

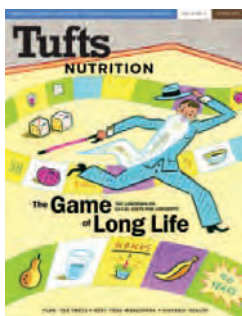
Tufts

NUTRITION

Doctors' Orders

Why physicians don't talk about
diet and exercise (but should)

PLUS: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR • THE FARM BILL • DONOR RECOGNITION



SALAD DAYS

I was very happy to see your story in *Tufts Nutrition* recognizing the many benefits of fresh-cut leafy greens ("The Best Things Since Sliced Bread," Spring 2007).

However, your story credits Earthbound Farms with creating fresh packaged salads, which simply is not true. Fresh Express began offering packaged, fresh-cut salads to food-service clients as early as 1976. By 1983, service to regional retail stores had also already begun, and by 1989, an additional Fresh Express breakthrough technology, the patented Keep Crisp™ Bag, allowed salads to stay fresh for national shipment, which therefore allowed the national retail salad category to be born.

BARBARA HINES
FOR FRESH EXPRESS

Editor's note: On its Web site, Earthbound Farms claims it was the first to "successfully" launch pre-washed salads packaged for retail sale in 1986. We'll leave it to others to define success. We appreciate that both companies have had a positive influence on America's salad consumption.

NO PLACE FOR POLITICS

This week, your latest edition of *Tufts Nutrition* arrived at my home. I enjoy reading the latest in the field of nutrition and look forward to it.

The magazine fell open to a page with an article, "Albright Pushes Political Solution for Iraq" (Spring 2007). I wondered what this had to do with nutrition. After reading it, I saw that there was no tie-in at all. This was a blatant bit of political propaganda, and nothing more.

Please remove my name from your list of readers and those who donate. I will not give one penny toward the dissemination of anyone's political point of view. It clearly has no place in a magazine on nutrition.

SHIRLEY K. BRONSON
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Editor's note: The article on former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's lecture, which appeared in the magazine's University News section, was included as a sampling of news from the wider Tufts University community. The annual Issam M. Fares Lecture aims to further the understanding of issues facing the Middle East. In past years, Fares lecturers have included former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

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Nutrition matters

IRONICALLY, THE SAME ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION IN medical practice discussed in our cover story ("Doctors' Orders," page 18) were being highlighted decades ago, when I was in clinical practice as a registered dietitian. Now, however, it appears that nutrition may genuinely be seen as more integral to health care, both here and around the world.

At Tufts, a more concerted effort is under way to link nutrition to medical training. In addition to Alice Lichtenstein and Edward Saltzman, who are teaching

the nutrition component of the master's in biomedical sciences program, Friedman School faculty, under the direction of Saltzman and Gary Gleason, are developing short courses for physicians and other health professionals in the Middle East. The courses, which will provide distance-learning options for participants, will emphasize diet and chronic-disease prevention.

This program will be enhanced in December, when Lynne Ausman will be inaugurated as the first holder of the Saqr bin Mohammed Al Qasimi Professorship in Nutrition, newly endowed by the government of Ras Al Khaimah. Similar to most parts of the world, the Middle East is undergoing a rapid nutrition transition that has caused a range of diet-related chronic diseases to emerge. Her professorship will focus on scholarship and training needed for preventive nutrition.

In fact, it is clear that the major gains in public health in this century will be accomplished through an emphasis on preventive nutrition. That is the understanding in China, where I spent two weeks this September. In Shanghai, I chaired a panel that discussed "The Double Burden of Disease" or under-nutrition existing side-by-side with problems related to weight gain. My co-presenters were He Fuchu of Fudan University and Ray Yip, an adjunct professor at the Friedman

School and the executive director of the Gates Foundation in China. The presentations emphasized the imperative need to promote healthy lifestyles in China, where overweight, obesity and related chronic diseases are increasing dramatically.

We know what the nutrition problems are, but the challenge is to identify science-based, preventive interventions that are effective in increasing physical activity and improving dietary patterns. This issue was the focus of lively discussions at the 10th Asian Congress of Nutrition in Taipei, where I gave presentations on linking nutrition policy to action, public-private sector collaboration for nutrition research and using nutrient density as a tool for improving consumer dietary behavior. Measuring diet quality, and using this information to guide the consumer, was a topic that transcended many of the sessions. South Korea, for example, will be proposing legislation to require food labeling, and is looking at the United States' experiences in this area, including the power of labels and product icons to change consumer behaviors.

Several Friedman School faculty members took part in the Asian Congress. Visiting Professor Nevin Scrimshaw and Associate Professor Gary Gleason conducted a workshop on research management and communications at the request of the par-

ticipating countries. In addition, Professor Jeffrey Blumberg discussed research related to the phytochemical composition of nuts, a complement to his earlier talk at a Beijing workshop sponsored by the International Life Sciences Institute Focal Point in China.

Back at home, our 2007 Friedman School Symposium delved into "What you eat. What you do. Who you are." We were fortunate to have as our keynote speaker Sir David Barker, who is world-renowned for his research on the theory of the fetal origins of disease. Professor Barker's seminal research elucidated the links between maternal nutrition, early fetal and infant growth and risk of developing chronic diseases later in life. His address was webcast around the world by the United Nations University.

Finally, a note on some faculty recently recognized for their achievements. Alice Lichtenstein, the Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy, was honored by the American Heart Association in November with the 2007 Distinguished Achievement Award from its Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism. In June, Miriam Nelson, associate professor and director of the John Hancock Center on Physical Activity and Nutrition, was sworn in by the Secretary of Health and Human Services as vice chair of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Advisory Committee. In September, Peter Walker, director of the Feinstein International Center, received the Humanitarian Award from the American College of Nutrition. At this same event, Jeffrey Blumberg was presented with the Mark A. Bieber Research Award. Congratulations to all.

eileen kennedy

Questioning Folic Acid Fortification

SCIENTISTS HAVE KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT WOMEN WHO TAKE FOLIC ACID before and during pregnancy can prevent neural tube defects like spina bifida in their babies. And indeed, since the United States and Canada started fortifying enriched-grain products with folic acid in the mid-1990s, cases of neural tube defects have decreased miraculously, by as much as 50 percent, according to some studies.

But this public health success story may have a downside. Dr. Joel Mason, director of the Vitamin and Carcinogenesis Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, suspects that fortification may be the cause of approximately 16,500 cases of colorectal cancer in North America each year.

His study, published in *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention*,

finds a correlation between when companies began fortifying enriched-grain products such as flour, cereal, rice and pasta with folic acid in 1996 (it became mandatory in 1998) and a change in the rates of colorectal cancer. Colon cancer had been on the decline for 15 years, most likely because more people began undergoing colonoscopies to screen for and remove precancerous polyps. But since fortification, national cancer registries have counted four to six additional cases of colorectal cancer annually for every 100,000 people. That translates to about 15,000 more cases in the United States and 1,500 more in Canada each year than that downward trend would have predicted.

Biologically, the association could make sense. Folic acid is the synthetic form of the nutrient folate, which is a crucial element in the function of a cell, and seems to protect against cancer in normal, healthy cells. If cells have begun to malfunction, however, and turn precancerous or cancerous, folic acid has the opposite effect—it helps the cancer cells replicate, speeding up the growth of the cancer.

Older adults may be particularly at risk from too much folic acid in their diets, Mason said, because as many as 35 to 50 percent of people over age 50 already have precancerous polyps in their colons, but don't know it. "The addition of substantial quantities of folic acid into the food stream may have facilitated the transformation of benign growths into cancers, or small cancers into larger ones," said Mason, who is also an associate professor at the Friedman School.

The victory of folic acid fortification over neural tube defects has prompted some groups to call for even more folic acid to be added to the American food supply, while other countries are discussing following suit.

Mason urges caution, debate and more research. In the meantime, older Americans who eat enriched-grain products and also take multivitamins should watch their total intake of folic acid. But they shouldn't worry about getting their folate naturally from beans, fruits and leafy green vegetables, which can help keep people of all ages healthy.



SOMETHING SWEET, SOMETHING SALTY, SOMETHING NOW

DO VISIONS OF SUGAR PLUMS DANCE IN YOUR HEAD? CHANCES ARE, you're on a diet. A Tufts study shows there's little escape from food cravings while you're counting calories; it's how often and how much you give in to the urge that can make or break a regimen.

Even after six months on a calorie-restriction diet, when you might expect hankerings to have faded away, some 94 percent of the study participants reported cravings, or an intense desire to eat a specific food. Participants who lost a greater percentage of body weight gave in to their cravings less often, and kept the portion sizes of the forbidden treats in check.

"Allowing yourself to have the foods you crave but doing so less frequently may be one of the most important keys to successful weight control," said corresponding author Susan Roberts, Friedman School professor and director of the Energy Metabolism Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging.

The study, which appeared in the *International Journal of Obesity*, involved 32 overweight but otherwise healthy women, ages 20 to 42, who were randomly assigned to two diets that differed in glycemic load, a measurement of how quickly the carbohydrates in a person's diet are converted to blood sugar. Both the high-carb and the low-carb groups had cravings, mostly for energy-dense foods that were high in both sugar and fat (candy) or fat and salt (French fries).

"These findings suggest," says Roberts, "that cravings are for calories, not carbohydrate, as is widely assumed. What is commonly called carbohydrate addiction should probably be relabeled as calorie addiction. The craved foods do have carbohydrate, but they also have fat, and some protein, too. The most identifiable thing

about the foods people crave is that they are highly dense in calories."

Roberts suggested that dieters try substituting foods that taste similar but have fewer calories, "since the craving can be satisfied by related tastes."



SPEAKING OF CRAVINGS...

According to a study published in *Clinical Chemistry*, a gene called APOA2 may be linked to food preferences. The 15 percent of study participants who had a particular version of the gene had diets with higher proportions of fat than other participants, said professor and study author José Ordovas. They also ate an average of 200 more calories per day and were nearly two times more likely to be obese.

Juicy findings

HOW'S THIS FOR A DELUGE OF LIQUID CANDY?

Adults drink 61 percent more sugar-sweetened soda and 42 percent more fruit juice than they did 20 years ago, making these beverages a major source of sugar intake for Americans. Type 2 diabetes rates have skyrocketed in the last two decades, as well.

More than coincidence? To find out, Tufts researchers looked at how much sugar-sweetened soda, diet soda and 100 percent fruit juice 2,500 healthy men and women consumed over a year. Then they took blood samples.

Study participants who consumed two or more sugary sodas a day had significantly higher fasting insulin levels, an indicator of insulin resistance, which is a risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. People who drank the same amount of diet soda did not have the association, but neither did people who drank two servings of juice a day. In fact, the juice drinkers had modestly lower levels of fasting glucose, another indicator of diabetes risk.

Senior author Paul Jacques, director of the Nutritional Epidemiology Program at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) and a professor at the Friedman School, said this could be because juice consumers have healthier lifestyles: They tend to eat less saturated fat and more fiber, and they are less likely to smoke. Or it could be that fruit juice, which provides vitamins, minerals, soluble fiber and phytochemicals, in addition to sugars, acts differently on the metabolism. Either way, more study is needed.

In the meantime, people shouldn't start gulping down O.J. by the liter. "While 100 percent fruit juice can be a healthful beverage, too much fruit juice can add excess calories and sugar to the diet," said Nicola McKeown, corresponding author and HNRCA scientist. "Whole fruit is often a better choice."

TIME for a CHANGE

Whether it's finding a healthier alternative to hamburgers-for-dinner-again or learning the safest way to drop a pants size, we could all use a little help. Following are a few of the different ways Friedman School alumni and students are working in the community to help people eat well and be active.

Off the streets and into the kitchen



NO FOOD PYRAMID POSTERS. NO LECTURES ON micronutrients. As soon as Allie Quady, N08, began working on healthy eating with residents at St. Francis House, a day shelter and rehabilitative center for the poor and homeless in downtown Boston, she saw that formal nutrition instruction was not the way to go.

"I really felt that people were interested in the topic," said Quady, a student in the Friedman School's Agriculture, Food and Environment Program. "But they also had so many pressing concerns that they were worried about—either looking for work or recovering from recent addictions or abuse—that if they sat in a class, they would turn off. It became more and more about just getting people out of their rooms and hanging out in the kitchen, cooking."

When Quady started volunteering last January, she thought she would be dishing out some of the more than 800 meals that St. Francis House serves every day. Instead, the nutrition student was introduced to Eleanor Coghill, who had been working on a holistic health program for the residents, and Tony Rello, a program director.

Together they came up with the idea of healthy dinners for participants in the Next Step Housing Program. St. Francis House currently dedicates three floors of its building to the program, which provides housing for 39 single men and women who have experienced chronic homelessness, unemployment and substance abuse, but who are now working at least 10 hours per week and living drug- and alcohol-free. The rooms are single-occupancy, but the kitchen is shared, which made cooking the perfect way to bring residents together as a community.

Quady and Coghill invited the residents to join them in the kitchen, and together they cooked meals focused on whole grains, vegetables (some residents got their first taste of kale) and healthful oils

instead of butter. Quady was impressed by the residents' nutrition savvy: Some knew that they should stay away from trans fats, and grilled her on the benefits of organic foods and whole grains. At the same time, "most didn't know how bad sodas were for them," she said.

She found that conveying the long-term health risks of bad eating habits is tricky with a population that is often, by necessity, focused on the present rather than the future.

"A lot of the problems they have involve not looking ahead anyway," Quady said. "So asking a chain smoker to think about his cholesterol level 30 years down the road is not really realistic."

Quady, who was recently named an Albert Schweitzer Fellow for her work at St. Francis House, is no stranger to public service. Before coming to Boston, she toiled on an AmeriCorps trail crew in Montana and spent two years planting trees with the Peace Corps in Senegal. After working on her family's farm in rural Oregon, she decided to come to the Friedman School, hoping it would lead her "more toward the connection that people have with the land."

To that end, and to complement the dinners at St. Francis House, she secured a plot of land for the residents at the Berkeley Street Community Garden, where a handful of residents were hard at work this summer growing herbs, zucchini, cabbage, tomatoes and a dozen pumpkin plants.

Gardening naturally brings people together, she said, and helps create a support network the formerly homeless will need as they move forward.

"At the end of it they can see the fruits of their labor," she said, and then coined a new term: "the vegetables of their labor."

Allie Quady, N08, tends the Berkeley Street Community Garden plot she helped secure for the residents of St. Francis House.



The rooms are single-occupancy, but the kitchen is shared,
which made cooking the perfect way to bring
residents together as a community.



BY DUSTIN BURNETT, N08, WITH MELISSA FUSTER, N08

The class we never taught



IRUN TO THE KITCHEN AND OPEN MY CUPBOARDS in a panic. I reach for something—anything—and find a bag of long-grain brown rice. I grab savory spices and kitchen utensils that I keep in shoeboxes on a shelf in my cramped Chinatown apartment. I'm even bringing a bamboo sushi-rolling mat and a meatball shaper. After all, I have no idea what is going to happen tonight.

My scrambling is part of a semester project for our class in Positive Deviance (PD), taught by Jerry and Monique Sternin. Melissa Luna, the director of Sociedad Latina, a nonprofit serving Boston's Latino community, wants to use the PD approach to help its members discover healthful eating practices. My classmates, Melissa Fuster, N08; Denish Moorthy, N06; Vanessa Salcido-Ibañez, N07, and I are the facilitators, and our first Healthy Eating Group session is tonight.

Just teaching the group how to cook healthful meals would be simple enough. I mean, I have training in culinary arts, nutrition and food science—all of which I learned as an undergraduate at Berkeley. And before college, I worked in restaurants as a baker. But my role is not to be the “expert” who tells them what to do. That is not how PD works.

I pack my spices and utensils into two paper bags. I reach for my knives and a horde of cooking and baking equipment, only to real-

ize that I definitely need bigger bags. I grab a black suitcase, dump all my summer clothing onto the floor, roll it into the kitchen and toss everything in.

I race to the subway. It's rush hour, and I stand while straddling the suitcase between my legs, pressing my hand up against the ceiling for stability. It's good to be tall.

I've taught classes before, for which I had to write traditional lesson plans with objectives and benchmark outcomes. I expected my students to passively soak up my teachings. Now, as I stand here practically unprepared, I remind myself of what Jerry and Monique said in class:

The major difference between the traditional teaching method and the PD process is that here, you really cannot be sure in which direction the class will take you. The class belongs to the participants—not you. They are coming to you with a problem that they want solved. They don't know that they already possess the solutions themselves. Your responsibility is to help them discover their own solutions. The challenge, of course, is to wait and allow the solutions to surface. This waiting is one of the most challenging parts of the PD process.

I meet up with Melissa, Vanessa and Denish, who look puzzled when they see the suitcase. I explain that I just packed my kitchen in it. We sit down to draft a plan.

We had met some of the Sociedad members the week before. As an icebreaker, Vanessa asked the group about their food indulgences. Some said they indulged in chocolate; others said rice. Then a tall woman with red hair and a big smile said, “I love salads!” Maybe she didn't understand the question, we thought. We probed further and discovered that she not only loves salads, but doesn't drink whole milk or eat fatty meat, white bread, white rice or eggs. She never fries food or uses salt.

We had identified our “positive deviant,” the person who has the same resources as the rest of the community, but who has found a way to overcome the problem at hand: in this case, unhealthy cooking. We have a plan: facilitate the group in a way that the other members ask our positive deviant what she does.

We head over to the Maurice J. Tobin School and meet with the Family Center coordinator, Matthew Miller, who has offered us space to hold our meetings. In the kitchen, we see immediately that there is no stove, no counter space, no microwave and no dish rack—only eight empty trash barrels and a commercial convection oven with no baking racks. Yes, we are about to start a cooking class without a kitchen, just a huge oven that is almost as tall as me. But we are encouraged that our positive deviant has brought a large aluminum pan filled with a brightly colored salad—a dietitian's dream.

I unpack the brown rice from my suitcase and suggest that it serve as our first dish. The participants look mystified. “Rice?” one of them



Denish Moorthy, N06; Matthew Miller; Dustin Burnett, N08; and Melissa Fuster, N08, with the commercial oven the Healthy Eating Group used for all its recipes, even rice and tea. Opposite, Burnett's suitcase served as a traveling kitchen.



They don't know that they already possess the solutions themselves. **Your responsibility is to help them discover their own solutions.**

asks. "In the oven?" I confirm, and ask if they have ever tried this before. After the Spanish translation and a bit of laughter, everyone emphatically replies, "No."

I'm not sure what they are saying next, but I can hear skepticism in their voices. Nonetheless, together we devise a recipe. We bake the rice, pull it from the oven and place it on the table along with the beautiful salad. Surprisingly, they nod their heads in satisfaction with the light, fluffy texture and nutty flavors of the brown rice. They enjoy the salad, too. We had earned their trust, and after only one class.

Over the following weeks, we cooked many things in that oven, from Indian flat bread to ginger tea and vegetables in an oven-heated skillet. But the baked brown rice remained the star. For most of the participants, white rice is an everyday staple. Knowing how to make this healthful alternative encouraged them to try new ways of cooking.

Gradually, members of the group brought up their own food concerns. One mother worried that her teenage son went most of the day without eating, and then gorged himself on chips and hot dogs at night. She asked for suggestions from Melissa and Vanessa, who quickly tossed the question back at the group. Some said to talk

to the boy about his health, while others said to stock the kitchen with more healthful options like whole-wheat products and fruits.

Toward the end of the course, they were sharing recipes and tips. Our positive deviant took charge on many occasions and taught the group how to cook without unhealthful fats or salt. They were receptive to her ideas, perhaps because she was part of their community, and was working with a similar food budget.

My suitcase got lighter as I slowly started bringing less of my kitchen to class, forcing the group to come up with ideas on how to cook with limited resources. I intentionally left my knives at home one day, and no one was happy about that, especially when we had to cut steak with the plastic cutlery we scavenged in the school kitchen. But during our last couple of meetings, the participants started to bring more of their own tools, foods and recipes. It was a measure of the group's creativity and self confidence.

As our time together neared its end, they were nervous—and sad, at first—but later realized that they themselves were the leaders of the group, and that we really didn't teach them much. So much for a nutrition class! We were the ones who had been taught something, about the organic process of learning.



“The longer the women were together, the more they wanted to come back and share their experiences.”

—STACEY KING, N05



BY HELENE RAGOVIN

Mothers and daughters, living better



WHEN STACEY KING, N05, AND HER colleagues at the Cambridge Public Health Department first discussed the need to help educate postpartum Hispanic women about nutrition and weight control, they laid the ground-work for a successful public health

endeavor that combines resources from the government, human service agencies and the Friedman School.

Latinas Living Better (LLB)—or Latinas Saludables, as it's known in Spanish—is a free bilingual program, offered through the Cambridge Health Alliance and Concilio Hispano, that includes nutrition workshops, cooking classes, fitness sessions and, perhaps most important, social support. Targeted towards Latinas between the ages of 16 and 24, particularly lower-income women and recent immigrants, the program has also attracted attention from older women—including some mother-daughter pairs—and women from the Haitian community. Some 20 women completed the program earlier this year, and a second session is under way.

The program is an example of Friedman alumni and students working together in the community. Many members of the LLB team have Tufts connections, and the program was the subject of a semester-long project for a Friedman School class in monitoring and evaluation earlier this year.

“We’re most excited about the collaboration that came out of this,” said King, the Healthy Living Cambridge coordinator for Cambridge’s public health department. Other Friedman alumni and students involved included Mara Sansevero, N03, a dietitian with the Cambridge Health Alliance who developed the curriculum and led workshops; Mary Gibson, N08, who led workshops; Alison Tovar, MPH06, N06, N12, who led the Spanish-speaking workshops; and Courtney Anderson, N08, who led fitness sessions. Cindy Marti, A06, MPH07; Guy Koppe, N03; and Julia McDonald, N07, MPH07, were on an evaluation team from the Institute for Community Health.

The Cambridge Health Alliance has received \$145,000 so far from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to run LLB. Organizers are overwhelmingly positive about the results.

“In general, the women who participated in the program loved it—some are coming back for a second session,” King said shortly before the start of the fall workshops. Because evaluations were done before and after the program, “we saw some improvements in fruit and vegetable



consumption, in the amount of physical activity and in the amount of [television watching] that the participants reported. We also saw some weight loss, and we’re just analyzing that data now,” she said.

Nutrition, fitness and weight control are particularly vital concerns for Latinos in the United States, who have high rates of type 2 diabetes, a disease linked to obesity and inactivity. According to the federal Office of Minority Health, Latinos are 1.5 times more likely to have—and to die from—diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.

Volunteers from Operation Frontline, part of the anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength, ran the cooking classes, which combined new recipes with traditional Latino foods. The participants helped choose the menus, went on supermarket tours and received free groceries so they could try dishes at home.

LLB “was meant to be a social support model,” King said. “The women were coming in and sharing successes, and getting ideas from each other about the different challenges they have ... we asked them to do things like write supportive postcards to each other and call each other, with the idea that behavior change models are very good, but the social support component often is missing.

“And that’s something that builds on itself. They looked forward to coming and focusing on making healthy changes. Over time, that social support piece is very important.” **TN**

Above: Alison Tovar, MPH06, N06, N12, and Chandra Batra make spinach and cheese empanadas in a Latinas Living Better cooking session. **Opposite page, clockwise from top:** LLB participants get acquainted with the MyPyramid food guidance system; Carmen Cárdenas listens to a presentation; mixing the empanada filling; Eduviges Soriano and Grisel Mancía chop onions.

Helene Ragovin is a senior writer in Tufts’ Office of Publications.





LAW of the LAND

Think the farm bill, that bushel-sized chunk of legislation that comes around every five years, only means something to corn farmers in the Midwest? The 2007 bill working its way through Congress will impact food stamp recipients and school lunch programs, dairy farmers in New England and cotton farmers in Africa. Here, *Tufts Nutrition* presents four perspectives on this mainstay of U.S. agricultural policy.

Healthy farms, healthy foods, good policy

BY HUGH JOSEPH

MANY PEOPLE HAVE JOINED THE FAST-growing local foods movement, which encompasses thousands of farmers' markets, community farms, schools and retail grocers. But those people may be surprised to find that the farm bill only nominally supports these efforts. Likewise, the burgeoning organic market receives relatively little farm bill support, compared to what conventional producers get. The farm bill doesn't really offer much to small farmers in the Northeast, either—unless one counts wealthy absentee “farmers” in New York City and other urban locations who rake in up to \$250,000 or more each for land they themselves do not farm. (Some call this “farming the government.”)

Instead, the farm bill mainly helps big commodity farmers, including large corporate operators. Reflecting long-held federal policies promoting the mass production of inexpensive food, the farm bill encourages overproduction and sector concentration by rewarding farmers according to how many bushels they grow.

These cheap food policies don't further the nutritional well-being of the public. As the journalist Michael Pollan puts it: “The Twinkie is basically a clever arrangement of carbohydrates and fats teased out of corn, soybeans and wheat—three of the five commodity crops that the farm bill supports, to the tune of some \$25 billion a year.” The cost to the public includes hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually to treat obesity and related chronic diseases. In short, the USDA's farm support is inconsistent with its own dietary guidelines, which encourage us to eat more fruits and vegetables.

We need a healthier farm bill that will align agricultural policy with our public health and environmental priorities. Some smaller initiatives to support local food systems and healthier diets need much more funding. For example, Community Food Projects, a USDA program I co-developed a decade ago, has provided grants to more than 250 projects that link local food production and marketing to anti-hunger and

nutrition programs in low-income communities. But the program currently receives only \$5 million a year in funding. If the \$30 million authorized in the House version of the farm bill is supported, it will be an enormous boon to these efforts.

Similarly, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which Tufts helped start two decades ago, gave \$20 million this year to low-income families with young children to obtain fresh produce at local farmers' markets. A similar program for seniors is currently funded at \$15 million. A three- or four-fold increase in funding would help address the enormous unmet demand for these benefits at a tiny fraction of what is now spent to support large commodity producers.

We should call on Washington to significantly increase funding for the Farmers Market Promotion Program, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides free fruit and vegetable snacks to students at school. In fact, we should supplement all school meal programs with hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of additional fresh

fruits and vegetables. This would encourage children to eat better, and open up large, new markets for local and regional farmers.

A healthy farm bill would promote overall biodiversity, not degradation of the soil and pollution of the air and waterways. The 2007 bill will provide more resources to promote greater environmental stewardship, but it ought not to allow USDA environmental quality programs to finance factory farm cleanups. These operations release enormous amounts of waste and toxins into our air and water and impose immense cruelty on the animals they raise. Corporations need to properly manage the messes they create on their own dime and invest in improved animal welfare.

The 2007 farm bill can take us down the road to healthy food and sustainable farms, or it can perpetuate imbalances that have existed for too long. This is a message all concerned eaters can take to their legislators in Washington.

Hugh Joseph, N84, N94, is an adjunct assistant professor at the Friedman School.





Plowing through the politics of agriculture

BY PARKE WILDE

UP UNTIL THE MOMENT THE U.S. HOUSE OF Representatives passed its version of the 2007 farm bill on July 27, the legislators quarreled and clashed. But those last hours of bare-knuckled debate had little to do with agricultural policy, and a lot to do with political theater.

Mind you, political theater can be entertaining. On the last day of debate, Republicans claimed to be surprised that part of the farm bill's funding would come from a tax increase. The response from Charlie Rangel, Democrat of New York and chairman of the House's tax-writing committee, was sarcastic. He reminded the critics that they had agreed to ask Rangel's committee to find the additional money. "You didn't go to the chairman of the Transportation Committee," Rangel admonished them.

But after the chuckles die down, we have to wonder whether the right questions were asked about farm policies themselves. The 700-page farm bill authorizes nearly every aspect of federal policy administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, from food stamps to conservation to farm subsidies to rural development, at a cost of about \$286 billion over five years. It seems there should be more there to discuss than whether a funding source should be called a tax.

Indeed, the drama in the end game serves

as a poor guide to the main policy decisions that were made a week earlier, when the agricultural establishment's version of the farm bill passed the House Agriculture Committee, and especially on July 26, when a key reform amendment failed on the House floor.

The "Fairness in Farm and Food Policy" amendment would have limited subsidy payments to millionaires and shifted several billion dollars from traditional row-crop subsidies toward nutrition and conservation priorities, while modestly reducing the overall cost to taxpayers. This amendment was sponsored by Ron Kind, a Democrat from Wisconsin; strongly supported by some Republicans, including Jeff Flake of Arizona; and gently boosted by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns from his more distant perch in the Republican administration. It had vocal and passionate grassroots support from some leading environmental groups, such as the Environmental Working Group; rural policy advocates, such as the Center for Rural Affairs; and anti-hunger groups, including Bread for the World.

Breaking up this reform coalition was hard work, but in the end, the amendment was denied. Although nothing will be certain until the day the president signs the bill into law, early prognostications say the Senate bill will

be similar to the House bill. The House bill included modest budget increases for food stamps, fruit and vegetable programs and conservation, but in the end, left the traditional row-crop subsidies largely unreformed.

The result may well be a continuation of the existing system of subsidies. According to the Environmental Working Group's analysis of USDA data, about 67 percent of farmers and ranchers don't even benefit from these subsidies. Of those who do get subsidies, 10 percent receive 73 percent of all subsidy payments, averaging \$34,190 each per year. The bottom 80 percent of subsidy beneficiaries receive an average of \$703 per year. The biggest subsidy payments go to corn and soybean crops, which are primarily used in animal feed for industrial-scale meat and dairy factory operations, while almost none of the payments go to fruits and vegetables.

There is really no good way to design these subsidies in the first place. Traditional price supports lead to environmentally destructive overproduction and immiserate farmers in developing countries by lowering world prices for the subsidized commodities. At some point, the rules of fair play in international trade will make these traditional subsidies untenable.

More recent policy innovations, such as decoupling subsidies from farm production decisions, solve the problem of encouraging overproduction by promising farmers a fixed amount, no matter how much they grow. These innovations let corn farmers this year earn record prices from the ethanol boom while enjoying billions of dollars in decoupled subsidy payments.

The savings from a subsidy overhaul could have made the tax-haggling on the House floor this summer unnecessary. Instead, we saw theatrical arguments over revenue sources, while real, needed policy reform was left in the wings.

Parke Wilde, an assistant professor, is director of the Food Policy and Applied Nutrition Program at the Friedman School.

Think locally, distort globally

BY PATRICK WEBB

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE FARM BILL MAY LOOK like a purely domestic concern. Yet, in many ways, the outcome of this legislation will impact the lives of millions of people beyond U.S. borders.

U.S. farm subsidies, which are set through the farm bill, impinge on poverty-reduction goals in poor nations. Rice, sugar, cotton and peanuts are grown by few farmers in the United States, but these crops represent a livelihood for millions of farmers across Africa, Latin America and Asia. According to a 2007 report by OXFAM America, the United States remains the world's largest exporter of cotton by benefit of subsidies, which not only depress prices (by an average of 12 percent annually over the past few years) by flooding the market, but also prevent farmers in developing nations from getting a foot in the market door.

Unable to rely on exporting what they can grow, many households around the world are more exposed to the vagaries of food prices, political instability and the regular, day-in-day-out depredations of disease, a lack of schooling and a lack of hope for the future. The result is that roughly 850 million people

remain chronically undernourished today.

In West Africa alone, some 10 million people depend on cotton as a major source of income. OXFAM and others calculate that the elimination of U.S. subsidies would raise the net household income of these poor farmers by as much as 20 percent, with concomitant benefits to the nutrition and health of their children.

Paradoxically, these are some of the same people the bill seeks to help through its foreign aid allocations. The problem is that subsidies to a handful of U.S. farmers, and tariffs on imported goods that protect them, amount to much more than the United States spends on all foreign aid to the developing world. The farm bill's right hand is wrestling with its own left hand.

A current debate on the bill's food aid component stands to have wide implications. Some are proposing that a portion of food aid to poor countries be made available in the form of cash, rather than shipping U.S.-produced and bagged food. The idea is that during crises in far-off, hard-to-reach locations, sending food is slow and cumbersome.

Analysts argue that it may be better to disburse cash to partners (mainly U.S. private voluntary agencies) that can purchase needed food in local or regional markets. The concept is radical in that it decouples humanitarian response from the U.S. domestic supply of food—and hence from agricultural lobby groups.

The issue has polarized food aid professionals. Some argue that sending food can take too long, cost too much and not fill the right need in particular crises. Others say there is not enough food aid in the world right now to meet need, and that this action may be a slippery slope toward a day when the U.S. foreign assistance budget becomes cash-based only—as is already the case in most of Europe. The danger, they argue, is that there will be less cash available overall if the “agriculture lobby” is separated from the “food lobby.”

For farmers in West Africa, simply having access to appropriate resources when they are needed is the highest priority. For them, the optimum result would be changes in both the subsidy and food aid sections of the bill: that is, reduced subsidies for crops that can be grown more cheaply in developing nations, reduced hurdles for those nations' entry into global markets and faster emergency responses to crises when things fall apart.

The dollars freed up from subsidies could instead support higher levels of foreign assistance—not just food aid, and not just emergency response, but assistance targeted at long-term food and nutrition security in the poorest parts of the world where access to global markets is still just a dream. Some of those resources should be in cash and, where appropriate, some should be in food. The allocation across resources should be defined by need, not dogma. The farm bill's hands need to stop wrestling each other. They should shake and agree on a unified vision relevant to global goals.

Patrick Webb is a professor and dean for academic affairs at the Friedman School.





Grassroots efforts take hold

BY ALIZA WASSERMAN

IT WAS NEARLY MIDNIGHT ON JULY 18, 2007, when amendment No. 36 was accepted by the House Agriculture Committee. It was a tiny portion of HR 2419, the federal omnibus food and agriculture legislation known as the farm bill, but I had been waiting for this moment for hours, sitting in my bedroom, watching the debate online through streaming video. I called my boss at the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), where I had been a policy intern since May, and we cheered quietly, trying not to wake up the others in our homes who weren't glued to the Ag Committee's website.

There had been several roadblocks, but because amendment No. 36—which would allow schools that participate in national school lunch and breakfast programs to request locally grown foods from their suppliers—had a lot of support and few opponents, it would remain in the final bill that would pass the House at the end of July.

At CFSC, a nonprofit dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all people, we had been lobbying for amendment No. 36 and two other pieces of community foods legislation for some time. We had garnered signatures of support from organizations around the country, armed our networks with talking points, prepared the ubiquitous “one-pager” briefing papers and met with congressional staffers. It had been a summer of constantly improving our messages and juggling the details of funding sources and process and politics. As the bill moved forward, we continued to spend each day figuring out which members of Congress held the power that day and how we could amass our ragtag band of farmers, nutritionists, food bankers, doctors and community leaders to pressure them enough to make a difference.

Compared to some of the food and agriculture lobbies debating farm subsidies and food stamps, we were a small team working on small issues. But to many people, the local procurement victory is a significant one. The ability of school food service directors to request local foods opens up great opportunities for local food systems. Schools can be important customers for small farmers. And schools that try to link local agriculture with their curricula have greater success when students can make a field trip to a local farm and then eat that farm's apples (rather than ones shipped in from across the country) in the school cafeteria.

Despite that triumph, the success for advocates of community food security was mixed, because the House bill did not include any mandatory money for another of our priorities, Community Food Projects, a competitive grant program that for the last 11 years has supported community-based food solutions such as urban farms.

Our third priority was a new program called the Healthy Food Enterprise Development Program, which would provide loans and grants to small- and mid-sized food processors that could, among other things, package local produce and bottle local milk. Such processors have been the missing link in the local food infrastructure. There is some version of this program in the House bill, but like the rest of the farm bill, its fate is still in limbo as the Senate struggles to cobble together its bill.

For advocates of a more sustainable, healthy food system that supports small farmers, the future is uncertain, as stronger interests maintain the upper hand in influencing legislation. But those of us with an interest in the fight will never stop educating, strategizing and advocating for improvements in legislation we know are possible, even one amendment at a time. ^{TN}

Aliza Wasserman, N09, MPH09, is in her second year studying food policy and environmental health at Tufts.



Dr. Michael Jon Zackin, N82, N86,
emphasizes nutrition in his practice.

Doctors' ORDERS

Why physicians don't talk about diet and exercise (but should)

WHEN DR. MICHAEL JON ZACKIN, N82, N86, QUIZZES HIS PATIENTS ABOUT WHAT THEY had for breakfast yesterday, he is not testing their memories. In his pediatric practice in Weston, Mass., he sometimes asks his patients or their parents to do 72-hour nutrition recalls (writing down everything they've eaten for three days) to evaluate their diets. If one of his teenage patients is seriously overweight, Zackin may encourage the youth to meet with him monthly.

"I personally spend an inordinate amount of time talking about nutrition right from the start, at every well-visit," said Zackin, who earned his doctorate from the Friedman School before going on to get his medical degree at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. "I try to get families eating well, and talking about eating behaviors."

As a physician, Zackin is an exception, and not just because of a lifelong interest in fitness that prompted him to read nutrition books, for fun, at age 12. Studies show that while most physicians are comfortable writing a prescription for a cholesterol-lowering pill or a diabetes drug, telling a patient how many servings of greens to eat or how many minutes of exercise to get is rarely part of doctors' orders. This is despite the bevy of medical literature that says diet and exercise can be just as effective as medication in treating—and especially preventing—illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

WITH FITNESS MAGAZINES AND even the local news trumpeting the latest nutrition findings, the doctor's pitch may seem redundant. But research suggests that patients need to hear nutrition advice from an authority figure, preferably one who wears a white coat.

"Most consumers say while they get their initial info from the web and blogs and mainstream media, when it comes to the information they trust, the sources they trust, the physician is number one," said Sylvia Rowe, an adjunct professor at the Friedman School and former president and chief executive of the International Food Information Council (IFIC).

The recent and alarming reports on obesity-related diseases have spurred some doctors to make lifestyle modification part of their exam-room agenda. But while nutrition advocates have long wanted to see physicians act a little more like Zackin, it has been a long, uphill battle, often waged against the American health-care system itself.

SHORT SHRIFT IN THE EXAM ROOM

Why does nutrition get such short shrift? Physicians point to the brevity of the average office visit, which lasts about 18 minutes, according to *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

"The basic reality is physicians have limited time with patients to convey what they consider to be the critical medical facts. Rarely will they get into lifestyle issues like nutrition and physical activity," Rowe said. "The exception is if you have an overweight or obese patient, but even that is somewhat ducked unless the patient brings it up."

Money is also an issue. Insurance companies don't readily reimburse physicians for preventative nutrition counseling. Then there are physicians' attitudes toward nutrition itself, which they may rank anywhere between alternative and hippy-dippy. Rowe will never forget when the IFIC surveyed physicians about their views on functional foods. One respondent was impressed with the medical research on foods naturally rich in antioxidants. But he wasn't about to tell his patients to go eat nuts and berries. "They will think I'm some sort of quack and go elsewhere," he said.

In general, medical schools do little to dissuade aspiring doctors from the perception of nutrition as a "soft" science. As recently as a decade ago, fewer than 26 percent of medical schools required that students take a nutrition course, while another 25 percent offered no nutrition course at all, even as an elective. Fresh from his studies at the Friedman School, Zackin was unimpressed by the brief nutrition class he and

his classmates took in medical school, and wonders how it affected the others' practices. "I think most physicians don't know enough about nutrition, and if you don't know enough, you don't want to talk about it enough," he said.

Margo Woods, an associate professor at Tufts School of Medicine as well as the Friedman School, has fought to keep nutrition in the medical school, where it has been a

While most physicians
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required first-year course since 1991. To integrate even more nutrition into the curriculum, she applied for and won a grant, called the Nutrition Academic Award, from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in 1998. Tufts was one of 10 pilot schools to receive the award, which helped Woods and her colleagues teach diet evaluation and intervention strategies. They developed case studies and brought in trained patient actors

with whom the third- and fourth-year students could practice doing nutrition reviews. This “standardized patient experience” is still part of Tufts’ family medicine rotation, which all medical students go through.

The goal is to know enough to take the right first steps. “You have to be able to evaluate a person’s diet by looking at it,” Woods said. “Count up the serving of fruits and vegetables and animal products. Are they having

beans and nuts every day? Are half the carbs high in fiber? Even if you refer them to the dietitian, you make the first contact. It’s the physician’s responsibility to motivate them, to educate them, evaluate what they are currently doing and then negotiate with them what they think they can change.”

That last part can be difficult, because it takes a certain kind of personality to work with patients on lifestyle modification. “Doctors like to tell people what to do, but here, they have to ask, ‘What do you think you can do and succeed at?’ ” Woods said.

The good news is that she has seen medical students become more and more interested in nutrition each year. “What really captures them most is that they have to keep a three-day food record and compare it to some standards,” she said. “They click into that because it’s personal.” This may have an added benefit, because some studies have reported that doctors who have made improvements in their own diets are more likely to give advice to their patients about good eating habits.

This year, the Friedman School and Tufts Medical School have created another nutrition education opportunity for future physicians. Alice Lichtenstein, the Stanley N. Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy, and Dr. Edward Saltzman, both scientists at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA), have partnered to teach a nutrition course for Tufts medical school’s new M.S. in biomedical sciences degree program, which is designed specifically for students aiming to become stronger applicants to medical school.

KNOCKING ON A CLOSED DOOR

Medical school can do only so much.

“We are interested in what doctors know about nutrition, but we are more interested in what doctors use,” said Dr. Irwin M. Rosenberg, University Professor and the Jean Mayer Professor of Nutrition at Tufts. “The usual rap that doctors don’t know about nutrition is not nearly as accurate as the rap that doctors don’t use nutrition in their practice.”

Rosenberg, a gastroenterologist as well as a nutrition scientist, has spent a good part of his life trying to impress on physicians how nutrition science is relevant to



Elizabeth Winthrop, N83, is the chief dietitian and internship director for Southcoast Hospitals Group.

what they do. He likens it to knocking on a closed door that has only barely cracked open: "It's a career-long challenge."

The medical profession has made some strides in adding more nutrition questions to its board exams, and even seen the creation of a certification for Physician Nutrition Specialist. At Tufts, a clinical nutrition post-doctoral program, which is run by Dr. Joel Mason, an assistant professor at the Friedman School, has been active since the mid-1980s. But these efforts attract the nutrition elite. "They don't get to the bulk of practicing physicians," Rosenberg said.

He has tried to reach out to that audience. For eight years, he was editor-in-chief of *Nutrition in Clinical Care*, a Tufts-based journal geared toward health-care providers. It reviewed the most pertinent nutrition research and showed how it could be incorporated into daily practice. Doctors could even rip out some of the articles and hand them directly to their patients. It now appears as a regular feature in the journal *Nutrition Reviews*.

Still, getting physicians to embrace nutrition has been a painfully slow process. Thirty years ago, the head of a major food company complained to Rosenberg: "My dog's vet knows more about nutrition than my doctor does." It was no doubt true, acknowledged



Dietetic interns learn they sometimes have to prove the value of nutrition to their physician colleagues.

THE DOC AND THE DIETITIAN

Elizabeth Winthrop, N83, the chief dietitian and internship director for Southcoast Hospitals Group in Massachusetts, has helped teach nutrition classes to medical students during her career, and she admits to having some fun with it. For a nutrition case study, she may offer up a patient with diabetes, gastrointestinal problems and enough complexities to make any resident's head spin. "We had a couple of messages for them," she said. "Nutrition is important, and you need the dietitian, buddy."

Put another way, doctors need to understand nutrition before they can appreciate the

side a doctor who really understands what the dietitian can contribute to the care of the patients," said Winthrop, who trained at the Frances Stern Nutrition Center.

The working relationship between physicians and dietitians needs to be built over time, she said. Sometimes dietitians find they have to prove the value of nutrition—and of the work they do—to their physician colleagues. "Doctors build their trust in dietitians one patient at a time," Winthrop said. "If you contribute to good patient outcomes, then you get respect."

Her ideal? A doctor who knows the significance of nutrition, and can stress that importance to the patient. "What we need is for a doctor to say to a patient, 'You know, your BMI is 30, and that puts you at a much greater risk for diabetes; I really wish you would sit down with a dietitian.' What we need the doctors to do, for the most part, is tell the patient, 'This is a big problem.' In some circumstances, we may need them to advocate with insurance companies and say, 'This is an important thing for my patients.'"

Too often, said Margo Woods, the nutrition referral is a "black box."

"There is no communications link between the doctor and the dietitian," she said. Some physicians "definitely refer them to the dietitian, but they don't know what happens." Without that initial push and follow-up, patients may not stick with the nutritionist for the six-to-eight weekly sessions that one study found was necessary for

"Doctors like to tell people what to do,
but here, they have to ask,
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and succeed at?" "

—MARGO WOODS

Rosenberg, who said the sad part is that most people could say the same today.

"They're not remunerated," he said of physicians. "They don't have time. They've been battered by the pharmaceutical industry to think they can deal with these things with drugs. It's much easier to write a prescription than it is to go over a diet history. The whole medical profession is weak on prevention, which ought to be the proper domain of nutrition."

nutritionist. Some physicians get the message more than others. For example, a bariatric surgeon recently asked Winthrop's team of dietitians for their expertise as he expanded his practice. "He didn't feel he could have a high-quality program without us," she said. The dietitians helped design the program, and now help rule people in or out for surgery and provide much of the follow-up.

"There is nothing so wonderful and fulfilling as a hospital dietitian working along-

a dietary intervention to be successful. One study, in 1994, found that when dietitians get to discuss their dietary recommendations with physicians, they were more likely to be implemented, “indicating how powerful the dietitian-physician interaction can be.”

Professional organizations have pushed for the creation of physician/dietitian teams, calling for nutrition experts to be a standard part of every medical office. It is not yet the norm.

“The whole idea of teamwork in medicine a very important one,” said Johanna Dwyer, director of the Frances Stern Nutrition Center. “But I think there is room for improvement there. It hasn’t changed as much as I would like.”

LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Dr. James Rippe, a cardiologist and associate professor of medicine at Tufts Medical School, is a longtime proponent of preventative medicine in the doctor’s office. He edits a textbook, *Lifestyle Medicine*, that teaches physicians about the impact of lifestyle decisions on wellness, with an emphasis on cardiovascular health. He knows the barriers that physicians face, but said it is up to the medical community to overcome them.

“If we really want patients to do the best they can for their health, we’ve got to figure out a way to do this stuff,” he said. By not bringing up diet and exercise with patients, he said, “we send them the subtle message that it is not important.”

Earlier this year, he launched the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, a compendium of prevention-focused, peer-reviewed research that reaches 20,000 physicians every other month.

“Most people go into medicine with the desire to take the best possible care of patients they can,” he said. “To deny the existence of this very exuberant, wonderful literature ... is a very nihilistic point of view.”

In the journal’s inaugural editorial, he conceded that change will mean bucking the system: “Our mandate is nothing short of changing the way we practice medicine and provide health care in the United States and the rest of the industrialized world.”

“Only when the physicians start telling their patients that **this is just as powerful as medication** will people start hearing it.” —ANN YELMOKAS MCDERMOTT, N02

Others are trying to spark a movement. Two years ago, a group of doctors formed the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, a nascent organization that wants lifestyle medicine to be incorporated into everything from medical school curricula to a credentialed clinical specialty. It plans to lobby Congress to ensure lifestyle counseling is compensated by Medicare and health insurers.

Maybe all physicians really need are the right tools. Last year, Ann Yelmokas McDermott, N02, and Heather Mernitz, N02, N06, then researchers at the HNRCA, made the case that physicians should provide physical fitness prescriptions to their older patients. In the journal *American Family Physician*, they detailed how doctors could easily tailor a regimen to the patient, spelling out what type of exercise to do, how often, how hard and for how long. McDermott called the guidelines a “how-to manual for health-care providers.”

When it comes to exercise guidelines, physicians “don’t know what to say,” said McDermott, now director of the Center for Obesity Prevention and Education at California Polytechnic State University. “As the science community we need to do a better job of conducting meaningful research for medical practitioners.”

Case in point: her own father’s doctor, who prescribed blood glucose medications to her dad, but didn’t address his complete lack of physical activity. “He told him, ‘I can’t control what you do outside my office, but I can tell you these medicines will make a difference.’”

She couldn’t help feeling undermined. “Most individuals look at the physician as the pinnacle of medical knowledge,” she said. “Only when the physicians start telling their patients that this is just as powerful as medication will people start hearing it.”

Right now, her office is working with the local public health department and local physicians to create a physical activity and

nutrition tool kit, including informational handouts, which physicians can employ in their practices. They are also looking at ways for physicians to consistently record Body Mass Index or waist circumference in patients, so their progress can be tracked from visit to visit, even if they change doctors.

Michael Zackin, the pediatrician, is on a task force that is looking at ways to deal with obesity in the office setting. If physicians are going to take up the lifestyle modification banner, the ones who work with children may be standard-bearers.

“Pediatrics is one of the best specialties in which to use nutrition,” Zackin said. “We’re getting kids from day one, and we can really make a difference in their long-term health and lifestyles right from the beginning.”

In fact, that is partly why he went into pediatrics, and may be one reason other physicians find lifestyle modification a lost cause. “If you have a 40- or 50-year-old person coming in with all these poor habits,” Zackin said, “I found it difficult and frustrating to try to change them.”

In the end, the call for preventative medicine may come from patients themselves. “For some time now, but more so recently, patients have been pushing their doctors to know more about nutrition,” said Dr. Robert Russell, a physician who directs the HNRCA and is a Friedman School professor. “Many more doctors are contacting me to ask how to counsel patients who come in with questions about specific diets and specific nutrients, or substances such as green tea. Even though the medical schools are falling behind on teaching preventative medicine, including nutrition, I think doctors are becoming more informed on the job. Patients are demanding it.” ^{TN}

Julie Flaherty is the editor of this magazine. She can be reached at julie.flaherty@tufts.edu.

IN FEBRUARY 2000, SASHA CHANOFF, NO.4, WAS ON THE FINAL U.S. humanitarian mission to evacuate Tutsi survivors of massacres in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was a last-ditch effort. The diplomatic situation was crumbling, and Chanoff and his two colleagues from the International Organization for Migration were under specific orders from their supervisor not to evacuate anyone who wasn't on their list because it would jeopardize the mission.

They arrived at the rescue center and found the 113 people they were supposed to evacuate. And then they saw the others: a group of widows, orphans and children who had been prisoners for many months and had just arrived at the camp. One, Rose Mapendo, a mother of nine, had given birth to premature twins on the prison cell floor. She had fought miraculously to keep her family alive, but the twins were malnourished and close to death.

Even if Chanoff and his colleagues went against their orders and managed to bribe officials into letting the newcomers leave, they would be a group of 146, and their plane had only 126 seats.

From then on, Chanoff's perspective on humanitarianism was changed. "Everywhere I went, I was tuned into the people who weren't on any lists," he said. "I wanted to move out beyond what was being done already to try to find new ways of helping people."

Five years later, Chanoff, a graduate of the Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance Program (MAHA), co-founded Mapendo

Connecticut, where he graduated in 1994 with a degree in history, literature, philosophy and European languages. At the time, he was more interested in soccer and music than relief work. His first job was helping to found a Cape Cod a cappella group, the Hyannis Sound, for which he sang tenor and served as the business manager.

Hoping to put his language skills to use, he took a position as a job developer with the Jewish Vocational Service, helping refugees find work in the United States. He was supposed to talk to them about their skills and work experience. Instead, "I found myself really drawn into the stories of the people I was meeting—what their lives were like, what their struggles were like," he said. "Many of them weren't ready to work, having lost their homes, their families and anything that meant anything to them."

Wanting to do something heartening for them, he organized a soccer tournament for Boston's refugee community in 1998. When Sherman Teichman, director of the Institute for Global Leadership at Tufts, read about it in the newspaper, he contacted Chanoff. Eight months later, they held an even-larger refugee celebration day with art, music, food and dance. It was the start of more collaboration with Teichman, who is now a Mapendo adviser.

Chanoff took his refugee work a step farther, going to Africa with the State Department to teach cultural orientation classes for U.S.-bound refugees. But he was soon recruited as an operations officer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for which

CLOSING

International, named for that mother of nine. Started in the spare bedroom of his Somerville, Mass., apartment, and now a relief agency with a half-million dollar budget and full-time staff in Cambridge, Mass., and Nairobi, Kenya, Mapendo is catching those who fall through the tears of the humanitarian safety net.

Much of Mapendo's work is helping the overlooked victims of war and terror in Central and East Africa. Take the Lost Girls of the Sudan. Most people have heard of the Lost Boys, the Sudanese orphans who fled their country's civil war and later were brought to the United States in a landmark resettlement program. But most of the orphan girls were left behind in Africa, scattered and unnoticed, as many of them were forced into marriages against their will or used by foster families as laborers. Finding these young women and bringing them to safety has been one of Mapendo's missions. It has helped about 100 Sudanese Lost Girls and other refugee girls in similar situations.

Once Chanoff and his staff, including Mathew Edmundson, A05, design a game plan for resettlement, they collaborate with governments, the United Nations and other aid agencies to get people out of danger. Mapendo worked for three years, for example, to bring 600 survivors of a Tutsi massacre in Burundi to the United States this year.

The goal is lasting solutions that go beyond refugee camps, which is why Mapendo is currently working to build a hospital and protection center to serve the estimated 50,000 to 175,000 refugees in Nairobi.

Chanoff, 36, came to social entrepreneurship in a roundabout way. He grew up in Marlboro, Mass., and attended Wesleyan University in

he conducted missions like the Congo evacuation and became a consultant to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

During his four years in Africa, Chanoff saw refugees who rarely make it onto the lists. Refugee camps can be dangerous places for orphans, single women and ethnic minorities, who often flee the camps "and end up in urban centers where nobody assists them," Chanoff said. "Once they leave, they go off everybody's radar." In Nairobi, Chanoff found close to 150 undocumented war victims who were also HIV-positive. He and Dr. John Wagacha Burton, an IOM medical officer from Kenya, got them what assistance and health care they could.

In 2003, Chanoff enrolled in Tufts' MAHA program, which put his field work into context. But when he returned to Kenya, he found that several of the HIV-positive refugees had died.

Raising money from family and friends, he and Burton opened a small medical clinic in the slums of Nairobi for those HIV-positive refugees, torture victims, rape survivors, widows and orphans. This was the beginning of Mapendo International, which they officially founded in January 2005.

Since then, Mapendo has garnered many donors and volunteers. Last year, Echoing Green, an organization that invests in nonprofit innovators, named Mapendo as one of the world's 12 best emerging social entrepreneurs. This year, the Draper Richards Foundation, which supports leaders it expects will make a global impact for the better, awarded Chanoff and Mapendo a fellowship.

His experience could be a guide for the socially conscious who



the GAPS

Sasha Chanoff, N04, creates a start-up for social good

BY JULIE FLAHERTY PHOTO BY JOHN SOARES

want to branch out on their own. He credits Mapendo's foundation (a partnership between himself, an American, and Burton, an African) and the strength of its advisers (including several from the Feinstein International Center) with their success so far.

"We have the passion to do it," he said. "But it's all about money. Raising money, managing your money well and then being accountable for every dollar you get."

It also helps to have a compelling story, which leads us back to that Congo rescue mission. Chanoff and his colleagues decided to go against their orders and try to bring the extra passengers. That left the

question of fitting them on the plane. So they spent the night before the flight changing birthdates on the manifest, making all the children significantly younger, because children under age 2 can share a seat with an adult.

"We had everybody sitting on everybody's lap," he said. "We said if anyone asks, you say it's just a big baby."

Among the passengers was the mother of nine, Rose Mapendo, who later settled in Arizona and is now a spokesperson for Mapendo International, the organization her struggle helped inspire. Her twins have graduated from kindergarten. ^{TN}

Green roofs can keep us cool, filter pollutants and even feed us by Marjorie Howard

Gardens in the Sky

IT'S A BRIGHT, SUNNY DAY, UNSEASONABLY HOT FOR THE END OF SEPTEMBER. Tufts biologist Colin Orians crouches on the roof of Tisch Library, where the temperature is well over 90 degrees. He lays his palm on a container of soil: It's sun-baked hot. The adjacent container holds a carpet of green sedum leaves, which are cool to the touch. A new garden is beginning to take hold.

Rooftop gardens brimming with pots of exotic plants connote cocktail party goers overlooking an urban skyline as the sun sets. But these atmospheric gardens also represent a new chapter in the urban environmental movement.

In addition to serving as home-grown insulators, keeping buildings cooler in the summer and warmer in winter, green roofs remove contaminants such as nitrogen and phosphorous from rainwater and carbon dioxide from the air. The rooftop plants absorb water, which then evaporates and creates a cooling effect. Where there is a critical mass of green roofs, they can actually reduce the effects of what are known as urban heat islands—metropolitan areas where expanses of asphalt and concrete make cities warmer than surrounding areas. Green roofs also keep rainwater from washing into storm drainage and sewer systems, where it is treated unnecessarily at wastewater treatment plants. They provide habitats for birds and other urban wildlife.

Tufts University has joined the green-roof movement with the creation of the Tufts Green Roof Collaborative, multidisciplinary programs and

research aimed at learning more about what plants grow best in the Northeast. One of the collaborative's goals is to influence policy-makers to make green roofs a linchpin of the urban environmental movement.

"We're not a state agricultural school, so we don't have huge tracts of land," said John Durant, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, who is one of the investigators on the project. "But we have the opportunity to become a player in urban-garden, green-roof research."

This past summer, the Facilities Department hauled 20,000 pounds of soil and plants, including four kinds of sedum, Echinacea, salvia and wild strawberries, to the Tisch Library roof on the Medford/Somerville campus. The green roof experiment has brought together faculty and students from the School of Engineering, the School of Arts & Sciences and the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

The summer's long drought taught Colleen Butler, a Ph.D. student in biology, that hardy sedum, a succulent that stores water in its leaves, can thrive when it's dry, and that even strawberry plants can bounce



back from a drought. Butler painstakingly photographed all the plants every week, documenting how they responded to plenty of sun, but little water. Under the guidance of Orians, who is the lead investigator for the Green Roof Collaborative, Butler expects to spend the next four or five years studying green roofs for her doctoral dissertation in plant science.

She started by doing a broad survey to see what plants survive and why. Now she is studying how the cooling effect of blankets of sedum might facilitate the growth and survival of a more diverse plant community. “We are excited to build on Colleen Butler’s research to identify other projects that would be suitable for graduate and undergraduate research,” said Orians.

The green roof project began as a casual discussion among three Tufts faculty members who were fellows at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. Orians had long been interested in learning more about what plants might thrive on a roof, while Durant wanted to study how urban gardens absorb water and filter pollutants. Kathleen Merrigan, the director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program at the Friedman School, wondered how green roofs might be used to grow food. The three decided to collab-



Opposite: Colin Orians, an associate professor of biology; Daniel Brady, E10; Jennifer Obadia, N14; Kathleen Merrigan, director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program at the Friedman School; and Colleen Butler, a Ph.D. student in biology. Above: a view of Tisch Library’s greening roof.

create a mixed garden. That would be the ideal situation. If we could eat them, all the better, but we also need to see if the food grown will be safe.”

Each faculty member began drawing in students to help. Merrigan is working with Jennifer Obadia, a doctoral student in nutrition who is researching what food might be grown on the roof. They planted

from the Tisch green roof will help persuade state and federal policymakers to encourage their development. “We want to be able to share with them what we think the ramifications are and what are the policy potentials as environmental interventions,” she said. She envisions a green-roof corridor, perhaps along the Mystic River Watershed, a 76-mile area that encompasses 21 communities north and west of Boston.

Durant, meanwhile, is working with Daniel Brady, E10, a chemical engineering major who is developing a system to collect and test rainwater for pollutants such as toxic metals. Another member of the team, Mara Gittleman, A09, an American studies major, has created a website for the project: www.tufts.edu/programs/sustainability/GreenRoof.htm. She also wrote a research paper on the history and benefits of green roofs.

Durant hopes to learn more about how plants filter pollution from rainwater and the effect this has on soil: “Depending on the kind of pollutant, plants can actually pick up chemicals with the water they absorb, and chemicals can be stored in the plants. Some pollutants, such as toxic metals, can react with cellular constituents in plants and be transformed into less-toxic forms.”

He is also well aware that urban vegetable gardens—whether on a roof or in a backyard—may pose some health risks. “Kathleen Merrigan’s problem is particularly interesting to me because I know from reading the literature that a lot of air pollutants accumulate in vegetables,” Durant said. “We theorized there might be some varieties of vegetables that can grow in urban environments and not accumulate pollutants.”

Orians said he hopes that the agricultural component of the project will help the Tufts community become more aware of how food is grown. “One thing our society misses is where things come from,” he said. “The more you can get people involved in agricultural production, the better.”

Marjorie Howard is a senior writer in Tufts’ Office of Publications.

“We’re not a state agricultural school, so we don’t have huge tracts of land. But we have the opportunity to become a player in urban-garden, green-roof research.”

—JOHN DURANT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

orate, with the goal of establishing a working green roof that Merrigan hopes will influence policymakers to encourage green roof technology.

“Imagine,” said Durant, “a grid with different kinds of plants and being able to test them by a variety of different measures: their ability to thrive, their ability to filter pollutants from the atmosphere and their ability to cool the roof. I doubt there is one plant that would do it all. We want to

mint and oregano from seed, which never germinated, but the strawberry plants survived the drought.

Obadia would like to try growing traditional vegetable crops, which require more maintenance than herbs. “I’m curious to see how eggplants or tomatoes would thrive because they come from places with hot climates, similar to that of the rooftop environment,” she said.

Merrigan hopes information gleaned



1. Stanley Gershoff, dean emeritus, presented the inaugural Stanley N. Gershoff Prize in Nutrition Science and Policy to Cheryl Gilhooly, N02, MPH02. The prize was established by the generosity of Simon and Arpi Simonian. Pictured are Simon Simonian, Gershoff, Gilhooly and Arpi Simonian. 2. Marlene Schwartz, director of research and school programs at Yale University's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, presented at the Gershoff Symposium. 3. Gershoff Symposium speakers and the Gershoff Scholars join Gershoff and Gershoff Professor Alice Lichtenstein. From left: Valerie Duffy, Beverly Tepper, Josiemer Mattei, Latrice Goosby, Elizabeth Frazao, Gershoff, Zivai Murira, Samuel Cadena and Lichtenstein.

I like it like that

Money, genes, parents and other reasons we eat the way we do

THE PREVAILING WISDOM IS THAT OBESITY HAS A LOT TO DO WITH income. Poor people can't afford fresh peaches, romaine lettuce or whole grain bread, the theory goes, and are forced to set the table with high-calorie mac and cheese from a box.

Then again, the price of food may be a nutritional scapegoat. Elizabeth Frazao, assistant deputy director for WIC research in the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program of the USDA's Economic Research Service, said that households with higher incomes do spend more on fruits and vegetables than their low-income counterparts, but not by much.

"We can buy more nutritious foods if we choose, but we often choose to buy tastier and more convenient foods instead," she said.

Frazao and three other researchers addressed some of the reasons we eat the way we do during the 2007 Annual Gershoff Symposium.

"What we really need to know more about ... is what really determines eating behavior and how, perhaps, we can intervene," said Alice Lichtenstein, the Gershoff Professor of Nutrition Science and Policy.

Where does cost fit in? Frazao pointed to a survey looking at snack purchases. People bought twice as many servings of potato chips as they did snackable produce like bananas, baby carrots, broccoli florets, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers or celery, even though the healthier snacks cost the same as, or even less than, the chips.

While it is true that women with lower incomes do have higher rates of obesity, since the late 1980s, obesity rates among women with higher incomes have been rising. Lower-income men actually have lower obesity rates than their higher-income counterparts.

Analysis by the Economic Research Service suggests that a 20 percent price reduction in fruits and vegetables would increase produce consumption, but only by half a serving per day.

"It's not clear how that would affect weight," Frazao said. "How would they spend that income? Would they go out and buy more ice cream?"

Valerie Duffy, a professor at the University of Connecticut and a visiting research scientist at the Yale School of Medicine, is trying to get to the root of why we like the foods we do.

People fall into a spectrum of taste perception. "Supertasters" have a genetic sensitivity to bitterness, sweetness and fat texture, as well as temperature and pain in the mouth. "A supertaster might be considered to be in a more vibrant oral sensory world," Duffy explained, while non-tasters, who are less sensitive, "live in a more pastel food world."

In some studies, non-tasters tend to have higher body weights and waist circumferences than supertasters. Because of those

correlations, she said, “we need to start looking more at preference as a way of assessing diet and adiposity relationships.”

There are many genetic and physical markers that researchers can use to determine an individual’s food preferences—markers that can identify people who may be at risk for obesity. Nutrition recall studies depend on people accurately remembering what they have eaten over a period of days. “I don’t need to tell nutritionists how hard it is to measure intake,” she said.

Taster status is mitigated by psychological factors, said Beverly Tepper, N82, N86, director of the Sensory Evaluation Laboratory at Rutgers University. A non-taster with a high level of dietary restraint—or ability to control food consumption—can be thin. At the same time, a supertaster who is “food adventurous” may like to seek out new foods, overcoming a natural aversion to spicy curries or dark beers.

“We are in the phase of trying to personalize intervention and treatment strategies for body weight control,” she said. “What better way to personalize that than around a person’s taste preferences?”

As scientists are exploring what drives us internally, others are looking at external factors. Marlene Schwartz, director of research and school programs at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, studies the influence that schools and parents have on childhood eating behaviors.

Parents receive mixed messages, she said. Restrict a child’s diet, and you could give him an eating disorder, they are told, but give him free reign, and he will fall prey to the obesity epidemic.

Children see an average of 10,000 food ads per year, and 95 percent of those are for candy, sugared cereals, fast food and soft drinks. “We have to really appreciate what parents are working against,” she said.

She said there is something to be said for the out-of-sight, out-of-mind theory of nutrition. She used the example of a school that stopped selling a la carte munchies and saw students reduce their overall intake of snacks.

“If you change the environment so it is less convenient ... chances are consumption is going to go down,” Schwartz said.

POTLUCK TRADITION

Each September, the Friedman School’s annual fall potluck is a chance for new and continuing students to gather with faculty and staff and show off their cooking (and eating) skills. Some bring regional dishes or foods from their home countries. This year’s incoming class is made up of 63 students—10 men and 53 women—from across the United States, as well as from China, Palestine, Ghana, Uganda, Canada, Venezuela, the Philippines, Mongolia, Burundi, Indonesia, Norway and India.



Clockwise from top left: Students gathered at the annual Friedman School fall potluck; Sabrina Wu, a first-year student; and second-year students Elizabeth Bontrager, Gretchen Miller and Aliza Wasserman.

Advice to graduates:

Value diversity, empower others, stimulate social action

IN HER ADDRESS TO THE 69 DEGREE RECIPIENTS at the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy commencement ceremony, Lorraine Cordeiro, who received her Ph.D., asked her classmates to commit to increasing diversity in their workplaces and work toward a more tolerant and just society.

“We will head out into workplaces that may not be as diverse as our school, and in many cases, these environments will not be representative of the populations they intend to serve,” she told the crowd that filled Cohen Auditorium on Tufts’ Medford/Somerville campus. “Without the diverse opinions, values and perspectives of individuals from different segments of society, I believe we lose

the essence of why we are so invested in improving the lives of vulnerable members of society. Understanding these perspectives is essential in this increasingly global society.”

She credited her husband, a refugee from Cambodia, with changing her perspective on public service.

“I now believe that our role is not to save the world,” she said. “It is to empower individuals and communities to improve their societies, to advance scientific inquiry, to recognize and build upon local knowledge, to use our expertise to facilitate social change and stimulate social action, to affect public and scientific policy, to advocate for human rights, to ensure ethical and sound research and to dare to think differently.”

As for career advice, William Lockeretz, professor and co-founder of the school’s Agriculture, Food and Environment Program, told graduates to question what is generally passed around as conventional wisdom in their field.

“When you find such a piece of dogma, study it empirically, and show that it is false,” he said. “If that’s the case, you will get a reputation that’s far beyond your young years, and you’ll have a lot fun.” Lockeretz learned the value of questioning the prevailing wisdom in the mid-1970’s, when he published a study disproving the argument that organic farms could not be economically competitive.

At the all-university ceremony earlier in the day, Tufts University President Lawrence S. Bacow presented honorary degrees to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; composer and Tufts Professor *Emeritus* Thomas Jefferson (T.J.) Anderson; engineer Lord Alec Broers; astronaut and alumnus Frederick H. (Rick) Hauck, A62; dancer and educator Denise Jefferson; and economist and Nobel recipient Thomas C. Schelling.

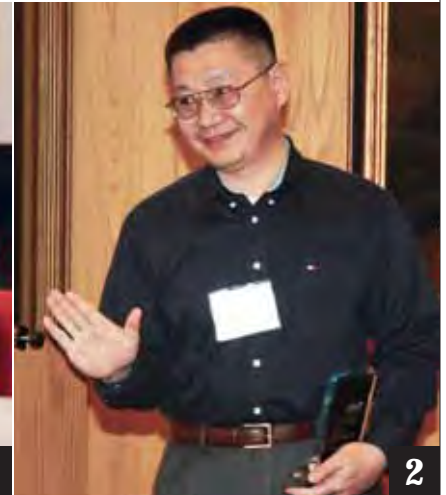
Bacow asked the Tufts community to honor the memory of two “distinguished and beloved” former university presidents: Burton Crosby Hallowell, who died in November 2006, and Nils Yngve Wessell, who died in March. “They were instrumental in making Tufts the university it is today,” Bacow said.



Clockwise from upper left: Patrick Webb, dean for academic affairs, served as master of ceremonies; master's degree recipients Vanessa Salcido Ibanez and Jasmine Chan; Lorraine Cordeiro, who received her Ph.D., gave the class address; and Heather Mernitz received her doctoral hood from Professor Xiang-Dong Wang.



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SCENES FROM REUNION 2007

1. The Gershoff Symposium featured presentations by Valerie Duffy, a professor in the Department of Allied Health Sciences at the University of Connecticut; Beverly Tepper, N82, N86, a professor of sensory science and nutrition at Rutgers University; and Elizabeth Frazao, the assistant deputy director for WIC research at the USDA Economic Research Service.

2. The Alumni Association honored two Frontline Award winners for their cutting-edge work in the field of nutrition: ZhiYong "Sam" Sun, N99, pictured here, a research scientist with the Archer Daniels Midland Corporation; and Virginia Chomitz, N85, N92, a senior scientist at the Cambridge Health Alliance.

3. Suzanne Dorfman, N00, N05; Abby Usen, N03; and Randi Beranbaum, N99, attended the Sunday brunch, which featured a "Back to the Future" program on the early days of the school, where the school is going and what life is like as a Friedman student.

4. Associate Professor Jim Levinson, pictured here, received the Alumni Association's Faculty Award, while Patricia Plummer, G71, chancellor of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, received the Service to the Profession Award.

5. Catherine Hsu, N07, spoke about her experiences at the Friedman School and her future plans.

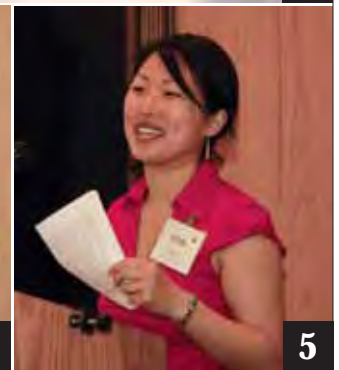
6. ZhiYong "Sam" Sun, N99; David Proulx; Mary-Jon Ludy, N04; and Andrew Shao, N00, at the cocktail reception.



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N86 Miriam Nelson, associate professor at the Friedman School and director of the John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition, has been appointed vice chair of a Health and Human Services (HHS) advisory committee that will make recommendations on the first federal guidelines on physical activity. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans will be issued in late 2008. The report will offer science-based recommendations on the latest knowledge about activity and health, with depth and flexibility to target specific populations, including seniors, children and persons with disabilities.

N87 Susan Harris completed the 111th Boston Marathon on April 16 as a member of the Tufts President's Marathon Challenge Team, which raises money for nutrition and medical research

at Tufts. She completed the 26.2-mile course in 5 hours, 36 minutes and 33 seconds. Harris is a scientist in the Calcium and Bone Metabolism Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts (HNRCA).

N98 Congratulations to **Julia Roberts,** M98, on the birth of her daughter, Georgia Mae. Georgia was welcomed home by big brothers Zach and Casey.

N99 Raina Gay, N05, was awarded the 2007 Hamish N. Munro Postdoctoral Research Award. This award is given annually for outstanding scientific research conducted at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University (HNRCA) by a postdoctoral fellow, research associate or visiting scientist within five years of receiving his or her

Ph.D. The award is named for the first director of the HNRCA. Gay is a scientist at Paratek Pharmaceuticals, Inc. in Boston.



Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has appointed **Kate (Gorton) Houston** as deputy undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services. She is responsible for improving the health and well-being of Americans by developing and promoting science-based dietary guidance and administering the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 15 nutrition assistance programs. Houston had been deputy administrator for special nutrition programs for the

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. In 2005, she received the Food Research and Action Center's Distinguished Service to Congress Award.

N00 Pollyanna Chavez, N05, has joined the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer on the Alcohol Team.

Congratulations to **Andrew Shao** and his wife, Tara, J95, on the birth of their son, Jack, in July. Jack was also welcomed home by his big sister, Samantha.

N01 Congratulations to **Skye Colclough,** M01, on the birth of her son, Shane Riley Douglas, who was born in 2006.

N02 Ann McDermott is the director of the Center for Obesity Prevention and Education and an associate

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TRAVEL-LEARN



New face in development and alumni relations

This fall, the school welcomed Sean Devendorf as the director of annual giving and alumni relations. Sean comes from the Rumsey Hall School in Connecticut, where he was the director of alumni relations and associate director of development. Sean is leading programs related to the school's annual fund and the Alumni Association. He joins Cindy Briggs Tobin, who was promoted to director of development and alumni relations earlier this year; stewardship and events coordinator Lindsay Schoonmaker and staff assistant Joanne McDonough.

professor in the kinesiology department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

N04 Jennifer Hastings, M04, is the prevention and communication manager at North Carolina Prevention Partners, a non-profit organization in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Magali Jadoun spent six months learning Spanish in Seville, Spain, and is now back home in Senegal, where she worked for the Pasteur Institute in an immunology program

designed to fight malaria in the subregion.

Mary-Jon Ludy is pursuing a doctorate at Purdue University. She will be analyzing if eating spicy food leads to eating smaller portions, and if this could be a strategy to help combat obesity.

Karen Willis is a clinical dietitian at the Vail Valley Medical Center in Vail, Colo. She shares: "I returned to Colorado after spending October 2006 to February 2007 in Narok, Kenya. I joined World Concern (developmental relief organization), working in health education and conducting a food intake study with the Maasai tribe communities within the district."

N06 Jessica Barney-Tilahun is working in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as a nutrition security consultant.

Meghan Slining, M06, is pursuing a doctoral degree in nutritional epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

N07 The policy brief, "Industrial Livestock Companies' Gains from Low Feed Prices, 1997-2005," by Timothy Wise, deputy director and researcher at the Global Development and Environment Institute (GDAE), and **Elanor Starmer**, research assistant at GDAE, was featured on the cover of the prominent weekly industry magazine *Feedstuffs* (March 26, 2007). The article comes at a time of active debate in Washington over the farm bill and over the recent increases in feed prices due to the ethanol-driven run-up in corn prices.

WE MISS YOU

AS MUCH AS WE TRY TO KEEP in touch with graduates, sometimes we lose track. Have you heard from any of these alumni? Let them know we miss them and would like to add them to the mailing list for *Tufts Nutrition*. Send them to <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/alumni>.

Nkiabungu Bikangi, N86, N87

Jeanine M. Comeau, N99

Saratha Cumesan, N93

Roberta M. Dworkin, N84

Sulima Abdel Haliem Elballa Rhman, N04, F04

Nahimana Gitebo, N88

Girma Gode, N05

Hongmei Li, N93

Rebecca A. Lyons, N96

Kristina A. Nordensten, N95

Mary-Anne K. Olivar, N96

Ameca Ellis Park, N01

Rebecca Ann Pugh Brown, N93

Million S. Tadesse, N05

Jonathan K. Thrasher, N90

Jean-Eric Triau, N83, N87

David E. Turkson-Ocran, N98

Nancy Fuhrman Sweeney, G58

Lori C. Hennessy, N89

Chun-Yin Huang, N02

Winona B. Lawrence, G52

Mohamed Mansour, G85, N86

Barbara M. Martin, G70

SAVE THE DATE All-Alumni Reunion April 12-14, 2008

Join us at the All-Alumni Reunion on April 12-14, 2008. Enjoy reconnecting with friends and mentors, as well as attending the annual Gershoff Symposium and the presentation of the Alumni Association Awards.

Graduates of the early 1990s: Catch up with classmates at a reunion reception just for you.

For more information about the All-Alumni Reunion, visit the alumni section of <http://nutrition.tufts.edu>. Interested in volunteering? Contact Sean Devendorf at sean.devendorf@tufts.edu.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Have you changed jobs? Fulfilled a dream? Is your family growing? Are you getting together with classmates? Keep fellow graduates up to date by sharing your news.

Send to:

Sean Devendorf

Office of Development and Alumni Relations

136 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA 02111

Or e-mail sean.devendorf@tufts.edu or

go online to <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/alumni>

CLASS NOTES DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS MARCH 1, 2008

Promising results help obesity prevention program go nationwide by Mark Sullivan

Shape Up Success

Three little girls, with race numbers pinned to their green T-shirts, ate bananas at the fourth annual Shape Up Somerville 5K Run/Walk and Family Fun and Fitness Day. They could have been the poster children for the event.

"We got a medal!" exclaimed 4-year-old Diva Cersosimo, of Melrose, Mass., who was there with her twin sister, Ella, and friend Mia Francis, 5, of Malden, Mass. The girls had competed in the obstacle course, testing their skills at jumping, tunnel-crawling and ball-kicking, and were readying for the 100-yard dash for children ages 3 to 6.

"It's great they have events for kids," said the twins' mother, Jessica Cersosimo, whose family physician, Dr. Michael Coffey of Somerville, was an organizer of this fun-and-races day on September 30. "I'm all for getting the kids active," she said.

Getting kids active is the idea behind Shape Up Somerville, the obesity prevention experiment launched by Tufts researchers that promotes a city-wide campaign to keep schoolchildren fit. The success of Shape Up Somerville has been making headlines. Now, a \$2.2 million grant from the PepsiCo Foundation will enable the groundbreaking experiment to be replicated in three other communities around the United States.



The Shape Up Somerville 5K Run/Walk begins. Luke Paillet (right) was cheered on in the kids' race by his mother, Assistant Professor Christina Economos.

Assistant Professor Christina Economos, N96, holder of the New Balance Chair in Childhood Nutrition, and fellow researchers at the John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition at the Friedman School, designed the Shape Up program under which Somerville has made a community-wide effort to curb childhood obesity.

Not only have Somerville schools nearly doubled the amount of fresh fruit served for school lunches, local restaurants have switched to low-fat milk and smaller portion sizes, and the city has added bike racks and repainted crosswalks to encourage kids to walk to school.

The Somerville experiment is working. According to a report published in May 2007 in the medical journal *Obesity*, Somerville schoolchildren during the 2003–04 school year gained less weight—as much as a pound less—than children in two nearby communities used as a control group. The news made the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* and was reported by NBC Nightly News, ABC's Nightline and CNN, among other media outlets.

The PepsiCo Foundation grant will enable the experiment to be tried in three more communities, with three others serving as controls, all to be chosen later this year.

Claire Lyons, manager of global grant programs for the PepsiCo Foundation, said



the foundation “is delighted to continue supporting the important and groundbreaking work of Dr. Economos and her team. We believe the community-based intervention model, which is the framework for Shape Up, is a superior method in helping communities become healthier places to live, work and go to school.

“As the results of the first year’s intervention show, a coordinated and comprehensive strategy does produce a slow down and reduction in weight gain among children. This is quite encouraging evidence and spurs us forward to focus more at the community level. Dr. Economos leads the United States in this particular type of action-based research, which is aligned with the foundation’s targeted grant priorities. Our collective goals are to positively impact Americans’ health; we hold much hope in the Shape Up model as a way to bring this about.”

Economos presented her Shape Up Somerville research at the second annual Friedman School Symposium in October. “There are many communities around the country attempting to make changes, and what this study tells us is they should persevere,” she said. “A lot of people making a few small changes added up to produce significant results. We couldn’t go to the children and say you have to change your lifestyle. We had to change the environment and the community spirit first.”

That community spirit was evident at the Shape Up Somerville road race and fun day, which drew 300 adults and children. Moon-bounces undulated on the city’s Trum Field, as lines of runners trotted past the triple-deckers on Broadway. Applause met those who crossed the finish line.

“It was kind of hard to keep up, but it was pretty fun,” said Emily Kate O’Brien, 10, of the Winter Hill section of Somerville, after she finished the mile-and-a-half race and joined her father, Timothy, at the finish line to cheer on her mother, Jeanne, in the 5K.

Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone, who ran with members of his staff, finished the 5K course in a little more than 25 minutes. “People are talking about eating smart and playing hard,” the mayor said, “and this is another example of how people in the community are embracing a healthy lifestyle.”



The event kept people of all ages active.

Some 30 Tufts medical students ran the 5K in blue hospital garb as the Classes of 2010 and 2011 raced each other for primacy in the so-called Scrubs Division. “This is a fun event, and the community spirit is great,” said Christie Binder, M11, after the run.

Economos’ son, 7-year-old Luke Paillet, munched an apple after finishing the kids’ 1.5-mile race in a little more than 16 minutes. “It was fun,” Luke said. “Some of the time we had to pace ourselves because we got a little tired, but then we ran faster again.”

Akash Altman, 10-year-old son of Dr. Wayne Altman, associate professor of public health and family medicine at Tufts School of Medicine, finished the race in 16-and-a-half minutes. Asked what he liked about



running, Akash answered: “Probably the exercise.” He keeps running, he said, “because it’s good for you.”

Economos stood at the finish clapping for runners as they crossed the line. “It’s a great community event,” she said. “It’s great to see kids walking and running, playing field games, getting out and staying healthy.”

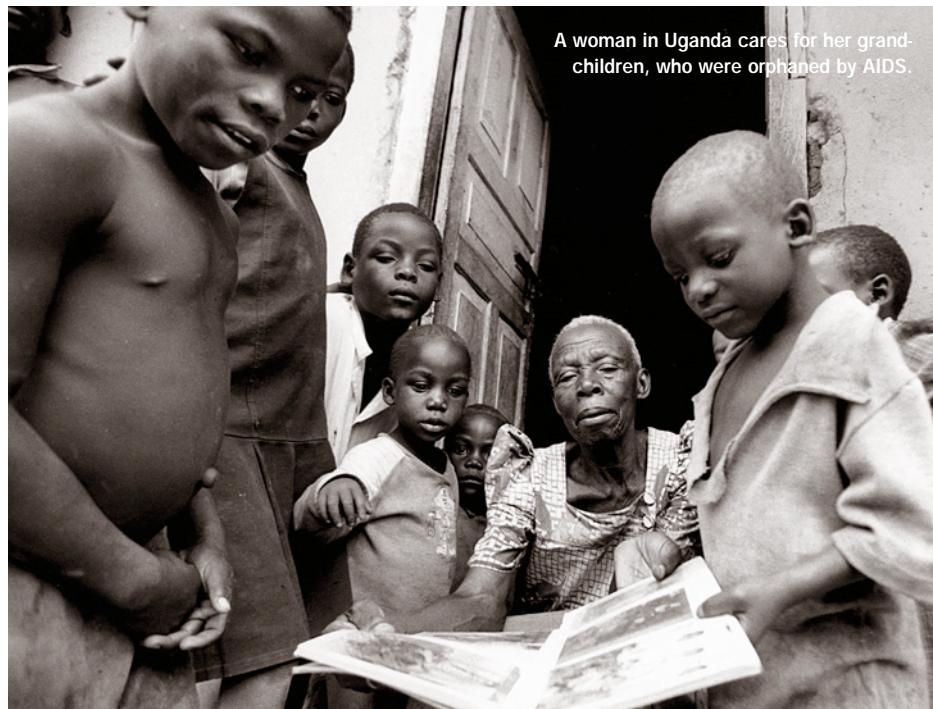
Mark Sullivan is a senior writer for Advancement Communications.

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

The Campaign for Tufts

PROGRESS REPORT

Contributions to Beyond Boundaries: The Campaign for Tufts have surpassed \$690.2 million. Learn more about the \$1.2 billion campaign and its impact at www.tufts.edu/giving.



A woman in Uganda cares for her grand-children, who were orphaned by AIDS.

Gift will expand joint program in human security

A \$6 MILLION GIFT FROM THE LEIR FOUNDATION will support cross-disciplinary research and teaching in the field of human security at the Fletcher and Friedman schools at Tufts, enabling the joint program to hire new faculty, attract and support the most qualified students and more effectively disseminate research to practitioners around the world.

Human security is an emerging concept that departs from the traditional, military-centered notion of national security to include humanitarian assistance, economic development, human rights and conflict resolution. It recognizes vulnerable groups in society, particularly women and children. "If you look at groups of people, whether in a village or in a nation the size of the United States, what makes you secure is not having a security guard at the gate, or an army," said Peter Walker, director of the Feinstein International Center. "Human security involves jobs, welfare, ownership of land, education of children; we have to

look at all contributing factors to human security in today's interconnected, globalized world."

Tufts University aims to establish itself over the next 10 years as the world's premier center for teaching, research, training and policy development in the field.

The Leir Foundation continues the philanthropic work of the late industrialist Henry J. Leir, H79, a longtime friend and supporter of Tufts University, whose bequest established the Henry J. Leir Chair in International Humanitarian Studies at the Fletcher School.

Over five years, the gift will provide:

- \$3 million to endow a joint professorship in refugee and migration studies, an area where development, humanitarianism, human rights and conflict resolution overlap
- \$900,000 in core funding for three new faculty positions in alternative financing, conflict and gender and conflict resolution, with research and teaching to cross discipli-

nary and institutional borders and involve colleagues and students at both schools

- More than \$860,000 to complete the endowment of the Rosenberg Professorship, held by Peter Walker, director of the Feinstein International Center at the Friedman School

- \$400,000 to renovate the offices of the Fletcher School's Institute for Human Security, directed by Peter Uvin, the Henry J. Leir Professor of International Humanitarian Studies at Fletcher and the school's academic dean

- Scholarships totaling nearly \$300,000 for Ph.D. students and \$137,000 for students in the Friedman and Fletcher schools' joint Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance (MAHA) program

- \$50,000 for a human security seminar series

Tufts researchers in human security are engaged in projects around the world. At Fletcher, Uvin and Marc Sommers, an associate research professor of humanitarian studies, investigate youth and violence in Burundi and Rwanda in the hope their research will help advance the peace process there. The Feinstein Center is pursuing similar research in Darfur and northern Uganda. Sally Abbott, a Friedman doctoral student working out of the Feinstein International Center, is studying the impact of the Asian tsunami on families' access to food, while Fletcher doctoral student Susanna Campbell looks at how development organizations working in war-torn countries learn to adapt their programming to become more "conflict sensitive."

The ultimate aim is to produce scholarship that makes a real difference in the world. "For that, we need people who are capable of working across academic and professional disciplines and who are at the cutting edge of current practice," Uvin said. "There are few such people in the world, and even fewer places where they can work."

"The aim of Tufts is to be the world center to which people look when they think of these issues. The Leir grant, following upon the past support Henry J. Leir's estate has given the Fletcher School, is key to our achieving this dream," Uvin said.

—Mark Sullivan



Frances Stern

Teacher, Pioneer, Nutritionist



The
**Charles Tufts
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GIFT PLANNING OFFICE

THE FRANCES STERN NUTRITION CENTER (FSNC) at the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy was established in 1918 by Frances Stern, a pioneer in the field of applied nutrition. The Center was the first organization of its kind in the world and has served as a model for many other nutrition clinics in the U.S. and abroad.

YOU CAN FURTHER FRANCES STERN'S LEGACY and support the Friedman School's advances in the field of nutrition by including the Frances Stern Nutrition Center in your estate plans.

For more information about making a gift in your will or estate plans, or for sample language, please contact Brooke Anderson at 617-627-4975 or brooke.anderson@tufts.edu. You can also call our toll free number at 1-888-PGTUFTS or visit us online at www.tufts.edu/giftplanning.

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START-UP FOR CHANGE

After years of working with large non-profits and government agencies to help refugees in war-torn parts of Africa, Sasha Chanoff, N04, had seen too many victims of combat and violence who were left behind by resettlement operations. So he started his own refugee assistance organization out of the spare bedroom in his Somerville apartment. For more on the story, turn to page 24.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHE CALAIS FOR MAPENDO



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