

# Student Public Health Practice Awardees

## 2019 AWARDS

### Excellence in U.S. Public Health Practice



#### ***Gia Naranjo-Rivera***

Project Title: Revolutionizing Teen Wellness with Peace in Schools

Partner Organization: Peace in Schools (PINS) in Portland, Oregon

Gia Naranjo-Rivera, PhD candidate and Brown Scholar in the Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, worked with Peace in Schools (PINS) in Portland, Oregon to evaluate the integration of mindfulness into public education to address adolescent mental health and trauma. Gia volunteered as a Research Analyst with PINS, – the first organization to offer mindfulness for academic credit in US public high schools – developing evaluation tools. She later chose to focus her dissertation on PINS, which teaches breathing techniques, meditation, identifying self-talk, yoga, and more ([www.peaceinschools.org](http://www.peaceinschools.org)). Gia conducted a study assessing the impacts of mindfulness classes on mental, emotional and social wellbeing in Portland public high schools; and whether outcomes differ among disadvantaged students, such as those with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), minorities, low-income, and LGBTQ+ youth. Program implementation and facilitators/barriers to effectiveness were also examined. The study included a pre/post survey, four qualitative methods, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) approaches. While data analysis is ongoing, initial findings show that underserved populations opt in and benefit from PINS: students with high ACEs, anxiety and depression symptoms, and low-income, minority, and LGBTQ+ youth. Students, parents, teachers and school staff also report improved mental health and coping skills, and youth being empowered with tools to self-regulate and face stress and trauma. Gia and PINS have begun sharing findings with policymakers in Oregon to inform policy and funding decisions and hope to demonstrate to school districts around the country how mindfulness can be integrated into public education to address adolescent mental health and trauma.



***Kristy McCarron***

Project Title: Food and Nutrition Initiatives for the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington  
Partner Organization: YMCA

Kristy McCarron wrote The Teaching Kitchen Toolkit after 10 years of nutrition education and food programming. For the past six years, she has worked with the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington overseeing all anti-hunger programs, food access initiatives, and the operations of two teaching kitchens. In 2018 Kristy created a Teaching Kitchen Cohort, which brought together 8 YMCAs across the country. She hosted monthly focus groups to learn best practices, common hurdles, and shared themes across the YMCA nutrition education movement. What she discovered was that teaching kitchens within a community-rooted space are uniquely positioned to effect great change for diet-related diseases, but given their recent and speedy emergence, instruction of best practices and resource sharing is lacking and necessary. Non-profits, such as the Y, must be especially prudent with their resources, and programming teaching kitchens without intentional design is simply not an option. Thus, she wrote the Teaching Kitchen Toolkit - a comprehensive road map for a community center with a teaching kitchen or with plans to build one. It outlines theories of behavior change programs and best practices of nutrition education so that the reader can build deliberate programs with increased impact and sustainability. Most importantly, it summarizes public health lessons and puts them into approachable layman's terms, so that anyone with a teaching kitchen – regardless of their background - can build more effective and holistic nutrition education programs. Additionally, she now sits on the Mayor's Commission of Healthy Youth and Schools, with the goal of increasing nutrition education across DC.

**Excellence in International Public Health Practice**



***Assanatou Bamogo***

Project Title: Successes and Lessons Learned from a Community Participatory-Cervical Cancer Screening Campaign in Ouargaye, Rural Burkina Faso (June 2018)  
Partner Organization: African Crossroad Development

Coming from a big family, Assanatou Bamogo's mother was one of the main driving forces for her education, this has enabled her to work with and empower women early on. The mentorship that she received at Johns Hopkins University has inspired and encouraged her to take her dream to the next level. In 2018, Assanatou and others registered African Crossroad Development (ACD) as a non-for-profit organization. In partnership with other NGOs, ACD collaborates with community members and local health districts to empower, build capacity, and improve access to screening, care, education, and training in rural areas. In June 2018, ACD worked with the women association of Ouargaye (rural Burkina Faso), the local health district, and

the association of midwives and gynecologists in Burkina Faso on a campaign to increase awareness of chronic disease prevention, screen, and improve access to care for cervical cancer and other non-communicable diseases (NCD). With a significant community participation and contribution from design to implementation, ACD was able to screen more than 500 persons for NDCs in two days and build a mentorship relationship with the community. In March 2019, ACD provided technical guidance to the women leaders of Ouargaye for their activities in celebration of Women's Day. Furthermore, in collaboration with other partners, ACD conducted a screening campaign and supported education in Kienfangué, another rural area of Burkina Faso. Assanatou intends to lead ACD while working in an LMIC setting, to continue improving the living conditions in rural areas.

## **Excellence in Baltimore Public Health Practice**



### ***Emma Ghazaryan***

Project Title: Quality Assurance for the Vision for Baltimore (V4B) Program

Partner Organization: Vision for Baltimore

Vision for Baltimore (V4B) is a city-wide, interdisciplinary program designed to provide school-based eye care to the students enrolled in grades PreK-8 at Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). It is a partnership program among Baltimore City Health Department, City Public Schools, Vision to Learn (VTL), Warby Parker (WB) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU). V4B is providing vision screenings to all BCPS elementary and middle school students, as well as eye exams and prescription eyeglasses for children who are found to need them. JHU is also conducting a research program on the impact of glasses on academic performance and provides educational programs for parents, students and teachers on the importance of glasses wear and care. The practicum was related to the V4B program, particularly to the eye examination conducted by the VTL and was focused on the quality assurance of the process from the first contact of a kid with VTL personnel to the data monitoring and evaluation. The purpose of the practicum was to understand interdisciplinary, city-based public health projects, communicate with stakeholders and develop quality assurance protocols and policy recommendations. The practicum consisted of several parts, including literature review and evidence synthesis, preparation of annotated bibliography, designing quality assurance framework, conducting stakeholder analysis, interviewing stakeholders and analyzing results to provide final recommendations.