

JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

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2018-2019 HOPKINS SOMMER SCHOLARS

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FROM THE DEAN

As I approach the anniversary of my first year as Dean, I am thrilled to welcome the School's fourteenth cohort of Sommer Scholars.

Collectively, they embody qualities of leadership, ingenuity and persistence that are integral to the work of public health. As 14 individuals from eight countries, they bring a wealth of diversity in backgrounds, interests and perspectives that will inform their unique journeys in life and enrich the Bloomberg School community.

They have already demonstrated a commitment to urgent and complex health issues through achievements that reflect the passion, curiosity and drive of public health leaders in the making.

Maia Ramarosandratana, for example, founded *Projet Jeune Leader* in Madagascar, where she was raised, to modernize sex education in the country by placing trained young adult educators in schools. Launched with seven employees, the nonprofit now works with 41 educators.

While in Ghana for an undergraduate mental health research project, Daniel Arias witnessed patients in chains at "prayer camps" for mental health treatment. The troubling experience led him to work with a global health nonprofit and cemented his goal to improve mental health care in developing settings.

Emily Cumbie-Drake's work in Georgia on the sustainable agriculture movement illuminated her interest in food system impacts on human and environmental health, and her desire to improve nutrition for people who lack access to high-quality food.

Some scholars, like Rupali Sood, come to the School having experienced some of the very challenges that they hope to address as future physicians, policymakers, lawyers and researchers. As a child, Sood watched her mother struggle financially after she was diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer. Now a medical student, Sood hopes to develop new care models for breast cancer patients that address the impacts of the disease—social, emotional, financial—more broadly.

As they begin their formal public health education, our Sommer Scholars will learn from inspiring faculty and fellow students, in the classroom and the Baltimore community. They will build peer networks and make invaluable connections that will enrich their professional and personal lives.

Above all, they will gain the essential public health tools to solve problems and translate evidence into interventions, policies and programs to protect health and save lives—*millions at a time.*

Ellen J. MacKenzie

Ellen J. MacKenzie, PhD '79, MSc '75
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor
Dean



EMILY CUMBIE-DRAKE

FROM: Atlanta, Georgia

DEGREES: BA in Anthropology,
2010, Emory University

PURSuing: MPH



Emily Cumbie-Drake grew up in Des Moines, Iowa, surrounded by family who loved cooking and eating good food. But she never thought a food-centered profession might be an option until she went to college at Emory University in Atlanta, Ga.

There, she became interested in food systems and their influence on human and environmental health. She was active in the campus’ burgeoning sustainability programs and wrote an ethnographic senior thesis on the motivations, opportunities and challenges of local organic farmers.

After college and a three-year stint as a sustainability coordinator at Emory’s Office of Sustainability Initiatives, Cumbie-Drake started a job as the farm-to-school coordinator at Georgia Organics, a leader in the state’s sustainable agriculture movement. Moving quickly through the ranks, she became the director of programs there within two years.

To achieve her dream of making healthy, sustainable food available to everyone, regardless of race, place or class, Cumbie-Drake knew that she’d need additional training. She’s looking forward to engaging with the Center for a Livable Future and gaining skills in policy, statistics and epidemiology.

“SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES OF
OUR FOOD SYSTEM **AND INTERDISCIPLINARY SOLUTIONS
REQUIRED TO SOLVE THEM ARE MISSING
IN MANY CONVERSATIONS.”**

“Food and nutrition are intricately tied to so many health outcomes, but the systemic challenges of our food system and interdisciplinary solutions required to solve them are missing in many conversations,” she says. “I see myself as being a bridge-builder in helping to make those connections.”

“IS IT MY MORAL DUTY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE

WELFARE OF ANOTHER? THE ANSWER IS YES.”

As a child of Soviet refugees, **Samuel Volkin** knew from early on that many societal inequities need urgent attention.

The summer following his freshman year at Cornell University, he worked in India to address stigmas associated with HIV in the local community. After several projects abroad and a White House internship with the Domestic Policy Council, he joined the U.S. State Department’s coordinating branch for PEPFAR. There, he played a pivotal role in developing a monitoring system of the quality of HIV services and expanding access to lifesaving treatment for HIV-infected children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Although these experiences gave him on-the-job training, Volkin says he knew that the next step would be more formalized education. Hoping to harness the expertise of the private sector for public health, he’s pursuing a combined MPH and MBA from the Bloomberg School and the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School.

But for the last two years, he’s been immersed in Judaic studies in Israel. “Judaism teaches that the first ethical question man asks in the Bible is, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ Or in other words, ‘Is it my moral duty to be responsible for the welfare of another?’ The answer is yes,” Volkin says. “I plan to combine what I’ve done in my work and what I’ll be learning at Johns Hopkins to become the best giver I can be.”



SAMUEL VOLKIN

FROM: Brooklyn, New York

DEGREES: BSc, Human
Biology and Health and
Society, 2014, Cornell
University

PURSuing: MPH/MBA



...LETTING THEM KNOW HOW TO PREVENT CONDITIONS

COULD IMPACT THEIR HEALTH BETTER THAN JUST SITTING IN THE CONSULTING ROOM AND PRESCRIBING MEDICATIONS ONE AT A TIME.”



The youngest in a family of eight children raised in one of Ghana’s most impoverished rural communities, **Banda Abdallah Abubakar Khalifa** managed to overcome multiple obstacles to becoming a physician. During his clinical rotations, he quickly realized that seeing patients individually wasn’t the most efficient way to improve the health of communities like his.

“Most of the cases I was seeing were preventable conditions,” he remembers. “It became clear that reaching out to people in communities and letting them know how to prevent conditions could impact their health better than just sitting in the consulting room and prescribing medications one at a time.”

Khalifa used this strategy after enlisting in the Ghana Armed Forces in 2015. As the leader of a Ghanaian medical team on a United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Ivory Coast, he implemented preventive measures such as hand-washing and limiting contact, which prevented any cases of communicable disease in his unit.

After establishing a preventive health program on another peacekeeping mission in Mali and returning home to lead an infantry medical center in Ghana, Khalifa says he knew that he wanted to pursue formal training to make health care more efficient and effective.

“A dual degree of MPH/MBA,” he says, “will equip me with essential leadership skills, sharpen my critical thinking ability and provide me with the health economics [education] needed to handle today’s byzantine global health challenges.”

**BANDA ABDALLAH
ABUBAKAR KHALIFA**

FROM: Abofour, Ghana

DEGREES: BS, Medical Science,
2008, University of Ghana
School of Medicine and
Dentistry; MBChB, 2012,
University of Ghana School
of Medicine and Dentistry

PURSuing: MPH/MBA

“I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT COMPREHENSIVE, QUALITY SEX EDUCATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT.”

Maia Ramarosandratana was only five when her father's work in environmental conservation took the family to Madagascar. Their move from Washington, D.C., to the small city of Fianarantsoa would ultimately guide Ramarosandratana to a future in public health.

In Madagascar she grew up attending a French school surrounded by Malagasy friends, leaving in 2009 to attend college in the U.S. In her sophomore year, Ramarosandratana had the opportunity to return to Fianarantsoa to implement a self-designed project to create a recreational space for local youth. As part of that venture, she brought in educators for a one-time discussion about sexual health.

“Having a single talk about these sensitive topics,” she remembers, “didn’t seem like the best way to really change behavior.”

That’s why Ramarosandratana started Projet Jeune Leader at the end of her senior year. This nonprofit aims to revolutionize sex education in Madagascar by placing young adults trained in sexual health in schools for the entire academic year to deliver knowledge and facilitate discussions. Founded with seven employees in 2013, the group is now 41 strong.

Ramarosandratana is hoping that getting a stronger background in statistics, epidemiology, monitoring and evaluation through her MPH will help her to shepherd Projet Jeune Leader’s future growth.

“I strongly believe that comprehensive, quality sex education is a human right,” she says. “With more training, I’m hoping to make this program even better.”



MAIA RAMAROSANDRATANA

FROM: Madagascar and
United States

DEGREES: BA in Growth and
Structure of Cities, 2013,
Haverford College

PURSuing: MPH

JAVIER GALVAN

FROM: Orange County, California

DEGREES: BA in Biology and Chemistry, 2015, San Francisco State University; Medical student, University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine, Graduation anticipated 2020

PURSuing: MPH



Javier Galvan and his single mother, brother and sister made frequent moves between cities scattered across Southern California and Mexico. Typically staying with friends or relatives, the four often crammed into a single room. By the time he finished high school, Galvan had barely passing grades and numerous run-ins with authority figures.

Hoping to improve his prospects, he enlisted in the military at 17. After excelling there, first as an auto mechanic and then a combat lifesaver—training intermediate between the basic aid every marine learns and that of a combat medic—Galvan decided to pursue medicine after his enlistment ended.

Galvan printed out the application requirements for the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) School of Medicine, using it as his guide for what courses to take in community college and then at San Francisco State University. To get hands-on experience, he also volunteered at Stanford University’s Arbor Free Clinic.

Galvan is now in a program at UCSF’s School of Medicine that provides him an extra year to earn an additional degree. He plans to use the training he receives at the Bloomberg School to eventually become a legislator to influence public health policy or to start his own hospital to provide care to underserved patients.

“The more I become a part of the health care system, the more I realize it’s not just,” he says. “Instead of being part of that same system, I want to do something about it.”

“THE MORE I BECOME A PART OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM,
IT’S NOT JUST.”
THE MORE I REALIZE

“I’M HOPING THAT MY WORK WILL BRING GREATER

PARITY BETWEEN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH...”

During **Daniel Arias’s** junior year at Yale University, a class exercise tasked students to design a research proposal to tackle a major global health problem. Interested in efforts to expand community-based mental health care, Arias focused his assignment on Ghana. From this academic exercise, a full-fledged research project began.

Traveling throughout Ghana alone on a shoestring budget, Arias performed the largest study to date on prayer camps that provide mental health care. The work was both exciting and deeply upsetting at times. He witnessed patients who—unable to receive adequate care—were occasionally restrained in chains and left without medical attention.

The experience was life-changing. When he returned to Yale, he knew that he was interested in a public health career in the mental health field.

Arias began volunteering at a peer counseling service and focused his thesis on the mental health of college students. After graduating, he joined the nonprofit Results for Development, conducting analytical research in support of health financing in low- and middle-income countries.

He’s hoping to draw on this past experience and the training he’ll receive at the Bloomberg School to help improve global mental health care, particularly in developing settings.

“I’m hoping that my work will bring greater parity between mental and physical health,” he says, “while developing care that’s more sensitive to people’s social and cultural needs.”



DANIEL ARIAS

FROM: Washington, D.C.

DEGREES: BA, 2015, History of Science, Medicine and Public Health, Yale University

PURSuing: MPH

ALLYN ROSENBERGER

FROM: Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania

DEGREES: BS, Health Policy,
2017, Georgetown
University; Law student,
Stanford Law School,
Graduation anticipated 2020

PURSuing: MPH/JD

Allyn Rosenberger grew up in Harrisburg, Pa., with everything she needed. But in the urban public schools she attended, she witnessed classmates struggling with food insecurity and how it dramatically impacted their ability to succeed.

With a mother whose law practice focuses on elder law, Rosenberger knew the power of legal tools to improve health. That's why she chose to pursue a law degree focused on public health, augmented with an MPH from the Bloomberg School.

Rosenberger got the idea while taking public health classes at Georgetown University. In a class centered on health disparities, she learned the importance of systems in promoting health far beyond the individual relationships between patients and their physicians—a lesson that prompted her to major in health policy, with a focus on food and nutrition policy.

Rosenberger just finished her first year at Stanford Law School, where her studies look broadly at health issues involving children, such as mental health in the juvenile justice system and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), in addition to food and nutrition policy. After her year at Bloomberg, she will return to law school to continue these studies.

"Oftentimes, legal and public health spaces are kept separate, even though there's so much to be gained in the public health space by applying legal tools," she says. "Having both degrees will enable me to facilitate collaboration between these two fields to allow children to thrive and reach their maximum potential."

“...LEGAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SPACES ARE KEPT SEPARATE,

EVEN THOUGH THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE GAINED IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SPACE BY APPLYING LEGAL TOOLS.”

“IT WAS VERY STRIKING THAT THE MEDICINES EXIST AND ARE AVAILABLE, YET PEOPLE ARE STILL DYING.”

“IT WAS VERY STRIKING THAT THE MEDICINES EXIST AND ARE AVAILABLE,

In **Hannah Rickman's** fifth year of medical school at the University of Cambridge, she chose to spend an elective placement in Malawi. There, she saw a range of health disparities, including deaths from fully preventable diseases and complex sociocultural barriers to individuals, especially women, accessing services.

During her next four years of clinical practice she maintained an interest in international health, fueled by a placement in infectious diseases at London's Hospital for Tropical Diseases. She then went on to complete a three-month diploma in tropical medicine in Tanzania and Uganda, followed by 16 months volunteering at a hospital in Sierra Leone.

While caring for patients with HIV in Sierra Leone, Rickman found a puzzling paradox: Medicines to treat HIV are highly effective and free in this country, yet many patients don't benefit from them, due to stigma and systems weaknesses.

“It was very striking that the medicines exist and are available, yet people are still dying,” she says. “It made me feel that, as a clinician, I didn't have all the tools to understand and tackle this problem.”

Hoping to find new ways to help these patients, Rickman is planning to pursue a career in academic global health, concentrating in epidemiology and biostatistics during her MPH training at the Bloomberg School.

“In the U.K., the life expectancy for someone with HIV is pretty much the same as someone without HIV,” she says. “I would like to be able to see that all over the world.”



HANNAH RICKMAN

FROM: Oxford, England

DEGREES: MA (Cantab), 2009, University of Cambridge; MB/BChir, 2012, University of Cambridge; DTM&H, 2016, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

PURSUING: MPH

“IF I CAN CHANGE WOMEN’S LIVES BY IMPROVING

THEIR HEALTH, I WILL HAVE MET MY GOAL.”



Most girls in Seema Subedi’s native Nepal marry young, leaving home for a life of childbearing, domestic chores and agricultural work, but her parents had different ideas. They gave their four daughters and one son the same opportunities, encouraging each to pursue higher education.

While Subedi was getting her bachelor’s degree in public health from Tribhuvan University, she saw the stark differences between her life and those of many of her contemporaries: She met women her age who had been married for years, had multiple children and were working in the fields with no control of their own finances.

Those experiences were compounded after graduation while she worked as a consultant for the government public health office. She interviewed mothers who told her that they had to continue working in the fields as their labors progressed, a delay that could lead to adverse birth outcomes.

“For them, that was their life,” Subedi says. “They didn’t know that they had other options.”

After completing a postgraduate diploma in women’s studies and beginning an MA in gender studies, Subedi decided to pursue an MPH. She’ll be starting the program this year as a Fulbright Scholar and plans to study how women’s household burdens affect their health.

“If I can change women’s lives by improving their health,” she says, “I will have met my goal.”

SEEMA SUBEDI

FROM: Pokhara, Nepal

DEGREES: BPH (Bachelor of Public Health), 2011, Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University; Postgraduate Diploma in Women’s Studies, Tribhuvan University, 2016

PURSUING: MPH

“AT THE BLOOMBERG SCHOOL, THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF THE PROGRAM WILL HELP ME BECOME A MORE

EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE FOR MY CLIENTS...”

Shamelle Richards’ family emigrated from Guyana to the U.S. when she was three years old, settling in a West-Indian enclave in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, N.Y. She spent much of her adolescence adrift, never quite feeling inspired in any educational setting despite excelling in her youth.

In her early thirties, she went back to Guyana and stayed for five years. “Going back there helped me to get focused and understand what I wanted to do and what my role was in the world,” she remembers.

Living in Guyana exponentially increased her awareness of health disparities, sparking an interest in global health. She returned to the U.S. in 2011, and ultimately enrolled in college at the University of Washington where she became particularly interested in how immigration laws affected whether migrants received access to health care. She decided to combine a law degree and an MPH to be able to help influence policy in this area.

Richards comes to the Bloomberg School having completed the first year of her JD at the University of Washington School of Law.

“Health touches so many aspects of our lives,” she says. “At the Bloomberg School, the interdisciplinary nature of the program will help me become a more effective advocate for my clients, no matter what challenges they’re facing.”

SHAMELLE RICHARDS

FROM: Georgetown, Guyana
and Brooklyn, New York

DEGREES: BA, Anthropology:
Medical Anthropology and
Global Health, 2016,
University of Washington,
Seattle; Law student,
University of Washington
School of Law, Graduation
anticipated 2021

PURSuing: MPH/JD



MICHAEL YONG

FROM: Winnipeg, Manitoba

DEGREES: BSc, Life Sciences, 2011, Queen's University; MD, 2015, University of British Columbia

PURSuing: MPH/MBA

Early in his medical training, Michael Yong, a fourth-year otolaryngology-head and neck surgery resident at the University of British Columbia, met a patient with a malignant tumor in his throat. While the surgeons were able to place a tracheostomy tube to restore his breathing, he then sat on the hospital ward for an additional week waiting for the operation that would resect his cancer—a delay that nearly caused his cancer to progress from curable to incurable, says Yong.

Having also been involved in serving a severely marginalized population in Vancouver's downtown specialist outreach clinic, Yong has further witnessed numerous examples of patients whose health problems stemmed from a lack of preventive resources, knowledge or access to care.

"In Canada, although we have a system that a lot of people think is ideal, we still have a lot of problems with timeliness of care and barriers to access," he says. "These are problems at a policy level that, as surgeons, we are uniquely positioned to help address."

"I HOPE TO BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE

WHO DRIVES CHANGE AND REALLY MAKES A DIFFERENCE."

To that end, Yong is taking two years away from his residency to pursue a dual MPH/MBA degree program at the Bloomberg School and the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School—knowledge he plans to use to spur innovations in health care policy.

"I hope to be one of the people," he says, "who drives change and really makes a difference."



“IN A WORLD WITH INCREASING ACCESS TO DATA,

I HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION TO UNDERSTAND AND INTERPRET THAT DATA FOR THE GOOD OF PUBLIC HEALTH.”

Jennifer Payne's father is a doctor, and her mother is a nurse. Even though choosing a health-related career was always a strong possibility, she says, Payne realized early on that a future in clinical care wasn't the right fit. Instead, she chose to major in human biology at Stanford University—an interdisciplinary program that includes elements of biology, behavior, sociology and culture—focusing on public health and infectious disease.

Upon graduation, Payne landed a communications and advocacy position at Global Health Strategies, an international global health consulting firm, where she worked at both the New York and New Delhi offices to raise awareness about various diseases and health interventions. Later, she gained exposure to strategic planning in a corporate setting in her next job as a project manager for Johnson & Johnson Global Public Health.

Eventually, Payne says, she realized that she wanted to be the one generating and analyzing the data to make decisions. That's why she's pursuing an MPH at the Bloomberg School, where she plans to train in epidemiology, statistics and other skills necessary to move to the next phase of her career.

“In a world with increasing access to data,” she says, “I hope to be in a position to understand and interpret that data for the good of public health.”



JENNIFER PAYNE

FROM: Seattle, Washington

DEGREES: BA, Human Biology,
2011, Stanford University

PURSuing: MPH

**RUPALI SOOD****FROM:** Las Vegas, Nevada**DEGREES:** BS, Molecular Toxicology, 2014, University of California, Berkeley; Medical student, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Graduation anticipated 2020**PURSuing:** MPH

When **Rupali Sood** was eight years old, her mother was diagnosed with late stage breast cancer. She lost her livelihood and all forms of support. “I felt helpless,” Sood says. “But these feelings served as a motivating factor for me to pursue the path I am on now.”

Sood, a medical student at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, is passionate about cancer health disparities, domestically and internationally. She hopes to pursue a career in oncology and eventually develop a comprehensive cancer care model for patients that treats the whole person—addressing emotional, financial, social and other needs—rather than just their disease.

Her experiences extend within the U.S. and beyond. Sood has studied environmental toxins that put disadvantaged populations at risk for cancer. She led a student-run nonprofit, Project RISHI, in implementing health improvement projects in India and worked at a free cancer care clinic in the Houston area. Sood has helped develop an automated blood test for more rapid detection of breast cancer in developing countries and she’s aided in a project to provide underserved, rural populations with cancer-detection radiology services in a mobile van.

“A person should never be defined by their disease,” she says. “My hope is to one day see cancer become a preventable disease.”

“A PERSON SHOULD NEVER BE DEFINED BY THEIR DISEASE.”

MY HOPE IS TO ONE DAY SEE CANCER BECOME A PREVENTABLE DISEASE.”

“IDEALLY, POLICY COULD HELP PEOPLE LEARN TO MAKE HEALTHIER DECISIONS FROM THE START,

SPARING PEOPLE THE BURDEN OF OBESITY.”

To create better opportunities for their children, Ahmed Elhussein's parents moved their family from Sudan to the U.K. when Elhussein was seven years old. With their three children, they settled first in Scotland, a racially homogeneous place where virtually no one looked like them.

The transition from his native country was challenging but Elhussein excelled academically, eventually enrolling in medical school at Oxford University.

While working at a general practice clinic one Friday, Elhussein met a patient whose lifestyle—smoking, heavy drinking, poor diet—put him at risk for multiple health issues. After the clinic doctor gave him a lecture, the patient responded lightheartedly about how difficult it was to change. On the following Monday, the doctor told Elhussein the patient had died over the weekend.

That experience was an eye-opener, Elhussein says: “There is such a stark contrast in the patients who are doing all the right things and those who aren’t getting the message, even though all the information is out there.”

Elhussein says that he hopes to eventually use the skills he learns at the Bloomberg School to influence health policy to prevent obesity. He plans to work in the Global Obesity Prevention Center to learn program modeling and simulation techniques.

“Ideally,” he says, “policy could help people learn to make healthier decisions from the start, sparing people the burden of obesity.”



AHMED ELHUSSEIN

FROM: London, England

DEGREES: BA, Biological Natural Sciences, 2015, Cambridge University; BM BCh, 2018, Oxford University

PURSuing: MPH

WHAT IS YOUR
BEST ADVICE
TO THE NEW
SOMMER
SCHOLARS?

SEEK OUT GREAT MENTORS and take advantage of the incredible resources at Hopkins to foster fruitful, longitudinal, multidisciplinary collaborations. Being a Sommer Scholar at the Bloomberg School is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Soak it all in!

DEBRAJ “RAJ” MUKHERJEE, MD, MPH '08
Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery, Oncology,
Radiation Oncology and Health Policy
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine



MAYA VENKATARAMANI, MD, MPH '15
Assistant Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN NOT ONLY FROM WORLD-CLASS FACULTY, but also from the varied experiences and viewpoints of your colleagues and the communities you hope to serve, now and in the future. It is truly a privilege to have the opportunity to interact with such a diverse group of insightful and dedicated individuals and communities, both inside and outside the School.

Public health is a team sport, and being able to listen and learn from each and every interaction you have is an essential skill. It only enriches our ability to positively impact the well-being of individuals or populations.



WHAT IS YOUR BEST ADVICE TO THE NEW SOMMER SCHOLARS?

DON'T BE TRADITIONAL IN YOUR WAY OF THINKING. Brilliant ideas are nontraditional.

AHMED HASSOON, MD, MPH '14

Research Associate, Department of Epidemiology
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

ALBERT DANSO OSEI MD MPH '18

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease

ONE OF THE BEST RESOURCES IN THIS INSTITUTION IS THE AMAZING FACULTY who are ever ready to guide you on your career trajectory.

I can never overemphasize the importance of forming long-lasting networks with faculty and classmates alike. You are surrounded by classmates who are also going to become pillars of change and global health giants in the not-too-distant future. Let your relationships with them transcend the walls of this institution. Build friendships and share experiences with these indispensable resources as you seek a career in public health. Above all, enjoy the fun and training the Sommer Scholars program offers and always bear in mind that you're being groomed to protect health and save lives—*millions at a time!*



VISIONARY LEADER

ALFRED SOMMER
MD, MHS '73

Alfred Sommer, dean of the School from 1990–2005, has made public health history throughout an unparalleled career.

His global health journey through epidemics, a cyclone and civil war yielded seminal contributions to ophthalmology, epidemiology, micronutrient research and disaster relief—contributions that earned him the 1997 Albert Lasker Clinical Medical Research Award and election to both the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine.

Sommer's work relies on sound science. His progress was guided by an open mind and a willingness to explore and embrace unanticipated findings. This philosophy, as well as a good measure of grit and fortitude, ultimately led to the realization that vitamin A deficiency dramatically increases childhood morbidity and mortality. Sommer made this unexpected discovery while reviewing his studies on childhood vision problems in Indonesia.

“Major insights usually come from unanticipated observations or thoughts, which most often bubble up at 2 in the morning,” he says. “Every so often, they provide a pearl worth pursuing.”

Based on his work, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and their partners distribute more than half a billion vitamin A supplements annually around the world, saving the eyesight and lives of hundreds of thousands of children every year.

His advice for these scholars whose award bears his name: “Think big thoughts. Worry about big issues. When an unanticipated thought or piece of data occurs, stop. Write it down. Think HARD about the implications for human health. If this might be large, whether good or bad, act! It is your moral responsibility.”

JOHNS HOPKINS SOMMER SCHOLARS

The Johns Hopkins Sommer Scholars program is designed to prepare and inspire the next generation of public health leaders.

The program provides intensive training in the context of a rich mentoring environment to embolden out-of-the-box thinking as it challenges the management and leadership skills of a highly select cohort. Sommer Scholars seeking masters’ degrees in public health are awarded full tuition and a stipend while enrolled in curricula designed to meet each individual’s unique needs and interests. When they graduate, these scholars become members of an expansive global network of advocates, researchers and scientists determined to make a difference in the health of individuals and communities.

As the world’s largest, oldest and most esteemed school of public health, the Bloomberg School attracts the very brightest and most committed. But excellent research alone will not improve health locally or globally. Dean Emeritus Alfred Sommer, MD, MHS ’73, speaks from experience when he attests that even the best data are not enough to make real and lasting change. The translation of scholarship and research into groundbreaking policies and interventions that prevent disease and save lives demands, above all, bold, evidence-based leadership.

To date, the Sommer Scholars program has graduated 294 students with sharpened skills vital to their future careers and to the future health of the world’s populations, many of which remain underserved and at risk.

Each Sommer Scholar arrives at our School with impressive experience and education. They leave with greater knowledge and enriched skills as well as the confidence to think grandly and act boldly, leading others into important public health frontiers.

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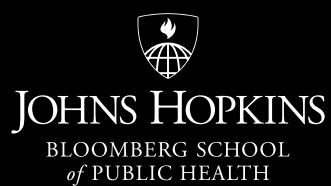
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