



June 2016
Volume 1, Issue 1



PWA Diversity Publication (title pending)

PWA WORKFORCE DIVERSITY TRAINING WORKSHOP

In early April, the PWA Workforce Diversity Committee (PWA-WFDC) met for a 2-day Training Workshop to explore, deliberate and establish workforce diversity goals for the Pacific West Area. Both Drs. Hammond and Onwulata were participants, as well as many of the location committee members from throughout the PWA.

The goal is to promote recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of groups with low participation rates in the PWA workforce, such as women, minorities, persons with disabilities and veterans. The primary objectives of the event were to:

- ◆ Identify barriers that hinder diversity and inclusion in the PWA workforce;
- ◆ Develop realistic strategies to overcome barriers; set reasonable/pragmatic goals, milestones and outcomes;
- ◆ Deliver recommendations for implementation to the Area Leadership

Participants received training on workforce demographics and statistics, Hispanic Serving Institutions, USDA Future Scientists Program, Veterans and Persons with Disabilities Hiring Strategies, Outreach and Diversity, and Human Resources Hiring Practices.

As an outcome of the training workshop Sub-Committees were formed to address the following initiatives:

- ◆ Hiring/Retention – PWA Hiring Program (Roadmap: L/A Appts-Pathways-Permanent Positions)
- ◆ PWA Publication – PWA Diversity Publication (Bi-annually)
- ◆ Employee Development – New PWA Mentoring Program (for all non-SY employees)

These initiatives are still in the planning stages and the PWA-WFDC welcomes **any employee who would like to volunteer** to participate on these Sub-Committees to contact Jan Lewis, PWA/ODEO Program Manager, jan.lewis@ars.usda.gov or 510-559-6003, for more information.



Top row; left to right: Tracey Troutman (presenter), Jianchi Chen, Andrew Hammond, Mark Weltz (presenter), Charles Onwulata. **Second row;** left to right: Bill Longland, Hero Gollany, Ted Kisha, Brooke Bowers, Ruth Martin, Eduardo Bautista, Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman, Craig Wilson (presenter) **Bottom row;** left to right: Keshun Liu, Renee Eriksen, John Preece, Chandra Holifield-



AREA DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

Welcome to the new “PWA Diversity Publication”. This is just one outcome of the PWA Workforce Diversity Committee Training Workshop held earlier this year in April.

I am delighted by the outreach and diversity efforts that you’ve shared for this inaugural issue. It is encouraging to learn of your continuing efforts to leverage our PWA diversity and are engaging in activities that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

You have my continued personal commitment to these important and critical endeavors.

We are all in this together.

Diversity & Inclusion



Dr. Imad Eujayl

CAREERS ON WHEELS-KIMBERLY, ID

Students from elementary schools across Twin Falls visited the College of Southern Idaho Expo Center on May 18th to learn from many different professionals. The “Careers on Wheels” event was aimed to draw students’ attention to the many different career opportunities available to them as they get older. The fifth-graders learned about the education involved in pursuing certain careers, demands and responsibilities, work environment and many other things. **David Tarkalson** and **Imad Eujayl** from ARS Kimberly, ID participated, they presented information

about job duties of ARS scientists and the role science plays in our society to approximately 200 area 5th graders.

~Submitted by Kara Vander Linden



Dr. David Tarkalson

“We all should know that diversity makes for rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”~~Maya Angelou

CHALLENGE!!

NAME THE “NEW”

PWA DIVERSITY PUB

Welcome to the “**New**” PWA Diversity Publication! Your mission, should you choose to accept, is to submit a recommendation for a **unique moniker** for the Publication that expresses the:

- ♦ **Intent** (i.e., creating/celebrating PWA workforce **diversity**) and; the
- ♦ **Effort** (i.e., establishing/maintaining PWA workforce **inclusion**).

After Area Leadership reviews the submissions and narrows down the list, those recommendations will be offered to the Area-At-Large for voting and final selection (via Survey Monkey).

So, showcase your creative side! Think of a thought provoking and heartfelt title for our PWA Diversity Publication that expresses **both diversity and inclusion**. Submit your recommendation to: Jan Lewis, jan.lewis@ars.usda.gov by Monday, August 1, 2016.

MARICOPA, AZ SPOTLIGHT

June 2015, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) committee celebrated **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Month** by hosting a Movie/Lunch session for employees. There were three movies shown by *Yoruba Richen*, "What the gay rights movement learned from the civil rights movement". *Morgan Bailey*, "The danger of hiding who you are" and *Norman Spack*, "How I help transgender teens become who they want to be".

December 2015, the U. S. Arid Land Agricultural Research Center (ALARC) EEO committee hosted an event to help celebrate **Native American Heritage Month**. Our guest speaker was *Mr. Frank Koerner* from the Heard Museum in Phoenix, AZ. The mission of the museum is to educate visitors and promote greater public understanding of the arts, heritage and ways of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, with an emphasis on American Indian tribes and other cultures of the Southwest. He presented *Native Foods* American culture.

March 2016, the ALARC EEO committee hosted *Women in Science: Challenges and Opportunities* to celebrate **Women's History Month**. Debra Baluch, President of the Arizona Chapter of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) and **Olga Yurchenko (ARS employee)** made presentations. Following the presentation, there was an open discussion focusing on *Women in Science Today*, as well as networking among employees from ALARC, Central Arizona College, Arizona State University, and Tempe High School District. Some of the key points discussed were under-representation of women in science, challenges for women in science, and opportunities for women in science. The event concluded with lunch and networking. **Special thanks** to **Olga Yurchenko, Sharette Rockholt** and **Kathy Johnson (ARS employees)** for organizing the event.



~Submitted by Steve Naranjo

UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM-PULLMAN, WA



This is the 10th class of interns and the 10th anniversary of Pullman's outreach and education program, "*Pumping-Up the Math and Science Pipeline*." As in the past, ARS Pullman partners with several WSU Upward Bound Programs in eastern Washington, which select the interns and provide funding for on-campus housing for the students. The mentors are scientists from ARS and WSU labs throughout the university and each mentor supports an intern on grant funds.

The Upward Bound program focuses on 1st generation high school students from families without a tradition of attending college. Since the inception of the internship program, ARS/WSU has hosted over 80 students and teacher interns. This year, **Dan Skinner (ARS Scientist)** will host a teacher intern, who previously was his student intern. Most of the interns go on to colleges or universities.

~Submitted by David Weller

ARS SPECIAL EMPHASIS

OBSERVANCES

February – Black History Month

March – National Women's History Month

May – Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month

June – National Gay and Lesbian Pride Month

September – National Hispanic Heritage Month

October – National Disability Employment Awareness Month

November – National American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

OUTREACH-SALINAS, CA

Members of the ARS and University of California, Davis research community in Salinas worked with 120 fifth graders from the Los Padres Elementary School to study ways to address the drought in California. Located in east Salinas, the school is less than a mile from the Crop Improvement and Protection Research Unit, and serves one of the city's most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Close to 97% of the students identify as Hispanic, and 88% of the students qualify for subsidized school lunch. The goal was to familiarize the students with agricultural research and the scientific method, so we asked them: given the historic drought in California, why can't we just grow crops using sea water? All students knew at the onset that this was a bad idea. But why?

Students were first given gummy bears to study osmosis, and measured them before and after immersion in water of varying salinities. The students found that gummy bears in fresh water expanded, but gummy bears in salt water stayed the same size, or shrunk. Students were then given different crop seeds and water with three different concentrations of salt: 0 salt water (fresh water), 0.2x sea water, and 1x sea water. The students counted the number of seeds that germinated over the course of a week, and they found that fewer seeds germinated in 0.2x sea water than in fresh water. In the 1x sea water, only a couple of corn seeds grew, while all other seeds dried up and died.

For three weeks, our researchers visited the students in their classroom. After, the students walked down the street to visit the station. They met with 14 researchers who demonstrated techniques used in their research, such as plating fungi, insect identification, molecular biology procedures, and lettuce crossing. They learned about the USDA lettuce germplasm collection, and they had group photos taken during a demonstration of a drone used in the fields. The outreach event was coordinated by **USDA-ARS Research Technician Polly Goldman**. "I'm very excited to see the development of this next generation of curious, energetic, and engaged scientists," she said afterwards.

The highlight, the students said, was the drone. And getting to eat the gummy bears.

~Submitted by Renée L. Eriksen and Polly Goldman



Research Leader Dr. James McCreight (back, center, light blue shirt) and ARS Research Horticulturalist Eric Brennan (front, right) poses with a group of students for a photo by a drone.



PENDELTON HIGH SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATION DAY

DIVERSITY NOTES: Did You Know??...

- ◆ President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution in 1978 that declared May 4–10, 1979, as the first **Asian Pacific American Heritage Week**.
- ◆ Celebrating **National Gay and Lesbian Pride Month**: The Henry Gerber House, Chicago, IL the home where the nation's first chartered LGBT rights organization, the Society for Human Rights was formed in 1924, is designated a National Historic Landmark. Learn more from the National Parks Service — LBGTQ Heritage Initiative
- ◆ **Hispanic Heritage Month** begins on September 15, the anniversary of independence for five **Latin American countries**—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.

Different
Individuals
Valuing
Each other
Respect
Skills
Intellect
Talents or
Years.

Coming Up Next Issue:

- ◆ Overview: What *is* Diversity and Inclusion?
- ◆ Celebrating — Hispanic Heritage Month
- ◆ Implicit Bias — what does *that* mean?

Pendleton High School, which also includes students from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, hosts a popular *Career Exploration Day* for all students. The intent of Career Day is to create a critical link between the classroom and workplace by allowing students to consider various career opportunities and connect the relevance of schoolwork to skills on the job. They typically invite a variety of speakers to present information about careers in fields such as agriculture, business, transportation, health services, engineering, education, communications, construction, industry, human resources, and the military.

Along with providing “hands-on” activities such as job interviewing skills, students can meet in small groups to hear and discuss with the speakers about required education/training, typical salary range, what they love about their job, challenges that they face, and any job shadowing or summer opportunities that they can offer to high school students interested in that field.



John Williams (Hydrologist), John McCallum (Chemist) and Hero Gollany (Soil Chemist) from the Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center (USDA-ARS-CPCRC, Pendleton, Oregon) participated this year on March 16th. They presented PowerPoint slides and information to encourage students to explore various career opportunities with USDA-ARS, and related how they use math, chemistry, and physics on the job.

~ Submitted by Hero Gollany

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH-YAKIMA, WA

Yakima Agricultural Research Laboratory (YARL) was visited by biochemistry students from Yakima Valley Community College in Yakima, WA and by entomology students from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA. Students discussed research with YARL scientists, were provided a tour of the lab, and learned about job opportunities for students and graduates.

Each year, YARL scientists mentor undergraduate research projects through an NSF-funded Research for Undergraduates program at Heritage University in Toppenish, WA. Heritage University is located on the Yakama Reservation, and predominately serves groups that are underrepresented in the sciences. Two students who conducted their research under the supervision of YARL scientists in FY15 attended the Pacific Branch Meeting of the Entomological Society of America in Honolulu, HI in April 2016. Their poster presentations won 1st and 2nd place in the undergraduate student poster competition. Three Heritage University students are conducting their undergraduate research projects at YARL in FY16. ~ Submitted by Rodney Cooper

