

SPOTLIGHT ON DIVERSITY



Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force

Visit us at:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/BA_Diversity_Task_Force

United States Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Research Service

What is the Buzz About at the Student Discovery Garden?

Students from the Glenelg Country School/Barclay School cohort of Maryland Youth Partners in Change visited the Beltsville Area (BA) Student Discovery Garden on November 2, 2012. The Garden fosters agricultural education and outreach to the community by showcasing BA research and engaging future scientists.

After their visit, the students wrote letters to Student Discovery Garden organizers. The following excerpts illustrate the children's positive reactions to the Garden, including the connection that at least one student made between his Garden visit and a potential career in the scientific/technical area:

"I really liked...the machine...to water the crops. I also enjoy building things and may even think about become and engineer." – Jake

"The most interesting vegetable to me was the watermelon which tasted really good." – Deja

"I learned a lot that day. Like how to grow mushrooms. Also I learned what to, and what not to eat plant wise." – Corey

"I was very interested in the peanuts because I never really saw peanuts planted and come straight out of the ground." – Kyriek



"I learned that tomatoes and green peppers grow from the ground and not from a tree." – Tara

"I really enjoyed...learning about different foods that are grown under the ground. I really enjoyed taking them home and eating them." – Lola

"Learning is very fun especially when it's fun!!" – Ashleigh



Kids aren't the only ones who can have fun with the Student Discovery Garden. Now there is a new Student Discovery Garden Learn at Lunch seminar series designed for BA employees.

At the first of these seminars, held on March 15, Victor Levi taught a packed audience about honey bees and described the ins and outs of being a beekeeper. Beekeeping suits, beekeeping boxes, and live bees were on display. Did you know any of the following fascinating facts that Levi presented about honey bees?

Honey bees are not native to the United States (US). They were brought over in 1622 by European settlers.

There are over 200,000 beekeepers in the US with hives that collectively produce about 200 million pounds of honey annually.

A honey bee can only sting once, and then it dies.

A male bee (drone) mates with the queen bee while flying and then immediately dies in mid-air.

(continued on p. 2)

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

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Future seminar topics include native bees, native plants, and climate change. See the calendar of events on page 4 for dates and times.

The BA Student Discovery Garden is a project of the BA Diversity Task Force, whose overall mission includes offering information, inspiring communication, and developing programs that support employee recruitment and advancement. If you would like to learn more about the Student Discovery Garden or the Task Force, please contact us at BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov or visit http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/BA_Diversity_Task_Force.

Do You Know Someone Who Promotes Diversity in the Beltsville Area?

“If you want to help people reach their full potential, catch them doing something right” (from *The One-Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson). You can easily put this tip into practice to foster cultural transformation and diversity, and you don’t even need to be a manager. “How?” you may ask. By nominating individuals who promote cultural transformation through outreach, diversity, and equal opportunity for an award. Any ARS employee may submit a nomination.

Recognition for achievements related to workforce diversity is provided through the Administrator’s Outreach Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Awards Program. This annual program acknowledges exemplary achievements in promoting a diverse workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It is a way to honor employees who have demonstrated commitment to workforce diversity through actions that clearly exceed the responsibilities of their positions or assignments.

There are two categories for this award, supervisory/managerial and non-supervisory/non-managerial. Information about selection criteria and nominations are found on the Beltsville Area staff-only website at <http://staffonly.ba.ars.usda.gov/awards/ODEO.html>. Let folks know that what they are doing is appreciated. As the Nike commercial says, “Just do it.”

– Rose McIntosh

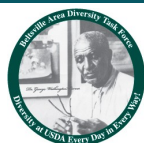


Celebrating Women in Agriculture: The Women’s Land Army

During World War I (WWI) and WWII, women were asked to take on multiple roles on the home front while men fought for our country. One of the most important tasks taken on by women during this time was to feed the country by becoming “farmerettes.” On March 20th, the National Agricultural Library’s Special Collections, along with the Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force’s Special Emphasis Subcommittee, hosted a Women’s History Month event. The guest speakers were Elaine Weiss, author of *Fruits of Victory: The Woman’s Land Army of America in the Great War*, and Anne Effland, a social science analyst with USDA’s Economic Research Service.

Weiss discussed topics from her book, which covers the story of women across the nation who organized

(continued on p. 3)



Winner of ARS Administrator’s Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Award for 2009 and 2011

Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force: Diversity at USDA Every Day in Every Way!



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to work on farms during World War I. The women of the WWI era were called upon to become “farmerettes” in order to stop the threat of a possible food shortage during war time. These women were made into icons and represented the tenacity of the American spirit during times of war, but their story is not well known. Women wanted to do their part to help their country, and they wanted to do more than just work at conserving resources at home in their kitchens. These women formed a private organization called the Women’s Land Army (WLA), and they set their own rules. They would only work 8-hour days, and they wore pants while working in the field. They defied the idea of what women of that time were capable of doing.

Effland spoke about the Women’s Land Army during WWII. In 1943, USDA was assigned the task of organizing emergency farm labor, and the WLA became a part of the Emergency Farm Labor Program. Effland read a quote from a woman in college who volunteered to join the WLA. The woman stated that after working in the field all day, she had dropped a quarter on the floor, and it took her two days before she was able to pick it up due to her sore muscles. These women were pushed to their limits, but they were also immensely proud of the work they had accomplished for their country.

If you are interested in learning more about this topic and Elaine Weiss’s book, her website has additional information. <http://www.fruitsofvictorybook.com/>

– Jennifer Kramer

New Opportunity to Foster Diversity by Mentoring UMCP Students

The College Success Initiative, which promotes college retention and graduation by providing resources to undergraduate minority students at the University of Maryland at College Park (UMCP), was highlighted at the Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force celebration of Black History Month on February 20. The initiative, a

project of the Maryland Institute for Minority Achievement & Urban Education (MIMAUE), a unit within the UMCP College of Education, was described by MIMAUE’s executive director, Stephanie Timmons-Brown, and program manager, Tamika Montgomery.

Timmons-Brown and Montgomery spoke of reaching out to USDA in order to build a lasting partnership and create new opportunities for students. They encouraged BA staff to consider working with MIMAUE participants. Information on the programs offered can be found at www.education.umd.edu/MIMAUE. If you think you might have the opportunity to bring a student in as an intern or even for a short shadowing assignment, contact Timmons Brown (stbrown@umd.edu) or Montgomery (tmont@umd.edu) about making arrangements.

The Black History Month event also included a video entitled “The Bridge to Freedom,” an episode of the *Eyes on the Prize* television series from PBS. The video documented the events leading up to the climactic and bloody march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, which led to passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, forcing states to end discriminatory voting practices. The focus was on the struggle of the African American community in Alabama.

“The video did an excellent job of capturing the strength, determination, and courage of the civil rights activists and their supporters,” said one BA attendee. “Parts were difficult to watch, and I will never forget the graphic images and the emotional testimonials from people that participated in the march. I would highly recommend this documentary to anyone who is not familiar with this event in our Nation’s history.”

In a speech delivered at the end of the Selma-to-Montgomery march, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., asserted his conviction that equal rights would soon be attained. “I know you are asking today, ‘How long will it take?’ ... How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

– Jennifer Kramer



Best Hiring Practices

One email is all it takes to quickly and easily disseminate your vacancy announcement for a non-SY position to the whole Best Hiring Practices (BHP) list of regional universities, colleges, and organizations. The Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force has put this system together, and you're invited to use it when your open position is ready for posting on USAJobs.

With the extremely short open periods for some current vacancy announcements, this new streamlined version of the BHP process puts you instantly on track for initialing required REE Recruitment Agreement, Box 2C, in good faith.

As soon as you receive your position announcement to be posted, **immediately** do these 4 simple steps:

Click this: jenny.allen@ars.usda.gov

Copy and paste this into the subject line: **Send to BHP group**

Attach your vacancy announcement to the message.

Click "Send."

It's that easy to get the word out!

-Allison Yates

Diversity Training Opportunity: New Leader Program

The New Leader Program is offered to Federal employees at the GS 7-11 level through Graduate School USA. This 6-month program is designed to develop future public service leaders by providing assessment, experiential learning, and individual development opportunities. The program includes 3 one-week residential training sessions that cover topics such as communication, problem solving, team building, and diversity. I recently participated in the New Leader Program from March to September 2012.

At the beginning of the program, I was introduced to the team members who would be my support system throughout the program. Participants are purposely grouped into diverse teams that include people of

different ages, races, and genders. I personally had a wonderful group to work with, and they have provided me with guidance and encouragement throughout the past 6 months. As the program drew to a close, each team delivered a fun and creative presentation of what we learned throughout the program.

During the 6-month program, participants focus on their own personal career goals within the Federal government. Each participant reviews 3 books on topics relating to leadership and conducts 2 management interviews with career employees from the GS 13 to the Senior Executive Service level. There is a 3-day shadowing assignment with a senior federal manager (GS 13 or higher).

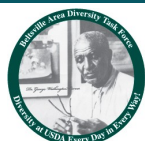
The most exciting part of the program is being able to do a 4-6 week developmental assignment. I was able to work at the Environmental Protection Agency for 6 weeks as a program analyst with the Superfund Community Involvement and Program Initiatives Branch. This experience was truly rewarding for me, and I am grateful to have had this opportunity.

The New Leader Program has provided me with the foundation to be a leader in my life and at work. I was able to network and meet people I otherwise would never have had the opportunity to meet. I also gained valuable work experience that was completely different from what I do on a daily basis as a laboratory technician. I would recommend this program to anyone working for the Federal government who meets the qualifications and is looking to gain new skills and experience. Information on the various leadership development programs offered through Graduate School USA can be found at http://graduateschool.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=188.

- Jennifer Kramer



Participants in New Leader Program 2012-1 (left to right): Patricia Walton, John Krouse, Rena Dupree, Kathleen Bloxham, Willie Coleman, Katherine McLaughlin, and Jennifer Kramer



Beltsville Area Summit Fosters Collaboration With Hispanic-Serving Institutions

At least two grant proposals by partners from the Beltsville Area (BA) and a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) can trace their beginnings to the HSI Summit and Partnership Meeting held on June 29, 2012, at the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and the U.S. National Arboretum. Yakov Pachepsky (Environmental Microbial and Food Safety Laboratory) and Monica Palomo (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona) submitted their applications for "Fate and transport, and dynamics of microbial quality of irrigation water during storage and delivery to agricultural fields" and "Bringing environmental engineering and agricultural sciences undergraduate education with the food safety focus on microbiological quality of irrigation water" to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

The full-day summit, organized by the Leadership Advisory Subcommittee of the Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force (BADTF), took place in conjunction with a conference in Washington, DC, for fellows from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship Program. This program "offers faculty and staff from HSIs the opportunity to work collaboratively with USDA...to address the spectrum of challenges faced in the development of a well prepared Hispanic workforce."



The summit provided an opportunity for members of HSIs to be exposed to career opportunities and research collaborations possible in the BA, as well as a presentation about NIFA grant funding and tours of Beltsville and Arboretum facilities.

Six De La Garza fellows were matched with BA researchers based on their areas of expertise. In addition to Pachepsky and Palomo, the other five pairs were: Gloria Solano-Aguilar (Diet, Genomics and Immunology Laboratory) and Kristen Corda (University of Texas, San Antonio); Ronald Ochoa (Systematic Entomology Laboratory) and Pablo Sacasa (Miami Dade College, North Campus); Michel Cavigelli (Sustainable Agricultural Systems Laboratory) and David Sotomayor (University of Puerto Rico); James Bunce (Crop Systems and Global Change Laboratory) and Ivan Castro Arellan (Texas State University, San Marcos); and Mary Cornelius (Invasive Insect Biocontrol and Behavior Laboratory) and Bert Rivera-Marchand (InterAmerican University of Puerto Rico, Bayamon).

To find out more about how you can get involved in building partnerships with HSIs or other organizations, contact BADTF at BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov. Read about the E. Kika De La Garza Fellowship Program at <http://www.hsi.usda.gov/HSIs/fellowship.htm>.



Missed an issue of Spotlight?

See previous issues of *Spotlight on Diversity* and other interesting articles at:

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/docs.htm?docid=20124>.



2013 Calendar of Events

May 28 - Student Discovery Garden Learn at Lunch Seminar Series: "What's in your backyard? Choosing plants to maximize ecosystem services." Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

May 15 - Asian/ Pacific Islander Heritage Month: Lunch and Learn. Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

June (date to be announced) - Student Discovery Garden Learn at Lunch Seminar Series: "Rising CO2 and bee health: Exploring the secondary effects of climate change." Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

June 19 - Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride Month: Lunch and Learn. Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

September 18 - National Hispanic Heritage Month: Lunch and Learn. Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

October 16 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Lunch and Learn. Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

November 20 - Native American/Alaskan Native Heritage Month: Lunch and Learn. Building 003, Room 020, 12:00pm-1:00pm

Did you know that the Student Discovery Garden is open to all BA employees all the time?

Enjoy your lunch at the picnic tables or take a stroll through the garden and check out the new additions. We welcome plot ideas that relate to your area of expertise. To design your own plot for future seasons or to simply volunteer to help, contact us at BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov .

Helpful Websites

BARC:

Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/docs.htm?docid=17502>

Spotlight on Diversity – diversity news for the Beltsville Area
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/Aboutus/docs.htm?docid=20124>

ARS:

ARS & You – news about ARS
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/services/Introduction/ARS%20and%20You.htm>

Your Two Cents – cultural transformation in ARS
<http://www.ars.usda.gov/yourtwocents/>

Outreach, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity (ODEO):

Cooperative Resolution
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/programs/coopres/>

EEO Complaint Process
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/complaintprocess.htm>

Outreach and Recruitment
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/outreach.htm>

Reasonable Accommodation
<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ODEO/reasonableaccomodation.htm>

USDA:

USDA news and information
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

USDA's Roadmap to Diversity
https://www.ars.usda.gov/sp2UserFiles/ad_hoc/12000000OutreachDiversityandEO/DiversityRdmp.pdf
(link opens 5.46 MB PDF file)

Other:

Smithsonian diversity information and events
http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/heritage_month/index.html

Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities
<http://www.wrp.gov>

AskEARN.org - Resources to Help Employers Hire and Retain People with Disabilities
<http://www.askearn.org/>

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Annual Conference
http://www.hacu.net/hacu/Annual_Conference1.asp



BADTF Committee and Subcommittee meetings (September - June)

Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force - Second Wednesday of each month, alternating between BARC-W Building 003, Room 020 and BARC-E Building 307-C Room 117, 10:00-11:00am

Communications Subcommittee - First Thursday of each month, Building 003, Room 238, 1:00-2:00pm

Leadership Advisory Subcommittee - First Wednesday of each month, Building 173, Conference Room, 9:30-10:30am

Science and Technical Education Outreach Subcommittee - Third Tuesday of each month, Building 001, Room 342, 1:00-2:00pm

Special Emphasis Subcommittee - Second Tuesday of each month, Building 003, Room 020, 11:00-12:00pm

Thank you for reading *Spotlight on Diversity*. Your comments and contributions for future stories are welcome. Please e-mail us at BARC.Diversity@ars.usda.gov.

Spotlight on Diversity is produced by the Communications Subcommittee of the Beltsville Area Diversity Task Force. Members of the Communications Subcommittee are Kamal Chauhan, Sharrell Davis, Dawn Harrison, Jennifer Kramer, Rose McIntosh, Linda Reynolds, Jim Plaskowitz, Dave Prevar, Cecilia Wilkinson Enns, Frances Truth, Catherine Parsons (*Spotlight* formatting and production), and Tasha Sprague (*chair*).

