



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **Black History Month and its relevance in the Central Valley**
- **Future prospects: UC Merced School of Medicine?**
- **Population changes have social, economical and environmental impacts on the Central Valley**

**INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE:**

- The needs of the Central Valley 2
- Meet AmeriCorps Members! 3
- What is Going on in February? 4
- Book of the Month 4



## The History of Black History

This February 2009 some will celebrate Valentine's Day, others may celebrate President's Day but none can forget that February is also the month in which Black History is celebrated. According to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Black History observance was established in 1915, under the guidance of Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Rev. Jesse E. Moorland. The purpose was to bring awareness to the largely ignored yet crucial role people of color played in American and world history. It was Dr. Woodson, the son of former slaves and second African American to receive a degree from Harvard University who choose the month of February for the celebration of Black History. In honor of the birth of two exceptional men whose actions drastically changed the future of African Americans: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. President who issued the Emancipation Proclamation born on February 12<sup>th</sup> and Frederick Douglass, one of the nation's leading abolitionist born on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

In its beginning stages Black History was celebrated during a week-long observance which included providing learning materials to teachers, black history clubs and the community at large. During the civil rights movement (1950s, 1960s and 1970s) the observance proved to be difficult but especially important as that was a time in

which the inhumane and unequal treatment of African-American was being challenged and overturned. It was not until many years later that Black History Month transcended into a month-long observance established in 1976.



**Quilts, often used as forms of communication capture a piece of Black History.**

Today, Black History Month is recognized and broadly celebrated by the entire nation on both a scholarly and commercial level. February 2009 will mark the 33<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Black History Month and across the nation events will be held to commemorate the importance of black history in this country.

California's Central Valley also holds a very special piece of Black History. The town of Earlimart about 20 minutes north of Bakersfield is home to the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. This park began as a vision of utopia for

those who were escaping from slavery and hoped to form a community where African Americans could thrive. In 1908, Colonel Allen Allensworth founded the small town in the Central Valley and the town flourished and grew as over three hundred families relocated to establish a self-sufficient farming community. This town included a school, church, businesses and municipal government. The existence of the Freedom Colony as it was often referred to remains an inspiration to African Americans around the country. In 1976 the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park was birthed and embraced as preservation of history, hope and exceptional determination.

The second month of the year may come and go while celebrations and remembrance of Black History take place across our country, state and maybe even in our hometowns. The efforts made by past generations to eliminate racial inequalities should not culminate in a one month observance. These extraordinary efforts withstand time and are best honored when incorporated into the non-bias, respectful, and fair treatment of people of all diverse backgrounds.

**Article Written By:  
Cynthia Mendez**

For more information please visit:  
<http://www.asalh.org/index.html>

## Population Increase Precipitates Change in Central Valley



The many fruits and vegetables grown in the Central Valley are enjoyed by millions across America.

The Central Valley stretches about 400 miles from the Sacramento Valley to the San Joaquin Valley, covering a range of 42,000 square miles of flat land. It is where the greatest garden in the world exists, and is the agricultural hub that supplies one quarter of the food America eats. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Central Valley Metropolitan Patterns, there are approximately 6.5 million people living in the Central Valley, and with its rapid increase in population it is said to reach 12 million by 2040. As the Valley's population increases, it is indubitable that the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the region will undergo many threatening repercussions. Economic growth is important to con-

tinue the quality of life for valley residents, but with the current building trends, high qual-



ity farmlands are rapidly being paved over for new subdivisions, which are allowing our most important agricultural region to be at risk. As a result and for the first time, about 500 leaders such as lawmakers, environmentalists, and businessmen gathered at the Blue-

print Regional Summit in Fresno on Jan.26, 2009 to discuss future development in the Central Valley. Discussion and debate was based on four guiding growth scenarios (A, B, B+, C) applying to the next four decades. At the end of the day scenario C prevailed, which states that the historic density trend of 10 homes per acre should more than double to 31 people per acre. Yet, this debate is far from over and the mission to manage efficient growth, or smart growth, in the Central Valley and preserve its resources will be an arduous road to follow, but a worthwhile battle.

**Written By: Julissa Gonzalez**

*“The main focus of the future medical school will be to establish....a model which will incorporate multi-cultural medicine to meet the diverse needs of the residents in the Central Valley”*

## Medical Education at UC Merced

“California will face a shortage of up to 17,000 physicians by 2015,” a statement made in a December 2004 report given by UCOP (University of California Office of the President). Similar reports have illustrated the great need for physicians in the near future, particularly in the Central Valley where there is a rapid increase in population and disproportionate shortages in health care provider access. As a result, academic and community leaders have been stimulated to take initiative on this issue. Before the arrival of the inaugural class of undergraduate students in 2005, faculty and administrative leaders from UCSF,

UCSF Fresno, and UC Davis had already joined forces to build part-



nerships and plan a medical school at UC Merced. The main focus of the future medical school will be to establish a community-based regional model program, which will incorporate multi-cultural medicine to meet the diverse needs of the residents in the Central Valley. In July 2006, the hopes to build a medical school in

Merced were high after receiving a \$5 million boost from the United Health Group. This year it was announced that regional leaders were accepting of the University's proposed plan: however, the exclusion of the UC Merced medical school from the \$9 billion bond proposal for higher education on the November ballot represented a major problem. As numerous other obstacles exist, it is clear that a united effort is greatly needed in order to successfully build the next valley medical school.

**Written By: Julissa Gonzalez**

**Marlene  
Her**



**Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction?**

Job Satisfaction

**Which is your most favorite book ever?**

Captivated by John and Staci Eldredge

**What television character do you simply adore?**

Well, not necessarily in an obsessive way, I do admire Will Smith. I believe he displays great integrity in his films

**What is your taste in music?**

Positive and Encouraging Music

**Which is your favorite genre of movies?**

Comedy and Action

**If you could have a luncheon with any three people (real of fictitious/ from any time period, dead or alive), which three people would you choose and why?**

The Apostle Paul, Proverbs 31 woman (if she exists), C.S. Lewis (I know I didn't list Jesus because I wouldn't be able to speak). I believe these were all very great people with integrity and faith. I would like to hear their stories of how and why they made the decisions they did.

**If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why?**

I find that very opportunity is here today. I want to be a physician assistant but that may change as I discover my strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities in the health occupations arena.

**What is your idea of fun? If given a choice to skip work for a day, how would you spend the entire day?**

I would not do anything that would require me to work strenuously. I would probably just drive down to Monterey or L.A. and walk along side of the ocean with my journal and pen in one hand and my IPod in the other.

**If given a choice, which animal would you want to be? Why?**

I think a bird or a dolphin

**What's been your best experience working at your Health Center?**

My everyday one-on-one with my patients

**When do you have the most fun at work?**

When I actually get to talk to the providers about their journey to be where they are.

**Who do you enjoy working with the most here? What do you like about them?**

Well I enjoy working with everyone here. It is hard to say because it's never just one person. I like the other health educators I work with. The doctors and the P.A.s

**Which manager do you admire the most at your health center? What do you admire about that person?**

Alice at Channel Center. I don't get to talk to her much but I know that at any time if I have a question, she typically has the answer.



**E'Bonique  
Sullivan**

**Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction?**

Job Satisfaction

**Which is your most favorite book ever?**

Crime and Punishment

**What television character do you simply adore?**

FRIENDS: Chandler

**What is your taste in music?**

Everything

**Which is your favorite genre of movies? (Comedy/Romance/ Suspense/Action/Horror)**

All of the above but if I had to choose it would be suspense.

**If you could have a luncheon with any three people (real of fictitious/ from any time period, dead or alive), which three people would you choose and why?**

Tyler Perry is someone I would like to meet because I would love to understand his determination and what it took to go from being homeless to becoming as successful as he is today. I learn about his life experiences. Barack Obama because I would like to see what he is like as a human and not a leader of a nation. Arnold Schwarzenegger because he and I have issues!

**If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why?**

Something with underprivileged children and teens because the future of our world continues with them and I want my chance to try and impact change.

**What is your idea of fun? If given a choice to skip work for a day, how would you spend the entire day?**

Spending my free time with my daughter. If I was playing hooky today I would most likely be at home with my baby.

**If given a choice, which animal would you want to be? Why?**

I would be a Siberian tiger because they are both beautiful and mysterious.

**What's been your best experience working at your Health Center?**

Connecting with the clients because there is nothing like helping someone try and turn their life around and being there when the turn is taking place.

**When do you have the most fun at work?**

When I am out at events promoting our services. Also when we come together as a team to brainstorm about how we are going to approach events and situations.

**Who do you enjoy working with the most here? What do you like about them?**

What I like about my center is that there is no one person that I would rather spend my time with more than others. We are a small staff at my building and we feel like family and there is no stress or strain in relationships here.

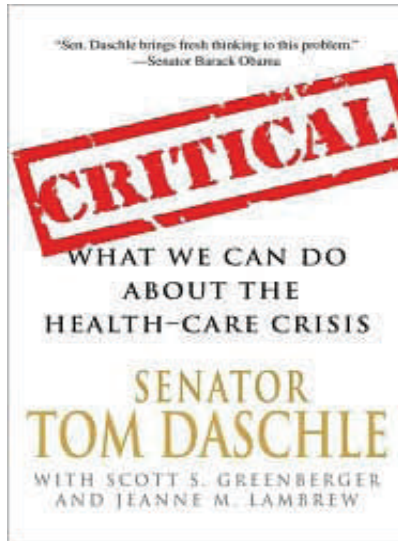
**Which manager do you admire the most at your health center?**

**What do you admire about that person?**

Of the two managers I have worked under, Rick is one that I admire most because when he is about business and he is very focused on our mission and comes in every morning with the intent to see it done. I also admire his sense of humor and how he manages his team without making them feel unworthy of what they are doing.

# What are *You* Reading?

In the interest of cultivating more and more readers, this section is dedicated to introducing and highlighting an interesting book read by our AmeriCorps Members.



## Critical: What we can do about the health-care crisis

By: Tom Daschle

Undoubtedly, the biggest domestic policy issue in the coming years will be America's health-care system. Millions of Americans go without medical care because they can't afford it, and many others are mired in debt because they can't pay their medical bills. It's hard to think of another public policy problem that has lingered unaddressed for so long. Why have we failed to solve a problem that is such a high priority for so many citizens?

After decades of failed incremental measures, the American health-care system remains fundamentally broken and requires a comprehensive fix. With his bold and forward-looking plan, Tom Daschle recently appointed by President Obama as Secretary of Health and Human Services points us to the solution.

# What's going on in February?

## American/National Heart Month:

Heart disease is the number one killer in the U.S. To urge Americans to join the battle against these diseases, since 1963 Congress has required the president to proclaim February "American Heart Month." This initiative has encouraged public awareness, education and support. Donations are encouraged to help fund research, education, and treatment. Even though cardiovascular disease ranks as the leading cause of death in women in this country, the majority do not consider heart disease, the biggest threat to their health. One in three women will die of cardiovascular disease in this country. Last year, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced that the number of women who died from heart disease declined by nearly 17,000 deaths in 2004, due in large part to the advances in medical research and treatment, as well as greater awareness among women about their risk. Yet, despite this tremendous progress, there continues to be inadequate funding for the NIH, stalling or postponing promising studies that could potentially save countless lives.

[www.americaheart.org](http://www.americaheart.org)

## Library lovers month

Library Lovers' Month is a month-long celebration of school, public, and private libraries of all types. This is a time for everyone, especially library support groups, to recognize the value of libraries and to work to assure that the Nation's libraries will continue to serve the communities who need them.

[www.librarysupport.net/librarylovers/](http://www.librarysupport.net/librarylovers/)

## Wise Health Consumer Month

February is Wise Health Consumer Month that reminds people to be a more physically and emotionally healthy consumer. Make healthy choices for yourself and your family when choosing doctors, health insurance and online health information. Choose a healthy lifestyle that suits your individual needs and do everything in moderation. The Surgeon General's prescription for health recommends:

- moderate physical activity, 5 days a week, 30 minutes a day
- avoid toxins - tobacco, illicit drugs, alcohol abuse
- eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- practice responsible sexual behaviors

[www.healthylife.com](http://www.healthylife.com)



## Central Valley Health Network

Incorporated in 1998, the Central Valley Health Network (CVHN) is a consortium of 12 Federally Qualified Health Center corporations that provide comprehensive preventive primary care services and advocate on behalf of low-income and medically underserved families throughout the northern, Central Valley and Inland Empire areas of California. In most Central Valley communities, CVHN members are the only safety net provider.

CVHN's mission is to facilitate community health centers' strength in the marketplace and to support member community health centers' effective delivery of high quality accessible health care to residents of their respective communities with special focus on advocacy for attaining optimal health for the medically underserved. CVHN staff support members through: advocacy, technical assistance, program development and administration, and training.

The AmeriCorps Informer is a monthly publication written, edited and reviewed by current AmeriCorps members throughout CVHN. Its purpose is to provide insightful and informative news and current events to our members. The newsletter also serves as a means to stay informed about events or changes happening within the organization. It also introduces all AmeriCorps members to the entire network therefore encouraging networking and collaboration opportunities.

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## Caring For California's Heartland

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