Shawnet Jones

Four-year medical student Shawnet Jones embodies the leadership, compassion and broad reach of students helping shape the CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program and UConn’s Urban Service Track (UST). In 2005, Jones enrolled in the University of Connecticut’s combined program in medicine, an eight-year program for high achieving high school students which ushered through her four years of college and then, medical school. As an undergraduate, Jones graduated with honors, completed research, participated in the Rowe Health Professions Scholars Program, and worked with the university’s foundation as a way of giving back. By the time she entered medical school, Jones already knew she was interested in working with underserved and underrepresented populations. She was immediately drawn to UST, which served as her introduction to AHEC. As an Urban Health Scholar, Jones has participated in and been a student leader for programs such as the UConn Migrant Farm Clinics and National Kidney Foundation Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) screenings. She also has been an active participant in health promotion education and screenings sponsored by the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services, and community outreach activities designed to promote health awareness and education. She is frequently asked to speak with students who are interested in health careers, and mentors younger Urban Health Scholars. For the past four years, she has spent a half day per week at her student continuity practice site at Asylum Hill Family Practice serving patients from the Hartford community.

Expanding on her experiences as a UST scholar and provider at Asylum Hill, Jones has chosen to again partner with AHEC and UST to complete her fourth year selective project. Advised by Dr. Jared Brunnemann from UConn’s NEAG School of Education, the focus of her project is nutrition and its effects on urban and underserved populations. Now, eight years after her UConn journey first began, she serves as student chair of the Family Medicine Interest Group, as a dynamic member of multiple student and professional organizations, and actively pursues a redefined program in family medicine.

Over time, Jones has embraced numerous leadership opportunities and roles, which have ultimately provided health careers awareness, health profession student training and mentorship and underserved population outreach to vulnerable communities.

Kate Kubler

Kate Kubler arrived at UConn’s School Of Medicine with a commitment to primary care and an ever-deepening interest in caring for the most vulnerable populations. Prior to beginning her medical education, Kubler worked as an Autism behavior specialist and a children’s hospital patient safety intern. With these experiences shaping her view on the need for diversity in her practice, she decided to seek a home with the Urban Service Track (UST).

Throughout her enrollment in the School of Medicine, she has embraced every opportunity to expand her toolkit as a clinical provider. She has participated in numerous service activities focused on health promotion and prevention screening in underserved communities. These events have included:

- the CT Mission of Mercy Free Dental Clinic
- National Kidney Foundation Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) screenings
- Migrant Farm Worker Clinics
- Family Medicine Interest Group, as a dynamic member of multiple student and professional organizations
- caring for patients at the UConn Urban Health Scholar Program

Kubler has helped develop UST’s mentoring program. During her third year, she initiated an understanding of the importance of characterizing the formal and informal mentoring components within the program. Central to her commitment to personal and professional integration of the Core Competencies for Inter-professional Collaborative Practice developed by the Inter-professional Education Collaborative (IPEC). She surveyed UST students as well as affiliated faculty to identify their interest and desire for collaborative practice, mentoring and career advising. The project yielded a wealth of information and data for use in further developing UST. Part two of the project will be to apply information with medical students who are not engaged in the program. As a scholar and health professional, Kubler has led UST’s mentoring program.

Kate Kubler, Urban Health Scholar, CT AHEC Program Office

Shawnet Jones, Urban Health Scholar, CT AHEC Program Office and underserved populations.

Kubler’s affiliation with the CT AHEC Program and the UST has helped raise the visibility of opportunities available to health profession students as well as the critical needs in urban communities. Not only is Jones an outstanding ambassador for UConn’s Urban Health Scholar, but she also exemplifies the type of student that AHECs want to engage in their programming.

Shanta Wiley

Shanta Wiley: AmeriCorps Changed My Life

Shanta Wiley made a difference in her life while make a difference in others’ lives serving as a Youth Health Corps (YHC) AmeriCorps AC member at the Connecticut AHEC Network. Wiley was unemployed in 2010 and looking for ways to make herself more marketable to employers. She thought volunteering might be one approach she applied to be a full-time YHC AC member. Wiley was not sure if she could do it. She and her children were on the brink of homelessness, but she knew that the experience would change the face of her resume and have the potential to put her in a position to improve her long-term employment prospects. Did it ever!

Looking back on her experience she cannot imagine where she would be if she had not committed to serve as an AmeriCorps member.

The CT AHEC Network’s YHCS AmeriCorps Program places 17 full-time members at the regional Connecticut AHECs. Members engage at-risk high school and middle school students in service learning projects that address pressing community health issues. Wiley completed her 720-hour service term at the Central AHEC located in Hartford.

Being an YHC AmeriCorps member allowed Wiley to explore the many facets of public health. Performing out-reach to youth and the community and learning about non-profit organizational design helped her understand what public health involves.

“Here was my opportunity to DO SOMETHING about what is going in my community.” Wiley said. “Now, I am motivated to get involved in making change and making a change in the community. I’ve learned so much about myself.” Wiley learned “to step up and let my voice and ideas be heard, not for me, but for the community I serve. Work is no longer for me, it’s for the community.”

Wiley credits her AC experience with solidifying her interest in starting her own nonprofit in Place making. Shanta remarked, “I only can go up from here! Thank AmeriCorps for the wonderful experience.”

The goal of the YHC AmeriCorps program is to engage at-risk youth who are interested in pursuing a health career in service. They learn about unmet health care needs and how to engage in post-secondary health professional training programs. While working towards this goal, AHEC’s AmeriCorps members also gain valuable experience and connections that help propel them toward meaningful careers.
Central CT AHEC's EMT Training Institute Provides Opportunities for Hartford Residents

The Central Connecticut Area Health Education Center (AHEC) has developed and implemented a program that targets underserved populations, including the short supply of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities in the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) field. The program, Improved Access to Academic and Career Training, is a three-year pilot project that provides free training, support, and educational opportunities to encourage community colleges to serve as recruitment sites for EMT training.

Central AHEC EMT Training Institute Putts Residents in the Fast Lane to Success

Kevin Coleman, former EMT student, Central CT AHEC

Kevin Coleman worked as an EMT for the Bridgeport Volunteer Ambulance Association as a driver for 10 years. He was looking for a change and found the Central AHEC EMT Training Institute.

“What I am doing now has opened my eyes and has opened doors of opportunities that would not have been available to me if it wasn’t for this program,” Coleman said.

He is now a Preceptor with the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance Association as a driver for EMTs and was recently promoted to Field Training and Recruiting Coordinator, his new position.

“My experience with Central AHEC has been tremendous. I’m proud to be a part of the Central AHEC team and I am excited for the future,” Coleman said.

Central AHEC is committed to providing opportunities for individuals who are looking to make a difference in their community and achieve a rewarding career in the field of emergency medical services.