

# News from the U

WINTER 2010

## WELCOME!

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### IMPORTANT MGC DATES

- February 24 and 26, 2010:** Oral Comprehensive Exams
- March 12, 2010:** First day of interviews for the MGC Program
- March 25, 2010:** Multidisciplinary Autism Workshop at Towson University
- April 23, 2010:** Universal notification date for all Genetic Counseling Programs
- May 20, 2010:** MGC Precommencement Ceremony
- May 21, 2010:** UMB Graduation
- May 31, 2010:** Summer rotations begin

As we sit to write the newsletter, Jessica and I can't believe it is already mid-February. The semester is going by so quickly. We have enjoyed getting to know the 1st year students and celebrating the successes of the 2nd year class. Graduation will be here before we know it!

Each of the 2nd year students is actively completing her thesis and course work. Additionally, all of the 2nd year students have started the job hunting process and finishing Spring rotations.

The 1st year students have established their routines and are getting

ready for summer rotations and volunteer camp experiences. They are also active in a community support group for people with genetic conditions. We look forward to introducing you to them in

rotations.

As always, we would like to thank all of our supervisors and alumni as the program could not exist nor succeed without your hard work and dedication.

*Jessica and Shannan*



MGC Students from L to R: (back row) Johanna Loewenstein; Sara Shelley, Vaishnavi Subramani; Laura Hutchins; Val Kantor; Jenn Weiss (front row) Rio Friday; Veronique Weinstein; Casey Lord; Jess Stransky; Zlatka Kostova and Jessie Abel.

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MGC FACULTY

There have been three new additions to the MGC program faculty this year. We would like to welcome **Julie Kaplan, MD, Lauren Doyle, MGC, and Carrie Blout, MS, CGC** to the genetics faculty. Dr. Julie Kaplan joined the Division of Pediatric Genetics as physician who specializes in pediatric genetics and dysmorphology. Dr. Kaplan completed medical school at the University of Maryland, her residency at the St. Louis Chil-

dren's Hospital (Washington University) and her fellowship in genetics at Stanford University. Lauren Doyle is an alumni of the MGC training program and she completed her undergraduate studies at SUNY-Geneseo in New York. Lauren is working in the Department of OB/GYN as a prenatal genetic counselor. Carrie Blout completed her undergraduate studies at Dickinson College

in Carlisle, PA and earned her MS in Genetic Counseling at the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to joining our team, Carrie worked as a pediatric genetic counselor at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH. Carrie now serves as the Newborn Screening Follow-up coordinator for the State of Maryland and as a pediatric genetic counselor in the Division of Pediatric Genetics.

## CLASS OF 2010

The MGC Class of 2010 are busy completing their independent study projects. Each student is actively completing a challenging project and all have had strong support from the community. Additionally, each of the students is beginning their job hunt. Please feel free to send any opportunities for GC positions to the program and we will share them with our students.

**Laura Hutchins:** Developing Pre-operation Support Materials for Pediatric Patients with Loey's-Dietz syndrome: A Pilot Study

**Zlatka Kostova:** Advocacy and Support Within Support Groups

**Johanna Loewenstein:** The impact of false-positive newborn screening results on families

**Casey Lord:** Motivation for the Amish Populations Participation in Genetic Research

**Veronique Weinstein:** Support Service Needs of Adult Siblings of Persons with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome

**Jenn Weiss:** The Impact of Children with Special Needs on Reproductive Decisions: Parent reports of birth order, reproductive decisions, and influential factors within the child, the family, and the community



Several of the 2nd year students attended the 2009 NSGC AEC in Atlanta, GA. From Left to Right: Veronique Weinstein, Laura Hutchins, Casey Lord, Jenn Weiss and Johanna Loewenstein

## 2010 GRADUATION

The MGC Pre-commencement Ceremony and Student Colloquium will be held on Thursday May 20, 2010 beginning at 1pm in the HSF II auditorium. Each of our graduates will share a 20 minute presentation of their Independent Study Projects. All are invited to attend. Our keynote speaker will be Betsy Gettig, MS, CGC of the University of Pittsburgh Training Program. Ms. Gettig is the recipient of the 2009 International Genetic Counseling Award.

*We look forward to celebrating the graduation of the class of 2010 with you.*

We received over 125 applications this year for the MGC pro-

## MGC CLASS OF 2012

gram. Interviews will begin on Friday, March 12, 2010. Universal notification day is Friday, April 23, 2010 and final acceptance must be decided by Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

## OUTREACH PROGRAM

On February 22, 2010 the MGC program participated in an outreach event for 4H leaders in the Baltimore City area at the Maryland Science Center. 2nd year students taught the 4H leaders about DNA, careers in genetics, and successful paths into genetic counseling programs.

**Learning inside and outside of the classroom:** On October 8 and 9, 2009, the 1st and 2nd year MGC students attended a 2 day symposium on perinatal medicine sponsored by the University of Maryland Center for Advanced Fetal Care titled **The Symposium on Advanced Perinatal Medicine and Imaging**. This symposium is scheduled to be an annual event. We hope to see you there next year!

## WINTER 2010

### MGC CLASS OF 2011



MGC Class of 2011 from left to right: Jess Stransky, Jessie Abel, Val Kantor, Sara Shelley, Rio Friday and Vaish Subramani

The MGC class of 2011 are already in the middle of their second semester of didactic work. Our six first year students bring a wealth of talent and enthusiasm to the training

program. We are proud to introduce the newest faces to the UMD Genetic Counseling program. **Jessie Abel**, from Kansas City, by way of Hereford, MD is a graduate of the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. **Rio Friday**, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, is a native of Pittsburgh, PA. **Val Kantor**, a graduate of the Pennsylvania State University is from Freehold, NJ. **Sara Shelley**, a graduate of Butler University in Indianapo-

lis, IN is from Terre Haute, IN. **Vaishnavi Subramani**, is from Minnetonka, MN. Vaish graduated from the University of Minnesota. **Jess Stransky** is from Bel-Air, MD and attended the University of Maryland College Park for her undergraduate studies.

The new student center at the University of Maryland opened in August 2009!

### INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS

The Independent Study Project (ISP) is a major undertaking for our students. We developed and now require a year long class in research for genetic counselors (course masters Toni Pollin, PhD, CGC and Meredith Weaver, ScM, CGC). This course allows our students to begin to understand the research process and design their ISPs. Many of you have

suggested ideas for independent research projects as well as serving on ISP committees. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to serve as a member of the ISP advisory panel for our students. Please send ideas for research projects to Shannan DeLany Dixon at [smdixon@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:smdixon@som.umaryland.edu). Feel free to email Shannan if you are interested in serving on an ISP committee.

For a list of all of the ISPs complete by the graduates, check out the University of Maryland Master's in Genetic Counseling Website at

<http://medschool.umaryland.edu/mgc/>

Congratulations to all who passed the 2009 ABGC Certification Examination!

### NEW ON CAMPUS

- The Southern Management Corporation Campus Center opened in August, 2009. At 125,000 square feet in size, there is room for a wide range of activities to compliment UMB's academic mission.
- The SMC Campus Center serves as UMB's town square, fostering collaboration, encouraging health and wellness, housing student organizations and services, providing recreation and relaxation and offering outstanding food and dining venues.
- The SMC Campus Center is an integral component of UMB's recruitment, enrollment and retention efforts. With the SMC Campus Center's wealth of recreational, educational, and programmatic opportunities, the UMB community is able to come together at the very heart of the campus, sharing knowledge and ideas across curricular disciplines with an eye toward bridging diverse personal, educational, and professional backgrounds. (SMC website)



SMC Campus Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore

## MGC REUNION

The MGC program hosted our annual reunion on Friday November 13, 2009 in Atlanta, GA . We had a fabulous time catching with up classmates and supervisors alike. Thanks to all who attended. We look forward to seeing everyone at the 2010 AEC in Dallas, TX! Please let us know if you have suggestions for the 2010 reunion.



Good Luck to all who are taking the 2010 ABGC Certification Examination! We know you will do well. Please keep up posted on your successes.

# Alumni News



Graham Oliver Higgs (son of  
Amanda Scaffè Higgs '00)

**Nikki Justice Ledbetter ('99)**, her husband David and big sister Allie welcomed Baby Will Ledbetter on 8/18/09.

**Amanda Scaffè Higgs ('00)** and her husband Oliver became the proud parents of Graham Oliver Higgs on June 12, 2009.

**Hetal Sheth Vig ('01)** has two publications. Manne S, Meropol NJ, Weinberg D, **Vig HS**, Catts Z, Manning C, Ross E, Shannon K, and Chung D. (2010) Facilitating Informed Decisions regarding Microsatellite Instability Testing Among High Risk Individuals Diagnosed with Colorectal Cancer. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, February 2010.

**Vig HS**, Armstrong, J, Egleston BL, Mazar C, Toscano M, Bradbury AR, Daly MB, and Meropol NJ. Cancer Genetic Risk Assessment and Referral Patterns in Primary Care. *Genetic Testing and Molecular Biomarkers*, 13(6), December 2009.



Will Ledbetter (son of Nikki  
Justice Ledbetter '99)

**Rebecca Kern ('02)** and her fiancé Sam McClellan are planning a September 25, 2010 wedding at Delfosse Winery in Nelson County, VA.

**Kathryn Mosman ('03)** married W. Robert Davis on Sunday, Sept 27, 2009, in a hillside chapel in Austin TX.

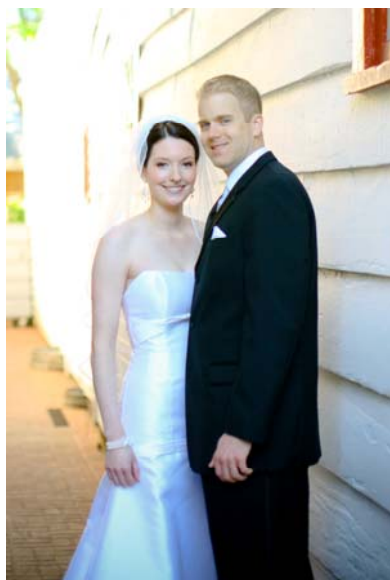
**Karen Benson ('03)** married Kevin Paul on Saturday September 19, 2009 in Annapolis, MD.

**Colleen Landy Schmidt ('05)** and her husband Matt became the proud parents of Katie.

**Jessica Scott ('05)** and her husband Jacob welcomed their son Dylan on August 25, 2009.

**Ania White ('06)** and her husband Rob became the proud parents of Tristan Robert White on December 2, 2009.

**Aimee Piurek ('07)** married Pete Martin in New Haven, CT in September 2009.



Karen Benson Paul and  
Kevin Paul 9/19/09

**Georgette Saba ('07)** and her fiancé Jeffrey Mund are planning a Caribbean wedding in February 2011. They recently purchased a house in Olney, MD and Georgette started a new position as a prenatal genetic counselor at the Center for Maternal and Fetal Medicine at Anne Arundel Medical Center.

**Megan Skinner ('07)** and Chris Wohn are engaged. An October, 15 2010 wedding in Laguna Beach, CA is planned. Megan and Chris recently purchased a home in Baltimore MD.

**Carolyn Dinsmore ('08)** is engaged to her fiancé Kevin Applegate. A summer 2011 wedding is planned. Carolyn also started a new position as a pediatric genetic counselor at Johns Hopkins University Hospital.

**Jodie Martin ('08)** and Anthony Vento are thrilled to announce their engagement. A June 2011 wedding in Pittsburgh, PA is planned. Jodie was also selected for a poster presentation at the ACMG meetings in Santa Fe' New Mexico, March 25-28, 2010.

**Andrea Short Ascencio ('08)** and her husband Juan celebrated their wedding in Mexico in January 2010 and just adopted a Labrador/shepherd mix puppy.

**Karen Siklosi ('08)** started a new position at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, OH as a pediatric genetic counselor.

**Natalie Beck ('09)** started a new position at Rhode Island Hospital and Hasbro Children's Hospital since July 2009 -Working as: The only fulltime pediatric GC in Rhode Island, and, the Co-Coordinator for Rhode Island Metabolic NBS Program.

**Jackie Francis ('09)** became engaged to her fiancé Nate Britton. A wedding is planned for after the ABGC Certification Exam. Jackie also started a new position as a prenatal genetic counselor in Philadelphia with Genzyme Genetics.

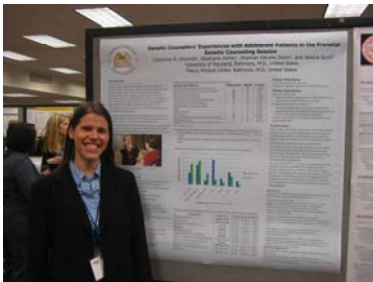
**Stephanie Miller ('09)** started a new position in Lincoln, NE as a prenatal genetic counselor at the Bryan LGH Center for Maternal and Fetal Care

News From the U is available on-line in the student section!  
Check out the MGC website at  
<http://medschool.umaryland.edu/mgc/>

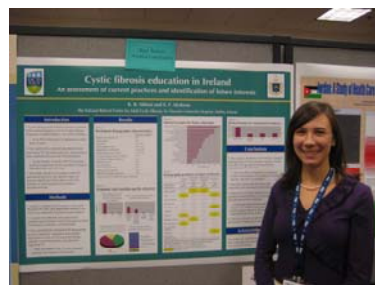
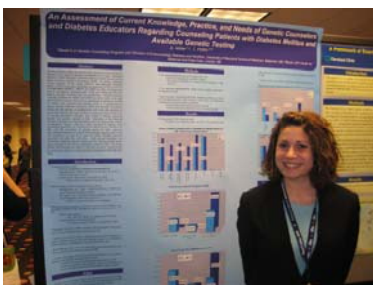
Masters in Genetic Counseling Program  
660 West Redwood Street  
Suite 570  
Baltimore, MD 21201

## 2009 AEC PRESENTATIONS

Several MGC alumni presented posters and platform sessions at the 2009 AEC. **Karen Siklosi ('08)** (poster) Cystic Fibrosis Education in an Adult Population in Ireland: An Assessment of Current Practices and Identification of Future Interests. **Natalie Beck ('09)** (platform presentation) Assessing Genetic Counselors' Knowledge about Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Attitudes Towards a Carrier Screening Program. **Jackie Francis ('09)** (platform presentation) Genetic Counseling for Pediatric Neuromuscular Disorders in Neuromuscular Clinics: A Survey of Parents' Experiences and Genetics Knowledge. **Cathy Griswold ('09)** (poster) Genetic Counselors' Experience with Adolescent Patients in the Prenatal Genetic Counseling Session. **Stephanie Miller ('09)**



(poster) An Assessment of Current Knowledge, Practice and Needs of Genetic Counselors and Diabetes Educators Regarding Counseling Patients with Diabetes Mellitus (DM) and Available Genetic Testing.



***Congratulations to all!***