

## First conference on geriatric care well received

More than 150 health care professionals attended the first “Advances in Geriatric Care Conference” (AGCC) held at the end of July in Omaha.

The conference is the first of a series being offered by the Nebraska Geriatric Education Center.

One of the major activities of the center is to provide health care professionals the most up-to-date information on caring for geriatric patients, said Jane Potter, M.D., a specialist in geriatrics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and co-director of the center.

“There was an enormous amount of fun and learning that occurred with this group of like minded professionals,” Dr. Potter said. “One of the highlights of the conference was an interdisciplinary case-based panel discussion led by Dr. Bill Lyons, called Four Heads Are Better Than One, that engaged the audience as well as the panel.”

The conference was a start-up to the geriatric mini-fellowship program now being offered to health-care professionals by the center.

The goal of the mini-fellowships is

*Continued on page 15*



Suzy Goedeken (left) and Nicole Ball show the results of their marshmallow animal project. This project helps to demonstrate phenotypes for various traits.

## Science teacher retreat a success

Nineteen high school science teachers from 15 rural Nebraska school districts participated in a weeklong workshop at Wayne State College in June to learn new science teaching methods.

The workshop, made possible through a grant received from the Nebraska Department of Education Math Science Partnership, is a collaborative effort among several entities.

Those involved include: the

University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) and Area Health Education Center (AHEC) programs; Educational Service Unit 10, based in Kearney; Wayne State College; and the collaborating school districts.

RHEN Director Roxanna Jokela, who directed the workshop project, said the goal was to help science teachers improve their inquiry skills and their curriculum.

Over the past five years, UNMC

*Continued on page 2*

# Mini-Medical School Celebrates Ten Years of Educating Nebraskans

The University of Nebraska Medical Center is celebrating the 10th anniversary of one of its most popular public education series: Mini-Medical School.

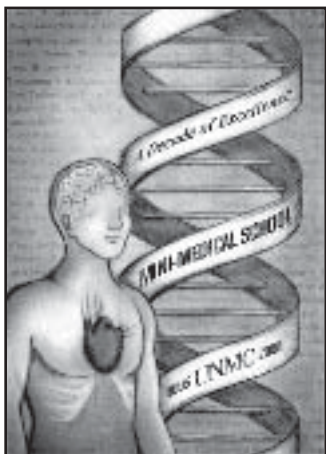
“A Decade of Excellence” is the program title of the fall 2005 Mini-Medical School.

The program will be held over three weeks beginning Oct. 6 through Oct. 20.

It will highlight three of the most popular topics covered – genetics, the brain and the heart – giving an update on the advances over the past ten years in research and treatment pertaining to each subject.

Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D. will kick off the series with opening remarks on Oct. 6.

The program is broadcast live from the auditorium of the Durham Research Center in Omaha to 15 host sites across the state on NebSat2.



Mini-Medical School began in 1995 and is the largest semiannual public education event sponsored by UNMC.

The free program is designed for anyone who wants to learn more about issues surrounding significant developments in research and patient care.

The series is taught by experts and explores science in language anyone can understand.

Topics covered over the past 10 years include the immune system, smallpox and new disease threats.

Continuing education credits are available for health care professionals for a small fee.

For more information the 2005 Fall Mini-Medical School check out the Website at: [www.unmc.edu/minimed](http://www.unmc.edu/minimed).

To become a host site call Vicky Cerino, UNMC Public Affairs at (402) 559-5190 or e-mail her at: [vcerino@unmc.edu](mailto:vcerino@unmc.edu)

## Science Teacher Retreat Well Received

*Continued from page 1*

has provided two-day workshops for science teachers.

“This year, through partnering with the state department of education and ESU 10, we were able to receive funding to increase the workshop to a full week,” Jokela said. “Next year’s workshop will be a capstone program of 60 hours over a two-week period.”

The weeklong workshop is part of the 20-month project “Rural Academic Secondary Schools Science Partnership (RASSSP).

Participants said they learned invaluable skills during the workshop.

“Inquiry was a central part of this workshop,” said Michael Zarate of Lexington. “It’s a different way of thinking about science and what science does. The enlightened ability to use and teach inquiry helps make us better learners as well as better teachers.”

Shelly Avery, of Santee Community Schools, agreed: “It was also a great opportunity to learn from some of the best high school and college teachers in Nebraska.”

Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., associate professor of pediatrics at UNMC and the director of the workshop’s science curriculum, said the goal of the workshop is to provide professional development for science teachers.

“The partnership between UNMC and teachers in rural Nebraska is a small but significant step in providing science experiences to teachers,” Dr. Godfrey said. “The hope is to make science an enjoyable experience for their students.”

The collaborating school districts were selected from the Central and Northern Nebraska AHEC service areas through previous workshop participation and recommendations from ESU 10.

“It was a great way to make connections and gain resources,” said Chelle Gomez, of Central City.



The RHEN Focus is published three times a year by the University of Nebraska Medical Center Chancellor’s Office, 986660 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha NE 68198-6660, (402) 559-8946.

The University of Nebraska does not discriminate in its academic, admissions or employment programs and abides by all federal, state and regental regulations pertaining to same.

*Funded in part through the Health Resources & Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions Federal Grant #2 U76HP00592*

Harold M. Maurer, M.D., Chancellor

Michael Sitorius, M.D., Director, Nebraska AHEC Program Office

Roxanna Jokela, RHEN Director and Deputy Director of the Nebraska AHEC Program Office

Robyn Henderson  
Assistant RHEN Director

Liliana Bronner and Ann Kraft,  
Program Coordinators

Lisa Spellman, Editor  
phone: (402) 559-4693  
e-mail: [lsPELLMAN@unmc.edu](mailto:lsPELLMAN@unmc.edu)

# Sandhills Spotlight of Ag Adventure Tour



This year's Ag Adventure Tour, "Gazing and Grazing," took place from July 14-16.

The tour was marketed as a "rurban bonding experience" bringing together rural and urban Nebraskans to find commonalities amongst one another and learn about the challenges that distance presents to agriculture in the Sandhills of Nebraska and the economy of our state.

Water issues, ranching, economic development, distance learning, and resource conservation were among some of the topics discussed.

Gretchen Forsell, executive director of the Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center, took this opportunity to inform participants about the purpose AHECs serve in rural Nebraska, as well as to promote some AHEC activities across the northern part of the state.

The three-day tour began in Madison County, stretched out to Cherry County, and concluded in Howard County.

Highlights included tours of Affiliated Foods in Norfolk, the Seven Springs water bottling plant in Long Pine, Smith Falls State Park and Heartland Elk Ranch in Valentine, Finney Ranch in Seneca, Fire Hall and Double R Ranch in Mullen, Sandhills Spirit of the West in Nenzel, Fort Hartstuff in Elyra, and the Danish Bakery in Dannebrog.

The following UNMC representatives participated in the tour: Rick Boldt, facilities management and planning; Liliana Bronner, Rural Health Education Network; Nancy Dunham, a researcher who works in the Eppley Institute; Mary McNamee, from student services administration, and Diane Ruskamp, academic affairs.

Before preparing to give tour participants a look into how ranching is done in the Sandhills, owner and operator Mike Finney, standing at far left, explains that his family started this cow/calf yearling ranch in 1946.



Ag tour participants get together for a group picture at the Goose Creek School playground in Valentine, Neb.

## Final Bioterrorism Symposia of 2005 Presented in Kearney and Gering

The Center for Biopreparedness Education presented the last of its 2005 Symposia Series in Kearney on May 24-25 and in Gering on June 16-17.

The Center for Biopreparedness Education offered the annual symposia series to provide a comprehensive overview of the issues facing Nebraska's communities related to biological and chemical incidents.

More than 225 health care professionals participated at these sites.

Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy, one of the keynote speakers, provided a report about biopreparedness activities in Nebraska, as well as the status of initiatives for homeland security.

Other speakers included Thomas Gouttierre, dean of International Studies and Programs and director of the Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha; Jerry Jaax, D.V.M., associate vice provost for research compliance and university veterinarian at Kansas State University; and Garry McKee, Ph.D., with the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service in Omaha.

The first day of the symposia included an audience response vignette, in which participants viewed a video of a biohazard emergency



The symposia offered an opportunity to “strengthen partnerships needed to protect our communities and the key systems we all depend upon,” said Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy, state director of homeland security.

involving children.

Participants were then asked to make decisions about the appropriate steps to take in responding to the incident.

The video is scheduled to be distributed to Nebraska hospitals and first responders for use in training.

The Center for Biopreparedness Education will also begin offering educational programs in school biopreparedness this fall.

The Biosecurity Conference for School Administrators will be offered on October 4 in Lincoln and on October 6 in Gering.

That program will be followed by the First National Congress on School Biosecurity and will be held in Omaha on Jan. 5-6, 2006.

For more information on these programs, please contact the Center for Biopreparedness Education at (402) 552-2529.

### Next Biopreparedness Course to focus on the Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation

The Center for Biopreparedness Education (CBE) will be sponsoring a Medical Effects of Ionizing Radiation (MEIR) course on January 21-22, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza in Omaha.

This course provides military and civilian personnel with up-to-date information concerning the biomedical consequences of radiation exposure, how the effects can be reduced and the medical management of casualties. Experts from the U.S. Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) in Bethesda, MD, will teach the course.

The course covers two days of the fundamentals of ionizing radiation: the ionizing radiation interaction with cells and organs, diagnosis and treatment of acute radiation symptoms and combined injuries, psychological effects of radiation exposure, internal radiation contamination, radiological defense, and protection against radiation.

RHEN will help with logistic coordination of the course.

For more information about this program contact the CBE office at (402) 552-2529.

# Elder Caregiving Focus of Kearney Town Hall Meeting

One hundred caregivers from across Nebraska were pre-selected from hundreds of applicants to participate in a town hall meeting to discuss a very important topic: elder caregiving.

The meeting, which was held in Kearney in March, was videotaped to be part of a larger television special by PBS titled: "And Thou Shalt Honor: A Town Hall Meeting on Caregiving."

Jane Potter, M.D., chief of the University of Nebraska Medical Center Section of Geriatrics and Gerontology was one of the participants.

"This town hall meeting was enlightening, moving and needed," Dr. Potter said. "Medicine has been slow in coming to the awareness of the multiple dimensions involved when caring for the elderly. Nursing has understood for years that health professionals must be more aware of the entire social environment of the patient. I always tell students that what happens in the house is as important as what happens in the clinic."

During the three-hour videotaping, the studio audience engaged 16 professionals in discussions that ranged from pointed to poignant, even heartbreaking at times. Elder caregiving in small rural communities can be especially hard in terms of access to auxiliary services and programs.

Elder caregiving is one of the most vitally necessary social duties performed in America today.

In 2004, the National Family Caregivers Association, based in Washington, D.C., estimated that there are 27 million family caregivers in the United States who spend, on average, more than 1,000 hours a year providing care to a loved one with little or no financial support - an estimated \$257 billion a year in uncompensated services.

"How we treat our elderly and vulnerable citizens defines us as a society, but more importantly, the act of caregiving provides us the opportunity to honor those we love,"

said co-executive producer Dale Bell. "We urge everyone across the nation to become engaged in the caregiving cause. Chances are good that every person either knows a caregiver, is a caregiver or will become one at some point in the future."

During the conference Dr. Potter noted that the American health system currently is skewed towards acute, big-ticket diseases and not on what people actually need.

"Today, I can get a patient a \$40,000 defibrillator implant procedure with no problem, but to get that same patient a \$400 ramp so that they can get in and out of their house in a wheelchair is virtually impossible. Too many Americans are placed in nursing homes today because they can't afford or lack access to adequate social assistance and amenities that would enable them to stay in their homes."

For more information Dr. Jane Potter can be reached via e-mail at [jpotter@unmc.edu](mailto:jpotter@unmc.edu) or call (402) 559-7595.

## Students from 31 Schools Attend June State Science Meet

Seventy-three eighth-grade students from 31 schools across Nebraska attended UNMC's 13th annual Eighth Grade State Science Meet June 9-11, for an educational and fun experience.

The meet's goal is to inspire students, especially those from rural communities, to pursue careers in health care.

The students qualified for the state meet by submitting science projects in six regional competitions earlier in the year.

"This helps us know a lot more about the many careers in medicine," said Haley Mondt of Funk. "I respect what a lot of people do behind the scenes."

The expense-paid meet exposes students to the health professions, medical research and patient care.

Events include hands-on science activities, presentations about a



Having fun while learning in the lab are, from left: Helena Britt of Brady, Janessa Eischeid of Elgin, Jo-Ann Moser of Omaha, and Alicia Hisel of Ashby.

variety of health science disciplines, tours of UNMC, and a team science competition.

"We saw a lot of experiments and some other neat stuff," said Brent Bartak of Ainsworth Middle School.

"I learned a lot from this experience."

Students interested in attending next year's eighth-grade Science Meets should contact their science teacher, school counselor or principal in the fall.

# Rural Research Project Has Lasting Impact

Susan Noble Walker, Ed.D. wants to help older rural women decrease their risks for chronic diseases associated with aging.

“National data show that rural women are more sedentary than their urban counterparts and are less likely to receive counseling from their health care providers on the importance of maintaining

a healthy lifestyle,” said Walker, professor and chair of the Department of Gerontological, Psychosocial and Community Health

Nursing at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing.



Susan Noble Walker

To reverse this trend, Dr. Walker began the “Wellness for Women” research project in 2001 with funding from the National Institute of Nursing Research, a division of the National Institutes of Health.

More than 200 women from rural Nebraska enrolled in the research project, which has produced very positive and sustaining results.

“One woman diagnosed with type II diabetes lost 10 percent of her body fat,” said Dr. Walker. “She also was able to go off her medications.”

Dr. Walker said that rural women were targeted for the research project because they have higher rates of obesity and chronic illnesses than their urban counterparts.

She said she also chose women between the ages of 50 and 69 because this is the time when a woman’s health risks increase.

“After menopause, women are at risk for chronic disease, such as diabetes and osteoporosis,” she said. “These are preventable, or can at least be delayed, with a healthy lifestyle.”



Bertha Fuentes, study participant, pictured with research nurse Cathy Vasko, B.S.N.

## Gering Resident Takes Study to Heart

Bertha Fuentes’ participation in the Wellness for Women research project couldn’t have come at a better time.

“I received a letter in late 2002 from the (University of Nebraska Medical Center) school of nursing that told about this study for women,” said Fuentes. “I was curious and called.”

Fortunately for the Gering, Neb., resident, the research project was exactly what she needed.

Earlier that year her husband underwent quadruple heart bypass surgery and Fuentes had learned recently that she had Type II diabetes.

“For the health of my husband and myself I had to learn how to prepare food in a way that was different than the way I had prepared food for 46 years,” Fuentes said.

This is exactly what the research project, spearheaded by Susan Noble Walker, Ed.D., professor and chair of the Department of Gerontological, Psychosocial and Community Health Nursing at UNMC aimed to do.

The two main goals of the Wellness for Women research project – to encourage rural women ages 50 to 69 to eat healthier and be more physically active – was just what the doctor ordered.

“I learned how to prepare food that was fat- and salt-free,” Fuentes said. “I also learned how to read food labels, how to make better food choices and the importance of making these changes.”

Participants in the program received newsletters that provided recipe ideas, tips on cooking and the value of exercise.

“Steaks, pork chops, chicken, fish – I use to pan-fry everything,” Fuentes said. “Now I broil or bake a lot more.”

She also walks six miles every day of the week, except Sundays.

“I have lost over 20 pounds in one year,” Fuentes said. “My husband’s trygliceride level is at 72, and I am able to manage my diabetes much better.”

# Students Introduced to Health Care Careers at Summer Workshop

Twenty high school juniors and seniors from throughout Nebraska participated in the Summer Health Professions Career Workshop Aug. 3-6 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

“It is always a pleasure having these students on campus,” said Lisa Jewell, director of the UNMC Youth Learning Center. “All of the students are ranked at the top of their class and eager to learn.”

Of the 60 students who applied to attend the four-day workshop, only 20 students were accepted. Applicants were chosen based on their grade point average, outside interests and an essay expressing why they want to attend the workshop.

“This has been really helpful,” said John Loschen, a junior from Wilcox. “I’m a diabetic and I decided that when I was diagnosed three years ago that I wanted to be an endocrinologist.”

While at UNMC the students participated in a variety of hands-on activities including: mixing soft



Andrew Jokumsen, Taylor Pugh, Catherine Koozer, Eric Van Boening and John Meusch.

gelatin lozenges in a lab at the College of Pharmacy, drilling and filling a simulated tooth at the College of Dentistry and examining animal hearts in the gross anatomy lab at the College of Medicine.

“This has been a great learning experience,” said Katie Schueths, a junior at the science magnet school at Lincoln Southwest High School. “I’ve probably learned more in the past two days than I have from speakers who have come to our school.”

At the end of the workshop, students were required to research a health career-related topic and then compose a short paper. Students presented their findings to their peers and UNMC staff on the final day of the program.

“Researching and writing these papers gives the students an opportunity to self-reflect, review what they learned and discover what areas of health sciences or a health care career they might be interested in,” Jewell said.

## Outreach Services Coordinator Committed to Providing Continuing Education

John Navis is the administrator of outreach services for the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

In this position Navis is responsible for a wide variety of services and continuing education programs for physicians and hospitals in the state.

Navis is primarily responsible for responding to the continuing educational needs of health care professionals in Nebraska and Iowa.

Once he receives a request for a specific educational topic, Navis will identify the appropriate faculty and staff at UNMC and The Nebraska Medical Center who are qualified to address the topic.

He also plans the educational programs utilizing medical

center physicians, nurses and other professionals and arranges transportation for the speakers along with audio visual equipment.

To help defray the costs of these programs Navis and others in the center seek and apply for grant funding.

Navis has organized between 60 to 80 educational programs a year and has accompanied speakers to most communities in Nebraska and several in Iowa and Missouri.

He also assists communities in the state who are attempting to recruit physicians from UNMC’s residency programs by acting as a liaison between UNMC, The Nebraska Medical Center and the community.

Recently, Navis has been actively involved in the development of

Nebraska’s Telehealth Network as it relates to educational programs and telemedicine consultations.

UNMC will soon be linked to every hospital in the state via “Internet Protocol” utilizing interactive video equipment that will allow physicians and other health care professionals to participate in educational conferences.

Navis also works closely with the Center for Rural Health Research, the Health Professions Tracking Center, the Rural Health Education Network, and the Area Health Education Centers.

If you are interested in learning more about bringing continuing education programs to your community contact John Navis via e-mail at: [jnavis@unmc.edu](mailto:jnavis@unmc.edu) or call him at: (402) 559-4798.

## Columbus Community Hospital Career Explorer's Post a Hit

Members of the Columbus Community Hospital Explorer's Post had their final meeting on May 9.

Last fall 39 high school students joined the explorer's post and formed committees to plan events that highlighted healthcare professions.

The students were very creative in deciding which professions to highlight and how.

They also took advantage of the available healthcare professionals on-site that would be willing to speak to the group.

Along with presentations by speakers and tours of the hospital, each student also gave a Power-Point presentation on the health profession career of his or her choice.

The students also formed teams and created a poster representing the various healthcare careers. The posters were then used in a final competition.

Topics covered during the explorer post included: radiology, nursing, clinical laboratory science, pharmacy, dietetics, medicine, physician assistant and physical therapy.

Area healthcare professionals from these fields told the students how they got into their careers, what their jobs are like, what they like about their careers and the challenges they face.

At the conclusion of each meeting, the students completed evaluation forms rating the career reports, speakers, tours and activities.

Students in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades were also able to request job shadowing opportunities at the meetings.

On the final night students competed and were awarded prizes in



Winners of the Columbus Community Hospital Explorer's Post competitions held at the final meeting on May 9.

two areas: best topic and explorer's post jeopardy.

Explorer members voted on the best poster and during the jeopardy game teams were formed and answered questions like: "According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, what is the median annual wage for a Registered Nurse?"

Prizes for first, second and third place were awarded during each event.

On final evaluation the students indicated that they really enjoyed the speakers and tours, and all said the hands-on activities really helped them to better understand each career.

The Columbus Community Hospital would like to thank the Central Nebraska AHEC for its support of this career exploration activity.



Members of the Columbus Community Hospital Explorer's Post on a tour of the hospital.

# Community Grants Put to Good Use

Five projects have been completed using funding from community grants provided jointly by the Central Nebraska AHEC and Rural Health Education Network office at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

The projects and a description of each follows:

**Edgerton Explorit Center** – “*Kidz Explore*” project held on April 17, in Kearney. This activity featured the game “Operation,” X-ray activity and a “blood pump” that showed how hard our heart actually works.

This was a very educational activity that encouraged exploration of health care careers with over 9,000 people in attendance.

**Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital** – “*Focus on the 5 C’s (Confidentiality-*

*Communication-Caring-Cultural Diversity-College/Career Planning)*”

This pre-professional workshop hosted 40 students, who participated in didactic and hands-on presentations. The three-day camp, held at Silver Lake High School, provided health education and career information to 50 students.

**Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools** – “*Opportunities in the Health Care Professions*” project featured a number of hands-on activities, three hospital tours, six health-related clinics/laboratories, and 13 speakers on health care careers.

This project also gave the 16 students who participated a chance to experience job shadowing, mentoring and career counseling from health care professionals.

**Wellness Works/Por Su Salud** – “*Exploring Health Career Camp*” project held in Grand Island featured a week long summer camp June 6-10.

Twelve students participated in the camp, which featured various hands-on activities along with job shadowing at various health care offices (dental, pediatrician, and occupational therapist).

**Eustis-Farnam Middle School** – “*President’s Challenge*” project had 74 middle school students participate in a variety of activities.

The students also completed a fitness program designed to not only help them become healthier, but to increase their awareness of different aspects of their health and learn about opportunities for careers in the health and physical fitness fields.

## CN-AHEC Given Unique Opportunity to Help Youths

Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center recently had the opportunity to help 100 young women from the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) in Geneva, Neb.

Dr. Don Belau, a psychologist from the YRTC contacted CN-AHEC requesting assistance with summer school programming that specifically pertained to the needs of the youths staying at the center.

The YRTC is part of the Nebraska Health and Human Services Protection and Safety System that provides treatment for girls, ages 13-18, who have been placed there by the courts.

The average length of stay at

the YRTC is between eight and 10 months.

After agreeing to assist Dr. Belau, staff from CN-AHEC began contacting professional educators that would provide the knowledge, expertise and presentation experience on topics chosen by Dr. Belau.

The eight-week summer school program began June 7 and ended July 29.

Each educator would conduct six separate programs.

Dr. Belau and his staff were very gracious by accommodating the educators with technical equipment and room arrangements as requested.

Ronda Dawson of Lincoln began

the program with a series of presentations on “Healthy Relationships” followed by Sondra Gemer from Beatrice, who focused on “Parenting Skill Building.”

Other educators included: Carrie Browder from Hastings, who talked about “General Dental Care,” Debbie Hughes from Lincoln, who spoke about “Stress Management,” Judy Kenealy from York, who talked about “Job Readiness/Skill Building,” Suzy Prenger from Lincoln on “Cultural Competency” and Cara Allgood from Grand Island, who gave a presentation about “Personal Fitness and Exercise.”

The Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center’s mission is to enhance access to quality health care in Central Nebraska, particularly primary and preventive care.

CN-AHEC offices are located at College Park, 3180 West Highway 34, Grand Island, 68801-7279. With questions, please visit the CN-AHEC Web site at [www.cn-ahec.org](http://www.cn-ahec.org), or contact one of the following:

**Executive Director**  
Sarah Cunningham, Ph.D.  
phone: (308) 385-5074  
e-mail: [sarah@cn-ahec.org](mailto:sarah@cn-ahec.org)



**Business Coordinator:** Mary Roy  
phone: (308) 385-6677  
e-mail: [mary@cn-ahec.org](mailto:mary@cn-ahec.org)

**Health Science Consultant**  
Sally K. Husen  
phone: (308) 385-6429  
e-mail: [sally@cn-ahec.org](mailto:sally@cn-ahec.org)

**Education, Outreach Coordinator**  
Cindy Paustian  
phone: (308) 385-6426  
e-mail: [cindy@cn-ahec.org](mailto:cindy@cn-ahec.org)

**Hablamos Juntos**  
phone: (308) 385-6428

**Project Director:** Mercedes Ayala  
e-mail: [mercedes@cn-ahec.org](mailto:mercedes@cn-ahec.org)

**Project Assistant:** Rosa Guia  
e-mail: [rosa@cn-ahec.org](mailto:rosa@cn-ahec.org)

## Healthcare Profession Workshops Help Build Bridges



Panhandle high school students administering medical devices they created during a workshop at the YMCA Trails West Camp.

Sixteen youths participating in the Migrant School summer program and 60 youths participating in the Upward Bound program learned about health care career opportunities this summer courtesy of workshops conducted by staff from the Nebraska Panhandle AHEC.

NP-AHEC staff conducted three half-day workshops for the Upward Bound enrollees and two-hour workshops were held for the Migrant School enrollees.

Students were led through several awareness activities that focused on fine and gross motor skills.

The purpose of the activities were

to increase the students' awareness of the kinds of medical services needed by persons who have lost their motor skills.

Along with the hands-on activities, speakers from the commercial nurses' licensing program, a college-level guidance counselor and a doctor told students in the Upward Bound program about the necessary steps one needs to complete to enter the various health care fields.

Mike Sarchet presented information to participants of the Migrant School camp on the aptitudes needed for each profession, what subjects the students should take in high school and the

financial opportunities available in the state.

He also spoke to the students about the job outlook and the types of programs available in Nebraska.

The "Nebraska Careers in Health Care" book was the basis for the curriculum offerings at both camps.

At the end of each camp it was decided to move forward and form a health care career mentoring program among local medical providers.

At least 40 health care providers agreed to mentor a student or provide them with a job shadow opportunity based upon the students' interests.

# Health Care Professionals Benefit from Workshop

The Nebraska Panhandle AHEC office had a busy summer filled with health care career workshops.

Of the many offered there were workshops held at the YMCA Trails West Camp in Scottsbluff and another at the Garden County Health Care Facility in Oshkosh.

Fifteen professionals presented at the camps and explained the steps they took to earn a degree in the health care field, their current careers and on-going education needed.

The NP-AHEC also sponsored a

two-day workshop for Panhandle Health Care Provider Partnership members.

The workshop featured a certified trainer, Dr. O. Raye Adkins, who delivered information based on the book "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

The July 20th and 21st training provided an in-depth study of information and issues that increased the participants' knowledge and understanding of the poverty culture.

Topics covered included how economic class affects behaviors and mindsets, why people from generational poverty often fear being educated, the "hidden rules" within economic classes, interventions that improve choices, and the eight resources that make a difference in success.

Related discussions also included case studies, support systems, the role of language registers and the relationship between eye movement and learning.



Dr. Tom Rohrick spoke to students at the YMCA Trails West Camp in Scottsbluff about the steps they would need to follow in order to pursue a career in the health care field.



To contact the office of the Nebraska Panhandle AHEC please call:

**Executive Director**

William Zitterkopf  
phone: (308) 635-6713  
e-mail: doczitter@np-ahec.org

## Additional News from the Central Nebraska AHEC Office

On July 30, eight UNMC senior dental hygiene students and two faculty members traveled to Grand Island to provide oral health education in a unique setting.

It was 94 degrees and a perfect day for the 1,800 children, parents and staff at the Island Oasis water park.

The Central Nebraska AHEC and UNMC College of Dentistry collaborated to bring oral health education to families in central Nebraska.

The collaboration was motivated by several concerns. First, the large need for oral health awareness.

Second, several counties in this area do not have fluoridated water supplies.

This was also an opportunity for the College of Dentistry to encourage students in providing oral health care-

information and instruction in settings outside of the dental office and to be open to unique opportunities to serve others.

At the water park, the students and faculty were provided with bright yellow AHEC shirts and stationed in a covered pavilion.

Free toothbrushes and toothpaste were handed out to children and parents as they came to the pavilion, as well as brushing instruction.

But not many park goers wanted to leave their poolside lounge chairs.

So, in the spirit of taking the services to the people, the students packed beach bags full of toothbrushes, toothpaste samples and toothbrush covers and set out to meet children and their parents wherever they were sitting.



Free toothbrushes and toothpaste were handed out to children at the Island Oasis waterpark.

Announcements were made every 15 minutes letting everyone know what the students in the yellow shirts were doing.

After circulating among the visitors for two hours, the students and faculty members agreed that this program was a great success.



One of the hands-on activities offered was the chance to learn how to intubate a mannequin.

## Sun, Fun and Health Careers

This past summer saw a variety of health career related camps for youths sponsored by the Northern Nebraska AHEC office.

Camps were offered in Fremont and Norfolk, as well as a health careers class for students in GearUp in Winnebago and in Upward Bound.

The summer kicked off with an Upward Bound health professions career class at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for high school sophomores and juniors.

Students from Lincoln, Lyons, Madison, Norfolk and Winnebago participated in hands-on activities, career building skills and college tours.

The week-long camp showcased a variety of health professions, as well as provided guidance on interviewing skills and resume building.

The students were especially interested in touring the hospital after

visiting with the various health care professionals.

One student noted that "seeing the workplace made everything real. I never thought I could be a health professional. But after seeing the variety of careers, I now know there is a job for everyone."

The students ended the week by touring UNMC and Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha.

The Norfolk area camp hosted 23 students, who also participated in hands-on activities, heard from health professionals and toured UNMC and Creighton.

A new program is being developed for next year that will hopefully be more challenging to those students who have participated in the past, said Gretchen Forsell, NN-AHEC director.

"We hope to provide an advanced camp next summer specifically geared to them," she said.

## NNAHEC Welcomes Karen Wesche, New Program Coordinator

Karen Wesche recently joined the Northern Nebraska AHEC as a program coordinator.

In this role, Wesche will work primarily with health profession students who are involved with or looking for opportunities to take part in rural rotations in the NNAHEC region.

"I have enjoyed traveling to the various parts of the NNAHEC region. It is a new adventure every day," Wesche said. "Meeting



students and preceptors is always exciting. I look forward to exploring new areas for students and using my contacts to make the program a success."

Wesche and her husband, Gus, live in West Point. They have three children and five grandchildren.

Prior to coming to NNAHEC Wesche worked as a health educator in a community action agency.

She received a bachelor of science degree in home economics from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a major in textiles, clothing and design.

Wesche's hobbies include gardening, camping and sewing. She is also very active in her church where she has established a parish health ministry.

# Medical Explorers Post Is Educational Opportunity for Students

Northern Nebraska AHEC, the Boy Scouts of America/Learning for Life and Faith Regional Health Services collaborated to sponsor the Norfolk Medical Explorers Post.

More than 30 high school students from Madison, Pierce and Stanton Counties, participated in the 2004-2005 post.

The explorers post allows students to learn about medical careers through hands-on activities, tours of health care facilities and presentations.

One activity focused on first aid training, while solving crimes and the importance of forensic science were spotlighted in another.

Throughout the year, the students also learned about nursing, careers in the field of cardiovascular medicine and communication in the health care field.

At the end of the school year, the



The Norfolk Medical Explorers Post on tour at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

students visited two medical centers in Omaha, including the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

A special movie night was hosted in July and featured the movie "Something the Lord Made."

The movie is based on a true story

and highlights the saga of a white doctor and a poor African-American.

The Explorers Post in Norfolk meets monthly. For information on meeting times and locations, please contact Donovan Roy at 402-644-7257 or [droy@nnahec.org](mailto:droy@nnahec.org)



The mission of the Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is to promote, recruit and retain health care professionals through partnerships among health care, education and community providers in Northern Nebraska.

For further information please visit the NNAHEC Web site at: [www.nnahec.org](http://www.nnahec.org), or contact one of the following:

**Executive Director**  
Gretchen Forsell MPH, RD  
(402) 644-7256  
[gforsell@nnahec.org](mailto:gforsell@nnahec.org)

**Program Coordinator**  
Karen Wesche  
(402) 644-7285

**Program Coordinator**  
Donovan Roy  
(402) 644-7257  
[droy@nnahec.org](mailto:droy@nnahec.org)

**Office Manager**  
Marie Janke  
(402) 644-7253  
[mjanke@nnahec.org](mailto:mjanke@nnahec.org)

Address:  
110 N. 16th St., Suite 2  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
Fax: (402) 644-7254

## Notes from Northern Nebraska AHEC

### Nutrition and Fitness Workshop

The Northern Nebraska AHEC office and Wayne State College are collaborating to conduct a Nutrition and Fitness Workshop for high school students to be held Nov. 15.

The workshop will be held in the student center at Wayne State from 9 am-2 pm.

It will address nutrition myths and empower students to make healthier eating and lifestyle choices.

There will be a session focused on keeping students in shape during the coming winter months.

The workshop also will introduce students to careers in wellness and dietetics.

The registration deadline for the workshop is Oct. 17.

There is a limited amount of space available. For more information or to register for the Nutrition and Fitness Workshop, contact Donovan Roy at (402) 644-7257 or e-mail [roy@nnahec.org](mailto:roy@nnahec.org).

### Student Rotations Supported

Providing support to the preceptor sites within the Northern Nebraska AHEC area is one way to ensure high quality rotations for health profession students.

Sister Norma Norton, Pastoral Care/Mission, was presented a check recently to provide such support to Avera St. Anthony's Hospital in O'Neill.

With these funds, cordless phones were installed in each room of the nine-bedroom hospitality house where the students stay during their rotations. Having a phone in each room enables the students to respond quickly to pages when they are on call at the hospital.

In the past, the students would have to leave their room to answer a house phone. Often it was not known whether or not the student received the page.

# Dental Hygiene Students are First to Graduate From UNMC College of Dentistry West Division

On May 7, Kelsey Dorsey, Heather Howell, Sara Lien and Sheri Printz made history.

That's because they are the first class of dental hygiene students to graduate from the UNMC College of Dentistry's West Division program.

"All of the graduates have been outstanding students," said Todd Junge, coordinator of the west division dental hygiene program for the UNMC College of Dentistry.

"I'm really proud of these students. Not only for being the first," he said, "but also for overcoming any hurdles that come with starting a new program and for making the best of any opportunities given them."

UNMC expanded its dental hygiene program to Scottsbluff/Gering in 2003 with help from a state grant.

One goal of the program was to make it more accessible to students living in western Nebraska.

"Newcastle is just two-and-a-half hours north of Scottsbluff," said Heather Howell, who returned to Newcastle, Wyo. upon graduation. "That made the decision to apply for the program easy."

Another goal, to provide much needed access to dental care to Panhandle residents, has been met with impressive results.

In the past two years alone, the four graduating dental hygienists have seen more than 1,000 patients.

"That includes patients coming into the clinic, on rotations and during outreach to local schools," Junge said. "These students have had a hectic two years, in terms of outreach they have participated in, as well as their regular classes and clinic duties."

Besides going to classes five days a week and working in the clinic at least 12 hours or more a week, the students have participated in activities such as: a three-day rotation on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota;



The four dental hygiene graduates are (from left, standing) Kelsey Dorsey and Sheri Printz. Seated are Heather Howell and Sara Lien.

dental health screenings for Mitchell (Neb.) Public Schools; and the 2004-05 Dental Day events in Alliance.

"We've also driven to Omaha to help with the sealant program and to the College of Dentistry campus in Lincoln for Children's Dental Day," Junge said.

The UNMC College of Dentistry's dental hygiene program is a two-year, bachelor's degree granting program.

Students enter the program after they complete two years of undergraduate prerequisite courses.

The Scottsbluff/Gering students "attend" classes via distance learning at Panhandle Community Services (PCS) in Gering. The PCS is also where they do any clinical training.

At first it was challenging to be so far from the main campus in Lincoln, said Kelsey Dorsey of Arcadia.

"We took classes with our peers via satellite, which was awkward at first, but once we got used to it everything went smooth," she said. "In fact, the

learning was more individualized, now it would be hard to go back to a regular classroom setting."

Sara Lien of Gering began her studies in dental hygiene at the College of Dentistry in Lincoln, but moved to Gering when asked to be part of the fledgling program.

"I'm really glad I did," she said.

Working at the clinic at Panhandle Community Services, Lien said she has a richer understanding of the critical need for affordable and accessible dental care among low-income families.

"We need more places like PCS in western Nebraska to provide services," she said.

Lien is currently working in Scottsbluff with Gary Cheloha, D.D.S.

The other graduates also are working in rural communities.

Dorsey is practicing in Grand Island and Printz is working for her father, William Printz, D.D.S., in Sidney and Ryan Foote, D.D.S., in Mitchell, Neb.

# Advances in Geriatric Care Conference

*Continued from page 1*

to help health care professionals provide the best care for their patients.

“Half of all health care services and half of all health professionals’ time in Nebraska is devoted to care of persons over the age of 65,” noted Dr. Potter.

The need for more training is evident, she said, in the number of conference goers who signed up for a mini-fellowship.

“We were overwhelmed that over 80 attendees signed up for a mini-fellowship,” Dr. Potter said. “By attending this first conference, participants will have earned just over 16 of the 80 hours they will need to complete it.”

A second conference already has been scheduled for Feb. 24 & 25, 2006.

Dr. Potter said she hopes that by then they will have made arrangements to telecast the conference to sites within each of the AHECs.

Participants at each of those sites



An interdisciplinary panel discussion was the highlight of the geriatric care conference.

will be able to ask questions and take part in discussions.

“We hope to recruit more individuals for the mini-fellowships with the second conference,” Dr. Potter said.

Health professionals targeted for the mini-fellowship includes physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, physical therapists and nurse practitioners.

Part of the hours fellows earn are devoted to discipline specific topics

and some are interdisciplinary. About half of the hours are done using web-based interactive learning modules.

“Beginning in the summer of 2006 we will be looking for other sites in the state for these semi-annual conferences,” Dr. Potter said.

For more information or to be placed on a mailing list for future programs contact Kate Turner at (402) 559-3964 or e-mail her at: [kfturner@unmc.edu](mailto:kfturner@unmc.edu)

## Students Attend UNMC’s AgroMedicine Workshop



Participating in the AgroMedicine workshop are, from left to right: Robert Daro, Scott Moon, Bridgette Robinson, Hilary Miller, Nicole Pedersen, Joshua Sole, Christa Moon, Eddie Leaders, Meggan Johnson and Katie Hofer.

Fourteen students from five Nebraska colleges spent a week in May learning about health and safety issues related to farming and ranching.

The AgroMedicine Workshop was developed in 1994 by a UNMC faculty member who grew up on a farm outside of Pender, Neb. Susanna Von

Essen, M.D., wanted college students in health-related fields to learn more about farm safety, stress in rural life, environmental farm and ranching concerns, community health and safety promotion. In addition to classroom lectures, the students shadowed health professionals in Auburn, Beatrice,

Fairbury, Seward, West Point, and Wymore. They also toured the University of Nebraska’s Agricultural Research and Development Center located near Mead. The week ended with the students giving group presentations on assigned topics they researched throughout their visit.

Participants included: Margaret Kucera and Christine Lee from Hastings College; Katie Hofer, Eddie Leaders and Meggan Johnson from Midland Lutheran College; Bridgette Robinson, Robert Daro, Burty Macwan, Nicole Pedersen, Joshua Sole and Hilary Miller, from the University of Nebraska at Kearney; Scott Moon and Christa Moon from the University of Nebraska at Omaha; and Elizabeth Christensen from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

For more information about this workshop contact Ann Kraft at (402) 559-3398 or via e-mail at: [akraft@unmc.edu](mailto:akraft@unmc.edu)

**Nebraska Teachers: Do you want to learn recent advances in science and share health care classroom experience with colleagues?**

Then make sure to sign up for the **Ninth Annual Teacher Connections** workshop on Thursday, Oct. 27.

UNMC's Rural Health Education Network (RHEN) plans this workshop in conjunction with the NATS fall conference to provide rural secondary science teachers the opportunity to spend a day at the Omaha UNMC campus with scientists and researchers.

Tentative timeframes are to arrive at 8:15 a.m. at the UNMC campus in Omaha. The activities will wrap up by 2:15 p.m. so you can travel to the NATS conference.

Space is limited so be sure to register early.

**Registration forms are available on our Web site <http://www.unmc.edu/RHEN>**

For more information, please contact:  
Liliana Bronner at (402) 559-8106 or e-mail her at [lbronner@unmc.edu](mailto:lbronner@unmc.edu)

**Visit our Web site at [www.unmc.edu/RHEN](http://www.unmc.edu/RHEN)**



986660 Nebraska Medical Center  
Omaha, NE 68198-6660  
Address Service Requested  
Printed on Recycled Paper

**NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Omaha, Nebraska  
Permit NO. 454**