



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **Health Professional Shortages: What is CVHN doing to change this?**
- **Earth day is April 22nd, Learn about how to become involved!**
- **Does your literacy level determine your health? The answer may surprise you!**

**INSIDE  
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## Inspiring tomorrow's Health Professionals Today!

The state of California is dealing with a health professional shortage, an issue which not surprisingly is magnified throughout rural areas of California's Central Valley. The question remains: How will the state and Central Valley ensure future ethnically and culturally diverse health professionals for the equally diverse and growing population? Up to now some suggest building a

new medical school, increasing loan-repayment programs for rural providers and inspire the new wave of future providers. What is the answer? Should the solution include all three of these suggestions? Probably yes, however many more measures of how to cultivate diverse health professionals can be improved. Beginning with inspiring young students from disadvantage backgrounds to consider health fields within their own disenfranchised communities, changing the methodologies of medical school admissions committees and rewarding MD's who choose primary care and other needed specialties specifically in medically underserved rural and urban areas.

It is Central Valley Health Network's (CVHN) goal to expose young, and diverse students to the inspiring world of community health. Through a successful partnership between Community Medical Centers, Inc. (CMC) and CVHN a group of 19 students and 1 faculty member of the University of California Davis Public Health Club (UCDPHC) were treated to a guided tour of CMC's Dixon and Stockton health centers. The group was picked up from UCD and was taken to the two sites where they were able to learn about CVHN and CMC through various presentations and panels. At

each site students toured through the facility and given an opportunity to meet staff and ask questions.

Usha Vyas, a 5<sup>th</sup> year student double majoring in Neurobiology Physiology and Behavior and English was in attendance and is also the president of the UCDPHC. A future health professional herself, I decided to ask what inspired her to seek such a career and how can CVHN help inspire young



students to do the same.

**How did you hear about CVHN?** From Dr. Troidl's public health class where I met Mr. David Quack-enbush who was invited to discuss community health centers (CHCs).

**What was the best part of learning about and touring CHCs?** Getting out of the academic arena and having the opportunity to have a "real world" experience. Exposure to Primary Care and Public Health work out in the CHC setting is a plus.

**Were you inspired by the work that CHCs do?** Absolutely. The fact is that we live in a country where capitalism and competition reigns it is great to see that compassionate individuals can still do what they want to do on a professional level. Meeting people who love what they do is inspiring. Also the prevalence of non-clinical representatives and non-clinical alternative professional options was a fresh breath of air!  
**In your view, what is one of the biggest problems in health care right now?** I believe it's this powerful

model of medicine which has been hard to step away from. Primary and preventative care system is not set up to accommodate for the primary care diagnosis resulting in a costly and less effective system. There is no early staged health care prevention program in place and a change is needed.

**Now that CVHN and CMC have given you a firsthand view of the CHC world, do you see a place for you? If so what are your fields of interest?** Yes, I absolutely see myself as part of the solution. I can see myself going in two directions I am interested in grant writing and health education and outreach. I love writing and would use my voice and writing skills to communicate on behalf of CHCs to allow them to receive much needed funding to serve the needs of a community. With education I see myself participating in outreach efforts with various

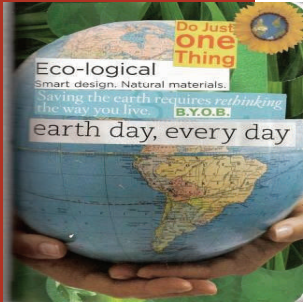


age groups from elementary school to adults and reach many cultures and ethnicities across medically disadvantaged communities.

It's essential to continue efforts to increase and diversify California's health-care workforce. This task may seem overwhelming but together as a collective and with a shared goal the task becomes more manageable. Student are thirsty for meaningful, gratifying and insightful careers in healthcare. Successful partnerships between CVHN and its members can expose students to numerous careers in the CHC setting. Inspiring tomorrow's health professionals begins today!

**Written By: Cynthia Mendez**

# Earth Day & Beyond: Changing for the Better



Earth Day isn't just for Hippies! It should concern all of us!

“ The American Medical Association indicates that literacy skills are a better predictor of an individual's health status over factors such as age, income, employment status, and education level ”

With Earth Day soon upon us, we must be cognizant of the environmental issues surrounding the San Joaquin Valley. With many of our family members suffering from asthma, we realize that air quality is not the best. In some migrant farming working towns around the Central Valley, water quality is problematic. In Fresno, real estate development is stagnant while some residents face homelessness. Businesses around downtown Fresno struggle to attract residents for shopping and entertainment as well as real state investors. Many more issues are prevalent in the Central Valley, with many being of environmental justice concern.

So, as AmeriCorps members, what can we do? I suggest we follow the advice of Mr. Orion Fulton, a former Great Valley Center employee and leader in

green real estate development, whom I spoke with recently about the Valley's urban growth issues. "While it's important to discuss the issues, what's more important is taking action; it always speaks louder than words," he said while speaking about revitalizing downtown Fresno. "Move to downtown and make it happen. People will notice and want to do the same."

So here are some suggestions to get you going on Earth Day and beyond:

- Attend your city government's meetings. With the Blueprint process underway, planners are welcoming suggestions.
- Help your local economy. Visit the farmer's market or participated in Community Supported Agriculture.

- Visit your downtown. Grab a couple of friends and get out, there are plenty of things to do and see.
- Walk, take public transportation, or carpool. Try it when you're going to the mall with friends or family to make it fun.
- Be INVOLVED! There are many groups concerned about the issues surrounding the Valley such as Coalition for Clean Air.

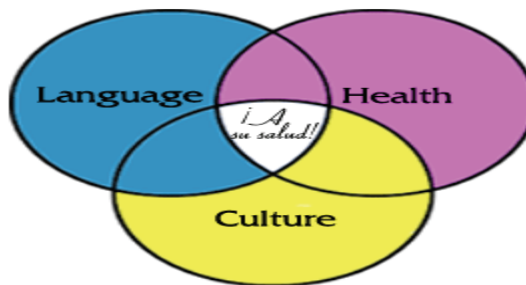
Whatever your passionate about, just go for it. If we don't act now, these problems will progressively get worse, leading our grandchildren to take the brunt. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see."

**Written By:**  
**Christel Tee Sy**

## A Prescription For Healthier CLAS

In a recent National Medical Association study, 90 million people in the U.S. were estimated to have low health literacy levels. These low literacy levels come with a huge cost. According to the National Academy on an Aging Society, the economic consequence of low health literacy in 1998 was \$73 billion. The American Medical Association indicates that literacy skills are a better predictor of an individual's health status over factors such as age, income, employment status, and education level. In other words, your health may be at risk simply because you cannot read well and at higher risk if you cannot read at all. Despite these striking observations, the patient education material continues to be written at a college level or higher. In addition, the issue of low health literacy has proven to be related to ethnic and cultural differences among the American public, and illustrates how cultural competence has escaped the focus of the medical community. It is clear that as the cultural diversity in America has expanded, this lack of attention has had a damaging effect on all popu-

lations, both in terms of health risks and healthcare costs. In response to these issues, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health issued what is referred to as Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services standards (CLAS ). This collective set of mandates, guidelines,



and national recommendations based on 14 standards is primarily directed toward health care organizations. It is believed that these standards have the potential to improve access to adequate health-care, quality care, and provide positive health care outcomes given the themes, cultural competent care, language access

services, and organizational support for cultural competence. Cultural awareness and understanding has increasingly become a central theme for discussion not only in medicine, but also in other social service professions. Although the situation is not always easily identified, health care professionals are encouraged to consider these standards in order to make their practices more effective.

**Written By: Julissa Gonzalez**

**Katrina Fisher**



**Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction?** Job satisfaction. The salary won't matter if you're miserable while you're there!

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

Too many to chose from

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

I don't have a favorite TV character...but I'm rooting for Melissa from the Bachelor to win Dancing with the Stars because I'm still feel bad about what happened to her on the Bachelor!

**What is your taste in music?**

I like all genres, including country!

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

Comedy

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

Had an interesting life and made important change in his society. Paul Rusesabagina: Did amazing things in the face of adversity. Family members who have passed, to see how they are doing and what life is like on the other side!

**If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why?** I feel like the majority of us in this group are only starting our professional lives. Hopefully we are starting on the path that we want to stay on! I know that I would stay on the path that I'm on: to become a community physician

**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 go hiking along the beach end the day at a spa

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

**Why?** A dog so I could communicate with my dog (haha!)

**What's been your best experience working at your Health Center?** Experiencing the administrative side of healthcare has been very eye opening for me.

**When do you have the most fun at work?** I have the most fun when I am out in the community interacting with people.

**Who do you enjoy working with the most here? What do you like about them?** I enjoy working with people who are motivated and knowledgeable on their particular project and get things done efficiently! At GVHC, this means different people for different projects.

**Which manager do you admire the most at your health center? What do you admire about that person?** I admire managers who treat everyone with respect regardless of where you stand on the career ladder.

**Julissa Gonzalez**



**Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction?** Job satisfaction and all the things that come with it.

**Which is your most favorite book ever?** I have many favorite books, but the first one that comes to mind is, A Brave New World, by Aldus Huxley.

**What television character do you simply adore?** I don't adore any T.V. characters, and I hardly ever watch T.V., but I do get a kick out of Penelope from SNL and Gregory House.

**What is your taste in music?** It depends on what mood I'm in, but definitely something with a good beat and something with thought provoking lyrics.

**Which is your favorite genre of movies?** Dramedy, especially if it is foreign.

**If you could have a luncheon with any three people (real or fictitious/ from any time period, dead or alive), which three people would you choose and why?** Bear Grylls because I'd like to pick his brain on his fearless adventures and his broad knowledge. My nana, who passed away many years ago, because I'd love to see her again. God, because I would love him to help me understand.

**If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why?** I'd be a Zoologist because I love animals or an artist because I love art.

**What is your idea of fun? If given a choice to skip work for a day, how would you spend the entire day?** My idea of fun is watching a good movie, painting, playing board games or playing outdoor sports. If I could skip a day of work, bbq on a beach close by and watch the sunset.

**If given a choice, which animal would you want to be? Why?** I think I'd like to be a blue whale because I would like to know what it feels like to be the oldest living mammal that travels fearlessly through the depths of the ocean.

**What's been your best experience working at your Health Center?** Being able to help lead staff and community members in choosing a more sustainable and healthy lifestyle and seeing the positive outcomes.

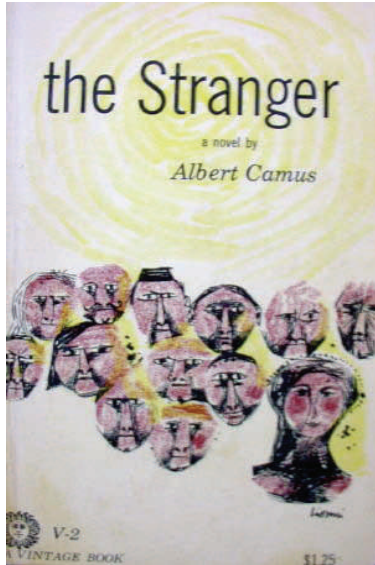
**When do you have the most fun at work?** When I'm interacting with the community.

**Who do you enjoy working with the most here? What do you like about them?** I enjoy working with most of the health coordinators/educators because we work well together.

**Which manager do you admire the most at your health center? What do you admire about that person?** I admire my supervisor Christine Noguera for being committed to Golden Valley Health Centers for 37 years, and her ability to help lead all 27 clinics in the central valley.

# 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.



The Stranger  
By: Albert Camus

While the title gives an intrigue that lures in readers, the book has nothing to do with the stranger but more about the human psyche. With the main character thrown in prison for murder, the author focuses on the character's struggle to maintain his sanity as his freedom and life is taken away. The author gives readers insight into the character's mind as he remembers the events of the crime, the life he had, and his emotions as he proceeds through the trial.

Although the book is not in the same category as any of John Grishman's law and order novels, it still offer an insightful look for any reader that's interested in the criminal justice system outside the U.S. It offers a world into how criminals are tried and executed, allowing any reader to formulate their own stance on capital punishment and prison reform. Pick up the book if you're interested and The Stranger will gladly meet you.

## What's going on in April?

### World Health Day:

April 7 of each year marks the celebration of World Health Day. From its inception at the First Health Assembly in 1948 and since taking effect in 1950, the celebration has aimed to create awareness of a specific health theme to highlight a priority area of concern for the World Health Organization. This year's focus is on the need to make hospitals and health facilities safe in disasters and other emergencies. Browse through this web site to learn more about the urgency and feasibility of making hospitals and health facilities safe in disasters, and find suggestions for individual and organizational action. We hope you will use this information to raise awareness and mobilize support for safe hospitals throughout 2009 and beyond  
<http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2009/en/index.html>

### National Stress Awareness month:

For the 17th consecutive year, April 2009 has been designated Stress Awareness Month. During this thirty day period, health care professionals and health promotion experts across the country will join forces to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. Sponsored by The Health Resource Network (HRN), a non-profit health education organization, Stress Awareness Month is a national, cooperative effort to inform people about the dangers of stress, successful coping strategies, and harmful misconceptions about stress that are prevalent in our society. In addition to sponsoring Stress Awareness Month, the organization also sponsors National Stress Awareness Day, held every **April 16--or the day after income taxes are due!** Find ways to live a more stress free life:  
[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2145813\\_observe-national-stress-awareness-day.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2145813_observe-national-stress-awareness-day.html)

### Get Fit and Save Lives. March of Dimes Walk.

It's America's favorite walking event! When you walk, you give hope to the families of babies born too soon or sick. The money you raise supports programs in your community that help moms have healthy, full-term pregnancies. And it funds research to find answers to the serious problems that threaten our babies.

When: April 18, 2009

Where: Woodward Park, Fresno, CA

Walk Distance: 6.25 miles

Time: 9:00 AM

Phone #: (415) 788-2202

<http://www.marchforbabies.org/default.aspx?si=&u=>



## 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's effective delivery of high quality and accessible health care. 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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