



Letter from the Director

Summer is my favorite season. It makes me think of climbing trees and eating popsicles and long days spent entirely outside. Even though I don't get to spend my summer days outside, I still love the season. I guess all that sunshine makes me feel like a kid again.

I think there is something to be said for reliving your childhood from time to time. We may have lots to learn about stress reduction from our youthful selves. As children, we see the world as full of opportunities; we give free reign to our imaginations. What a great stress break to take a few minutes during a busy work day to indulge in a little day dreaming. Summertime is also a great time to get in touch with your inner child by getting your hands dirty with some gardening.



Most of all, children are great at living in the moment and enjoying small things in life. What a great lesson for all of us grown-ups. Sure we have lots of responsibilities and worries, but we can also slow down and be more aware of the present moment. So how about taking a bite out of a fresh peach and savoring the sweet flavor of summer!

Stacey C. Cunningham

Assistant Director, Mary Amelia Center

Women Making a Difference: Kathleen Sebelius

With public health issues attracting the media spotlight these days, we are seeing more frequently the faces of women who are directing institutions important to our health. One of these women is Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).



On April 28, 2009, she was sworn in to head the federal department responsible for protecting the health of all Americans. At her swearing-in ceremony, President Obama said, "I expect her to hit the ground running, and I have every confidence that given her experience as a governor who's managed crises before, who's worked on public health issues since she's been in public life, she is the right person at the right time for the job."

HHS agencies are responsible for public health, food safety, research, and the administration of the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The federal response to the recent H1N1 (swine) flu outbreak is part of these responsibilities. Many of the actions being taken in this flu outbreak are based on lessons learned from disease outbreaks of the past decade, as well as Hurricane Katrina and its impact on New Orleans and its residents.

Secretary Sebelius, 60, was previously the governor of Kansas for six years. Prior to that, she spent eight years as a representative in the Kansas Legislature and eight years as Insurance Commissioner in the state. She has said she loves New Orleans and has attended Jazz Fest for the past thirty years.

Public Health in Action

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It is unclear to many people how public health affects life on a daily basis. A close partner of MAC, the Tulane Maternal and Child Public Health Leadership Training Program (MCPHLT), reached out to local youth to introduce the idea that public health is a new way to think about health because it incorporates the physical, social and personal environment. Public health is everything from sidewalks to clean water to vaccinations.

Over the last few months, as part of its leadership training for public health graduate students, MCPHLT has coordinated outreach opportunities at several New Orleans schools. The graduate students have introduced the concept of public health – as a career option and as an integral part of our lives – to area middle school, high school, and college students. The discussions were lively with the younger students having plenty of questions of their own. Lauren Dito, a public health student who is also a yoga instructor, incorporated yoga into her outreach. "The students seemed completely engaged and cooperative and would have liked it to last longer. It was very inspiring..."

This project was a real win-win scenario. The outreach gave the MCPHLT students an opportunity to develop their presentation skills and work toward leadership by serving the community, and it expanded the younger students' definition and recognition of public health and may have planted the seeds for future leaders in public health.

"I thoroughly enjoyed this activity and ... I think it was effective using a sort of open forum to discuss [the students'] ideas about public health."

~Lauren Dito

Cooking for Good Health: *Featured Chef, Melissa Lovell*

Summer is a wonderful time to get outdoors. Playing catch, swimming, gardening; there are so many things to do outside in nice weather. So, why stop there? Cooking food on the grill adds fun and flavor to the summer months. Here are some great grilling ideas for vegetables:

- All kinds of summer produce taste great with a grilled flavor. Try summer squash, zucchini, eggplant, corn on the cob, red onion, mushrooms, peppers and potatoes. The possibilities are endless!
- You can cook the veggies in a bag made of aluminum foil, on skewers, in a grill pan or directly on the rack.
- Cut the vegetables into similar sized pieces for even cooking.
- Try out different marinades from olive oil with salt and pepper to spice rubs to Italian dressing.
- Use the vegetables to pair with your favorite meat, spice up a salad or make a sandwich with some pesto and grilled baguette.



- Cook times vary from veggie to veggie and from veggie to meat. For example, meat and potatoes take longer to cook than onions and mushrooms. So put the ones with longer cook times on the grill first so everything is ready to serve at the same time.
- Try grilling fruit like mango or peaches for a sweet dessert. Slice and serve with some vanilla ice cream. Yum!

In the News: *Incentives for Health*

Most of us know what we need to do to get or stay healthy—watch our diets, get exercise, get regular medical screenings. Sometimes, though, our busy lives mean that these health promoting activities are not a priority. Would monetary incentives help you to make health a priority?

That is what the Congress has recently proposed. As part of broad health care reform, Congress has started to look for ways to promote prevention and wellness. The proposals focus on offering tax credits to companies that have health and wellness programs and on allowing companies to give financial rewards to employees who participate in the programs.

These proposals would make prevention a real priority for both corporations and individuals, but putting them into practice will not be simple. Some are asking if these kinds of incentives are fair to all employees or if employers should have the right to impact our private lives. Hopefully, Congress will find a way to put these good ideas into action.

Student Highlight: *Ashley Martin*

I am a MPH candidate in Global Maternal and Child Health at Tulane SPHTM. Born and raised in SC, I completed my undergraduate studies at the College of Charleston focusing in Microbiology. I spent two years in Nicaragua serving as a Community Health Educator with the Peace Corps focusing in reproductive health with adolescents and pregnant women. While there, I realized that many of the health disparities faced by people in the rural communities where I worked were the same as those faced by residents in the Southeast United States. These disparities among disadvantaged populations are one area I wish to address during my career in public health.

“Through my work, I not only gained knowledge and technical experience...but expanded my understanding of NOLA and its residents ”



I joined the Creating Community Connections team in the Fall of 2008 and was quickly thrown into the process as I took initiative in the community of Algiers. Through my work, I not only gained knowledge and technical experience on how to plan and conduct Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups but I also expanded my knowledge and understanding of New Orleans and its residents. I am currently in the process of becoming a trained birthing attendant, and upon graduation I plan to return to school for a Master of Physician Assistant degree. I eventually hope to work both domestically and abroad focusing in women’s health care issues.

Wellness is the Focus of Algiers Event

The Mary Amelia Center happily attended the Spring Wellness Night at Common Ground Health Clinic on May 14th. The event brought alternative health practices to the Algiers community showing them that staying healthy isn’t always about taking medicine. Activities were divided between the clinic and the office building, fondly known as the “Yellow House”. People were invited to try massage, yoga, meditation and acupuncture. There were crafts for kids too. The Common Ground Herbal Clinic offered delicious hibiscus iced tea to go with the yummy and healthy snacks. Made-to-order fish tacos and raw oysters added to the festivities. This event was held during National Women’s Health Week (NWHW). One of the purposes of NWHW is to encourage women to get regular health screenings. MAC gave away brochures that explained which ones and at what age women should get health screenings. All the activities were meant to reduce stress and increase health. The smiles and laughter from the people attending showed that everyone had a good time.





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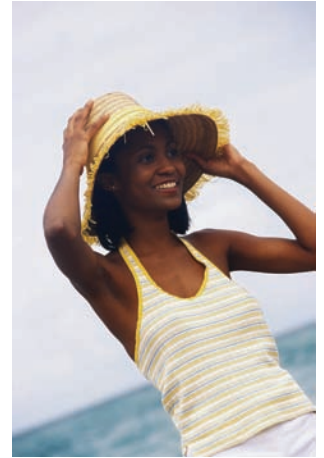
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Be Sun Smart this Summer!

Living in the South provides a bounty of activities all year long, but the summer offers promise of good times outdoors in the hot, hot sun. Lake Ponchartrain and the Mississippi River levee are great places to take long walks and bicycle rides. A visit to the Satchmo Summer Fest, a walk on Jackson Square or a ballgame at Zephyr's field all expose us to the sun's harmful rays. If you spend time outdoors you should know how to protect your body. Short amounts of sun exposure provide Vitamin D which is important for health but even 30 minutes of sun exposure can hurt more than help. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. So, protect yourself and your kids too! Your child's risk for skin cancer later in life can increase after only one or two sunburns.

Here are some sun tips to keep in mind:

- Use **sunscreen** with a minimum of SPF 15+.
- Re-apply your sunscreen every two hours or after swimming or sweating.
- Seek **shade** under a tree or awning for a retreat from the sun especially during peak hours from 10am-4pm.
- Wear a **hat** with a wide brim to cover your face and neck.
- Don't forget your eyes! Wear **sunglasses** to protect your sensitive eyes from the sun. Ultraviolet light can cause problems like cataracts and macular degeneration.
- The sun's harmful rays can reach you on cloudy days too.
- Stay hydrated by drinking lots of **water**.



In Memory: *Dr. Gene Usdin*



Albert Einstein once said "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value." Dr. Gene Usdin, who passed away this May, succeeded in doing both in his life. He has been recognized locally, nationally and internationally for his contributions as a psychiatrist, scholar, mentor, speaker, educator, clinician, author and philanthropist. He was also an early civil rights activist and started the first community mental health center in New Orleans. Dr. Usdin's contributions to Tulane, the community and psychiatry have made an enormous difference. He was always there for others being generous with his time, talents, advice, energy and financial support.



Dr. Usdin established the Cecile Usdin Professorship in Women's Health with the Center's Director, Jeanette H. Magnus, as the first recipient. At the Mary Amelia Center we are reminded of Dr. Usdin's kindness each day when we pass the sculpture "Contemplations" by his late wife, Cecile that he generously donated to the Center. We at MAC are honored to have been affiliated with Dr. Usdin and send our condolences to his family and friends.

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