



WSEHA NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Winter 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Tom Kunesh

Dear Colleagues,

One common trait I have noted about sanitarians is our desire to serve our communities. As the old saying goes, "Be careful what you ask for..." The past year has thrust public health professionals onto the front lines of worldwide crisis response. The pandemic requires many of us to step into unfamiliar roles. The flexibility to pivot into new roles is another defining sanitarian trait. We assess risk, develop response plans, and advocate for protective measures. In turn, these actions reduce or eliminate exposure to harmful conditions. So we've been training for Covid response all along. Who knew?

I don't like to wish my life away but I am kinda glad to put 2020 in the rearview mirror. It was a rough year but I found that my colleagues are up to this challenge. I am an eternal optimist ... most of the time. As such, I have noted some silver linings and I try to keep them in mind when I feel exhausted by the many things I am required to juggle. Does any of this sound familiar to you?

- Watching co-workers thrive in new and challenging roles
- Collaborating with nurses, public health educators, communications specialists, epidemiologists, and community partners in ways not required before
- Learning new ways to get our jobs done – necessity truly is the mother of invention
- ...AND...knowing that the work we are doing is saving lives

2021 AEC **Announcements** *(see pg 4 for more AEC info)*

- Help Water1st International & WSEHA support projects through the 2021 IHC Silent Auction & Raffle

- Submit a speaker proposal!
What have you learned/ accomplished the past year or two? What are some new challenges?

- Have an amazing co-worker?
Give 'em some kudos & submit their name for a WSEHA award— it's easy!

The work we do has meaning. Our communities depend on us to think about health threats so folks can go about their lives. As the pandemic hit our state, our traditional response teams were quickly overwhelmed. Environmental public health professionals have filled gaps to assure a high quality response. Just look at Washington's Covid statistics compared to the rest of the country and you see that our work has made a difference.

I offer a physically distant virtual toast to you all. Let's hope 2021 is brighter with each new day.

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Like [WSEHA's Facebook page!](#) Stay up-to-date [with](#) new educational events, job postings, and goings-on in the field of Environmental Public Health.

Another way to keep up with what we're doing is to join our mailing list. Go to wseha.org to join the mailing list or email Megan McNelly at megan@wseha.org.

Next Newsletter Deadline:

April 2021

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

WSEHA Welcomes a New IHC Chair

LCDR Steven Galvez has recently stepped into the WSEHA International Health Committee (IHC) Chair position. He is excited to have found WSEHA, and to get involved, after moving from California in August 2019. The IHC's focus on international environmental health issues is important to him and wants to continue the good work of his predecessor, Ashlee-Rose Ferguson.

Steve is originally from central California, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health from California State University, Fresno and started his job with the FDA. Shortly after joining the FDA, he was commissioned as an Environmental Health Officer in the US Public Health Service. He later served as a Supervisory Consumer Safety Officer in the Human & Animal Food (HAF) Division West-5 between May 2015 and July 2019 in Alameda and South San Francisco, CA. In August 2019, he accepted a State Liaison position at the FDA Seattle District Office with HAF Division West-6 in Bothell, WA. During all this time, he received his Master of Arts in Emergency and Disaster Management from American Military University, along with his Registered Environmental Health Specialist, Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety, and Certified Professional - Food Safety through NEHA and Registered Sanitarian through WSBRS. He and his family really enjoy all the hiking opportunities that are offered in Washington and glad his daughter was able to witness snow. She is only a year old, so she likely will not remember it.

IHC Recipient: Water1st International

At our coming 2021 Annual Education Conference, the International Health Committee (IHC) will be hosting a virtual Silent Auction and Raffle! The IHC remains committed to educating and alleviating environmental health issues that affect populations around the world. There are many countries that are significantly impacted from various environmental issues, such as lack of safe drinking water, hygiene education, and sanitary toilets. The IHC supports organizations who uphold the same values as our organization. One way we support these organizations, is to host an annual silent auction/raffle. All proceeds go to a carefully selected international non-profit organization that fits the criteria mentioned and has a local tie to Washington state.



The IHC is pleased to announce the recipient for the 2021 virtual Silent Auction/Raffle will be **Water1st International**. Water1st International is a Washington based non-profit that currently works in low-income areas of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Honduras. Their mission is to enable the world's poorest people to implement and sustain community-managed projects integrating clean water supply, toilets, and hygiene education. Their international work includes the completion of 3,286 water systems that have benefited 236,593 individuals in five countries by providing household water and hygiene education. Please visit their website at

www.water1st.org to learn more about the organization and other ways to support their vision of a world where all communities are safe and healthy. You may also visit www.water1st.org/our-work/ip-report/ to see a more detailed report of their work.

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2021 AEC

The 2020 AEC may have been cancelled but we're doing the 2021 AEC in virtual style! We're excited to explore new opportunities to provide education to our members. The conference will be in May but we're spreading it out over a few weeks to accommodate people's schedules. We're planning to have several half-day sessions but in keeping with the usual program, each session will be dedicated to a specific topic so you can attend what you're interested in. Information is available on the [AEC webpage](#). More information will be posted as it comes available.

Registration will open around late March so stay tuned. Prices will be significantly reduced from the usual registration but exact prices have not been determined.

You can help! Here are two ways:



SPEAKERS

We need you! What have you been working on—successes, challenges, new studies, etc. Sessions will be ~50 minutes long with a Q&A.

For info, [visit here](#) or submit a proposal, [here](#).

Questions? Email megan@wseha.org.

Deadline: March 22, 2021



NOMINATIONS

Environmental Health workers are amazing people. Unfortunately, we can't see everything that you do, all of the amazingness that happens daily so we need YOU to help us out. Submit the names so we can consider them for an award! See page 6 for more information.

Deadline: April 2, 2021

.....spread the word.....

WSEHA BOARD UPDATES

Central Region **VP: James Rivard**

Adams
Benton
Cheland
Columbia
Douglas
Grant
Franklin
Kittitas
Klickitat
Okanogan
Walla Walla
Yakima

Northwest Region **VP: Vacant**

Island
King
San Juan
Skagit
Snohomish
Whatcom

Olympic Region **VP: Jodie Holdcroft**

Clallam
Jefferson
Kitsap
Mason

Eastern Region **VP: Ben Stone**

Asotin
Ferry
Garfield
Lincoln
Pend Orielle
Spokane
Stevens
Whitman

Southwest Region **VP: Jeremy Simmons**

Clark
Cowlitz
Grays Harbor
Lewis
Pacific
Pierce
Skamania
Thurston
Wahkiakum

The WSEHA board meets a few times a year via conference call or Zoom with the Annual Business meeting usually occurring during the AEC. Meeting minutes can be found on the WSEHA website under About or by using [this link](#).

Recent Board action:

- Approval of the 2021 IHC recipient, Water1st International
- Renewal of the Executive Secretary contract
- Accepted of a position on the Tacoma Community College's Advisory committee for their Community Health Bachelor's program

Board members are listed on page two of every newsletter. If you ever have any concerns or questions, we have a great panel of Vice-Presidents and Board members. We'd love to hear from you!

WSEHA MEMBERSHIPS

Hello again

Have you renewed your membership? We want all of our Washington State Colleagues to remain up to date. The best way to do that is to renew your membership with WSEHA. The business of WSEHA continues to hum along, in spite of the pandemic.

- We're planning a virtual AEC to provide CEU opportunity for our members – guaranteed to cost \$50.00 less if you renew your membership.
- We're holding a fundraiser for the International Health Committee to support critical environmental health infrastructure in communities that need it. See info about our chosen recipient Water First International, at this link: www.water1st.org.
- Scholarships and awards will be handed out!
- Election of officers is scheduled for this spring.

The best way to stay informed and to keep our organization healthy is to renew today. It's easy...just follow this link: [Membership form](#).

Tom Kunesch
WSEHA President

WSEHA memberships are cool

IHC Recipient: Water1st International

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To make the 2021 IHC Virtual Silent Auction and Raffle successful, we will be seeking gift card donations from Washington businesses to support this wonderful organization. Due to the virtual nature of the auction and raffle, we have decided that it may be simpler to mail gift cards to our lucky winners. Silent auctions items may be donated if they can be easily shipped by the donor or sent via email. Please contact the IHC Chair, Steven Galvez at steven.galvez@fda.hhs.gov for information or with questions. Help spread the word about IHC's mission and request for gift card donations! Remember every little bit counts as we move towards one common public health goal. We are stronger together than we are apart but remain six-feet apart for social distancing. Please help the IHC in fulfilling its mission!



One of Water1st International's projects to improve sanitation and water sources.

AWARD & BOARD NOMINATIONS

April 2 is the deadline to nominate your colleague(s) for one of WSEHA's prestigious awards.

[Click here](#) for nominating information, the Awards manual, and even a "Tell Us" option where the committee will help you with the paperwork. Take a moment, consider your colleagues and co-workers—you know someone who should be nominated!

We are accepting Award nominations for the following:

- Rookie of the Year*
- Environmental Health Professional of the Year*
- John P. Nordin Outstanding Sanitarian Award

**WSEHA membership
not required*

And the following Board positions (nominations close March 22nd):

- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- Regional VP—Northwest region

Information about the positions and requirements is available [here](#).

Holly Erdman's colleagues watching during the 2020 Award Presentation. To watch the entire presentation (~20 minutes) or just selections, visit [Awards | wseha](#)

