# News from the U

**Winter 2009**

## Welcome!

As we sit to write the newsletter, Jessica and I can't believe it is already March. 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.

Shannan and Jessica

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**Trip to Elwyn:** 1st and 2nd year students traveled to Elwyn Inc., in Elwyn, PA in the Fall to learn about residential facilities and programming for individuals with mental retardation. Mary Delaney, MS, CGC gave a great tour and overview of the facility. From Left to Right: Jackie Francis, Veronique Weinstein, Casey Lord, Jenn Weiss, Laura Hutchins, Johanna Loewenstein, Natalie Beck, Cathy Griswold, Lauren Doyle, Stephanie Miller and Zlatka Kostova

**Important Dates**

**March 6, 2009:** Oral Comprehensive Exams

**March 9, 2009:** First day of interviews for the MGC Program

**March 24, 2009:** Autism Workshop at Towson University

**April 24, 2009:** Universal notification date for all Genetic Counseling Programs

**May 14, 2009**: MGC Precommencement Ceremony

**May 15, 2009:** UMB Graduation

**June 1, 2009:** Summer rotations begin

## Program Updates

We welcomed Ann Toma, academic coordinator for the MGC program in the Fall. Additionally, Allison Mitchell, MS, CGC joined the genetics team at Maryland in November. Allison provides GC services at Baltimore Washington Medical Center (cancer) and in the Adult Clinic at UMD.

In the Fall of 2008 the 1st and 2nd year MGC students participated in a standardized patient encounter. Each student was assigned a case to prep (based on year of training) and then met with a patient actor to demonstrate their individual skill sets. All sessions were recorded and each student was given a copy of their case to review. The MGC program plans to use the standardized patient experience throughout the 1st and 2nd year to help students identify areas of strength and skills to improve upon during their training.

Amanda Higgs is the new course master for HGEN 610 (Genetic Counseling Seminar). Megan Skinner is co-course master for HGEN 615 (Clinical Applications Workshop).

Lastly, we added the Osteogenesis Imperfecta clinic to our Kennedy Krieger rotation for 1st year students.

## Graduation 2009

The MGC Pre-commencement Ceremony and Student Colloquium will be held on Thursday May 14, 2009 at 1p.m. in the HSF II auditorium. All are invited to attend. Our keynote speaker will be Diane Baker, MS, CGC of the Genetic Alliance.

From left to right: Natalie Beck, Stephanie Miller, Lauren Doyle, Jackie Francis and Cathy Griswold (MGC Class of 2009) in LA at the 2008 AEC.

## Class of 2009

The MGC Class of 2009 are busy completing their independent study projects. Each student chose a fascinating project and have had strong support from the community.

**Natalie Beck:** "Assessing Genetic Counselors' Knowledge About Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Attitudes Toward a Carrier Screening Program"

**Lauren Doyle:** "Deficiencies in genetic literacy are evident at the high school level"

**Jackie Francis:** "Genetic counseling for pediatric neuromuscular disorders in neuromuscular clinics: A survey of parents' experiences and genetic knowledge"

**Cathy Griswold:** "Prenatal Genetic Counseling Session for Adolescents Who Are Pregnant"

**Stephanie Miller:** "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"

## MGC Class of 2011

We received over 100 applications this year for the MGC program. Interviews will begin on Monday, March 9, 2009. Universal notification day is Friday, April 24, 2009 and final acceptance must be decided by Wednesday, April 29, 2009.

## Outreach Program

On April 1, 2009 the MGC program will once again host DNA Day. 1st and 2nd year students will teach Baltimore County public school middle and high school students about DNA, careers in genetics, and successful paths into genetic counseling programs. MGC students will also lead hands on laboratory exercises in DNA extraction. This is the third year that MGC students have volunteered their time in the schools. Approximately 150 students take part each year.

# Alumni News

**Karen Benson (03)** and her fiancé Steve are getting married in Annapolis in September.

**Andrea Short (08)** and her fiancé Juan are getting married in Houston in May.

**Karen Siklosi (08)**presented a poster at the All-Ireland Cystic Fibrosis Conference entitled "Knowledge and attitudes toward cystic fibrosis in an adult population in Ireland" and will also be presenting a poster at the Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland Annual Conference at the end of April.

**Cheryl Pendergrass (03)** was promoted in October to Manager of the Women's Health North Regional Medical Specialists at Myriad.

**Aimee Piurek (07)** and her fiancé Pete are getting married in New Haven, CT in September 2009.

**Good Luck to all who are taking the 2009 ABGC Certification Examination! We know you will do well. Please keep us posted on your successes.**

# Alumni Corner

The MGC program hosted our annual reunion on Sunday October 26, 2009. We had a fabulous time making ice cream sundaes and catching up with classmates and supervisors alike. Thanks to all who attended. We look forward to seeing everyone at the 2009 AEC in Pittsburgh, PA!

Please let us know if you have suggestions for the 2009 reunion.

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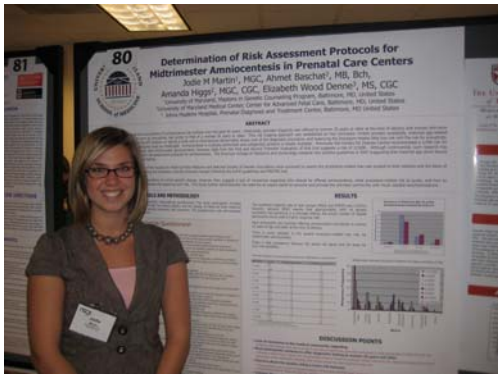
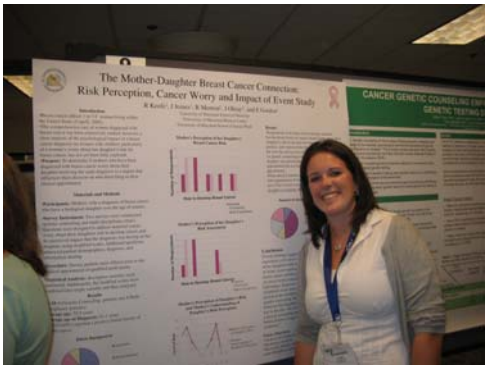
News From the U is available on-line in the student section!
Check out the MGC website at
**http://medschool.umaryland.edu/mgc/**

## 2008 AEC Presentations

***Several MGC alumni presented posters and platform sessions at the 2008 AEC. Carolyn Dinsmore (08)*** *gave a platform presentation on: The Uptake of Invasive Prenatal Testing in the Infertility Population Compared to the Naturally-Conceiving Population.* ***Rosemarie Keefe (08)*** *presented a poster presentation on: The Mother Daughter Cancer Connection: Risk , Worry and Impact of Event Study.* ***Emily Malouf (07)*** *presented a platform presentation on: Family History Core Competencies.* ***Jodie Martin (08)*** *presented a poster presentation on: Determination of Risk Assessment Protocols for Mid-trimester Amniocentesis in Prenatal Care Centers.* ***Andrea Short (08)*** *presented a poster on : Assessment of Physicians' Screening Practices and Knowledge of Genetic Disorders in the Ashkenazi Jewish Community.* ***Congratulations to all!***






From Left to Right: Jodie Martin, Emily Malouf and Rose Keefe