



Your Health and the Environment

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News from the University of Rochester Environmental Health Sciences Center

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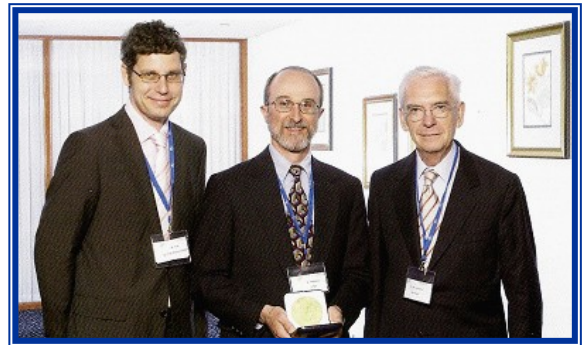
Research Highlights

Ned Ballatori Receives Adolf Windaus Prize in Amsterdam

Dr. Ned Ballatori, Deputy Director of the EHSC, received the prestigious Adolf Windaus Award at the 20th International Bile Acid Meeting this past June.

Alfred Windaus, who began his remarkable career as a chemist in 1901, committed his life to studying cholesterol. He was the first to elucidate the structure of cholesterol and to demonstrate the relationship between cholesterol and bile acids. In honor of Dr. Windaus' pioneering research, the Falk Foundation sponsors the Adolf Windaus Award. The prestigious prize is awarded for outstanding publications in the field of bile acid research.

Selection of the award recipient is made based on his or her publications within the past two years. The first



Dr. Ballatori received the award from Dr. Martin Falk, President of the Falk Foundation, Munich, Germany and Chair of the Adolf Windaus Prize Selection Committee, Professor Dr. Gustav Paumgartner of the Department of Medicine, University of Munich.

prize was awarded in 1980; Ballatori is the fifteenth recipient.

Dr. Ballatori lectured on OSTalpha-OSTbeta as a potential therapeutic target for altering bile acid and lipid levels at the Amsterdam conference on June 14th.

2008 Gordon Regional Conference on Endocrine Disruptors

Dr. Shanna Swan was Chair of the 2008 Gordon Research Conference on Environmental Endocrine Disruptors (EED) held at the Waterville Valley Resort, NH, on June 8-13. The conference encouraged open discussion and collaboration on endocrine research, with a focus on reproductive science and the clinical translation of new science. New mechanisms and environmental agents under investigation as endocrine disruptors were also highlighted. Trainees and young scientists were encouraged to join the conference and become active in EED research. To celebrate the GRC's 10th anniversary conference on EED, advances from the past decade of research and hopes for the next decade were highlighted.



The EHSC was well represented at this conference: Dr. Bernie Weiss led a session on Environmental Endocrine Disruption over the life span, and Dr. Paige Lawrence presented recent work on the effect of developmental exposure of dioxin on the ability to fight influenza infection; Dr. Rick Stahlhut and several of Dr. Swan's students presented posters.

Dr. Swan recently received a European Union grant to look at semen quality in young men in relation to their mother's consumption of beef while pregnant. The project will begin in October 2008.

Community Outreach and Education Core (COEC) Rochester's Healthy Home: Second Year Update

Healthy Home Welcomes 2000th visitor



Vonjula Thompson (center) receives a free bucket of cleaning supplies for being Rochester Healthy Home's 2000th visitor. Nora Herbert (left) is the WEP Director based in the Healthy Home. Dot Gulardo (right) is the Healthy Home Program Manager.

WEP is designed to improve the job readiness of participants through actual work experience. Interns receive benefits from the county while working at a host site, and must complete their work experience hours in order to continue receiving these benefits.

Rochester's Healthy Home, a hands-on museum that teaches people how to reduce environmental hazards in their homes, welcomed Vonjula Thompson as its 2000th visitor on July 8. Vonjula is a Work Experience Program (WEP) intern. WEP is a county-funded program co-located at the Healthy Home that helps people transition from public assistance into the workplace. The Healthy Home tour is part of the first day of orientation for all of the WEP interns, many of whom have small children and live in homes with high risks of home hazards. Since it opened in June 2006, the Healthy Home has educated residents, property owners, health care providers, community groups, and many others about home-based hazards such as lead, asthma triggers, carbon monoxide, household toxins, and others.

News and Events at the Healthy Home

During its first two years of operation (June 2006 -May 2008), Rochester's Healthy Home welcomed 1,989 visitors, nearly three times the projected goal.

The Healthy Home provides information to community members, landlords, property owners, contractors, doctors and others about home health hazards such as lead. Visitors to the Healthy Home are given personalized tours with hands-on demonstrations of how to reduce lead hazards, asthma triggers and other potential health risks in their homes. After the tour, visitors are asked to fill out an action plan declaring one thing they will do to deal with hazards in their home. According to follow-up calls, this approach to home health education is very effective in encouraging action. In the second year, 66.8% visitors contacted through follow-up calls reported that they had accomplished their planned actions; 9.8% had plans or had started to change, and 23.4% reported that they had not made any changes.

In addition to promoting ongoing visitation by high-risk residents, community groups and professionals, a second goal of the Healthy Home is to build the community's capacity to raise awareness of those issues among existing groups and programs. To this end, the Healthy Home has

recruited a 26-member Advisory Council. Healthy Home staff have also initiated a wide variety of special programs and visits to help expand the project's impact. In addition to the Work Experience Program (WEP), recent programs include:

The University of Rochester's President Joel Seligman visits two agencies each year in which UR Urban Fellows are working as interns. This June he met with Quintin Dukes, the Healthy Home's Urban Fellow, to discuss Quintin's project on health literacy. Accompanying President Seligman were Urban Fellows program staff, Dean of Students Matt Burn, assistant director of student activities Lydia Crews, and Wilson Day coordinator Kierstin Hughes.

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter received a tour of the Healthy Home in August from youth intern Dekontee Richards. Following the tour, a press conference was held in which Congresswoman Slaughter addressed the issues of childhood lead poisoning and other home health hazards, and the need for widespread awareness of these issues.

Rochester City School District (RCSD) Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard held his management team's monthly cabinet meeting at the Healthy Home this June after receiving a tour from Healthy Home



Urban Fellow Quintin Dukes and COEC Program Manager Kate Kuholski give a tour of the Healthy Home to UR President Joel Seligman as part of his visit to discuss literacy in Rochester.



Healthy Home Intern Dekontee Richards speaks with Congresswoman Louise Slaughter about the dangers to children of lead and other environmental health hazards.

News and Events at the Healthy Home, continued

interns. Their visit focused on education and learning issues associated with lead poisoning, and the need for affordable housing in Rochester. As a follow-up, RCSD plans to integrate the Healthy Home in staff and parent education.

Healthy Home interns Jessie Calihan, a sophomore at Brown University, and Dekontee Richards, a sophomore at Edison Technical Center, developed and implemented the "Snapshots" project this summer, funded by a Social Justice Outreach Grant to the Healthy Home from the First Unitarian Church. "Snapshots" used project-based learning that taught children about home health hazards, enabled them to recognize hazards in their homes, and created a display that would make the Healthy Home more appealing to future young visitors. As part of the program, children ages 7-11 were given a tour of the Healthy Home. Afterwards, the children were given single-use cameras donated by Kodak to take pictures of both healthy and hazardous practices in their homes, then used these pictures to create posters. During the project, children's parents were encouraged to visit the Healthy Home and take a tour; each parent who visited as part of this program received a gift bucket containing \$50 worth of cleaning supplies. The goal of the project was to increase the Healthy Home's appeal to younger children and reach parents regarding home health hazards.

Sixteen pregnant and parenting teens from the YMCA Successful Futures for Youth Program came with their babies to the Healthy Home for tours and discussions on keeping their children healthy. Each mother created a "pledge" featuring a picture of her child and one step she planned to take to make her home healthier.

Clients and staff members of the Rochester Rehab Day Treatment Program visited the HH four times during the spring and summer for a series of tours focusing on asthma triggers, smoking issues, healthy housekeeping, and healthy food choices and preparation. Clients engaged in hands-on activities such as making their own non-toxic cleaners to take home.

Teams of NET inspectors and DOH educators used the Healthy Home as a base of operations for the City of Rochester's Lead-Safe Saturdays Primary Prevention Initiative this summer. The teams had been conducting free lead inspections in the 14611 zip code, a high-risk area for lead paint poisoning, since May 3rd; the program ran through September 2008.

The University of Rochester's Pediatric Links to the Community is an ongoing program that reaches out to various community agencies to learn about their efforts. The goal of the PLC program is to educate young doctors and students on issues relevant to the health of their patients. Throughout the past year, over 40 residents and students participating in the PLC program toured the Healthy Home and learned about household hazards to children's health.

In July, 33 Emergency Medical residents and staff from Strong Memorial Hospital attended a day-long pediatric safety workshop at the Healthy Home. The visit was arranged by Healthy Home Advisory Council member Karen Knauf of the Injury-Free Coalition for Kids, another URM program. The workshop provided residents and hospital staff with information regarding children's health and safety that they can share with patients.

SWAN Grow Green Youth Entrepreneurship Program

During the summer of 2007, an Urban Fellow with the Southwest Area Neighborhood Association (SWAN) surveyed convenience stores in the Southwest section of Rochester and found that 95% of these small stores did not carry healthy foods such as produce and low-fat dairy products. This study highlighted the need for increased availability of healthy food options in the City of Rochester. In response to this observation, SWAN initiated the Grow Green program that aims to teach youth how to grow and prepare nutritious foods. Grow Green began as a pilot program involving youths from the Rochester After School

Academy (RASA) program at SWAN. Participants learn gardening methods that conserve water, limit pesticide use, and are available to anyone regardless of health, handicaps or experience. For example, vegetables are grown in above-ground "Earth Boxes" to avoid problems with potentially toxic soil. Grow Green tends a garden of 32 Earth Boxes near SWAN's offices at the Wilson Foundation Academy where youth grow produce to sell at the Westside Farmer's Market at nearby St. Monica's Church.

Grow Green is based on the "Growing Connection" program developed by the Binghamton Housing Authority with the

aim of encouraging youth to learn science, math and reading skills, increasing physical activity, and showing youth they can be productive citizens.



The Healthy Home supports the Grow Green initiative by providing information about lead-safe gardening, giving tours to participating youth, and maintaining an Earth Box at the Healthy Home.

Life Sciences Learning Center



The Life Sciences Learning Center hosts summer and school break science camps each year for Middle and High School students. The Life Science Academy is a two week summer program designed for students entering grades 10-12 who have a strong interest in biological science. This challenging

program emphasizes topics in microbiology and molecular biology, and teaches basic skills that are important for working in the field of biological research. This year, 13 students with the Life Science Academy engaged in a number of hands-on biological case studies that introduced them to stem cell biology, neurobiology, microbiology, and many other topics. In addition to honing their skills in dissection, sterile technique and microscopy, the students and instructors built friendships

and memorable experiences in the lab, and even on the Genesee River during a canoeing trip to collect water samples. The Life Sciences Learning Center offers field trip programs during the school year for over 2,000 students from throughout Western New York. To learn more about the Life Sciences Learning Center Programs, visit:

<http://lifesciences.envmed.rochester.edu>.

Looking for More Information?

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

We are often asked for advice on environmental health concerns that are reported in the media: lead in toys, phthalates in baby bottles, and pharmaceuticals in drinking water are some recent examples. There are several national groups that strive to pull together science-based advice and practical approaches to many of these issues where many uncertainties still remain. These groups have different sources and standards for reviewing and interpreting information, so we cannot guarantee the content of their websites and other materials. One source that we frequently rely on is the Environmental Health Sciences Center sponsor, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).



NIEHS is a government agency (part of the National Institutes of Health) that sponsors environmental health research and education. The NIEHS website is an excellent resource for anyone interested in obtaining general information on environmental health issues. The Environmental Health Topics page of their site (<http://niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/index.cfm>) provides information on common diseases linked to environmental exposures, chemicals or other environmental factors that may cause adverse health effects, and explanations of some basic scientific principles pertaining to environmental health sciences. Sections on health conditions and diseases include descriptions of common diseases, recent health studies and clinical trials, information on what the NIEHS is doing with respect to the diseases, and links to general information sources and related topics. There is also a kids' page with games, stories and more. Teachers should take a look at the science education materials page (<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/scied/ondex.cfm>). For more information on discoveries by NIEHS-funded scientists, visit the Public Health Impacts page on the NIEHS website (<http://niehs.nih.gov/health/impacts/index.cfm>).

Environmental Health Perspectives (<http://www.ehponline.org>) is a monthly journal of peer-reviewed research and news on the impact of environmental human health. It is published by NIEHS and made available for free online. EHP peer-reviewed publications contain current information for researchers, educators and the general public. This September, EHP re-launched its high school lesson plan series. Each month, two downloadable lesson plans pertaining to EHP articles are released. These plans utilize current environmental health topics to teach students valuable science skills and introduce them to current topics. The series has been revised to include sets of thematic lesson plans that can be used in a series of lessons to enhance students' understanding of a topic, or on their own to introduce new topics into the classroom.

Summer In the City

The University's Center for Community Health sponsors a lunchtime summer seminar series called "Summer in the City" to highlight health initiatives of community interest. On July 15, the Healthy Home partners were featured in a presentation called "Nourishing our Neighborhoods: How local farmers' markets are increasing access to healthy food choices for Rochester residents." Over 60 people attended from both the University and Community. Katrina Korfmacher explained how the Healthy Home partners' interests had expanded over time to include healthy nutrition, obesity prevention, and local foods. Eleanor Coleman of SWAN described how a small "Good Grief" garden had evolved into the "Grow Green" youth gardening and entrepreneurship project (see article on page 3). Chris Hartman, market manager of the Southwest and Westside Farmers Markets, explained how the markets have developed and invited community and university partners to participate in supporting the market's mission to promote healthy food availability, particularly to low income neighborhood residents. For more information, visit: <http://www.swfarmersmarket.org>

Welcome new COEC Staff Members!



Liam Casey recently joined the Life Sciences Learning Center as a Scientist-Instructor. In the course of his scientific training, Liam discovered a passion for communicating scientific concepts and training new scientists. As a Scientist-Instructor, he hopes to get young students more interested in scientific careers by sharing his love of science. Liam received his PhD in the Department of Biology at the University of Rochester and has subsequently worked as a post-doctoral fellow in the Center for Oral Biology and the Aab Cardiovascular Research Institute at the URMC.



Valerie George is the new Program Manager for the Community Outreach and Education Core of the EHSC. She is joining us from the Rochester Institute of Technology where she completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in Environmental Science with concentrations in Environmental Biology and International Relations. As part of her undergraduate program she spent a semester in Kenya assessing rangeland condition through participatory research methods with community members. She is excited to bring her research experiences here to the EHSC.