

# Department of Mental Health Alumni and Friends Newsletter

June 2016

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## Letter from the Chair:

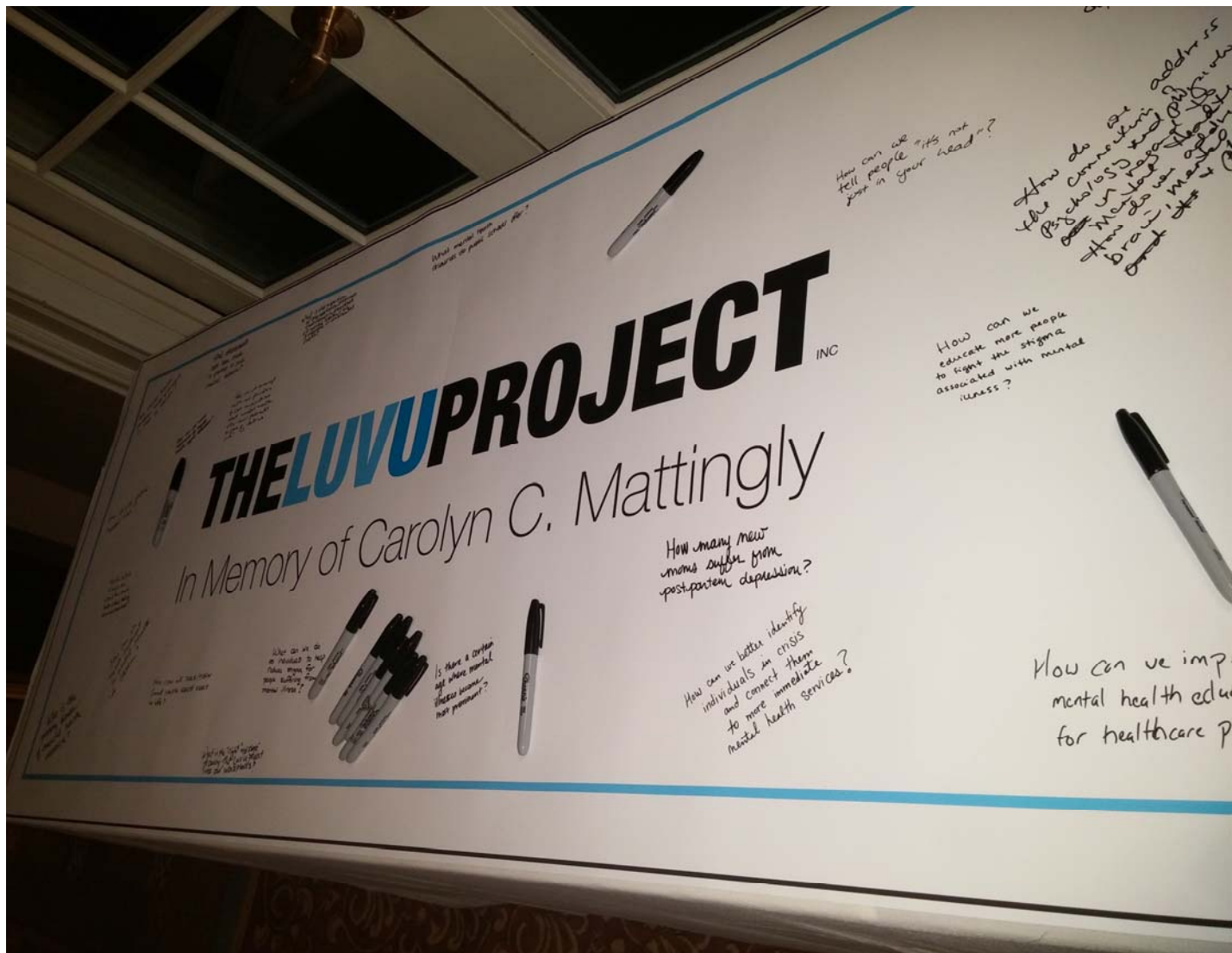
This has been an amazing Centennial year here at the Bloomberg School, thanks of course to our amazing faculty, staff, students, friends, and alumni! We started the year with a Centennial celebration of mental health accomplishments and impact on public health that lasted the entire month of October. This included a stimulating symposium including current and past students and faculty and a keynote from Paul Gionfriddo, the President of Mental Health America, followed by a Centennial celebration dinner. The school had a goal of 100 dinners to celebrate 100 years, and JHSPH alumni and friends have now hosted over 130 Centennial dinners across the world, including 6 continents! We also awarded two non-departmental JHSPH student essay contest winners for their essays describing how their public health work can be integrated with public mental health. We hope to sponsor this contest for many years to come as a great way to spread awareness across the trainees of the school about the relevance of mental health in all aspects of public health.

Our students and faculty have yet-again shown their talents and dedication through multiple publications and awards, both within Hopkins and across their fields. As examples, Phil Leaf received the Thurgood Marshall Legacy Award from the Baltimore City branch of the NAACP and Judy Bass received another Advising, Mentoring, and Teaching Recognition Award (AMTRA). Also, our own Liz Stuart was named the new Associate Dean for Education at the Bloomberg School, beginning July 1. Please check out additional faculty and student accolades within this newsletter!

After completing our core curriculum update last year, we have convened a permanent Curriculum Committee to evaluate all our course offerings, not just the required ones, and examine how other non-classroom experiences can maximize the training of our students. In this regard, we are beginning a new doctoral seminar for second year and beyond PhD students that will meet weekly throughout the academic year. Students will collaborate with faculty to generate a seminal reading list for discussion as well as develop sessions on skills and leadership. We also completed our comprehensive exam reorganization and delivered the new format to this year's cohort. Both students and faculty appear to like the change, which emphasizes concept integration and composition. Our continuation of Specific Aims boot camps and Mock Study Sections to help with grant writing has paid off well for many faculty in the department, as you will see in the list of new grants in this newsletter.

Each year that I write this letter, I am filled with pride for the work of our faculty, staff and students and feel even greater gratitude that I get to be a part of such an important department and to see how we are making an impact in public mental health. Thank you to each of our alumni, affiliates, and friends reading this for your partnership in this mission!

- Dani Fallin



This year the Department partnered with the Luv U Project ([theluvuproject.org](http://theluvuproject.org)) to address prevention and treatment of mental health issues. Together, we will host Mental Health in the Workplace: A Public Health Summit on October 20, 2016. Our department has a great history of building an evidence base for prevention in early life and also in aging. We hope this summit will bring stakeholders together across academia, industry, and government to develop a strategy for mental health prevention in the middle of life, using the workplace as a common environment and implementation opportunity. The picture above is from the Luv U Project kick-off event last November where they asked attendees to write their burning mental health questions on a poster for all to read. The comments were deeply inspiring reminders of the importance of our work as a department and the work that Luv U is now engaged in.

## Research and Education

### RESEARCH

In fiscal year 2015, the faculty applied for 108 grants (including competing and non-competing applications). Our success rate was 32%, with 34 grants awarded at a total amount of \$12,446,993. This is better than double the current average NIH success rate, which is only funding approximately 10% of applications. This speaks to the quality and tenacity of our faculty! These submissions include only grants in which our faculty were Principal Investigators—the faculty supported other investigators throughout the school and university and other institutions as well. FY 15 newly funded awards include:

- ◆ Evaluation of Gender Based Violence Program in South Kivu/[Judy Bass](#)
- ◆ KKI Social Work Clinic Agreement/[Lisa Townsend](#)
- ◆ MD-AWARE Maryland Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education/[Katrina Debnam](#)
- ◆ Making better use of randomized trials: assessing applicability & transporting causal effects/[Elizabeth Stuart](#)
- ◆ Improving Part C services and outcomes for under-resourced children with ASD/[Elizabeth Stuart](#)
- ◆ Training DSAMH Staff in Public Mental Health FY15/[Dani Fallin](#)
- ◆ Examining Bias in Judicial Outcomes for Youth who have Sexually Offended Examining Bias in Judicial Outcomes for Youth who have Sexually Offended/[Ryan Shields](#)
- ◆ Alcohol policies to prevent and reduce youth violence exposure/[Carolyn Furr-Holden](#)
- ◆ Genes, Environment and Drug Use in Three Baltimore Cohorts/[Brion Maher](#)
- ◆ Evaluation of the START Crisis Prevention and Intervention Program/[Luther Kalb](#)
- ◆ Randomized evidence of psychosocial interventions in children exposed to traumatic events in low and middle income countries/[Wietse Tol](#)
- ◆ Enhancing the Identification of Victims of Child Pornography Production and Distribution/[Elizabeth Letourneau](#)
- ◆ Poor Sleep Altered Circadian Rhythms and Alzheimer's Disease/[Adam Spira](#)
- ◆ Association of Sleep Disordered Breathing with Alzheimer's Disease Pathology/[Adam Spira](#)
- ◆ Improving Part C services and outcomes for under-resourced children with ASD/[Elizabeth Stuart](#)
- ◆ Preventing violence against women and girls in Zambia A two pronged approach/[Laura Murray](#)
- ◆ Folic Acid Prevention Pathways for ASD in High Risk Families/[Dani Fallin](#)
- ◆ Concluding Follow-up of Families Enrolled in the EARLI Cohort/[Dani Fallin](#)
- ◆ Testing the Efficacy of Double Check: A Cultural Proficiency Professional Development Model in Middle Schools/[Katrina Debnam](#)
- ◆ Evaluating Maryland State Policies to Improve School Climate/[Elise Pas](#)
- ◆ NNDC Consultation/[Peter Zandi](#)

### EDUCATION

During this 2015-2016 academic year faculty taught more than 41 formal courses with a total enrollment of 888 students. Faculty advised 39 doctoral students, 18 postdoctoral fellows and 36 master's students. Our faculty members sat on 46 school-wide preliminary oral examinations and 58 final dissertation defense examinations for students in this department and eight other departments in the school (excluding only the laboratory departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Molecular Microbiology and Immunology).

Applications for our doctoral program remain steady (70), and we are successfully recruiting some of the nation's best. As of now, we are expecting to be joined this fall by eight new doctoral students, six new postdoctoral fellows, and approximately 30 new master's students.

# Congratulations to our *Doctoral Success*

## *Degree Recipients: Doctors of Philosophy*

### **Michelle Colder Carras**

Advisor: Tamar Mendelson, PhD

*Video Game Play, Social Interactions and Friendship Quality in Adolescents: A Latent Class Analysis*

### **Emily Edmunds Haroz**

Advisor: Judith Bass, PhD

*Depression Across Contexts: Development and Validation of the International Depression Symptom Scale*

### **Jeremy Calvin Kane**

Advisor: Judith Bass, PhD

*Longitudinal effects of acculturation on alcohol use among immigrant Vietnamese and Cambodian families in the US*

### **Christopher Norfleet Kaufmann**

Advisor: Adam Spira, PhD

*Sedative-hypnotic Prescribing in the United States from 1993-2010: Recent Trends and Outcomes*

### **Angela Eunji Lee-Winn**

Advisor:

*Associations of Sociodemographic and Psychological Factors with Binge Eating Behavior in a Nationally Representative Sample of U.S. Adolescents*

### **Pia Maria Mauro**

Advisor: Ramin Mojtabai, MD

*Mental Health and Peer Support Services Co-located in Substance Use Disorder Treatment Facilities in the United States*

### **Sarah Sutherlin-McIvor Murray**

Advisor: Judy Bass

*Caregiver Mental Health and child physical health in HIV-affected families in Uganda*



**Doctoral Graduates from left: Michelle Carras, Angela Lee-Winn, Pia Mauro, Shaocheng Wang and Alex Wennberg.**

## *Degree Recipients: Doctors of Philosophy (cont'd)*

### **Katherine Louise Musliner**

Advisor: Peter Zandi, PhD

*Heterogeneity in Long-term Trajectories of Depression: A Review and Application of Group-based Trajectory Modeling*

### **Vijay Ramesh Varma**

Advisor: Michelle Carlson, PhD

*The Association between Physical Activity and Cognition: The Baltimore Experience Corps Trial*

### **Shao-cheng Wang**

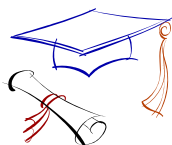
Advisor: Brion Maher, PhD

*Genetic Influences on Injection Drug Use*

### **Alexandra Margaux Vaillancourt Wennberg**

Advisor: Adam Spira, PhD

*Blood Glucose Levels and Genetic Factors as Predictors of Neurocognitive Outcomes*

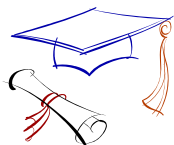


# Department Graduates

## Master's Degree Recipients

### Master's of Health Science

Sadaf Sadie Ahari  
Ibrahim A. Al-Jabbar  
William Cox Altekruze  
Loretta R. Anderson  
Briella Lexene Baer  
Joshua Troy Barnett  
Sunakshi Bassi  
Marli DeAnn Choate  
Monica Latreice Daniels  
Jason Ira Feinberg  
Gerard Dean Hampton  
Katherine Elizabeth Hein  
Sarah Rose Holloway  
John Wesley Hopkins  
Bradley John Hunt  
Rebecca Sarah John  
Meghana Kalavar  
Melody Kelemu Sinke  
John Mekail  
Reema Mistry  
Michelle Jinsun Moon  
Tianna Maria Negrón  
Maia Nieto  
Shivani Pradip Patel  
Kaitlin Pfisterer  
Sarah Fatemeh Porter  
Diana Rayes  
Limbika Maliwichi-Senganimalunje  
Emily Ann Suminski  
Mary Elizabeth Summers  
John Richard Thorne  
Christine Truong  
Lindsey Rochelle Webb  
Mark Yoon  
Joy Ziyi Zhou



## Student Highlights

### Student Departmental Awards 2015-16

Paul V. Lemkau Award

**Kimberly Roth, PhD student**

This award is made annually for outstanding performance in doctoral students in the field of Mental Health.

Morton Kramer Fund

**Luther Kalb, PhD student**

This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in the application of biostatistical and epidemiologic methods to mental disorders.

Lucy Shum Memorial Scholarship Award

**Chang (April) Shu, PhD student**

This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in public health policy for mental health issues.

Dr. Ali and Rose Kawi Scholarship

**Jura Augustinavicius, PhD student**

This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in mental health issues.

### School-wide Awards 2015-16

**Pia Maria Mauro, PhD '16** was elected to Phi Beta Kappa

**Sarah McIvor Murray, PhD '16** was elected to Phi Beta Kappa

### Other Student Awards 2015-16

**Claire Greene, PhD student**, is one of the 2016 **Delta Omega Scholarship Competition winners** for the "Policy and Practice" category

**Erin Goodell, MS, PhD student**, has received the **2016 Patricia H. Rosenberger Award** for Outstanding Student/Fellow Abstract, on behalf of the Society of Behavioral Medicine Military and Veterans' Health Special Interest Group (MVH-SIG).

**David Fakunle, PhD student**, has been selected as a delegate to the Centers for Disease Control Millennial Health Leaders Summit. David was one of only two students selected from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health!

## Alumni Highlight: Lilian Ghandour, PhD '09



Growing up in Lebanon, Lilian Ghandour knew the whirl and excitement of teenage social life, but it wasn't until she became a public health researcher that she could put numbers to the obvious yet under-researched societal and public health issues of importance in her home country.

"I always felt I was a lawyer at heart, but I discovered my simultaneous love for research and mental health when I was undertaking my MPH practicum at a leading mental health research institute where I was responsible for coordinating and undertaking the first rapid situation assessment study on substance use in Lebanon." Ghandour later joined the institute as a senior researcher, and was extensively involved in the design and implementation of the Lebanon chapter of the World Mental Health Surveys. "With a much deepened interest in mental health research, I knew I had to pursue a doctoral training in mental health epidemiology" Ghandour says.

Ghandour, who earned her doctorate in 2008 from JHSPH, is now an Associate Professor at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in the Department of Epidemiology and Population Health. She also holds an adjunct position at Michigan State University in the Department of Epidemiology.

"I did not want to leave my work, family and friends in Lebanon to pursue a PhD in just any university," Ghandour explains. "I had my heart and mind set on Hopkins, one of the best schools of public health, and the only one to host a department specialized in mental health, offering students the opportunity to strengthen their investigative and quantitative analytical skills, while broadening their knowledge of the epidemiology of mental health disorders."

While at Hopkins, her research focused on using latent statistical techniques to better understand the distribution

of opioid analgesics in the US general population, and the longitudinal impact of early parenting on young adult alcohol drinking. Upon returning to Lebanon, the scarcity of substance-related epidemiological data necessitated that she undertake various national surveys on youth to establish baseline estimates.

"Despite the rise in nonmedical use of psychoactive prescription drugs among U.S. youth at the time, data from Lebanon was nonexistent," Ghandour says. Consequently, in 2009 she undertook the first survey focused on estimating the medical and nonmedical use of psychoactive prescription drugs, enabling her to understand the local scene and note some important cross-national comparisons. She then carried out a similar survey among the younger high school students, and additionally showed a strong association between nonmedical use of prescription drugs and water-pipe smoking – a link explored for the first time with this form of tobacco consumption.



Ghandour's research on alcohol also indicated a significant rise in underage and harmful alcohol drinking among young adolescents in Lebanon, which was not so surprising to her given the absence of alcohol-related policies and amidst densely available, cheap and heavily marketed alcoholic drinks.

Since 2013, Ghandour has been leading a project funded by International Development Research Center/Canada to generate data for an alcohol harm-reduction policy for Lebanon. "In addition to establishing local baseline data, I feel a deep sense of commitment as a public health researcher to produce epidemiological evidence that can inform policy and practice," she explains.

## Lilian Ghandour, PhD (cont'd)

Although she is aware that the alcohol industry and perhaps more urgent threats to Lebanon's security and economy could hinder her work, Ghandour hopes that the project will help spur national dialogue and momentum for policy reform.

Ghandour has also led or co-led several other surveys and is proud to have published the data from Lebanon in high-tier international peer-reviewed journals. More importantly, she is more fulfilled knowing that the data has helped raise awareness among the general public, and inform the 2015-2020 National Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy, to which she has contributed as a national expert.

"Undertaking public health research in a context of political uncertainty has been inevitably challenging, but equally rewarding when the findings have helped move

forward the country's mental health research and policy agenda," Ghandour says.

Ghandour also has been passionate about teaching and contributing to several undergraduate and graduate courses in epidemiology, biostatistics, psychometrics, and public health.

Since she graduated from Hopkins in 2008, Ghandour has kept in touch with fellow alumni and many mentors. She makes sure to visit Baltimore, her second home, and her friends at JHSPH every opportunity she gets. When not at work, Ghandour and her husband (also a faculty member at AUB) enjoy spending time with their two lovely children, Talia Lynn (2 years) and Hani Elyas (4 years). They are all very excited about their new addition, a baby boy, expected late September 2016.

## Alumni News

- ◆ Kate Musliner, PhD '15, first-authored a paper, "Heterogeneity in 10-Year Course Trajectories of Moderate to Severe Major Depressive Disorder: A Danish National Register-Based Study" in *Jama Psychiatry*.
- ◆ Lingsheng Li, MHS '11, has published two first-author papers. She recently finished her research year at the NIH as a part of the Medical Research Scholars Program, and will head back to Oklahoma to complete her 4th year of medical school.
- ◆ Benjamin Zablotsky, PhD '13, is mentioned in *Psychology Today* in an article "An Ice Bucket, an Autistic Child, and a Cruel Joke." Victimization worsens when autistic children cannot verbally express themselves. A social media campaign aimed at raising awareness for one health problem becomes the cruel vehicle by which awareness is raised for another.
- ◆ Laysha Ostrow, PhD '14, is featured on a *Psychology Today* blog. Laysha Ostrow on Live & Learn Inc.: On the future of mental health. A Q&A with Laysha Ostrow, founder of Live & Learn, a consulting firm that works with community and government organizations on mental health issues.
- ◆ Susanna Awoyode, MHS '14, spent a year working as an epidemiologist at the Delaware division of Public Health, and will be starting residency in Internal Medicine at the Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee in July. Susanna remarked, "The skills and training I received at Hopkins have been invaluable throughout my endeavors."
- ◆ Adam Milam, MHS '09, PhD '12, and Associate Faculty in DMH, accepted a four year residency position in Anesthesiology at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. Dr. Milam just received his MD from Wayne State University School of Medicine and heading to warmer territory!
- ◆ A study led by Lian-Yu Chen, PhD '14 and Ramin Mojtabai, PhD, Professor, that appeared in *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* received broad media coverage. The analysis found that while Adderall use held steady, instances of misuse rose mainly for college-age adults, ages 18 – 25.

## New Faculty

**Trang Nguyen, PhD**, will join the faculty as Assistant Scientist on August 1. Dr. Trang's expertise is in the application and development of statistical methods for research questions in mental health and the social and behavioral sciences more generally. Dr. Nguyen came to BSPH in 2009 as a Sommer Scholar and received an MHS in Biostatistics and her PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences (Department of Health, Behavior, and Society) in 2014. In the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society she received a Distinguished Doctoral Research Award in 2012, and a Dissertation Research Award in 2013. Since 2014 she has been a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Mental Health.

**Andrew Feinberg, PhD**, Andrew "Andy" Feinberg has been appointed as Bloomberg Distinguished Professor at JHSPH in the Bloomberg School of Public Health's Department of Mental Health and the Whiting School of Engineering's Department of Biomedical Engineering, where he will be mentoring students and teaching an undergraduate course in epigenetics and epigenomics. He currently holds the position of King Fahd Professor and Gilman Scholar in the School of Medicine's departments of Medicine, Oncology, Molecular Biology and Genetics, and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and the Bloomberg School's Department of Biostatistics. Feinberg directs the Center for Epigenetics, one of the leading research centers in the world focused on the chemical tags of the human genome that tell the cell which genes should be turned on or turned off.

The Bloomberg Distinguished Professorships are supported by a \$350 million gift to the university from Johns Hopkins alumnus, philanthropist, and three-term New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. The majority of this gift is dedicated to creating 50 new interdisciplinary professorships, galvanizing people, resources, research, and educational opportunities to address major world problems.

## Faculty Promotions

**Renee Johnson, PhD**, was promoted to Associate Professor.

**Elizabeth Stuart, PhD**, Professor in the Department, has been named Associate Dean for Education at the School.

**Deborah Agus, JD**, was promoted to Adjunct Associate Professor.

**Debra Furr-Holden, PhD**, has been promoted to Adjunct Professor. Dr. Furr-Holden begins her new post at the University of Michigan, Flint as Professor on July 1.

## Faculty Awards

### Excellence in Research and Practice:

**Phillip Leaf, PhD**, received the 2015 Thurgood Marshall Legacy Award from the Baltimore City branch of the NAACP.

**Nicholas Ialongo, PhD**, has received the 2016 Society for Prevention Research (SPR) Presidential Award.

**Tamar Mendelson, PhD** has been appointed as a member of the Maryland State Task Force to study Maternal Mental Health.

**Elizabeth Stuart, PhD**, has received the 2015 Mid-Career Award by the Health Policy Statistics Section (HPSS) of the American Statistical Association.

**Elizabeth Stuart, PhD**, has been named an Editor (Section on Methodology) for the Journal of Research Educational Effectiveness for a three-year term (2016-18).



## Faculty Awards (cont'd)

**Tamar Mendelson, PhD**, has been appointed as the next recipient of the Dr. Ali and Rose Kawi Professorship in Mental Health, effective July 1.

**Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD**, has been appointed to serve as a World Health Organization (WHO) temporary adviser on the guidelines for responding to sexual abuse of children and adolescents currently being proposed by the WHO.

**Holly Wilcox, PhD**, was appointed to the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention by Governor Larry Hogan.

**Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD**, has been appointed to serve as a World Health Organization (WHO) temporary adviser on the guidelines for responding to sexual abuse of children and adolescents currently being proposed by the WHO.

### Star Teacher/Advisor:



**Judith Bass, PhD, Associate Professor**, received an Advising, Mentoring, and Teaching Recognition Award (AMTRA) from the School.

## Faculty Highlight: Joseph J. Gallo, MD, MPH



Dr. Gallo is a two-time Hopkins kind of guy. After receiving his MPH from Johns Hopkins in 1991 and subsequently completing a postdoctoral fellowship in what was then called the "Department of Mental Hygiene". Dr. Gallo immediately took post as an Assistant Professor in the Department until 1999. He then moved on to the University of Pennsylvania, but found his way back home in 2011. And we're happy he's back! As the story goes, one never really leaves Hopkins.

Professor Gallo's research focuses on mental health and primary care; the intersection of physical and mental health, and mixed methods. Along with colleagues at other universities, Dr. Gallo is a program director of the Mixed Methods Research Training Program for the Health Sciences. The program targets doctorally-prepared applicants who have evidence of their potential for conducting R01/R34 quality research in mixed methods applications. To read more about Dr. Gallo's research please visit: <http://www.jhsph.edu/faculty/directory/profile/251/joseph-gallo>.

A couple of Dr. Gallo's recent publications include:

- ◆ Joo JH, Hwang S, Abu H, Gallo JJ. An Innovative Model of Depression Care Delivery: Peer Mentors in Collaboration with a Mental Health Professional to Relieve Depression in Older Adults. *Am J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 2016 May;24(5):407-16. doi: 10.1016/j.jagp.2016.02.002. Epub 2016 Feb 10.
- ◆ Bogner HR, Joo JH, Hwang S, Morales KH, Bruce ML, Reynolds CF 3rd, Gallo JJ Does a Depression Management Program Decrease Mortality in Older Adults with Specific Medical Conditions in Primary Care? An Exploratory Analysis. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2016 Jan;64(1):126-31. doi: 10.1111/jgs.13711.

# Photo Gallery



Above: MHS '16 graduates having dinner at Gertrude's. Also pictured are Dr. Jeanine Parisi, MHS Director (far left), and Dr. Daniele Fallin, Department Chair (back row, far right).



Left: Assistant Professor Heather Volk and Chair Dani Fallin participated in the Baltimore Marathon relay team.



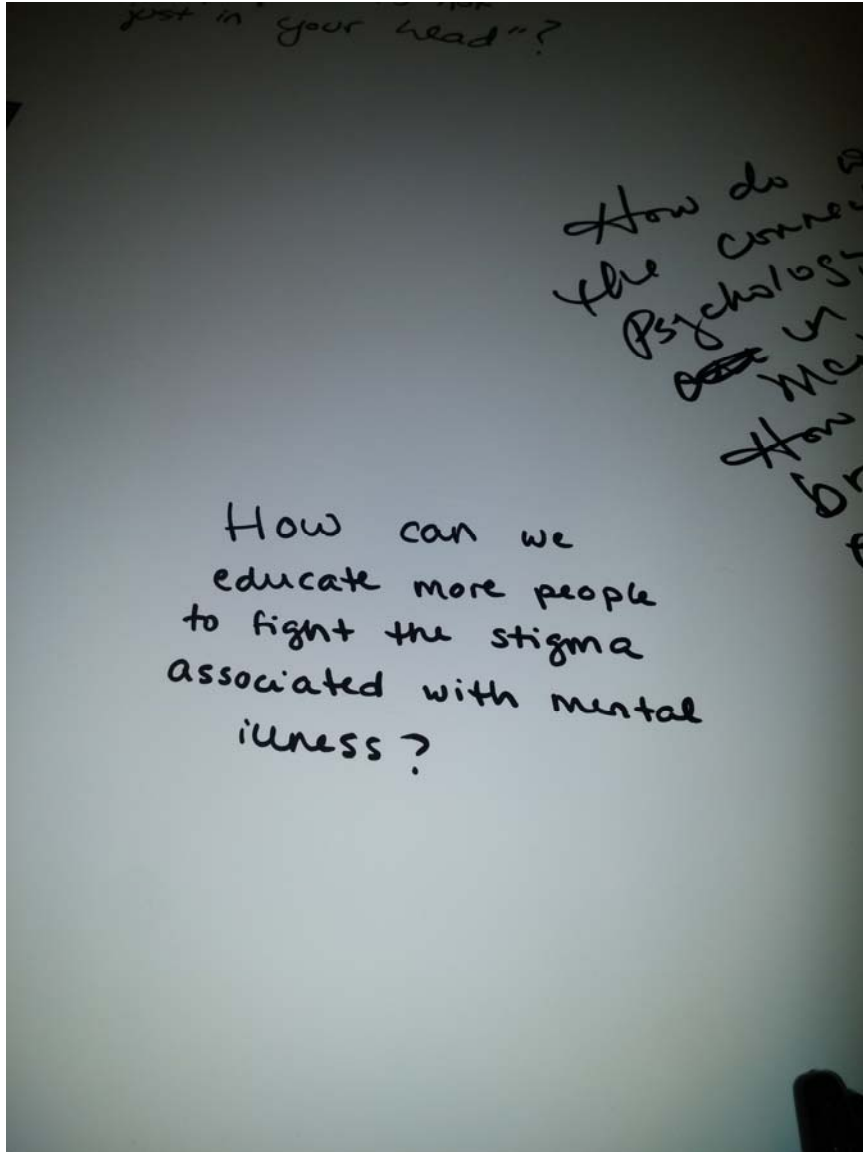
Right: Dr. Parisi is presented a gift by the MHS students.



Left: Kimberly Roth, PhD student, is presented the Paul V. Lemkau Award by Dean Michael Klag.



Above: Luke Kalb, PhD student, is presented the Morton Kramer Award by Dr. Fallin.



Question posed on the Luv U Project Event Board.

## Let Us Know About Your Success!

We would love to hear how and what you're doing and your recent career highlights. We'd also like to highlight your accomplishments on our departmental alumni website. **Please keep in touch!!** Just drop an email to Michelle at [mmaffet1@jhu.edu](mailto:mmaffet1@jhu.edu).



Sarah Murray, Stacey Lloyd, David Fakunle, April Joy Damian

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## Faculty Recruitment 2016

We are continuing to grow! We will be recruiting new **tenure-track faculty soon!**

Please visit our website for upcoming details about the positions.

<http://www.jhsph.edu/departments/mental-health/faculty/faculty-openings/> or simply do a Google search on "Hopkins mental health faculty positions" for details about the positions.

Please spread the word among your colleagues!

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