

The Alumni Magazine of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise

HealthBEAT

Volume 1, Summer 2015

The power of marketing
foods to children:

are brand mascots friends or foes?



2



7



12



14

Message from Matthew Hulver, department head

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our alumni magazine, HealthBeat. We hope that you find the new format informative and interesting!

Our three missions of teaching, research, and extension are vibrant and alive. In our 54 years, we have taught thousands of students, made invaluable advances in research, and provided countless service hours to communities around Virginia. Yet, we are still learning and growing.

During the last year, the department has been developing a five-year strategic plan to guide us in future improvements and expansion. As our undergraduate enrollment continues to escalate (we now have over 1,100 undergraduate students and 60 graduate students), planning for the future is essential to ensure that every student receives the quality education they deserve. Once completed, we will ensure the plan is available for all of you to review.

During the last year, we welcomed valuable additions to the department: Carlin Rafie, an Extension specialist in adult nutrition; Lucinda Shewchuk, program specialist for the Fralin Translational Obesity Research center; and Michelle Rockwell, who coordinates the dietetics and graduate program.

Let us know what you think about HealthBeat, and remember, stay in touch. We truly value and appreciate our alumni!



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In this issue

Help HNFE feed the future	1
Janet Johnson	2
Extension & FNP update	3
The power of food marketing	4
Meet Vivica Kraak	5
Faculty research	
Brenda Davy	6
Samantha Harden	6
Janet Rankin	7
Fabio Almeida	7
Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics	8-9
New faces and updates	10
HNFE graduates 2014-15	10
Awards and achievements	11-13
Alumni around the world	14-17



Recent graduate Corinna Coffin started obstacle racing last year and is now part of the 2015 BattleFrog Race Series Pro Team.

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Help us feed the future

Here at Virginia Tech, private philanthropy fuels progress, and your gift to HNFE today truly makes a difference tomorrow.

Through giving, our community of supporters, alumni, and friends helps us to respond to health needs of Virginians and the world.

Thank you for your support!



Your gift to the department's general fund helps us attract and retain strong faculty, supports research, reinforces student programs, and creates experiential opportunities.

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Your gift to HNFE scholarships helps support our students: visit http://www.hnfe.vt.edu/Giving/make_gift.html

Chrissie Chawanje Mughogho International Education Scholarship

Chrissie (Ph.D. '98, Outstanding Senior Alumna '13), featured in the spring 2014 issue of Happenings, was a strong advocate for the education of women. Designate "HNFE - Chrissie Mughogho Scholarship" on the giving website listed above.



Michael Houston Memorial Scholarship

This award supports the research pursuits of a GTA who demonstrates a passion for teaching and an excitement for learning. Designate "HNFE - Michael Houston Memorial Scholarship" on the giving website listed above.



Forrest Thye Scholarship

Forrest Thye was a devoted teacher to both undergraduate and graduate students for over 36 years. Designate "HNFE - Forrest Thye Scholarship" on the giving website listed above.



Don Sebolt Fitness/Wellness Research Award

This award supports student travel to a scientific conference to present research on the health aspects of physical fitness. Designate "HNFE - Sebolt Fitness/Wellness Award" on the giving website listed above.



Janet Johnson: Rural beginnings spark lifelong interest in food and health

Growing up on a rural farm in Indiana, Janet Johnson was destined to become a food scientist. Her two grandmothers lived nearby and taught her all about food, gardening, and health. Early on, Johnson could make perfect cottage cheese and custard, dress a chicken, and knew that gooseberries — while not fun to eat — would jell a food just like commercial pectin.

Johnson's upbringing and 4-H experiences led her to Purdue University to study home economics, where she excelled in food and science courses. After completing her bachelor's and teaching for several years, she headed back to the classroom to earn both a master's and Ph.D. in food and nutrition at Cornell University.

However, the course of Johnson's life altered when she met S.J. Ritchey from Virginia Tech. Ritchey, department head of human nutrition and foods (HNF), was visiting Cornell to help develop a nutrition graduate program back in Blacksburg. Ritchey and fellow HNF faculty member Jean Phillips (whom Johnson had met at Purdue) were influential in convincing her to join the department in 1972.

Despite only planning to stay a few years, Johnson was happily involved with research, teaching, and leadership roles for 26 years.

Johnson especially enjoyed the consumer foods tours when HNFE alumni were the tour guides. During one such visit, an alumnus encouraged students to develop international skills to learn about diverse world cultures. Several students subsequently signed up for international fellowships and study abroad opportunities.

Janet Johnson and her brother Alton, circa 1948



Johnson fondly recalls the semester that Wallace Hall was being remodeled and she taught Food Communications in a local church kitchen. Preschool children and members offered sensory critiques, creating a lively and fun atmosphere!

Regardless of the venue, Johnson was truly dedicated to teaching students healthy nutritional practices for communities and families.

It was her privilege to teach and work with those truly living "That I May Serve."



The Johnsons were recently awarded the CALS Hall of Fame Award, which honors significant leadership, service, and philanthropic contributions that demonstrate *Ut Prosim*. Jim retired as Extension director and associate professor emeritus of Extension, and Janet retired as the dean emerita of the College of Human Resources and Education and professor of HNFE. They recently celebrated their 42nd wedding anniversary. Stay in touch: janetmj610@gmail.com.

Food science is still a part of Janet's life as an Extension volunteer and as a grandmother. Since retiring, Janet has volunteered for many local community organizations and is currently the president of the Roanoke Symphony Board of Directors.



EXTENSION – Family Nutrition Program

Virginia receives \$8.8 million USDA grant to end child hunger

The Family Nutrition Program will provide nutrition education to participating families in the Virginia Hunger-Free Kids Act Demonstration Project. This grant will test the impact of providing three school meals a day to children in select schools during the school year, food for weekends and school breaks, and more resources for low-income households to purchase food during the summer months when school is not in session.

Virginia's proposal was spearheaded by first lady Dorothy McAuliffe and brings together key stakeholders from the Virginia Departments of Education, Health, and Social Services, as well as FNP, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, and Share Our Strength, a national nonprofit focused on ending child hunger.



Students participate in a Teen Cuisine cooking lesson at Life Academy in Rocky Mount.



“It’s hard to believe that nearly one in 10 children were considered food insecure in 2013. We need to consider innovative ways to address child hunger and guarantee that all Americans have access to a nutritious diet. This grant is a step in that direction,” said FNP Director Elena Serrano (pictured with Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands).

The Family Nutrition Program reaches out through social media

FNP is increasing online visibility and reinforcing in-person lessons with supportive content and messaging through their social media and marketing initiative. During the past year, more than 167,000 people were reached, leading to almost 6,000 interactions (comments, likes, shares, video views, etc.) with FNP’s audience.

Ongoing projects include Facebook (www.facebook.com/vafnp); Twitter (@vafnp); the Eat Smart, Move More blog (<http://blogs.ext.vt.edu/eatsmart-movemore/>); a collection of video podcasts created with VT dietetic students (youtube.com/user/VAFamilyNutrition/videos); and e-newsletters for FNP clients and volunteers. Future projects will build even greater capacity for reaching limited-resource Virginians, with an emphasis on mobile-friendly content and online learning programs.



The power of food marketing to CHILDREN

Adapted from a story reported by Robbie Harris, New River Valley bureau chief for WVTF / RADIO IQ / Virginia Public Radio

Does just seeing Ronald McDonald put you in the mood for a burger and fries? Well, that effect is even stronger for children, who are bombarded with billions of dollars worth of food advertising and marketing brought to them by the brand mascots and media characters they learn to love.

It's the low-hanging fruit in the childhood obesity epidemic: to redirect the power of advertising to promote foods and beverages to children that are low in salt, sugar, and fat. And by promote, researchers mean use the extraordinary power of cartoon media characters like Dora the Explorer and brand mascots like Tony the Tiger to deliver healthy lifestyle messages.

Vivica Kraak conducted a review of experimental studies that examined how popular cartoon media characters (owned by entertainment companies) and brand mascots (owned by food companies) may influence children's diet and health.

"We know that when you don't have a media character on a food versus when there is one, kids choose the food with the character," said Kraak. "But if you have a familiar media character promoting fruits or vegetables, the child is going to choose that fruit or vegetable." The power of a media character could get kids to eat broccoli? Kraak says yes. "They are very influential to inspire nostalgic memories. These characters are often used with sounds, colors, and animations that kids associate with products."

A caveat is that media-character branding is a stronger influence on children's preferences for cookies and chips compared to healthier choices.

In a second paper, Kraak documented that General Mills (owner of Buzz Bee, Chef Wendall, and Lucky the Leprechaun) and Kellogg's (owner of Tony the Tiger, Toucan Sam, and Sunny) used their brand mascots to promote six of the top 10 best-selling cereals totaling \$1.9 billion U.S. dollars in 2013.

Between 2006 and 2015, the U.S. Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative lacked clear policies for companies to use brand mascots and media characters on food packages, in merchandising, and as toy giveaways and premiums. She recommended that government, industry, and civil society could substantially strengthen their accountability for these food-marketing practices to ensure healthy food environments for children.

Recently, Kraak served on a expert committee convened by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating Research program that called on the food, beverage, restaurant, and entertainment industries to close loopholes in voluntary commitments to market healthy food products to children 14 years and younger.



Kraak's papers were recently published in *Obesity Reviews*. One discusses the influence of brand mascots and media characters on children's diet and health, and a second was an accountability evaluation of the industry's responsible use of brand mascots and media characters to promote a healthy diet to children in the U.S.



Meet Vivica Kraak, R.D., Ph.D.

Assistant professor of food and nutrition policy

Vivica Kraak has a professional passion to catalyze student's interests in how social, economic, and political processes drive food, nutrition, and public health policies in the U.S. and internationally.

One of her research areas is to understand and evaluate the dynamic changes implemented by the food and entertainment industry to align marketing practices to influence children and adolescents with a healthful diet recommended by expert and government bodies.

Another research interest is to encourage students to appreciate how and where food is produced, who harvests and transports it, the factors that influence food prices and affordability, and how food purchased and consumed influences people's diet and health.

Along with Susan Clark from horticulture, Kraak co-taught the Concepts in Community Food Systems course, part of the civic agriculture minor degree. She aspires that her work will establish Virginia Tech's reputation as a center of excellence where students become the next generation of nutrition policy entrepreneurs to shape healthy food and active living environments.

vivica51@vt.edu [@vivicakraak](https://twitter.com/vivicakraak)

Prior to relocating to Blacksburg, Kraak completed her Ph.D. in population health at Deakin University's World Health Organization's Collaborating Centre for Global Obesity Prevention in Melbourne, Australia. Her 20 plus years of experience includes working as an HIV nutrition specialist and staffing expert committees focused on obesity prevention at the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. She also collaborated with Tufts University colleagues on the Creating Healthy, Active, and Nurturing Growing-up Environments study while working as a nutrition advisor for Save the Children's obesity prevention initiative for rural children across the country.

Kraak with Boyd Swinburn, professor of Population Health at the University of Auckland, co-director of Deakin University's WHO Collaborating Centre for Global Obesity Prevention, at the Lancet global obesity 2 series of papers launch last February. They collaborated on writing the sixth paper in this series, "Strengthening of accountability systems to create healthy food environments and reduce global obesity."



Her goals for HNFE students are that they will:

- Become intellectually curious about food and nutrition policies;
- Develop versatile skills in addressing research questions that use a trans-disciplinary team approach;
- Be flexible to work in different political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts; and
- Learn to use social media professionally to champion sustainable food systems that normalize healthy eating and active living environments.



FACULTY RESEARCH

Added sugars and the consequences on childhood health and obesity

Brenda Davy, along with co-investigators Tina Savla, Valisa Hedrick, Madlyn Frisard, and University of Hawaii co-investigator Hope Jahren, was awarded a grant from the NIH's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for her proposal, "d13C Added Sugar Intake Biomarker: Determining Validity in Children."

Foods and beverages with added sugars represent about 16 percent of total daily calories consumed by children in the U.S. Added sugars are linked to weight gain and obesity and may displace nutrient-rich foods from the diet.

A major obstacle researchers face is relying on self-reported food intake, particularly for children. The use of dietary biomarkers can overcome this challenge, so Davy's findings could notably advance research addressing the health impacts of added sugar intake in kids and teens.

Davy and Jahren are pursuing additional NIH funding to carry out similar studies in adults.

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Brenda Davy's professional interests have always been focused on improving health, from her earlier days working as a clinical dietitian to her current role as a biomedical researcher. She also applies her clinical and research experiences in the classroom as co-instructor of the newly designed course Methods of Human Health Assessment, required of all HNFE undergraduates.

Fit-Ex: the cornerstone of Samantha Harden's Extension efforts

Remember those New Year's resolutions to get in shape and eat healthier that disappear by the end of January?

Well, it's not too late to achieve your summer fitness goals!

Virginia Cooperative Extension invites you to sign up for Fit-Ex, an eight week team-based health program designed to increase physical activity and improve eating habits. Groups set team goals for exercise and fruit and vegetable consumption, with the main objective of completing 150 minutes of moderate activity each week.



Extension agents provide updates and encouragement, while team captains ensure members report progress, providing a sense of accountability; this underlies the program's success. At the individual level, self-monitoring — via tracking goals and progress — is one of the most effective behavior-changing techniques.

Researchers and Extension agents have seen the success of FitEx's predecessor, Walk Kansas, for over 10 years, and the program shows great promise for Virginia's adaptation.

On the web: <http://fit-ex.org>
hardensamantha@vt.edu

FitEx is an online fitness campaign where you...

Create a Team

★ Set Goals

Track Progress

See Results!





Andy Clark; League American Bicyclists, Carlos Dora; WHO; Janet Rankin, Rear Admiral Surgeon General Boris Lushniak; Jim Sallis; Active Living Research

Promoting an ActivEarth

Janet Rankin is exploring the impacts of active transportation by leading ActivEarth, a global-scale and science-based initiative intent on improving public health, the environment, and the economy through greater levels of physical activity.

Physical activity reduces most non-communicable diseases, yet less than half of U.S. adults exercise at recommended levels. Even though 27 percent of all trips are less than a mile, only a third of these are completed by biking or walking, contributing to rising health care costs, greenhouse gas emissions, and depletion of fossil fuels.

Rankin initiated a collaboration with the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies and planned the scientific conference “Moving Active Transportation to Higher Ground: Opportunities for Accelerating the Assessment of Health Impacts.” Scientists, transportation planners, and community designers presented research that explored the barriers and health benefits of active transportation.

On the web: <http://activeearth.org>.
jrankin@vt.edu @JanetWRankin

Rankin is collaborating with Urban Affairs and Planning faculty and developing classes on active transportation in Blacksburg and on campus.

Fabio Almeida: building South American connections

For the last two years, Fabio Almeida has traveled to Brazil to present “Health Program Planning and Evaluation Using the RE-AIM Framework.”

The Brazilian RE-AIM version is culturally adapted and translates health research into practice in five steps: Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance.

He also collaborated with the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Florianopolis and received two grants:

- Development and implementation of a distance learning program to train public health care professionals on planning and evaluation of health promotion and disease prevention programs
- Adaptation and dissemination of evidence-based physical activity interventions into clinical and community practice using the Brazilian national health care system and RE-AIM

During the next year, Almeida is hosting Camila Squarcini, a M.S. and Ph.D. student on a one-year pre-doctoral fellowship from the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology, and Felipe Marta, a postdoctoral fellow from the Brazilian Ministry of Education.

On the web: www.re-aim.hnfe.vt.edu.
almeida@vt.edu



INTERNSHIP IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Our internship program graduates have exceptional roles as registered dietitians!

Within a year, graduates of the Virginia Tech dietetics programs achieve a 100 percent pass rate on the registration exam. Once they have their R.D. credentials, they work in unique roles, like Kerry Calise, Katey Halasz, Dan Kahn, Katie Nash, and Rebekah Overstreet.



Kerry Johnson Calise (B.S. '08, internship '10) took a keen interest in public health as an undergraduate student in HNFE when she studied Appalachian culture and learned about their community health care needs. After completing her internship, Kerry started her career as a clinical dietitian in the New York City area. She is now pursuing her interest in community health by completing her M.P.H. in health policy and management at New York Medical College. She also works for Abbott Nutrition in New York City and collaborates with hospitals to help address the high prevalence of malnutrition in acute care and community settings. Johnson hopes to utilize her graduate degree and bring about health policy change to improve community access to healthy food.

Katey Swanson Halasz (internship '10) is a content specialist with Nemours on the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives Project.

The project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a learning collaborative model used to educate and empower early care and education providers on implementing best practices for early childhood nutrition, physical activity, reduced screen time, and breastfeeding support in their programs. To learn more about the National ECELC project, visit <https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/about-ecelc/>.



Dan Kahn (internship '10) is a clinical dietitian with the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center near Boston, where he collaborates with community agencies and residents to provide comprehensive health care that is accessible to everyone. After working in an acute care setting as an R.D., and participating in interdisciplinary rounds, Kahn observed that nurse practitioners are similar to R.D.'s in supporting primary care prevention. He is now completing a M.S. in nursing with the MGH Institute of Health Professions with the ultimate goal of becoming a family nurse practitioner.

DC Central Kitchen provided Katie Nash (internship '12) an exceptional rotation that led to a job she loves! As manager of School Food Programs, she oversees 6,400 scratch-cooked, locally-sourced school meals each day to students in 10 Washington, D.C. schools. She also oversees nutrition education programs such as taste tests, cooking classes, and theme meals to encourage students to make healthier choices. As a result, fruit and vegetable intake among students has increased. According to Nash, "my job has allowed me to combine my passion for food, healthy eating, and working with children and turn it into a career. I believe that providing children, especially those in underserved populations, with nutritious foods and education at a young age is the key to lifelong wellness and health."



Nash and Ed Kwitowski, director of School Food Services at D.C. Central Kitchen, raise awareness about their Healthy Corner Program during Growing Healthy Schools Week.



Rebekah Miller Overstreet (B.S. '10, internship '11) is the diabetes program coordinator at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Martinsburg, West Virginia. She oversees diabetes clinics at both the medical center and throughout the surrounding community, and she is committed to helping veterans receive the best diabetes care from their medical teams. Overstreet is currently working to integrate medical and nutrition appointments for veterans in order to create a more streamlined, integrative care environment. She is also organizing a diabetes prevention class and aims to increase community outreach by creating a testimonial video of patients who have achieved better diabetes control.

The Virginia Tech Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics prepares confident and competent dietitians who balance evidence-based practice with client-centered care.

NEW FACES AND UPDATES



Carlin Rafie is assistant professor and adult nutrition Extension specialist. Her research focuses on community engaged resource and gap assessment; community programming for measurable improvement of health outcomes; impact of diet, physical activity, and sleep quality on inflammation and quality of life of cancer survivors; and models of community educator training for hard to reach populations.



Michelle Smith Rockwell (B.S. '97, M.S. '99) is the new graduate and dietetics program coordinator. She will be responsible for management, coordination, and collaboration within and among the graduate program, didactic program in dietetics, and the internship in nutrition and dietetics. Rockwell and her family are happy to be back in Blacksburg!



Lucinda Shewchuk is a program specialist in the Translational Obesity Research Center and is facilitating grant and research proposals for all HNFE faculty. She previously worked for the Occupational Safety and Health Research Center on campus.



Susan Hutson retired April 1. She will continue her research, work with HNFE's study abroad opportunities, and assist in the development of an integrative health minor. Hutson joined HNFE in 2008 as department head and stepped down in 2013.

Madlyn Frisard is the new director of the graduate program, replacing Brenda Davy.

Congratulations to our graduate students who completed their degrees in 2014-2015!

M.S. graduates:

Eirika Abbey (BCS*): "School's Out! Active After the School Day"

Joshua Bostic (CPM*): "Stable Isotope Variability in the American Food Supply: Implications for Dietary Reconstruction Applications"

Maggie Reinhold (BCS): "Exploring the reach and representativeness of participants enrolled in a behavioral intervention targeting sugar-sweetened beverage consumption"

Gregory Rodden (MCS*): "The Effects of Resistance Wheel Running on Skeletal Muscle Function and Adaptive Signaling in C57BL/10SnJ Mice"

Maja Tyhurst (BCS): "Application of The Theory of Planned Behavior in a Randomized Control Trial Targeting Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake and Physical Activity in Southwest Virginia"

Ph.D. graduates:

Angela Baily (BCS): "Exploring health disparities in rural regions of Virginia: The impact of health literacy and social capital"

Alisha Farris (BCS): "Improving the Nutritional Quality of the Lunches of Elementary School Children"

Cynthia Karlsson (BCS): "Health Promotion Programs within Worksite Settings: The Implementation and Evaluation of Weight Loss Programs"

Lauren Kennedy (BCS): "The Slow Down Program: A mixed methods intervention to promote mindfulness-based stress management and healthy eating with mothers of young children"

Shaun Riebl (CPM): "Understanding adolescent's sugary beverage consumption: A review and application of the Theory of Planned Behavior"

Michael Tarpey (MCS): "Effects of an acute high-fat diet and endurance exercise training on skeletal muscle mitophagy and mitochondrial dynamics in response to a high-fat meal"

* Behavioral and Community Science (BCS) * Clinical Physiology and Metabolism (CPM) * Molecular and Cellular Science (MCS)

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2015 HNFE Outstanding Senior: Justin Resendes was recognized for his high GPA, outstanding undergraduate research, and commitment to volunteering for local and international outreach programs. He earned a VCOM Global Health Internship, which enabled him to participate in a medical mission trip to El Salvador; he also helped arrange other trips to Central America and the Appalachian region. Resendes' undergraduate research led to two summer research program fellowships, and he presented his findings at the national level. He was a member of Virginia Tech's chapter of the American Medical Student Association and Hokie Health Club. Resendes will be attending the VCOM-Virginia campus and plans to be an orthopedic surgeon.



HNFE and CALS Outstanding Recent Alumna Katrina Butner Piercy (Ph.D. '10, R.D., ACSM-CES) is the physical activity and nutrition advisor to the Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. "As a part of the U.S. Public Health Service Corps, she holds the rank of lieutenant and provides expertise in cross training in nutrition and physical activity. She was a subcommittee lead for the development and promotion of the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans and designs the My Plate guidelines. Piercy also serves as a mentor and preceptor to students going through the visiting scholar program at ODPHP, and at the request of the Acting Surgeon General, led the annual Physical Fitness Test Project for almost 7000 members of the USPHS Corps.

Outstanding Senior Alumna: Brenda Harmon Rohe (B.S. '66) is an outpatient registered dietitian for Novant Health Presbyterian Medical Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. She has provided advisory support to the department's accredited dietetics programs, and her named scholarship has been awarded to 22 dietetics students planning to become registered dietitians. She also supports university alumni functions in North Carolina. Rohe was a member of the American Dietetic Association and held leadership roles in several associations in the dietetics profession. Additionally, she has published recipes in Southern Living Magazine and Annual Cookbooks. Rohe's many contributions to health fairs and community events related to nutrition, weight management, diabetes, and heart health allow her to carry out the Virginia Tech motto *Ut Prosim*.



Jessica Li was honored as the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Student of the Year for her exceptional achievement in academics, leadership, and service. Li, who graduated in May with dual B.S. honors degrees in HNFE and biological sciences, also minored in chemistry and maintained a 4.0 GPA while paying for her education.

Li said her research and service work made her realize the true meaning of *Ut Prosim*. "As a Spanish translator on a medical mission trip in Honduras, I discovered the importance of seeing the world through the eyes of others. Applying myself in community-based research, I worked to make positive changes in my community. As a hospice volunteer, my patients model the importance of living every moment with an open mind and learning from those around us. Working as an academic tutor, students teach me to be sensitive to the needs of others. In classes, through brainstorming and teamwork, my peers instilled the power of collaboration and strength in numbers," she said.

Li's experiences at Virginia Tech have inspired her to dedicate her life to serving others. She has been accepted to medical school, where she will continue to pursue her passion for medicine, especially as it relates to diversity and geriatrics.

Packed vs. school lunches: which is healthier?

What do you discover when you compare packed lunches to those offered in schools?

Recent Ph.D. graduate Alisha Farris and her team found the typical packed lunch contained more sugary beverages, desserts, and chips and fewer fruits and vegetables when compared to the school cafeteria. Surprised?

Their findings led to the development of a parent questionnaire that targets motivations and barriers to choosing school lunches vs. packing. They also developed a pilot program called PACK-IT, which helps parents plan healthier lunches for their children.

The research gained national recognition and was featured on Good Morning America, the New York Times, the Washington Post, National Public Radio, and over 100 additional news media sites and outlets. It was also accepted for presentation at 13 different venues with five publications produced so far.

Farris' doctoral studies focused on childhood obesity and school nutrition, and her major advisor was Elena Serrano. A registered dietitian nutritionist and a certified specialist in pediatric nutrition, she is now leading a food security assessment project in Madagascar with the assistance of two HNFE undergraduate students. The project will focus on diet diversity, malnutrition, and food availability and will target mothers and young children. Follow her adventures in Madagascar at <http://alisha010.wix.com/alishafarris#!blog/c5i1>.



Student award winners 2014-15

Anthem Hokie Spirit Scholarship:

Daniel Giraldo Herrera was recognized for his high GPA, academic successes, and his commitment to volunteering for local and international community outreach programs, including programs to help improve English proficiency for non-native speaking students.

Kathryn Ingraham was also recognized for her high GPA and academic achievements. She has contributed over 250 hours to volunteering over the last two and a half years, which includes working with a service sorority.

Margaret C. Hepler Summer Research Fellowship:

Ramine Alexander: "Developing a Parental Advisory Board of the iChoose Program"

Mostafa Ali: "The Role of Toll-like Receptor 4 in mediating Cytokine and Metabolic Responses to Exercise in Skeletal Muscle"

Suzanne Bowser: "Skeletal muscle pro-inflammatory signaling and metabolic flexibility"

Emily Pyne: "Investigating the metabolism of ovarian cancer stem cells and spheroids"

Michael Houston Memorial Scholarship:

Will Moore has served as a teaching assistant at both Virginia Tech and Kansas State University. He was part of a fellowship program through the college, where he learned about contemporary pedagogical practices and conducted teaching research. He is also an instructor of anatomy,

physiology, and microbiology at New River Community College. In his application, Moore states that he lives and teaches by the quote, "Innovatively write the history of the generation with an enthusiastic approach that inspires, excites, and entertains."

George Oley Fund for Excellence:

Katherine Stewart maintains a strong GPA in both HNFE and outside classes while being a member of the Hokie Varsity Cheerleading Squad. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in physical therapy.

Carol Papillon Dietetic Scholarship:

Olivia Schwartz is pursuing a combined B.S./M.S. degree to be followed by a dietetics internship. Outside the classroom, she is working on edits for a textbook and doing undergraduate research with Elena Serrano.

Brenda Rohe Dietetic Scholarship:

Keya Dunford is a proud Wythe County resident majoring in both dietetics and psychology. She plans to become a R.D. and work in childhood obesity and nutrition counseling. While earning Dean's List honors, Dunford has been a member of the Student Nutrition and Dietetics Association for the past two years and currently serves as the club secretary.

Don Selbolt Fitness and Wellness Award:

Tanya Halliday presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting in Orlando and attended three other meetings this year.

Paige Spangler and Aaron Gringer received the prestigious Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarships, which are only offered to 14 students in the nation. They will receive full funding for their dental school education in exchange for serving four years in the Air Force and Army, respectively.

Paige Spangler graduated this spring Summa Cum Laude, and in addition to completing a minor in psychology, was on the Dean's List every semester for four years. She also volunteered with Missions of Mercy and a Remote Area Medical Clinic, both large-scale community-based programs that offer dental services to those in need. Spangler will attend Nova Southeastern University and will then serve four years as a captain with the U.S. Air Force. After her military service is complete, she plans to attend orthodontic school.



Paige Spangler with her brother Wesley (HNFE and poultry sciences, B.S. '13) and fiancé Dustin Hardy on a family trip to Tanzania and Kenya last summer. The Spangler siblings have been diehard Hokie fans since childhood; their parents and many extended family members are alums, so there was never any other college choice for them!



Aaron Gringer completed a double major in biological sciences and HNFE. Inspired by his love of learning and teaching, he coached a local recreational league soccer team, tutored local high school students, and was a teaching assistant for Principles of Biology. His career focus changed to medicine when biochemistry research led to a Fralin Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. Gringer's interest in dentistry began in pre-dental club, where he learned how the field combined sciences with micro-engineering artistry. He then shadowed a local dentist and decided this was the career for him. He will attend Columbia University College of Dental Medicine and then spend four years as an active duty captain in the U.S. Army serving as a dentist both domestically and abroad. After his service, Gringer hopes to open a practice in New Mexico, a top underserved state for dentistry. He is appreciative of the opportunities Virginia Tech gave him, which has allowed him to pursue a career beyond his expectations!

OUR ALUMNI

We would love to share your story here! Send news, updates, and photos to ssonger@vt.edu; Include your degree and the year you graduated.

Update your address online with the Virginia Tech Alumni Association: www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/. If you ever opted out of receiving email or mail from the university, you must email their office (alumnidata@vt.edu) to change this preference.



Charlie Badawy, Sarah Bassett Walls, Steve Reed, and Kelsey Doucet Reed.

Charlie Badawy (HNFE '14) works full-time as a strength and conditioning coach with Strength and Performance Training, Inc. in Fairfax, Virginia. His day-to-day work includes writing strength programs for athletes of all shapes and sizes, performing intake assessments on first-timers,

developing marketing strategies to serve more area athletes, and coaching on and off site. SAPT offers semi-private training for up to seven people in any given hour, so Badawy can be coaching a college baseball player alongside a weight-loss client, while also critiquing the deadlift form of powerlifters. In addition, he runs team-training sessions for a local club volleyball league and is currently developing a collegiate baseball off-season program for the summer. Badawy says he is "fortunate to find myself living *Ut Prosim* every single day at SAPT, while also working with my fellow Hokies Kelsey Doucet Reed (HNFE '09), Steve Reed (HNFE '09), and Sarah Bassett Walls (ID '06)." He is applying to graduate school for physical therapy, which will allow him to carry on living the Hokie tradition.

Keep in touch: crbadawy@vt.edu

After graduating in 2013, Kristen DeAngelis completed her dietetic internship at Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Chicago and became a certified registered dietitian. Her passion for nutrition, healthy living, and helping others all comes together as an R.D. with the online company, Reboot With Joe. This company started in response to the documentary "Fat, Sick, and Nearly Dead," which showcased Joe Cross's journey to lose weight and cure his autoimmune disease by only consuming fresh juices. As an R.D. she responds to nutrition issues, leads nutrition camps and campaigns, and works directly with Cross (pictured at right) to manage his personal nutrition and exercise regime. Her passion to help as many people as possible is rewarded with hundreds of daily messages she responds to, as well as meeting those who have turned their health around. DeAngelis says, "by leading change from the ground up with families, kids, and adults that are struggling with weight and disease, this is where revolution in our food system happens!"



Follow her on Instagram: [KristDeAngelis](#),
Twitter: [@KristDeAngelis](#),
and iTunes Podcast: [JuicingRadio.](#)

Mabry frequently runs with her two dogs, Friesia and Wicket. Even after traveling all over Europe, she loves all that Blacksburg has to offer.



Erin Mabry (Ph.D. '13) is a research associate with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute at the Center for Truck and Bus Safety. Her research centers on improving the health and safety of commercial drivers, who have a higher than average obesity rate which leads to increased crash risks. She studies commercial driver health and wellness, obstructive sleep apnea, cardiovascular and metabolic consequences of sleep apnea, and fatigue management in commercial motor vehicle operations. A recent case study evaluated a national trucking company's health and wellness program; Mabry and her colleagues collected data that will assist and encourage other trucking companies to create similar programs.

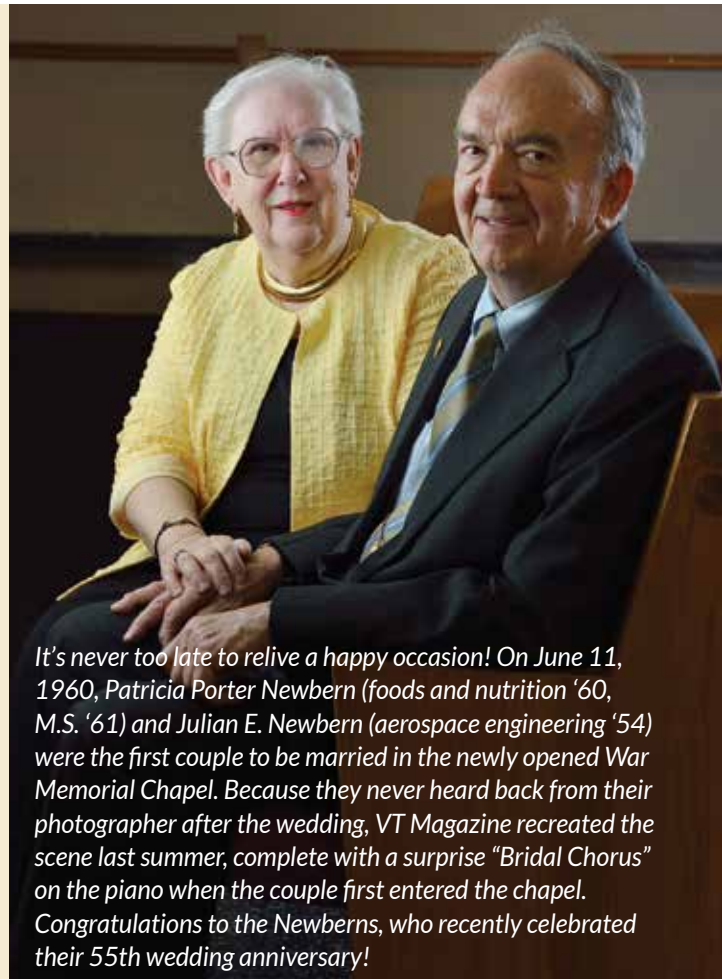
She serves as secretary for the Transportation Research Board Committee on Truck and Bus Safety and is an active member of the ACSM and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Mabry earned her degree in clinical exercise physiology under the direction of Bill Herbert.

Keep in touch: jemabry@vt.edu

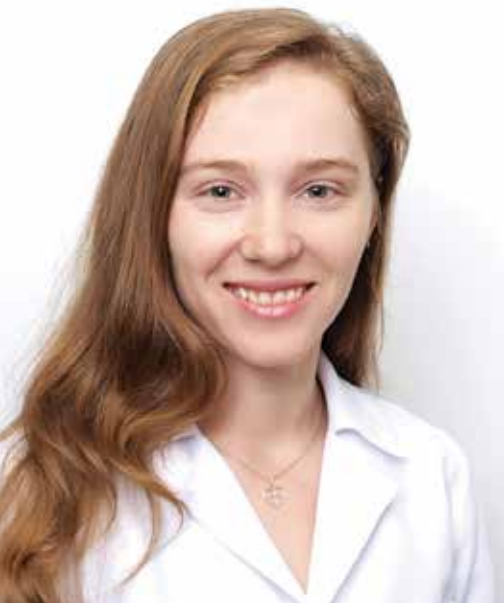
Amar Mukhtar (B.S. '12) learned early on that he wanted to go into medicine after a visit to his native country of Sudan, where he was overwhelmed by the lack of healthcare. While he was an honors student at Virginia Tech, Mukhtar received the Jerry and Leslie Gough Fellowship, where recipients design an experience that enhances their awareness of medicine as a career. Mukhtar compared American healthcare and medicine to Sudan, which intensified his plans to become a physician working with underserved populations. He has just completed his third year at the Edward Via-Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine on a full scholarship from the National Health Service Corps, and in exchange, will work in an underserved region for several years post-residency.

Keep in touch: amukhtar@vcom.edu

During his second year, Mukhtar went on a medical mission trip to El Salvador, he enjoyed the experience so much that he will return next year.



It's never too late to relive a happy occasion! On June 11, 1960, Patricia Porter Newbern (foods and nutrition '60, M.S. '61) and Julian E. Newbern (aerospace engineering '54) were the first couple to be married in the newly opened War Memorial Chapel. Because they never heard back from their photographer after the wedding, VT Magazine recreated the scene last summer, complete with a surprise "Bridal Chorus" on the piano when the couple first entered the chapel. Congratulations to the Newberns, who recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary!



Jessica Dexter Skakalska (B.S. '11, internship '12) works as a consultant dietitian in an American clinic in Kiev, Ukraine, where she provides weight loss counseling, meal planning, and chronic disease management plans. Although the food is fresh and healthy, many Ukrainians are overweight due to lack of exercise and their carbohydrate-based diet. One of her biggest challenges was learning the different foods available and making recommendations based on seasonal availability. However, Skakalska is excited to change the way her clients feel about food and health, which will hopefully lead to a new mindset passed down to the next generation. While she plans to be in the Kiev area for another five to 10 years, Skakalska eventually hopes to study public health and move to India or Nepal where she can open a nutrition clinic at an orphanage.

Keep in touch: jessica.dexter11@gmail.com

Class Notes

1980s

Eric Terry (HNF) is president of the Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association.

Kathryn Wright Hosig (HNF) was inducted into Purdue's Department of Nutrition Science Hall of Fame.

1990s

Robert K. Griffin (BAD, HNF '94), Hadley, Mass., is the deputy under secretary for the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate.

2000s

James Bean (HNFE, BAD '13) and **Katherine Maloney** (HD '14) were married on April 12, 2014.

Paul Blalock (HNFE '09, internship '11) is a R.D. with LifeCare Management in Las Vegas, Nevada. pblalock26@yahoo.com

Eric Frady (CE) and **Amy Coddington Frady** (HNFE '05) had a son on Jan. 6, 2014.

Matthew Cook (HNFE '03) was elected chairman of the National Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching and named a senior staff member at the Osaka Prefectural Board of Education.

Elizabeth Henry, M.S., R.D., L.D.N. (HNFE '11) is a R.D. for Pittsburgh Public Schools. ehenry06@gmail.com

David W. Litchfield (CHE, CHE '07, CHE '08) and **Lindsey Saufley Litchfield** (HNFE '04) had a son on May 7, 2014.

John A. Majeski (HIST) and **Meagan Schroeder Majeski** (HNFE), had a son on August 1, 2014.

Michelle Spiers Schmeissing (HNFE) had a daughter on Jan. 10, 2014.

Sarah Misyak (HNFE B.S. '06, M.S. '08, Ph.D. '14) was selected for the first class of Engagement Faculty Fellows at VT Engage: The Community Learning Collaborative. She is a postdoctoral scholar with HNFE.

Sarah Visich (HNFE) earned a M.S. in physician assistant studies from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Ashley Holmes Roth (HNFE B.S. '08, M.S. '09, internship '12) is a clinical research coordinator at Seton Hill University outside of Pittsburgh. Her research evaluates the health status of college students and assesses the impact of a text-message based intervention on individual health goal attainment across the domains of nutrition, sleep, exercise, and stress. Roth is also teaching for the Coordinated Program in Nutrition and Dietetics. She and husband Ben Roth (Geology B.S. '08, M.S. '10) welcomed their daughter Libby on Jan. 22, 2015.

Keep in touch: ashley.shannon.holmes@gmail.com



2010s

Robert Benson (HNFE '11) is a R.D. at Doctors Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. robert24benson@gmail.com

Abby Carter (HNFE '12) is an account manager with UNFI, a leading independent national distributor of natural, organic, and specialty foods and related products including nutritional supplements, personal care items, and organic produce. cartera@vt.edu

Rachel Cornett Hart (HNFE '10, M.S. '11) is a thoracic transplant dietitian with the U.Va. Health System in Charlottesville, Virginia. rchart4@gmail.com

Roxana Ehsani, M.S., R.D. (HNFE '12) recently joined Giant Foods in Washington, D.C. as an in-store dietitian. She will be doing one-on-one consultations, group presentations, in-store cooking demonstrations, and work in the community. Once established, she would enjoy working with HNFE student volunteers. ehsani@gmail.com

Sydney Flippo, M.S., R.D. (HNFE '12) is an outpatient dietitian at San Joaquin Community Hospital in Bakersfield, California. She works with the diabetes education and cardiac rehab programs, teaches DSME classes, and does one-on-one nutrition counseling. She also teaches pre-op education classes and completes patient assessments with the Bariatric Solutions program and is the dietitian for the medically-managed weight loss curriculum. Flippo also appears on local TV stations to promote health and nutrition programs and tips. seflippo@gmail.com

Suzie Lee, R.D. (HNFE '10) is a regulatory specialist at Nestle USA in Cleveland, Ohio. susanne.a.lee@gmail.com

Whitney Leet, M.S., R.D. (HNFE '13) is a program associate at the International Life Sciences Institute Research Foundation, which focuses on implementing programs related to agriculture, nutrition security, and sustainability in developing world countries. She works with scientific programs (primarily nutrition and food safety), communications, and finances. lwhitney16@gmail.com

Michael Mansdoerfer (PSYC) and Catherine Christensen Mansdoerfer (HNFE '11) were married on May 24, 2014.

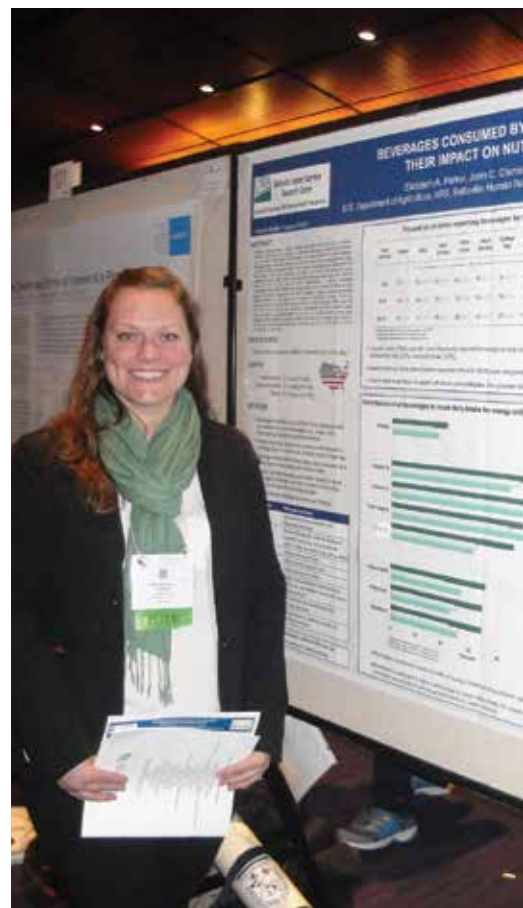
John Parker (ENSC, CSES) and Kelly Phillips Parker (BIOL, HNFE, PH '13) were married on June 7, 2014.

Allison Smith, M.P.H., R.D. (HNFE '10, M.P.H. '13) is a retail dietitian at ShopRite in New York City. allisonl.smith87@gmail.com

Shannon Summers, M.S., R.D., L.D.N. (HNFE '12) recently graduated from the combined M.S./D.I. program at Northern Illinois University, passed the R.D. exam, and accepted a clinical dietitian position with Mission Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina. shannonsummers4@gmail.com

Elizabeth Tankovich, R.D. (HNFE M.S. '12) was commissioned as an officer and entered the U.S. Army M.S./D.I. program; she is stationed in Hawaii at Tripler Army Medical Center. ebt2t@virginia.edu

Kate Turner R.D., L.D.N., C.L.C. (HNFE '12) is working as an R.D. at the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA in Havertown, Pennsylvania, where she leads their nutrition program. Since opening last fall, the Y has over 24,000 members, making it the fastest growing one in the country. They are also working to be one of the first YMCAs to accept insurance for nutrition consultations. kktturner22@gmail.com



Elizabeth Dennis Parker, R.D., Ph.D. (HNFE '06, Ph.D. '10), won the American Society for Nutrition's Emerging Leaders in Nutrition Science Competition, presented at Experimental Biology 2015. This program recognizes the highest quality research presented by students and young investigators at ASN's Scientific Sessions and Annual Meeting. Her winning abstract was "Beverage Groups Consumed by U.S. Children and Their Impact on Nutrient Intake."

Parker is currently working as a research scientist with the USDA in Beltsville, Maryland.

Keep in touch:
elizabeth.parker@ars.usda.gov

Study Abroad Ecuador 2014-15:

Sustainable agriculture, natural resources, health

CALS and HNFE students and faculty experienced a trip of a lifetime to Ecuador during Winter Session!

The group explored incredibly diverse ecosystems, cultural and historical sites, universities, the Amazon rainforest, and the Andes Mountains while embracing the country's culture, people, and food.

Excursions included Quito, the Galapagos Islands, the Tiputini Biodiversity Station, and Riobamba. They were also able to see many of the rainforest's medicinal plants and spent time with a shaman in Salasaska. More trips are being planned.



See more pictures at <https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/ecuador2014>.

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