

# Alert:

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## A Trip to Remember

By: Scott Kobner, 2007-08 YES National Finalist

2008-09  
YES Competition

Online submission  
deadline

February 2, 2009  
by 9:00am ET

YES National Event  
April 17-20, 2009

On August 5th, I met up with Jessica Palmer and Katie Everett, the two first place winners in the YES Competition. YES and the CDC sponsored the three of us to spend the day in Atlanta at the CDC. There were so many amazing parts of the trip that it's nearly impossible to summarize how I feel about all of it. We toured the Global Health Odyssey Museum which features exhibits focusing on a variety of public health topics as well as the

history of the CDC. We donned hazmat suits. What a blast that was! In the afternoon, YES research was presented to a number of CDC staff, and we met with Dr. Steven Thacker, Director of the CDC's Office of Workforce and Career Development. He was so generous with his time, answering questions and telling us about his work. The entire experience solidified my desire to someday work for the CDC, hopefully as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) officer. So for me, one of the most memorable activities was attending the Tuesday morning EIS seminar.

I can still recall the giant wood doors that were rimmed in steel. We passed through the archway opening into what appeared to be an auditorium or lecture hall. But as we made our way deeper inside, the room revealed itself to be so much more - lined with cameras, microphones, TV screens, and more seats than I could imagine people to fill. Yet they say at certain times during the year this room has so many EIS and CDC officers packed into it, the aisles overflow with equal amounts of people and excitement.

Today the sea of chairs was much calmer as the presenter, an EIS officer, began his discussion. Just as all lights fell on the officer, and some of the world's best medical minds listened over phone lines, computer screens, and TV's from all different corners of the world, it struck me. The familiarity hit me hard and fast. The PowerPoint, the podium, the introduction to his subject - I felt myself up on that stage in front of an audience all over again at the YES Competition. For the first time I realized that my work, although scientifically immature in comparison, was amazingly similar to the work of this EIS officer standing in the exact place where I hope to be, perhaps in a decade's time. With each passing chart, p-value, and epi-curve my excitement, my confidence, and my dream grew. I listened to the question and answer session, where this officer was questioned just as I had been! To realize that my work at the YES Competition was treated just like this EIS officer's work made me speechless.

It was truly an experience I will never forget. The path is clear to me now, and I hope it will lead me back to the CDC and to EIS.



Jessica Palmer, Scott Kobner, and Katie Everett Visit the CDC



Young  
Epidemiology  
Scholars

Visit [www.collegeboard.com/yes](http://www.collegeboard.com/yes)

## Evan Orenstein, 2003-04 YES Scholar



Evan and Friends in South Africa

*"As a parent, I can say that the YES experience played the major role in the career path my son has chosen. I cannot be more positive regarding the importance of stimulating high school students to pursue epidemiology."*

Walter Orenstein

Five years ago, Evan Orenstein, then a high school junior, had to make a tough choice between attending the school prom or participating in the YES Competition. No one knew what to expect at YES since it was the inaugural year of the competition. Evan decided to present his research titled "Sensitivity Analysis of an Influenza Epidemic Simulation: Analysis of Exposure and Intervention" and was awarded a \$15,000 scholarship as a National Finalist. He still thinks back to his YES experience with excitement and fond memories.

Evan found himself captivated by the opening speaker at YES - Laurie Garrett, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and expert on global health. She spoke about the implications of the HIV epidemic and the role it plays in social, economic, and environmental arenas. Since then, he has taken an avid interest in AIDS and broadened his knowledge about and interest in public health.

Evan enrolled at Yale University where he played a major role in organizing the first AIDS walk in New Haven in 10 years. He volunteered at a half-way house and helped care for AIDS patients. He spent the summer of 2007 working in Tugela Ferry, South Africa - site of the first major extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (SDR TB) epidemic. Fifty-two of 53 patients with HIV and XDR TB had died with a median survival time of 16 days after sputum collection.

Evan's work in South Africa led to the development of a data capturing system to track HIV patients on anti-retroviral treatment and integrate the data with the TB office to improve surveillance. He began constructing a mathematical model to support the empiric treatment of tuberculosis using second-line drugs.

But Evan's work doesn't stop there. He has published three papers on key epidemiologic issues and is the second author on an article in press for *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*. He is preparing to submit a full manuscript to *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* that is a meta-analysis of multidrug-resistant TB treatment outcomes and adverse events. Of course he has a number of other projects in the works. Meanwhile, he is a first year medical student at Emory University.

Working with underserved populations has been one of the most rewarding experiences for Evan. He says that HIV in particular has captured his interest because medical issues related to HIV and AIDS cannot be separated from stigma, differences in economic opportunity, racial perceptions, and of course, sex and drugs. He believes that the fight against AIDS is also a fight against inequality on all of those fronts.

For Evan, the YES Competition wasn't about winning but rather meeting other participants who shared his excitement about public health as well as having the opportunity to interact with some of the most experienced public health minds in the world. He continues to make strides in his quest to bring to light the many public health issues that exist today.



Evan in India 2008



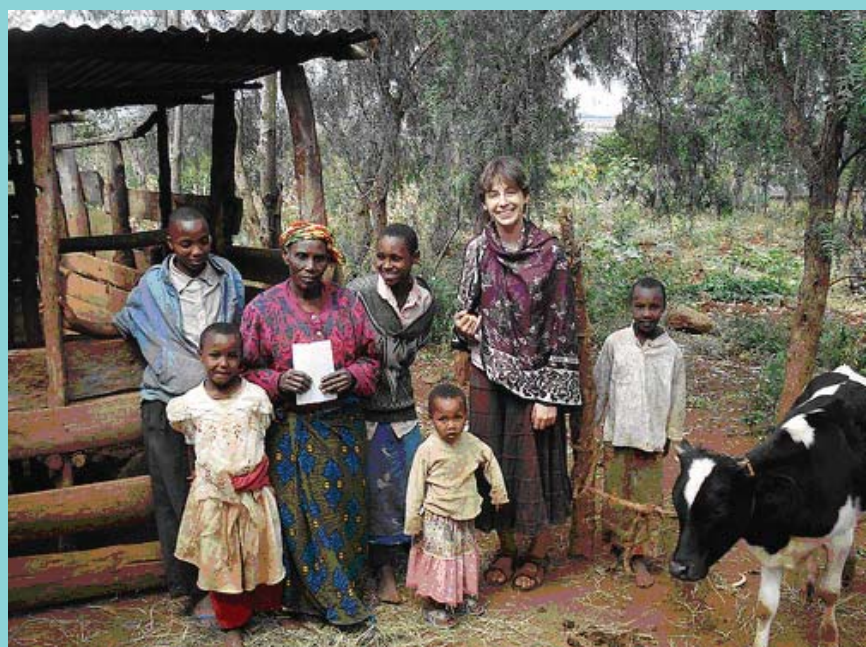
## Natalia Nazarewicz, 2005-06 YES Scholar

After winning the 2005-06 YES Competition, Natalia Nazarewicz from Oak Ridge, TN, enrolled at Brown University. She took last spring semester off before beginning her studies at the University of Dar es Salaam. Natalia contacted YES judge Dr. Robin Taylor Wilson who put her in touch with a former USAID (US Agency for International Development) employee. One thing led to another, and Natalia found herself in Karatu, Tanzania from March - June working with the Minnesota International Health Volunteers (MIHV-TZ), a non-governmental organization carrying out health and child survival projects throughout the world.

Natalia experienced firsthand how an effective non-governmental organization can work collaboratively with a community to create positive change. While she was at MIHV, the organization worked on a variety of projects including the Tanzania Child Survival Project. This 5-year initiative focuses on increasing child survival rates by preventing and treating diseases like malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea and increasing infant survival by training midwives and traditional birth attendants in villages. MIHV is currently constructing a

Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Center where mothers can go for pregnancy and parenting advice. In addition, MIHV is implementing new record-keeping protocols in the Karatu District by introducing Pregnancy Registers. Natalia notes that there are many more projects going on and so much work to be done.

As a volunteer, Natalia found herself working on training booklets for midwives about safe birth methods and emergency care during childbirth. She designed bags and clothing to aid in the support of local single mothers. She helped organize and video a



Natalia in Gongoli with Family Cow

half-marathon to raise awareness about malaria and its prevention and treatment. And she is currently working on a film series on family planning and child spacing that will be shown in villages.

Natalia wrote that her "decision to volunteer in Karatu was absolutely influenced by her YES experience." She said, "I wasn't interested in epidemiology (or really knew what it meant) until I entered the YES Competition." Over the course of the YES National Event and her visit to the CDC (sponsored by YES), she gained a greater appreciation and understanding of epidemiology and public health. She is thinking about pursuing a career in international public health.



The Race Against Malaria

### 2007-08

**Emily Barker**, Marshfield, WI, is enrolled at the University of Wisconsin and is interested in a career in public health. She is preparing her research on influenza for publication.

**Cameron Breen**, Merrick, NY, is attending Cornell University. This summer he presented his research at the Association for Chemoreception Sciences International Symposium on Olfaction and Taste.

**Alainna Brown**, Idaho Falls, ID, now a high school senior, is interested in epidemiology, biochemistry, and pre-med. This summer she attended a National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine at Villanova University.

**Jennifer Damm**, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, is attending The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a freshman. Her interests are public health and medicine.

**Anthony D'Ippolito**, Grove City, OH, attends The Ohio State University. This summer he worked as a research aide at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

**Rebecca Earnest**, Dallas, TX, is at the University of Pennsylvania. She is interested in a career in public health and pursuing research in international medicine, particularly infectious and tropical diseases.

**Michelle Jin**, Iowa City, IA, a high school senior, is interested in studying epidemiology, bioengineering, or other sciences. She interned this summer at the National Institute of Health.

**Danielle LeePow**, Atlanta, GA, is attending Howard University as a freshman. She will be majoring in biology and African American studies and hopes to have a career in epidemiology and medicine.

**Maya Mathur**, Woodside, CA, a high school senior, is currently writing up the results of her HPV study for publication in a pediatric journal.

**Samara Skwiersky**, Roslyn Heights, NY, attends Tulane University as a freshman majoring in public health and plans to continue the research she submitted to the YES Competition.

**Jonathan Sole**, Massapequa, NY, is a freshman at Johns Hopkins University where he will be working with a professor in epidemiology to extrapolate his YES findings to a broader population.

**Lauren Southwick**, Ossining, NY, is a freshman at Franklin and Marshall. She is interested in a career in public health, sparked by her experience at the YES Competition.

**Hannon Welch**, Croton-on-Hudson, NY, is enrolled at Sarah Lawrence College and has been working at a battered women's shelter, studying whether late introduction into group therapy for teens is effective in stopping the cycle of domestic violence.

**Jonathan Yeh**, Rowland Heights, CA, a freshman at Yale University, is majoring in biomedical engineering and plans to continue researching risk factors of cancers.

### 2006-07

**Ralph Burns**, Dallas, TX, is at Southern Methodist University. He would like a career as a practicing physician and hospital epidemiologist.

**Sarah Coleman**, Waynesboro, VA, is a sophomore at James Madison University. She is interested in a career in public health and just returned from a study abroad program in Guam investigating the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Asian Pacific Island population.

**Natania Field**, Haveford, PA, is a freshman at Columbia University pursuing a science major. Natania has stayed in touch with several of the YES Scholars.

**Jamie Forman**, Bellmore, NY, is at Haverford College and interested in possibly studying public health.

**Samantha Goldstein**, Roslyn, NY, attends Lehigh University where she is studying behavioral neuroscience. She is currently assisting a researcher with a project on diabetes.

**Mingyang Shan**, Merrick, NY, is transferring to Cornell University where she will be studying biometry and statistics. YES helped her to choose an undergraduate major related to biostatistics.

**Junzi Shi**, Rocky River, OH, is currently attending Northwestern University and is interested in a career in public health. She is leading the Northwestern Global Water Brigades program on a trip to Honduras this fall.

**William Slack**, Decatur, GA, attends Williams College. Will is studying political science and public policy.

### 2005-06

**Steven Benay**, Smithtown, NY, is majoring in biology, science, and technology at Cornell University and plans to one day become a college professor.

**Lindsay Haines**, Marietta, GA, attends Yale University where she is studying economics and history of science and medicine. She is currently working at the Humana Foundation helping to launch a health literacy program. She also hopes to continue her work in breast cancer focusing on African American women under 40.

**Matthew Russell**, Bradford, PA, is studying mathematics/physics at Taylor University. YES introduced him to statistics, and he sees himself doing stats-related work in the future.

**Nazia Saiyed**, LaGrangeville, NY, attends Cornell University. She is currently majoring in developmental sociology and global health and is interested in a career in public health.

**Michelle Stokes**, Marietta, GA, attends Agnes Scott College and has declared a biochemistry and molecular biology major. She is working in a lab using *C. elegans* to study genes involved in the Ras signaling pathway.

**Allyson White**, Springfield, IL, is attending University of Pennsylvania studying international relations and economics. She is working on a health economics research project while studying abroad in Argentina.

**Maya Wolpert**, Cleveland Heights, OH, is studying human biology, with a concentration in bioethics. Maya has been granted an internship at the National Institutes of Health, Center for Bioethics.

### 2004-05

**Keshav Arogyaswamy**, Collierville, TN, is attending University of Oklahoma and is studying zoology with a focus on biomedical sciences. He plans to have a career in medical research.

**Amy Edelstein**, East Rockaway, NY, is in a 7-year medical program at The Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at the City College of New York. This fall she will be studying clinical epidemiology and hopes to pursue research on a study to understand the pharmaceutical marketing impact and social factors affecting the health of Hispanics in NYC.

**Krista Fehlauer**, Sandy, UT, attends Westminster College studying nursing. She will be completing her clinical experience in community health this fall.

**Andrew Iliff**, Stilwell, KS, spent the summer volunteering at a hospital in Guatemala. He attends University of Missouri Kansas City where he is working on his medical degree. He also volunteers at a free clinic in downtown Kansas City for the homeless. Andrew is considering a career in medicine and epidemiology.

**Joshua Pepper**, Berkeley, CA, attends the University of California, Berkeley, majoring in environmental studies and civil and environmental engineering. He has career interests in public health.

**Stephanie Wilburn**, Shawnee, OK, did an internship at Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation as a Fleming Scholar and attends Oklahoma Baptist University majoring in biochemistry. She did not know she wanted to become a scientist until she attended the YES Competition.

### 2003-04

**Amanda Anjum**, Jamaica, NY, completed her B.A. in environmental studies, anthropology minor in forensics, and pre-med. She completed her M.S. in environmental studies in 2008. Amanda would like to work for a non-profit organization.

**Bevin Cohen**, Rockville Centre, NY, is attending Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in pursuit of her master's of public health in epidemiology.

**Kaitlin Eng**, New York, NY, graduated from Cornell University and is enrolled at New York Medical College.

**Alanna Hay**, Fort Washington, MD, graduated from Stanford University in May 2008 and is enrolled at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill pursuing a graduate degree in social work.

**Kelly Moltzen**, Harriman, NY, graduated in May 2008 from the University of Delaware. She plans to either work for the HealthCorps teaching health and nutrition in a NYC high school for a year or to enroll in graduate school at NYU to pursue a degree in international public health.

