

# The Genetic Counseling Connection

The Official Newsletter of the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center  
Genetic Counseling Graduate Program



Habitat for Humanity - Genetic Counseling Group Day - November 15, 2003

## **In this Issue**

Mission Statement	2
News from the Program	2
An Update from the Class of 2004	4
Getting to Know the Class of 2005	6
News from Past and Present Students	8
Recent Publications from UC Grads	9
Words of Inspiration	9
Habitat for Humanity	9

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Genetic Counseling Graduate Program is to provide an exemplary environment to foster the academic, clinical and research training of genetic counseling students. It is expected that Program graduates will provide the highest quality of care to their clients, work effectively in interdisciplinary settings, participate in research to advance the profession, and become leaders in the field.

## News from the Program

[Nancy S. Warren, M.S., Program Director](#)

December 2003! Where does the time go?

The Genetic Counseling Program is in full swing and thriving this academic year. We have recently had a fine array of invited guest, faculty and peer presentations to provide a stimulating academic environment. We are also strengthening our counseling curriculum by including topics such as contracting, cultural diversity case studies, marriage and family counseling, counseling children (and adults), couples counseling, facilitating decision making, etc. Students are videotaping counseling vignettes as an additional method for self, peer and supervisor assessment.

We hope to offer an online version of at least one of our core classes next fall. Interested in a refresher course in Human Embryology? Adjunct Professor DJ Lowrie is working on it...we will keep you posted.

A community outreach education course supports the important role the students play in our community. They are responsible for giving lectures and participating in health fairs around campus and town. Our commitment to community service was also enhanced a few weeks ago by Carol Turner, our invaluable Secretary. Carol is to be congratulated for pulling together a team of worker bees who spent a rainy Saturday nailing vinyl siding to a Habitat for Humanity abode located in Walnut Hills. This will be called "home" to a single mom soon. Thanks, Carol for all the help and caring that you give to the program and students everyday!

Thesis work is going well this year. IRB proposals are being approved and small grants are being awarded to fund the projects. Next year, our first years will be spending two full weeks in the summer engaged in a formal "research rotation" in order to significantly advance their progress before the second school year begins.

Our clinical program becomes stronger each year. Our 16 local clinical supervisors are enthusiastic and committed to helping the students become the best counselors they can be. Thanks, supervisors, for the invaluable time and effort you spend as teachers and role models.

We are continuing to pursue our long term goal of developing an advanced graduate degree in GC, and are also considering developing a variety of specialty tracks. Contact me if you are interested in adding intellectual energy to such projects. We can always use advice and expertise from our grads.

Given the shrinking state dollars for higher education, we are looking at innovative ways to fund all of the important activities that our students need in order to be fully prepared for the responsibilities of the field. We are looking at opportunities for private donations and grants. More about this in a future newsletter. Let it suffice to say, that if you have any ideas for attracting outside budgetary support for our program operations, instructors and students, just give me a call.

On the personal side, my family is doing well. Sarah is a Freshman at McGill University (science nerd). The younger sibs are following close behind: Ariel is a Junior and Jacob a Freshman in high school. Growing up; but everyone is thriving and we are thankful for health and well being.

Take care. Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to all.

Nancy

#### [Carol Christianson, M.S., Clinical Coordinator](#)

Well it's the end of another busy fall quarter and as usual I am impressed with all of our students. Our first year students are just now starting to take an active role in clinic, and our second year students are working diligently on their counseling skills. We moved the counseling theory assignment in AGC to fall quarter and we are hoping to see even greater strides in our second years' counseling skills over the course of the next two quarters.

In regards to our clinical program, I am pleased to report that we added two new clinical supervisors to our ranks this fall, Betsy Johnson Peach (class of '01) and Michelle Wojtasiak (class of '02). Debi Cragun (class of '03), the newest counselor in the Division, has also started working with our first year students, providing them with wonderful observational experiences. All three are graduates of the Program and I am thrilled that they are working with us.

In January we will be adding a new permanent site to our list. Gretchen Parsons and Rachel Barnett are counselors at the Center for Maternal Fetal Medicine, Ultrasound and Genetics at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, and they have enthusiastically agreed to work with our students. Their Center has seven ultrasound suites, and it looks like it will be a great training site.

Other changes include the development of a genetic counseling journal club. We are now getting together the fifth Friday of each quarter to discuss articles in the genetic counseling literature. Our cancer counselors, Jessica Everett and Jennifer Gamm, have also started a cancer genetics journal club the first Wednesday of each month so both staff and students have even more opportunities to stay up on the latest literature in our field.

Well, that about sums it up for the quarter. I wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season and peace in the new year. ~ Carol

# An Update from the Class of 2004

## Angela Bedard

I am enjoying my second year here in the program. Things are well underway on my thesis project which is a follow up on Heather Clark's project from last year. I will be surveying genetic counseling program directors to characterize their program's research requirements as well as determining their opinions on the importance of developing an advanced degree in genetic counseling. I will also be surveying genetic counseling students to determine their interest in performing research in their career as well as their interest in pursuing advanced degrees. Currently I am also brainstorming ideas about employment for next summer. I will be staying in the Cincinnati area, so if anyone has any leads, let me know!

## Rachael Bradshaw

I cannot believe it is already November! Our second years were right...going away for the summer really does transform you magically from first year to second year. I spent my summer working with three great genetic counselors in St. Louis and would LOVE to be employed there if there are job openings after graduation! I still try to deny the fact that I am only 7 months from graduation when I get stressed out, but overall, it's been a great year. I am getting my IRB together for my thesis and am on survey draft #783 (at least that's how it feels!). My project focuses on studying recent GC grads' (last three years) knowledge of Latino culture as well as their comfort working with this population. It has been somewhat of an uphill battle creating my own topic, but I have had a lot of help here at UC/CCHMC, as well as outside with experts in the field. And no matter how stressed I get, I have my classmates to help me out. I am pretty lucky to have such a great group of friends. You guys make it worth it!

## Carrie Gill

Fall quarter has been pretty intense this year with all the thesis/clinic/classes taking over my life! However, I am happy to report that my IRB proposal was approved and data collection for my thesis is now ready to begin. I will be studying the effects on women from direct-to-consumer advertising of BRACAnalysis genetic testing for breast cancer susceptibility to determine if this commercial causes anxiety in women or increases their intent to pursue testing. I will also explore where women would go to find out more information on testing. So needless to say, thesis has consumed my autumn months and probably will also be a large part of the months to come. I will be traveling to Maine for a relaxing holiday break and hope to start applying for jobs in Western Massachusetts area upon my return to Cincinnati.

**Natalie Jansen**

So much has been happening in the past year that it's hard to know where to start. Last December, my boyfriend surprised me with a first-class trip to Paris and there, asked me to be his wife. So we're planning our wedding for next October, when we'll both be well out of school. This past summer and fall, I was part of an upstart co-ed ultimate frisbee team, that through hard work and playing one game out of our minds, made it to Nationals in Sarasota, Florida. And of course, I can't forget about school. As you all know, working on thesis, clinic, and academics makes for a hectic time, but it is all well worth it when you love the subject matter and feel like you are making a difference in someone's life. Not to mention, graduation is only two quarters away!

**Linda Lardinois**

I am enjoying my second year here at UC and finding plenty to keep myself busy. I have served as T.A. for an undergraduate Genetics in Society class with Dr. Huether and I will be presenting on the Genetics of ADHD at Journal Club on Friday, December 12. I am currently working to develop a survey for my thesis project entitled "Using the HOPE Questions as a Model for Spiritual Assessment within a Genetic Counseling Session." I have also been busy making plans for the wedding next June and looking for a job in the Midwest.

**Trisha Mulhaupt**

This quarter has been a whirlwind with friends, classes, thesis and clinic. I was extremely excited to see all of my classmates again after our summer apart (me in Ann Arbor, MI) and to meet all of the new students. It has been wonderful catching up and getting to know everyone. Right now, the main task at hand is my thesis regarding geneticists' practices of testing adolescents for carrier status. I am in the process of creating my survey (currently in its second draft) and I hope to have submitted to the IRB by the end of January. Additionally, I am beginning to look for job opportunities in Philadelphia, New Hampshire and Chicago (areas where my boyfriend is looking at graduate schools). I hope that everyone has a terrific holiday season and a fabulous start to the new year!

**Sara Rankin**

Hello! Since the last newsletter, I completed my internship in the D.C area. My experience this summer was invaluable...I learned so much from the counselors and physicians there. It was great to come home, though, and get back to my family and friends (and the GC program). This year has been challenging but exciting. I'm looking forward to starting my thesis research in winter quarter and finishing up classes. I can't believe we only have 2 quarters to go! It seems like just yesterday that my classmates and I started together in classes and clinic. The days have gone quickly but as I observe and learn from my fellow 2nd years, I am impressed with all we have accomplished! Time flies! Graduation is soon approaching! I'm planning to stay near my family in the Cincinnati area so I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I find a job close by!

**Jill Siegfried**

As we continue along our path to graduation, I've really enjoyed getting to know my classmates better as well as getting to know our new 1st years!

# Getting to Know the Class of 2005

## Emily Adkison

I come to the UC/CCHMC Genetic Counseling Program from the peachy state of Georgia. Since arriving in the Pork Capital of the World, Cincinnati, I find myself consumed by my studies, but during the moments of free time and relaxation I still enjoy the same activities that provided me pleasure in Macon, GA: ballroom dancing, volunteering at assisted living facilities, and cooking international dishes.

## Andrea Harbison

Starting graduate school has been full of new experiences and life changes. I am pleased with the different clinical experiences that I've had so far. I had never seen a cancer or pediatric counseling session before starting the program and I have enjoyed my rotations. I've learned a lot in 10 weeks!

It's been a big change to move to Cincinnati from Albuquerque, NM and I'm still adjusting to being in the midwest!

I do feel fortunate to be working with such a great group of people.

## Deanna Hutchinson

The first quarter of the genetic counseling grad program at UC has been both challenging and fun. I'm extremely excited to finally be involved in the profession I've been interested in since high school, and I have also met some great new friends in the process.

I'm really enjoying my clinical experiences this quarter. I had interned with a genetic counselor in a prenatal clinic in undergrad, and now I've seen both cancer and pediatric cases in the short time that I've been here. I'm excited about my clinical experience, especially my rotation next summer. I've already been working with Carol Christianson and she has contacted Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles about my placement.

Overall, I think the first few months of grad school have been great. I feel like I really fit in well with the other girls and also in Cincinnati. It's definitely a great place to live on your own for the first time. I'm excited for what the remainder of the school year has in store for me, but right now I'm really looking forward to winter break.

## Jill Kelsay

My first quarter has been great! Cincinnati is by far the biggest city (the only city, for that matter) that I've ever lived in, so I was really scared to move out here--but I love it now! I'm figuring everything out much faster than I thought I would, and I feel really comfortable here. I've found a church and joined its orchestra, which is lots of fun--and a good stress reliever. Classes are going well, though (we'll see if my opinion changes after finals . . .), and I'm really enjoying clinic, too. It's hard to believe that the first quarter's almost over!

**Jamie Poskochil**

I am a first year student originally from Nebraska. I got my undergraduate degree in Biochemistry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am excited to be here in Cincinnati, and I can't believe the first quarter is coming to an end. I feel like I have already learned so much! I have really been enjoying my clinic experiences, although half of them have been no-shows! In my "spare time" I like to crochet and have been working on a quilt. I have also been enjoying getting to know my classmates while finding good restaurants and fun things to do.

**Ann Reinhard**

It has been a long and busy quarter, but exciting as well. Adjusting to a new city, new program, and new people took some time, but it is all going much better now. I'm really enjoying getting to know my fellow first years and the second years. They are a great bunch of girls!

Clinic by far has been my favorite part of the program. I've really enjoyed getting to see pediatrics since I'd only seen prenatal before coming to the program. I am anxious to see cancer next quarter. I'm working with Carol right now on my summer externship. It looks like I will either be in Boston or Salt Lake City. I will update you on that in the spring.

Thank you to all who submitted to the newsletter. It has been fun reading your responses and putting this newsletter together.

**Jenny Smith**

Hello Everyone! My name is Jenny and I am thrilled to be a part of the Class of 2005! I'm originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, though I went to undergrad in Virginia. I graduated in May '03 from Sweet Briar College outside of Lynchburg, VA with a degree in biology. My favorite thing to do outside of studying is community service, especially Habitat for Humanity. I've also recently joined my church's handbell choir to share my musical talents, or lack thereof as it may be. Though we have little time outside of classes, I've greatly enjoyed the Cincinnati area and what it has to offer. I've had a fabulous time this quarter and I look forward to the future!

**Kami Wolfe**

I am so excited to be a part of this program. It is definitely making me work my tail off, but I have learned so much in the last three months. On a personal note, I am really looking forward to going to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on New Years Day. Go Blue!

## News from Past and Present Students

- ◆ Laurie Bailey (Class of 1995) gave birth to Emily Rose on November 6, 2003. Baby Bailey weighed in at 7 lbs. 14 oz. and was 19  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. long.
- ◆ Sharon Trumpy (Class of 2000) gave birth to Cameron David on October 9, 2003. He weighed 6 lbs. 6.8 oz. and was 19 in. long.
- ◆ Linda Lardinois (Class of 2004) will be getting married June 2004 in Wisconsin.
- ◆ Natalie Jansen (Class of 2004) will be getting married October 2004 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- ◆ Liz Barry (Class of 2003) got engaged this past May and will be getting married August 2004. She is currently working at Michigan State University.
- ◆ Carrie Strange Atzinger (Class of 2003) was married October 11, 2003 in Cincinnati, OH. She has a new job as a prenatal genetic counselor at Greater Baltimore Medical Center.
- ◆ Elizabeth Hellmann Varga (Class of 2002) is happy to announce her marriage to Roland Varga on October 4, 2003. Liz and Roland were married in Cincinnati, OH at Vineyard Community Church. They went to Kaua'i Hawai'i and the Big Island of Hawai'i for their honeymoon. Highlights included a helicopter ride of the island and acting as volunteers for the Ironman Hawaii during their trip. Liz's new address is 8031 Pawnee St., Apt. 201, Prairie Village, KS 66208 and her e-mail is [lvarga@kumc.edu](mailto:lvarga@kumc.edu).
- ◆ Michelle "Meech" Wojtasiak (Class of 2002) is engaged to Errick Coughlin. They will be getting married August 2004 in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- ◆ Heather Clark (Class of 2003) has a new job as a prenatal genetic counselor at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.
- ◆ Debi Cragun (Class of 2003) is the newest addition to CCHMC's genetic counseling team. In addition to her genetic counseling duties, she is also in charge of all outreach and inreach clinics.
- ◆ *as submitted by Ginger*, Ginger Hepler Nichols (Class of 1998) and her husband, Cliff Nichols, would like to announce the birth and death of their son, Lincoln Benjamin Nichols. Lincoln was born on November 4, 2003 at 26 weeks 0 days gestation. He had IUGR and by ultrasound was measuring the average of a 22 weeker (except for head measurement, which was approximately 24 weeks). Lincoln weighed 1 pound 2 ounces and was 9 inches long. He was tiny but perfect. Despite his small size, he came out crying and kicking. Sadly, the odds were against our little boy and even though he fought with more will than we can comprehend, he died on November 11. Lincoln was only with us for a short time, but we will cherish every moment.

## Recent Publications from UC Grads

◆ Elizabeth Hellmann (Class of 2002). “Knowledge and educational needs of individuals with the factor V Leiden mutation.” Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis DOI: 10.1046/j.1538-7933.2003.00448.x.

◆ Christine (Krekel) Koil (Class of 2002). “Differences in physician referral practices and attitudes regarding hereditary breast cancer by clinical practice location.” Genetics in Medicine (2003) Volume 5, number 5; p.364-369.

## Words of Inspiration

“I had my 3 month evaluation a month ago- and I was thrilled to hear that they felt like I was a perfect fit here (in addition, they thought that my training program had prepared me for this job, and they said that I have a huge knowledge base for a new grad (thanks to Cinci!!).” “I think that it is important for the current students to see/know that all of the hard work pays off. I admit that there were times when I felt like we were overworked and wondered why we seemed to work so much harder than the students at other programs. Now I know, and I am so thankful for the past 2 hard-as-hell years!”—Christy Stanley (Class of 2003)

## Habitat for Humanity

Carol Turner, Program Secretary

**Happy Holidays to everyone!!**

On Saturday November 15<sup>th</sup>, staff, students, clinical supervisors, and family members of the Genetic Counseling Graduate Program volunteered for the local Habitat for Humanity. The house we worked on is a "**Women Building a Legacy**" project which is an initiative from Habitat for Humanity International requiring the majority of volunteers to be women. This program addresses the problem of substandard housing and its effects on the health and well being of children.



Betsy Peach, Jen Gamm and Rachael Bradshaw



Jen Gamm and Rachael Bradshaw

This is the first time that the entire University of Cincinnati community has built a house as part of “Women Building a Legacy” and the Genetic Counseling Program is proud to have been a part of this experience.

We would like to extend a huge “thank you” to everyone who volunteered for the day.



Natalie Jansen and Tom Bradshaw



Betsy Peach

For more information about Habitat for Humanity in the Cincinnati area and for updates on this house go to: [www.cce.uc.edu/habitat](http://www.cce.uc.edu/habitat)



Rachael Bradshaw and Jen Gamm



Rachael Bradshaw



Jen Gamm and Carol Turner