Class VII graduates celebrate their success at spring ceremony

Family, friends and colleagues joined 26 Health Leadership Class VII fellows to celebrate their success as they graduated on April 4 at Sierra Health Foundation. A joyful exuberance marked the ceremony and following reception. In comments to the graduates, President Chet Hewitt stated that Sierra Health Foundation has high expectations of these outstanding individuals as they continue their work as leaders dedicated to improving health and quality of life in their communities.

Guest speaker Anthony Iton, director and public health officer of the Alameda County Public Health Department, gave a powerful presentation to guests and graduates on the causes of disparities in health across communities. Dr. Iton was an advisor to and is featured in the PBS documentary series *Unnatural Causes*, which explores racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health.

Representing her fellow Class VII graduates, Lourdes González spoke eloquently about the program as an inspiring, rewarding and transforming experience. She also expressed gratitude to USC and Sierra Health on behalf of her colleagues for this valuable opportunity.

The Health Leadership alumni, represented by Wendy Greene (Class IV) and Bob Herne (Class V), invited the Class VII graduates to join the alumni network and continue their leadership learning and expand their networks. Since 2001, 182 health and social service professionals have successfully completed the Health Leadership Program.
Alumni continue leadership learning

The Health Leadership alumni meet three times per year to re-establish friendships, reinforce earlier learning, and address new topics to enhance their leadership skills. In the last year, members of Classes I-VI attended a retreat at Grizzly Creek Ranch, Sierra Health’s camp in Plumas County, and two events at Sierra Health.

At the retreat in early May, Ron Gilbert, Ph.D., a member of the program’s faculty, returned to work with the group on the Leadership Excellence Assessment (LEA), a process in which each fellow’s staff evaluates him or her as a leader. This was a follow-up to the LEA conducted as part of the class curriculum. Dave Landis, former Nebraska state senator and current director of urban development for the city of Lincoln, Nebraska, conducted a workshop on problem-solving negotiation. Alumnae Wendy Greene (Class IV) and Rachel Farrell (Class VI), along with facilitator Francesca Wright, led a discussion on challenges and strategies related to top health care issues in our communities.

Dave Logan, Ph.D., of CultureSync, and a program faculty member, returned once again on the first of a two-day session in January to revisit the subject of "tribal leadership," also the title of his new book. Fellows also had the opportunity for one-on-one consulting time with Dave during the evening. On day two, the group explored the Enneagram with Diane Pendola, co-founder of Eco-Contemplative Center, as a way to understand oneself and one’s team. The Enneagram is an ancient Sufi teaching that describes nine different personality types and their interrelationships.

At the September 2007 event, alumni learned and experienced “open space technology,” a meeting technique where those present set the agenda, identify topics, and then discuss the issues of personal interest.

Class projects put leadership skills to work

Class VII members presented the work of their project teams during the final three-day class session. As a part of the Health Leadership Program, participants work in small groups to practice new leadership techniques, to learn from one another, and to use and expand their networks and resources to examine issues affecting nonprofit organizations and health concerns in the region. The projects were:

**Dream Catcher Collaborative:** This team presented its plan for developing a rural collaborative of those with resources and those who need services to increase access to care in a rural part of Shasta County, where services and other health care resources are limited or not available.

**Holly Courts Housing Community Resource Project:** To develop healthy families and a stronger community in an affordable housing apartment complex in West Sacramento, this team developed and implemented a plan to integrate professional and community-based knowledge, skills and services for the low-income, multilingual residents.

**Fostering Healthy Relationships Between Youth and Law Enforcement:** Through surveys of youth and law enforcement officers in Sacramento, West Sacramento and Woodland, the team assessed the relationship between these two groups and identified best practices and model programs that have shown success in bridging the gap between youth and law enforcement.

**Evaluating Sierra Health’s REACH Program Improvement Grant Program:** After conducting an assessment of this program that funds community organizations to increase youth participation in quality programs, the team reported an overall positive impact, and recommended continuation of the program to enhance the youth development efforts of nonprofit organizations in the capital region.

**Fund Development Plan to Save a Nonprofit Organization:** This team designed a fund development plan to sustain the Multiple Assistance Center in Humboldt County. During the team’s presentation it was announced that funding for MAC to continue operations had been found and services will continue.
Leadership stories

Class VII graduate Lourdes González shares her experience in the Health Leadership Program.

Reflecting on the Health Leadership class, I can truly say that it has been such an inspiring, rewarding and transforming experience in both my professional and personal life. I felt privileged and honored to work closely with such a group of dedicated and committed individuals while expanding my own potentialities in developing my leadership skills.

Throughout the training, I had the opportunity to reconnect with my core values with an open heart while increasing my self-confidence. The strategic model has been instrumental in keeping myself organized and goal-oriented. My networking capabilities have been enhanced by sharing our stories, therefore creating a sense of community.

The Health Leadership Program offers the opportunity of personal growth by creating a safe environment where the leadership skills find expression through the highest purpose of service. I will always be grateful for this unique Health Leadership class that helped me tremendously in becoming a better individual with a clear vision about my purpose in life.

With many blessings,
María Lourdes González
Class VII
Health Leadership class roster

Class VII
2007–08

Daniel Albano
Chief Operating Officer
CommuniCare Health Centers
Davis

Karen Alvord
Executive Director
Lilliput Children’s Services
Sacramento

Jane Atkins
Chief Quality Officer
Mayers Memorial Hospital
Fall River Mills

Michele Blake
Public Health Program Coordinator
Sutter County Human Services—Health
Yuba City

Glynis Butler-Stone
Director of Clinical Services
Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento
Sacramento

Maryfrances Collins
Division Manager of Adult Services
Yolo County Department of Employment and Social Services
Woodland

Diane Cooper-Puckett
Executive Director
Peg Taylor Center for Adult Day Health Care
Chico

Larry Dayton
Program Manager
The Salvation Army Shelter Services
Sacramento

David Dove
Executive Director
Collings Teen Center
West Sacramento

Maria Lourdes González
Clinical Director
Wild Iris Women’s Services of Bishop, Inc.
Bishop

Daniel Hahn
Captain
Sacramento Police Department
Sacramento

Kay Hudelson
Resource Center Program Director
Golden Umbrella, Inc.
Redding

Adele James
Program Officer
The California Endowment
Sacramento

Michelle Johnston
Health Promotion Supervisor
UC Davis Cowell Student Health Center
Davis

Wendy Knowles
Vice President, Operations
Blood Source
Sacramento

Jennifer Long
Executive Director
First 5 Colusa
Colusa

Becca Louisell
Associate Director for Public Health Programs
California Center for Civic Participation
Sacramento

Valerie Martinez
Operations, Energy and Environmental Services Director
Redwood Community Action Agency
Eureka

Chris McCarty
Director of Community Programs
Sacramento Children’s Home
Sacramento

Kim Rhinehelder
Chief Development Officer,
Mercy Foundation
Mercy San Juan Medical Center
Carmichael

Adrian Ruiz
Co-Director
Youth Development Network
Sacramento

Jennifer Savin
Program Director
Community Pride Project
Sacramento

Peter Simpson
Executive Director
Harm Reduction Services, Inc.
Sacramento

Terri Smyth Canillo
Resident Services Program Manager
Community Housing Opportunities Corporation
Davis

Rogelio Villagran
Youth Training Coordinator
Woodland Coalition for Youth
Woodland

Kimberly Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Sacramento
Sacramento

Know someone who’d benefit from the Health Leadership Program?
The Class VIII application is available online at www.sierrahealth.org
or by calling 916.922.4755.