New Adventures at the CODE Office

This month, we have some big news! Vanessa White, manager and miracle-worker at the CODE office for the past 6 years, is starting dental school at UNC in the fall. We will miss her dearly, and are so grateful for her vision and community engagement. She has expanded our capacity as a research center to make information about HIV/AIDS accessible to all. In this issue of our newsletter, we introduce Madison Hayes, the incoming Executive Director of the Office of Community Outreach, Dissemination, and Education (CODE) at the UNC Center for AIDS Research. A Chapel-Hill native, Madison comes from a background of social and behavioral research in HIV, international work in community capacity building, and empowerment-based community activism.

Madison spent four years working with an international humanitarian NGO focused on HIV/AIDS and the orphan crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. After receiving a grant from UNC-Asheville, Madison worked with a women’s empowerment collective in South America, and continued her international work in Central America. After returning to the United States, Madison began facilitating social and behavioral research, specifically testing interventions for formerly incarcerated women, examining the structural, social, and behavioral factors influencing the transmission of HIV and STIs.

Madison explained that her “work in social distribution and sociocultural determinants of HIV, health care access, and community empowerment” laid the path for her position with the CODE Office. She advocates for “community engagement in setting the CFAR research agenda, and in disseminating research findings back in to the community in creative, engaging, and culturally-appropriate ways”. She believes that by “increasing the visibility of the research and academic sectors in the community”, we further the capacity to shift “the power dynamics of research” and facilitate mutually beneficial relationships between community members and researchers based on respect and trust.

When asked about her future goals for the office, Madison explained that she “aims to expand our collaborative efforts with local clinics, health departments, non-profit organizations, student groups, and agencies doing ground-level prevention and empowerment work”, and she hopes to build supportive relationships with “vulnerable and underserved communities”.

“Madison working at a women’s collective and meal kitchen in Argentina

In addition to her position with the UNC Center for AIDS Research’s CODE Office, Madison speaks Spanish, co-directs the Refugee Community Partnership and serves on the founding board of Mutual Aid, a social justice organization. She lives in Carrboro and is so excited to join our team. Madison, we are so grateful to have you on board, and we look forward to seeing great things from you in the future! We are so grateful for her vision and community engagement. She has expanded our capacity as a research center to make information about HIV/AIDS accessible to all. In this issue of our newsletter, we introduce Madison Hayes, the incoming Executive Director of the Office of Community Outreach, Dissemination, and Education (CODE) at the UNC Center for AIDS Research. A Chapel-Hill native, Madison comes from a background of social and behavioral research in HIV, international work in community capacity building, and empowerment-based community activism.

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HIV Myth Busters is a new project and initiative launched by UNC CFAR’s Community Outreach, Dissemination, and Education office. After almost a year of collecting HIV myths from the community, the CODE office has launched the first part of its initiative, the HIV Myth Buster’s website. The website provides an interactive gallery of HIV Myths in which our panel of some of UNC’s top HIV specialists give the hard facts about these myths in order to reduce the stigma that surrounds them and end the spread of these myths. The website also allows for both anonymous and email submission of myths that will allow us to continue collecting and busting myths! Future components of this project include providing slideshows of the myths and answers to clinics, distribution of brochures and pamphlets providing some of the most common myths, and more interactive features on our website. Visit the website today at:

http://hivmythbusters.unc.edu

Myths and debunking responses are available on the HIV MythBusters website

An example of an HIV-related myth response on the site. Soon to come – video responses to myths from CFAR doctors!