

FALL 2018

WHAT THREATENS YOUR WELLBEING?

Local is Global. We have all heard this phrase. Local health conditions induce a ripple effect that influences the entire globe. Wellbeing is not restrained to state or national boundaries. Therefore, the editorial team of the GHIA (Global Health in Action) newsletter has decided to continue our efforts in highlighting local health needs and successes and by doing so, contribute much needed informational resources available to our local community.

In this edition, local threats to health and prosperity are discussed utilizing a multifaceted approach. After all, integral to the nature of global studies is an ability to view issues from multiple perspectives.

Focused on the health of the entire family, local voices are captured in relation to teen dating violence, childhood trauma, and nutrition. By recognizing the importance of addressing these problems, we can make Macon a healthier community.

We hope that by sharing stories told through the narrative of our neighbors and friends, Macon's wellbeing will take center stage as a pivotal point of community engagement.

This issue also showcases stories from faculty and student trips abroad that will keep you glued to the screen!

I encourage you to read all of the pieces below, written by members of the editorial team.

- Moriah Roycroft, Editor-in-Chief

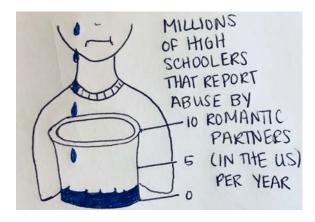
OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The GHIA newsletter is an educational outlet with the goal of shaping perspectives on health through a multidisciplinary approach to stimulate personal growth among our readers so that they may take positive action in the Mercer and Macon communities.

"HE WAS POPULAR, SO I THOUGHT IT WAS OK" TEEN DATING VIOLENCE IN MACON

Moriah Roycroft

Roughly 1.5 million high school students suffer physical abuse from a romantic partner within a single year in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Macon is not immune. Mercer is not immune.



Aleesha, a 15 year old attending a Macon public high school, bluntly stated.

"My friends definitely have some bad stuff going down in their relationships. We have this idea that being in a relationship makes you more likeable and so we put up with more than we should. I mean, we know that it's not Gucci, but we don't want to talk about [it]."

1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the US have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner. These trends don't begin spontaneously. Stephanie Heath, a local therapist for

victims of domestic and relationship abuse, emphasizes the eenage years (ages 13-18) are particularly crucial for relational development.

The severity of intimate partner violence in adulthood is exacerbated by abuse experienced in adolescence. High school students who are provided with information about healthy relationships will have the resources that they need in order to set up good habits for the future. What is being done locally to combat this?

One activist on Mercer's campus, Elliza Guta, has designed and implemented a project to change the narrative of teen dating and domestic violence in Macon. Her project, called Operation Lighthouse, is currently a semesterlong program for a group of high schoolers. There are five modules in the curriculum designed to promote trust, openness and vulnerability.

Currently, the Georgia public school system has no similar programs that address the danger of violence in relationships. it has become Elliza's goal to not only educate, but to open up dialogue about the need for such a program on a larger scale.

When asked about feedback from adults about her program she laughed,

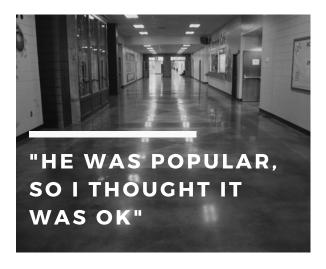
"They have been very encouraging! It surprised me just how much support I have received outside of Mercer.

Even the students have been receptive. Having peer interactions allows them to be more open in their dialogue."

The program is designed so that college students conduct the sessions, which helps combat stereotypes, she thinks. Because of the lack of a generational divide, the students can better picture themselves in the place of their mentor. Additionally, Mercer students are keenly aware of the teenage culture, having just exited that phase of lives themselves.

Perhaps the greatest finding from Elliza's project has been better understanding the overall teenage view of sexuality in Macon. While interacting with her pilot cohort, she was surprised as to the extent to which media outlets have greatly romanticized sexual relationships for teens. It has both put more pressure on having the "Instagram-ready" aesthetic for a relationship, as well increased the pressure on teens to be more adventurous in their sexual relationships. Elliza learned that she needed to address the impossible standard portrayed by the media and get real with her group.

Aleesha also drilled this point. "I hear people talking about how 'crazy' they are in bed all the time. It's definitely a thing. Like, if you aren't hardcore then everybody thinks you're lame."



Sometimes this can cause confusion for teens in terms of what is acceptable in a relationship and what is not. During vulnerable years of sexual development, it is important to have a space for dialogue with a trained peer rather than a professional.

Stephanie Health sat down swiftly in her office chair, "as much as we would like to help, teens aren't always going to feel comfortable coming to us. I just want them to to be able to talk to someone. Programs like Operation Lighthouse make a lot of sense."

Aleesha reflects on her own past relationships. After having read a list of what violence in a relationship looks like, she realized that her ex-boyfriend, star student and jock, was taking advantage of her. He head dropped and her voice softened.

He had been emotionally abusing her behind the glowing screen of the phone, and had twice physically abused her by throwing her into a wall. In Aleesha's school environment, Being in the "in-group" often means being involved in hurtful behavior. In addition to substance abuse, relationship violence is all too common.

In the state of Georgia alone, there are around 150 deaths per year related to relationship violence.

This statistic is not acceptable. Macon's teens are at high risk for experiencing abuse. We need to change the narrative.

"I want to be in a healthy relationship where we both learn to trust each other, but I just don't really know how because everyone I know treats each other bad and... it's kinda hard not to follow everybody else," Aleesha said. Abuse is not a new problem, it has just gone unaddressed and unreported for many years. For some teens, reporting abuse is social suicide. For others, not reporting the abuse has severe, and

maybe even life-threatening emotional and/or physical ramifications. By normalizing discussion on this issue, hopefully our teens will feel as though they are able to change the status quo. Teen dating violence is dangerous, and is often based out of insecurities produced in the mind of the abuser, Stephanie Health says. When family members, friends, and peers treat each other poorly, damaging behavior becomes normalized. We don't want that for the next generation.

LET'S CHANGE THE NARRATIVE.



EXPERIENCING RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE?



- The National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org)
- Crisis Line & Safe House of Central Georgia (478-745-9292)
- Jada Elliot, therapist 478-216-1885
- "Secrets and Stillettos" informational session hosted annually by Georgia Legal Services

GLOBAL-HEALTHY:

DIY FLU PREVENTING GUMMIES

Please get your flu shot! But if you want a little extra protection this winter, or are unable to get your vaccination, read below on how to make your very own gummies that are packed with vitamins to help you stay healthy!



INGREDIENTS

- -1/3 cup juice
- -6 tablespoons gelatin
- -2 tablespoons honey
- -Supplements of your choosing, more concentrated is better (we suggest
- Vitamin C powder, probiotics, and iron)
- -Sugar as desired
- 1. Verify your weight and height and check online for the recommended dose specific to you. Divide it by the number of gummies that you would like to take daily.

TIP: If you're using vitamin C powder, aim for about 1/4 teaspoon of powder per gummy. 2. Place the juice and honey in a small saucepan and sprinkle the gelatin over. Let stand 2-3 minutes.

- 3. Place pan over very low heat and heat until gelatin is completely dissolved, 5-6 minutes. The liquid should be just slightly warm to the touch.
- 4. Stir in any supplements, then pour immediately into candy molds or a shallow pan. Set aside at room temperature for 2-3 hours or place in the freezer for 10-15 minutes to gel, then remove, cut into squares if necessary, and store at room temperature for 2-3 days or in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Our lives are dynamic - and so is our health.

At GHIA, we are working to debunk the preconceived notions that many of our students come into college with, and open up our community to diverse relationships and partnerships.

We hope to further enlist the active participation of health care providers, educational institutions, and other college students in our journey. If you or anyone you knows would like to become involved, please reach out to us. Thanks!

Thank you to Samantha Max, Report for America Fellow at the Macon Telegraph and our community partner this semester!

CHOOSING TO READ IS ONLY ONE EXAMPLE OF ALEX II STUDENT'S RESILIENCE

Madeline Raine

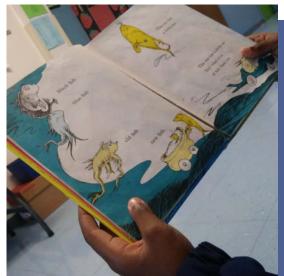
Crystal Walker, an Alex II teacher, emphasizes "as much as you can know your kids, get to know them." Over the past 22 years of her career, she has listened to her students tell stories, which they hold in their lives as books and as trauma.

While there is no universal standard of intensity for trauma because every experience is individualized, trauma, in the words of River Edge head counselor Ashley Allen, may be defined as a major event that affects someone's behavior, "particularly an event where they feel like they had some loss of control or some loss of power over their own body or over their own self." Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) occurs when all physiological responses are deemed ineffectual, when the trauma is prolonged despite "best efforts to escape it" (Hopper, 2016, pg. 4). For these reasons, Allen explains that "kids who have been exposed to trauma react in different ways than kids who haven't been exposed to trauma."

Crystal Walker's teaching practice is trauma informed because she reinforces children's positive behaviors rather than their negative behaviors. Allen explains that "giving attention to a negative behavior can encourage that behavior."

By learning as much as she can about her student's history, Walker's teaching is trauma-informed because she intuits "what makes them click, what sets them off," and tries "to avoid situations where you know it's going to make them explode, or implode, as the case may be."

If trauma is perceived as a profound lack of choice, then trauma-informed teaching grants children the choice to read. "Nothing takes the place of that one on one contact, and the joy when they've been struggling with something and they read it successfully."



Alex II teacher Crystal Walker is grateful. "I'm so appreciative to you listening to them read because they don't get that at home."

THE ONES WHO WEREN'T IN THE BEST SITUATIONS WITH THE BEST FAMILY SUPPORT, THOSE ARE THE ONES WHO YOU SIT DOWN AND WONDER ABOUT 22 YEARS LATER, YOU KNOW, 'WHERE DID YOU END UP?' THE ONES YOU DON'T GET IN TOUCH WITH ARE THE ONES YOU WONDER ABOUT THE MOST."

-CRYSTAL WALKER, ALEX II

Walker summoned a memory of a student, "who I adore, but he's very impulsive and reacts before he thinks," whose grandmother shared that he was a baby whose mother had been addicted to drugs. "It's that kind of thing that changes your mindset about the child when you know they're not just acting out," Walker explains.

They're acting out because there are still some repercussions from their birth." Walker also pondered a memory of several former students who watched "their mom taken away in a police car, several times," prior to being placed within a nurturing foster family. only to be given back to their biological mother. Walker explains that "as a teacher who knew these kids and knew the family that they had been with, it was maddening, because it was like, why are you taking them away from a family who has supported them and has made differences in their lives?"

Just like the initial impact of trauma, symptoms of PTSD are embedded in the body. At River Edge, Allen explains that "for hypertension, a common Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) technique we use would be Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), which actually works on releasing that muscle tension."

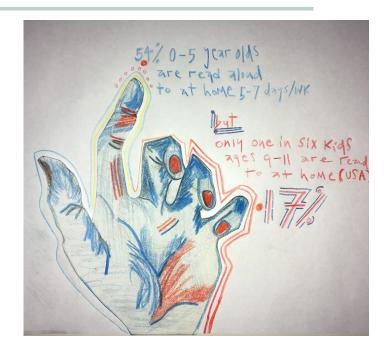
In addition to hypertension, Allen explains that at River Edge she witnesses somatic symptoms caused by anxiety. "You'll see a kid come in with an upset stomach, diarrhea, and the root cause of that could very well be anxiety," which she believes "goes a long way to de-stigmatize mental illness because depression and anxiety are mind-based illnesses, just like other body-based illnesses."

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THAT'S VERY TELLING IN WHAT
TRAUMA DOES TO THE BRAIN." ASHLEY ALLEN, RIVER EDGE

In 2018 alone, River Edge served over 3,000 kids between the ages of 5 and 18 who had experienced trauma. "I've seen the gamut of everything and anything you can imagine, from childhood physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, all the way to gang activity. I've worked with kids who have seen parents murdered in front of them, who have seen shootings, violent crime, robberies. Pretty much anything you can imagine, I've seen it."

Allen believes that part of erasing the stigma surrounding mental illness sparked by trauma is understanding that a chasm does not exist between the body and the brain. "Instead of having that dichotomy of the brain and the body, realize that the brain is an organ within the body and look at it as health instead of physical health and mental health because it's all connected."

In a similar vein, instead of creating a problematic narrative of kids who have experienced trauma as being emotionally wrecked, recognize the vast resilience that they display by choosing to navigate the world through books and human relationships just the same as any other child. Recognize that children who have experienced trauma have the power to heal both themselves and other people.



Walker shares, "It's like when you have a death in your family, you know that when you walk in that building the sadness of losing that person, as long as you're with your kids, you're going to be okay. Even when we go through trauma, the kids are there to be themselves and pick us up."

Mercer students who participate in the ARAC program partnered with Bibb County elementary schools, such as Alex II and Ingram Pye, listen to books read by kids who may have experienced trauma. Sometimes, the tutors are dealing with trauma of their own. If you have experienced trauma, or just need someone to listen to your story in a confidential context, please call 478-301-2862 and schedule a free appointment with Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) right here on Mercer's campus.

Sydnei Mayers

WHERE IN THE WORLD WERE YOU THIS SUMMER?

This past summer many members of the International and Global Studies Department visited different countries were they participated in a variety of programs. From Macon to Cape Town, IGS faculty and staff engaged in diverse mutually beneficial service-learning programs. Enjoy stories from a few of the summer trips.

R Alled A

Dr. Eimad C. Houry Cape Town, South Africa



"I traveled to Cape Town, South Africa this summer with a group of 13 Mercer students. We worked with elementary schools in the morning and coached three high schools to compete against each other in a Model United Nations, an exercise they have never heard of or done before. Our Model UN competition was a resounding success and we were able to buy 6 tablets with money we raised in order for the students to do research for future debate and Model UN competitions."

"I spent the summer interning at "MindLeaps" in Kigali, Rwanda. MindLeaps is an organization for at-risk youth which provides a 9-month dance curriculum, a good lunch meal, a tutoring program, and sponsorships for the children's school fees and materials. While there, I was able to write profiles for all 96 children, help lay the foundation for the establishment of an alumni network and build MindLeap's "Family Strengthening" program which seeks to empower the parents of MindLeap's children. I hope to help formulate a more formal partnership between MindLeaps and Mercer in the Future!"

Ryan Neil Kigali, Rwanda



Ange F. Mvilongo Mwanza, Tanzania



"The trip to Tanzania was amazing! I along with 11 other students had the amazing chance to collaborate on health curriculum with the Upendo Daima staff. Upendo Daima is an organization that houses young boys previously on the street and arms them with multiple social and academic skills for them to use in the actual world. The curriculum included modules such as HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, drugs and alcohol, yoga, future mapping, English and science lessons. The aim of the organization is to ultimately reunite the boys with their families. During our stay there, the Tanzanian Mercer on Mission team also got the opportunity to not only to explore the beautiful hills of Mwanza, but to also gaze at the amazing Lake Victoria and to of course enjoy Tanzanian dishes."

Sydnei Mayers

Brunswick, Georgia "This summer I was asked to be a summer research assistant for Professor Obidoa, I was able to do some small data-related assignments for her. I also completed a short virtual global health internship with the Institute of Child Health at the University of Benin, Nigeria for the 2018 World Breastfeeding Week events. I produced three infographic fact sheets and an interactive game on breastfeeding. I made an impact in Nigeria from the comfort of my home. This is a prime example of how you can make a difference in another country without even leaving your

own."





Hoor Qureshi South Africa



"This summer I participated in Mercer on Mission South Africa (MOMSA). This experience exposed me to some of the structural, educational, and social issues present throughout townships like Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain. Our cohort of 13 girls worked as peer tutors in 3 primary schools and facilitators of a Model United Nations simulation between 3 secondary schools. Our three-week journey gave us all a glimpse into the diverse cultures of South Africa and exposed us to many of the parallels and juxtapositions between South Africa and the U.S. Ultimately, this trip gave me real-life, hands-on experiences that applied concepts from both my global health and development courses such as the impacts on populations who suffer from cyclical poverty. This is an experience I highly recommend all IGS department students to consider!"



Darien Bishop Atlanta, Georgia

""This summer I interned at Open Hand Atlanta, a nutritional nonprofit. Open Hand differs from other food delivery services in that all of the meals are planned by registered dieticians on staff. The mission is all about using healthy food to help manage chronic disease and provide clients with simultaneous food security and immuno-benefits. Nearly 500,000 people in metro-Atlanta live in a food desert. Many of our clients fell into this category and 90% of our clients also fell below the federal poverty line. Without the aid of Open Hand, these individuals might not have access to fresh, healthy options, which could negatively impact their preexisting ailments. My responsibilities included recruiting new volunteers and training them on site. I got to spend time with the nutritional staff to learn about medicinal food and their patient assessment process.

The management staff taught me about the inner workings of a nonprofit and grant writing.

There was an emphasis on professional development as well. We workshopped my resume and

I left with contacts at the CDC.

Moriah Roycroft



"Working in Cape Town re-framed my perspective Cape Town, South Africa on what is truly important. My team (the Service Scholar group) worked alongside small business owners in several townships, teaching fundamental concepts of business, and providing one-on-one consultations and tool-building workshops for entrepreneurs. Even though racial segregation is no longer enforced by law, it is still enforced by society. Living within this context for three weeks helped me to better appreciate all that I have learned in class regarding the cyclical nature of poverty and to question its root cause. I am glad that I was able to bear witness to the promising but slow process of social evolution that is taking place in South Africa."

Christopher Turner Vietnam

"Through my opportunity with Mercer on Mission Vietnam I was able to see what I have learned from being a Global Health Major as well being able to put what I have learned into action. The socioeconomic status was very evident to see through each city we went to. This was a direct cause of the health determinants in the region. I thoroughly encourage ever person I meet to apply for the Mercer on Mission Vietnam program because it has forever changed my life. Mercer on Mission has given me the opportunity to see the world for much more than I ever have before."



"I received a Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship in May 2018 to co-develop an **Undergraduate Diploma (Associates** Degree) Curriculum in Gender and Climate Change for Egerton University, Kenya. Given the growing threat of climate change on the livelihoods of women and hence entire communities in Kenya, there is a pertinent need to develop programs and approaches aimed at reducing the gendered impact of climate change in Kenya. It will foster the intellectual engagement of homegrown ideas and approaches for responding to this issue. Due to expressed need and interest, I also went ahead and created two certificate programs in gender and climate change for the same university.

Dr. Chinekwu Obidoa Nakuru, Kenya



Dr. Lisa Vu Macon, Georgia



"The summer work on the 'Young Cultural Explorers of Macon' project seeks to increase interest in foreign languages and world cultures among children in Macon-Bibb County, GA with the goal of preparing them to become global citizens. Despite being a country with substantial influence in the world, the U.S. population suffers from comparatively low knowledge of world geography and international events. This project's presentation of foreign cultures and languages encourages personal reflection on one's own culture and how it compares to the culture of others. Macon-Bibb County schools continue to face large disparities in academic achievements and resource allocations; therefore, enrichment programs such as this one is essential for filling the gaps in students' education. Each lesson highlights cultural differences while consistently relaying back to the similarities the children share between their personal experiences and the other lifestyles studied."

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: A LOOK INTO MACONITES' EATING HABITS

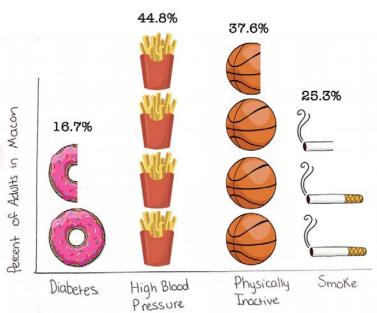
SHREYA KANUKUNTA

Although the phrase "you are what you eat" seems like a redundant catchphrase used in diet magazines, it is actually timeless advice supported by scientific evidence. Food is medicine; it has the power to prevent chronic illnesses before they even begin.

Whole foods heal and protect the body from the preservatives and chemicals found in so many of today's processed foods. Berries, for example, are loaded with antioxidants that help neutralize free radicals, molecules damaging to cells in the body, and omega 3 fatty acids found in fish help lower one's risk for heart disease. The idea of healthy eating should be simple; the more nutritious foods you eat, the healthier you are, and the less likely you are to contract a diet-related chronic disease, yet this simple formula fails to explain Macon's obesity epidemic.

According to City Health Dashboard, a staggering 40 percent of adults in Macon are obese, yet simultaneously malnourished. Alisha, for example, is a preschool teacher in Bibb County and mother of two children. She admits she is overweight and has high cholesterol, but the diagnosis does not worry her because she feels healthy. However, being overweight or obese is associated with an increased risk of certain health problems, including type two diabetes, coronary heart disease, arthritis, hypertension, and cancer.

HOW HEALTHY IS MACON?



Despite expressing her love for fruit and leafy greens, Alisha's shopping cart was filled with refined carbohydrates with poor nutritional value, such as frozen oven-ready meals, pastries, and pre-packaged snacks.

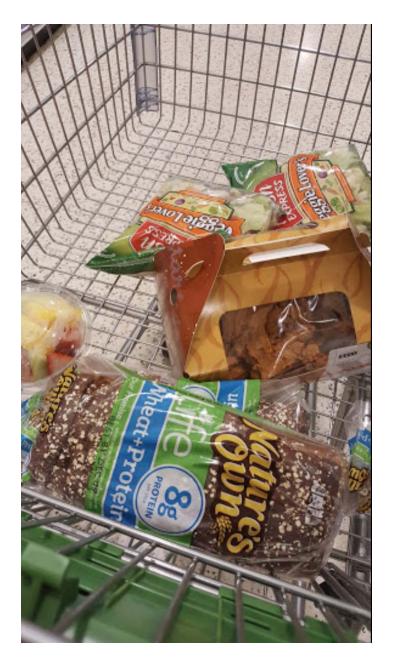
"I could be doing better, but it's cheaper and faster this way," Alisha admits, "I just put sometin' in the oven or microwave, and my kids like it more than my cooking." A typical dinner in Alisha's household is hamburger meat, mashed potatoes, frozen lasagna, and canned green beans with a glass of soda or juice.

The World Health Organization recommends adults consume five portions of fruit and vegetables, minimize refined sugar intake to less than 50 grams, and incorporate whole grains into their daily diet to prevent malnutrition. According to Alisha's description of her daily eating habits, she, like many other Americans, is consuming an excess amount of processed meats, saturated fats, sodium, and refined grains and sugar.

It does not help that 56% of the restaurants in Middle Georgia are fast-food industries.

Bryson, a manager of a local business, is a self-proclaimed fast food addict and recently diagnosed diabetic who is also obese. Breakfast for him is usually a bacon, egg, and cheese biscuit from McDonalds or Chick-Fil-A, but his recent diagnoses has made him rethink his indulgences. "Sweets are my weakness," said Bryson, "I grew up on my mother's Southern cooking. She made the best fried chicken and apple pies. Good food is in my blood."

Bryson was in the produce aisle of Kroger buying a week's worth of fruit, but his lunch earlier that Saturday was a platter of mac n' cheese, cheesy grits, and fried chicken from H & H Soul Food. "Southern food is my comfort. It got me through some of the hardest times of my life. When life gets hard, I eat, which is probably why I'm obese," laughs Bryson.



Georgie, a frequent shopper at the Fresh Market on Forsyth Road, shows a different side to Macon's eating habits. Georgia is a 26-year-old runner, vegetarian, and has no current health problems.

"I try to eat as clean as possible. My mother is a diabetic, and my father has heart disease. I grew up in Macon. I know what food culture here is like," said Georgie.

She tries to avoid dairy and excess sugar and pays attention to ingredients. "I read food labels because I want to know what I am putting inside me," said Georgie, "Seeing how my parents live now, taking lots of meds to function, motivates me to eat clean." Georgie suffered from being overweight as a child, and now as an adult focuses on clean eating on a budget.

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SIMPLE, HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

- 1. Apple slices with peanut butter
- 2. Homemade trail mix (combine equal parts of your favorite roasted nuts, seeds, and dried fruit)
- 3. Mozzarella, tomatoes, and avocado on whole grain toast
- 4. Air pop or stove-top popcorn
- 5. Deli Roll-ups (place favorite vegetables and condiments in the center of a slice of chicken or turkey and roll like a burrito)



GLOBAL HEALTH WEEK

MONDAY

IGS DEPARTMENT

PANEL HOSTED BY GH ASSOCIATION 6:00 PM-7:15 PM

STN 151

TUESDAY

ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH Q&A 1:40 PM 3:00 PM | CRUZ PLAZA

ENVIRONMENTAL
INJUSTICE SIMULATION

5:30PM - 7:00 PM | STN 251

WEDNESDAY

DISPARITIES QUICK FACTS 11 AM - 2 PM | CSC LOBBY

VACCINE AWARENESS &
MULBERRY MARKET 3:30
PM-6:00 PM | TATTNALL
PARK

SEXUAL HEALTH DOCUMENTARY 7:00 PM-8:30 PM | CSC III

THURSDAY

VACCINES QUICK FACTS 1:40 PM - 3:00 PM | CRUZ

PLAZA DISPARITIES SIMULATION 5:30 PM-7:00 PM | KNT 307



November 12-15

THE GLOBAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

The Global Health Association is a new organization here at Mercer University that aims to provide a space for IGS majors (specifically Global Health majors) to come together as a group. We hope to promote awareness about global health issues around campus and get more students involved with global health work. Our meetings are every other Monday at 4:30 in KNT 203 this semester!

For Membership Information and more details contact:

Lauren Caggiano Senior, Global Health Studies President, Global Health Association

lauren.e.caggiano@live.mercer.edu

MEET THE TEAM

2018-2019 EXECUTIVE BOARD



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Want to get involved?

Contact Moriah Roycroft at mgroycroft@gmail.com

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