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship (JEMF) Student Research Award. The JEMF award is granted by the National Society of Genetic Counselors to improve the practice of genetic counseling by providing support for scholarly investigation. Kate's research focuses on the resilience of fathers who are parenting children with fragile X syndrome and the impact on family dynamics and quality of life. Kate will be conducting a survey on paternal perspectives in partnership with members of the National Fragile X Foundation, the Fragile X Association of Michigan, and the Fragile X Clinical Research Consortium. Kate's thesis will provide novel insight regarding the experiences and needs of this rarely studied population of fathers. Her research committee is composed of faculty from U-M's pediatric genetics clinic, the department of psychology, and the department of human genetics.



Samantha Greenberg is the 2014 recipient of the James V. Neel Fellowship. This fellowship is intended to support the development of genetic counseling clinical research scholars. Samantha's thesis work, "Community Based Cancer Genetics: Evaluating the Planned Parenthood System," grew from her well established interest in ensuring access to genetic services, with special attention to underserved populations. Samantha's work will yield important insight about the successes and limitations of a screening and intervention model developed by Planned Parenthood to increase the identification of women at increased risk for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer syndrome. Samantha has formed important alliances with Planned Parenthood and the Michigan Department of Community Health. Sam is pursuing dual degrees in genetic counseling and public health, and the focus of her thesis is at the intersection of these two disciplines.



The UM Genetic Counseling Program at the 2014 NSGC Annual Education Conference

This September, UMGCP students, faculty, and alumni joined thousands of genetic counselors from around the country in New Orleans for the NSGC Annual Education Conference (AEC). Our program was well represented throughout the conference. Here are some highlights!

Several of our alumni and faculty provided plenary presentations intended for attendance by all conference attendees. **Kari Branham** (Class of 2002 and Current UM Faculty), a nationally recognized expert in inherited retinal disease, kicked off the conference with a lecture in the Janus Series, "Eye Can See Clearer Now: Genetic Testing and Genetic Counseling for Retinitis Pigmentosa." **Sarah Scollon** (Class of 2006) participated in a plenary panel presentation, "Informed Consent for Genomic Sequencing: Experience and Recommendations for Clinical and Research Settings." The plenary session was one of three presentations Sarah provided at this year's AEC! **Wendy Uhlmann** (Class of 1987 and Current UM Faculty) and **Barbara Biesecker** (Class of 1981) were entertaining, thought-provoking, and wonderful as actors in a skit, "Bringing ELSI Issues to Life: The Drama of DNA." Barb also participated in the plenary session, "Shared Decision Making in Genetic Counseling."

Six members of the UMGCP Class of 2013 presented the results of their research theses in platform or poster presentations: **Julie Frank**, **Christine Hong**, **Lauren Hipp**, **Emily Moe**, **Dana Schlegel**, and **Caroline Weipert**. At least a dozen other UMGCP Faculty and Alumni shared their expertise with attendees, through preconference symposia (**Jessica Everett** -Current UM Faculty -"Tumor Genomic Testing: Technology, Clinical Implications and the Role of the Genetic Counselor") and poster and platform presentations.

Finally, we are also tremendously proud of our NSGC awardees from this year's AEC. **Monica Marvin** (Class of 1994 and Current UM Faculty) received the 2014 NSGC Strategic Leader Award, **Barb Biesecker** (Class of 1981) received the 2014 Natalie Weissberger Paul Leadership Award, and current student **Katlyn Partynski** (Class of 2015) received a Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship Student Research Award.

We celebrated the UMGCP accomplishments at a reception at the Rusty Nail. It was a great time to reconnect with old friends and to make new ones too! Go Blue!