

Cultural Medium

Through Masa Crítica, faculty forge new connections

Two years ago, at a graduation luncheon, professors Diana Hernández, PhD, and Manuela A. Orjuela-Grimm, MD, SCM, found themselves at the same table. Small talk revealed a string of commonalities, and the two made a date for coffee.

Later, over cups of café con leche, they hatched a plan to bring together fellow Latina and Latino faculty from throughout the Mailman School to fuel the kind of serendipity that had sparked their first meeting. “Our intention was camaraderie and sharing experience,” says Orjuela-Grimm, academic director for the Global Health Certificate in Environmental Health Sciences. “Everybody could learn from what everybody else has done.”

Today, the group they formed—known as Masa Crítica, “critical mass”—also includes participants on the faculties of Columbia’s College of Physicians & Surgeons, College of Dental Medicine, and School of Nursing.



Meeting of the Minds: Masa Crítica co-founder Manuela Orjuela-Grimm (left) teamed up with Helena Duch (right) to pen a research grant. Ana Abraido-Lanza (center) offered feedback on their proposal.

Monthly meetings, held in a seamless pastiche of English and Spanish, feature short research presentations by participants, as well as informal discussion of upcoming grant proposals, and coaching on career development challenges. Celebration of accolades guarantees plenty of laughter and camaraderie.

Unlike formal mentorship programs, which pair junior faculty with more senior colleagues who serve as coaches, Masa Crítica has evolved organically, exploiting the array of strengths and experiences each member brings. “We’re coming from different disciplines,” says Orjuela-Grimm, who notes that while she could coach Hernández on tactics that boost success on an NIH grant, Hernández reciprocated with insights into community-based research models and tips borne of her work as a social scientist. “Even if people are more junior in terms of the time they’ve been on the faculty,” says Orjuela-Grimm, “they’re coming with a different perspec-

tive that is very enlightening.”

At Hernández’s invitation, Helena Duch, PSYD, assistant professor of Population and Family Health, attended one of the group’s first meetings, and met Orjuela-Grimm. At another meeting, Duch presented an overview of her work with Mexican immigrants in Washington Heights, a population with which Orjuela-Grimm had been particularly interested in working. Subsequently, the two joined forces with Carmen Rodriguez, PhD, assistant professor of Population and Family Health and director of Columbia Head Start, and others to examine diet and cooking practices among the people with whom Duch had already been working.

“To our delight, we discovered that nearly all of us are already working with Latino communities,” says Orjuela-Grimm. “The big surprise was that we didn’t know about each other’s work. Sometimes we were working with the same communities without even knowing it!”

Better Together

In May, demographer James F. Phillips, PhD, professor of Population and Family Health, and Mary Beth Terry, PhD ’99, professor of Epidemiology, were honored as the first recipients of the Dean’s Excellence in Mentoring Award. The recognition is part of a growing effort to facilitate the relationships among junior and senior faculty that fuel early career professional development and promote retention. When junior faculty are hired, their department chairs assign each a mentor who shares their research interests. Vice

Dean for Faculty Affairs and Research Regina M. Santella, PhD, whose office oversees the formal mentorship program, furnishes an array of online tools to help the pairs set realistic goals and make the most of their relationship. “We hire fantastic researchers and teachers, but it’s increasingly difficult to get NIH funding,” she says. “It’s not an easy environment, with the pressure to bring in your salary, teach, mentor students, do research, write grants, write papers. The role of the mentor is to show that it can all be successfully managed.”

Hot off the Presses. For Mailman School faculty, the drive to create and disseminate new knowledge runs deep. This past year's publications exemplify their breadth of research interests and dedication to improving our collective future.

* **Democratic Governance and Health: Hospitals, Politics and Health Policy in New Zealand**, by Miriam J. Laugesen, PhD, assistant professor of Health Policy and Management, with Robin Gauld, PhD. This analysis traces the development of elected health boards in New Zealand—unique worldwide—from the 1930s to their present structure as District Health Boards. It covers the history of democratic governance of health care, how boards have functioned, the politics surrounding their reform, and the role of local democracy in healthcare decision-making.

* **Epidemiology of Women's Health**, edited by Ruby T. Senie, PhD, professor emerita of Clinical Epidemiology. This volume—which includes chapters by 11 Mailman School faculty members—reviews the body of literature on morbidity and mortality in the field of women's health at the beginning of the 21st century. The book covers health promotion, sexual health, sexually transmitted diseases, endocrine and autoimmune conditions, malignancies, chronic conditions, and aging.

* **Collective Trauma, Collective Healing: Promoting Community Resilience in the Aftermath of Disaster**, by Jack M. Saul, PhD, assistant professor of Clinical Population and Family Health. This guide considers the role of mental health professionals who respond to large-scale political violence or natural disasters. Saul offers a framework for practitioners to develop their own community-based, collective approach to treating trauma and providing culturally and contextually appropriate clinical services.

* **Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America's Sorted-Out Cities**, by Mindy Thompson Fullilove, MD, professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences and Clinical Psychiatry. Fullilove identifies nine tools to mend our broken cities and reconnect communities to make them whole. (FOR MORE ON FULLILOVE'S WORK, SEE P. 24)

* **SAS for Epidemiologists: Applications and Methods**, by Charles J. DiMaggio, PhD '02, MPH '93, associate professor of Clinical Epidemiology. This comprehensive text covers the use of statistical analysis system (SAS) software for epidemiology and public health research. Readers learn techniques for data entry and cleaning, categorical analysis, analysis of variance, linear regression, and more.

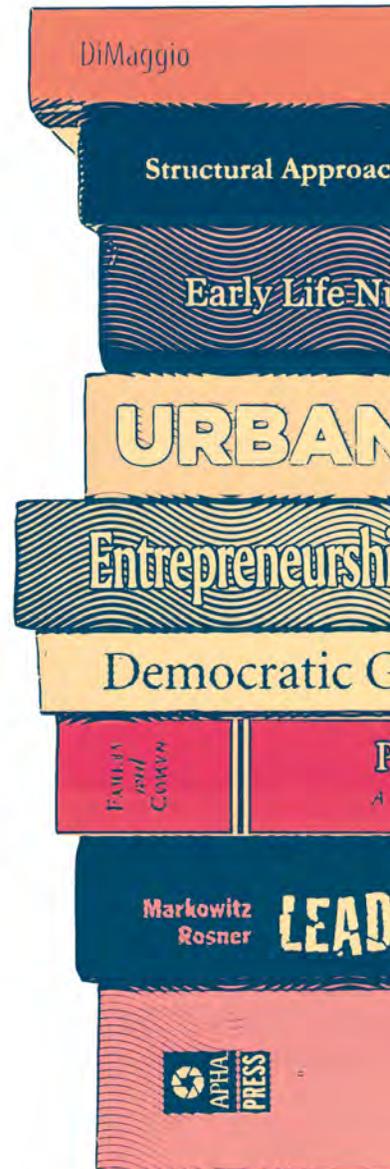
* **Entrepreneurship and Sustainability: Business Solutions for Poverty Alleviation from Around the World**, coedited by Paul W. Thurman, MBA, director of the Professional Development Program and lecturer in Health Policy and Management, with Daphne Halkias, PhD, editor of the *International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation*. This volume of case studies details locally proven, for-profit solutions to alleviate poverty.

* **The Family Guide to Mental Health Care**, by Lloyd I. Sederer, MD, adjunct professor of Epidemiology. With a foreword by actress Glenn Close, this manual offers a comprehensive resource for the millions of people with a loved one suffering from mental illness.

* **Structural Approaches in Public Health**, edited by Marni Sommer, DrPH '08, assistant professor of Sociomedical Sciences, and Richard G. Parker, PhD, professor of Sociomedical Sciences. Internationally recognized authors and case studies of innovative and influential interventions provide a holistic approach to improving population health and analyze the factors related to health and well-being that are both within and beyond an individual's control.

* **Lead Wars: The Politics of Science and the Fate of America's Children**, by David Rosner, PhD, MPH, Lauterstein Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, and Gerald E. Markowitz, PhD, adjunct professor of Sociomedical Sciences. In 1993, scientists in Baltimore launched a study of lead poisoning among predominantly poor African-American toddlers that launched accusations of unethical practice and a cascade of legal suits. Rosner and Markowitz delve into the debate and detail the history of lead poisoning over the last half-century as a prism through which to view larger questions about the practice and future of public health.

* **Early Life Nutrition, Adult Health and Development: Lessons from Changing Dietary Patterns, Famines and Experimental Studies**, coedited by Lambert H. Lumey, MD, PhD, MPH, associate professor of Clinical Epidemiology. This comprehensive overview of the mechanisms by which chronic disease in adulthood emerges from nutritional deprivation early in life integrates data from multiple fields and summarizes the long-term health and economic outcomes due to specific famines.





In Their Own Words

The Class of '13 gets to work

The Mailman School conferred 544 degrees in 2013, including 474 master's of public health, 50 master's of science, and 20 doctorates. New York City Department of Health Commissioner Thomas Farley, MD, MPH, a member of the Board of Overseers and recipient of the 2013 Dean's Distinguished Service Award, gave the commencement address, welcoming his new colleagues in their shared enterprise to promote public health. "When we save lives," he said, "we save them millions at a time." A few grads told us how they're embracing that opportunity.

I'm a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Using a population-based survey, I'm looking at how the neighborhoods where black youth live affect how they form **emotional bonds** and develop **high-risk behaviors**.

— **STEPHANIE COOK**, MPH '08, DrPH '13,
SOCIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

I am the associate vice president for Environmental Health and Safety at Columbia University. Our vision statement is that EH&S provides expert guidance and timely service to the University community through our commitment to health and safety. Employing best practices and collaboration, and by building long-term relationships, we promote a **productive and safety-conscious work environment**. EH&S is committed to establishing and maintaining a healthful and safe work environment for our faculty, staff, students, neighbors, and surrounding communities. Through the recognition, evaluation, and control of personal and environmental hazards, the University strives to **eliminate individual risk and the environmental impact of its activities**.

— **KATHLEEN CROWLEY** MPH '91, DrPH '13,
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

I direct the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center, which is one of 12 tribal epidemiology centers across the country. We provide **public health surveillance, community health assessment, capacity building, and student development** work to the American Indian population in our area, which includes all of New Mexico, southwestern Colorado, and portions of Utah and Texas.

— **KEVIN ENGLISH**, MPH '01, DrPH '13,
SOCIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

I'm a consultant for Grant Thornton, a company whose main clients are hospitals and healthcare providers. For the next two years, I'll do **revenue cycle management** with a client in Upstate New York, finding ways to shorten the amount of time it takes for claims to be paid. I will be looking at the whole process, from start to finish. Do they need health IT? Do they need more people analyzing those claims?

— **IRENE FROHLICH**, MPH '13,
HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

I'm a program associate for monitoring evaluation and research at EngenderHealth. I analyze how programs are implemented in different countries and I assess the **effectiveness of programs that provide reproductive health**, including long-acting and permanent methods of contraception, and address issues of gender-based violence.

— **LEAH JARVIS**, MPH '13,
POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH

I work in the Department of Psychiatry at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center as an assistant research biostatistician. I consult with investigators and help them with **study design, grant writing, and statistical analysis**. I also mentor research assistants in how to work with data and use basic statistics. For the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service, which provides outreach services to immigrants and low-income cancer patients I help to evaluate their programs. I'm also involved in **behavioral sciences research**, focusing on cancer prevention and the effects of cancer treatment on cognition. And I am working on a randomized controlled trial assessing a scheduled smoking cessation intervention, a study tracking sun protection behaviors over time in people with a family history of melanoma, and a study on the impact of chemotherapy on memory.

— **BECCA LOEB**, MS '13,
BIOSTATISTICS

While earning my master's degree I offered to assist Happtique, a mobile health solutions company with a role in many aspects of the industry, in order to learn more about the medical technology field. I worked with them on a limited basis while I completed my education and accepted a full-time offer after I graduated in December. At Happtique we feel that we are **at the forefront of health care** or what's going to be the new version of health care. It's a really exciting time. Working at a start-up is fantastic. One of the great things about working at a small organization is the ability to work on multiple projects. You're not trapped in a silo. You're actually working with different departments on everything from strategy to product development to implementation.

— **MARTIN MENDIOLA**, MPH '13,
HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

“I’d noticed that it’s not cool to be interested in aging. I didn’t mean to force people’s interest, but I wanted to help people in other disciplines see that their interests overlap with the field.” — ABIGAIL LOWIN, MPH ’13



ABIGAIL LOWIN — MPH ’13

School Spirit

Award honors work to transcend departmental boundaries

Longtime professor Bernard Challenor, MD, MPH, taught in each of the Mailman School’s departments during the course of his 30-year career on the faculty. Challenor, who had also worked with the World Health Organization, was known for his concerted efforts to create a sense of community for students and faculty that transcended departmental boundaries.

In May, Abigail Lowin, MPH ’13, was awarded the Bernard Challenor Spirit Prize for activities that extended Challenor’s legacy of integration among disciplines. As a student in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences, in the Aging and Public Health Track, Lowin served on the executive board of the Perspectives on Aging student group and established the Perspectives on Aging Speaker Series.

Each effort brought together participants from throughout the Mailman School and the wider University community to explore the issues facing older populations. “I’d noticed that it’s not cool to be interested in aging,” says Lowin. “I didn’t mean to force people’s interest, but I wanted to help people

in other disciplines see that their interests overlap with the field.” As a teaching assistant for Lifecourse Epidemiology—part of the social, behavioral, and structural determinants module in the core curriculum—Lowin coached first-year students from throughout the School, spurring cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration. After completing her coursework, she spent the spring semester organizing a seminar on aging with Vice Dean Melissa D. Begg, ScD, and working in the Office of Student Affairs, as an activities coordinator and advisor to student groups.

Now a student in Columbia’s School of Law, Lowin aspires to design a career that integrates her training in public health with legal credentials to serve aging patients and their physicians. “I’d like to facilitate communication among patients and providers, advocate for older people,” says Lowin. “And I’d like to help teach physicians how to talk with patients about advanced directives and end-of-life care—before it’s imperative because a patient is on their deathbed.”



MAC LEVINE — MPH ’13

Greening the Concrete Jungle

Gorman Prize winner promotes urban environmental health

In 2008, Mac Levine, MPH ’13, launched the nonprofit Concrete Safaris to promote leadership skills and civic involvement among school-age kids from East Harlem and to cultivate homegrown leaders for the urban environmental health movement. Today, the organization serves more than 1,500 students through after-school, weekend, and summer programs. Participants vote on their healthy living goals, then pursue such group activities as gardening, biking, running, swimming, and fishing.

This spring, Levine—who began her MPH studies just months after Concrete Safaris offered its first program and remains its executive director—was honored with the Mailman School’s John and Kathleen Gorman Public Health Humanitarian Award for her demonstrated excellence in and commitment to the humane care of individuals and communities, advancement of human rights, and promotion of health care and prevention. “I am proud to have been one of her professors and advisors during her time at Mailman,” says Associate Dean Robert E. Fullilove, EdD. “She is one of the most amazing students I have met in the course of 23 years at Mailman.”

Levine penned her thesis on insights

gleaned from the California Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights and applied to Concrete Safaris. She credits that study and her training at the Mailman School with furnishing the tools she’s needed to craft a long-range plan for her organization and bring it to fruition. “When I started, I had 16 kids in the program,” she says. “In the urbanism department, I learned how to implement a community-based participatory intervention, by getting the kids to make decisions and involve them in every step of the process.”

This fall, Concrete Safaris hosted Jungle Gym, a two-day community service event in Harlem’s Thomas Jefferson Park featuring a street festival and a 16-obstacle adventure race designed and built by the children, who also did much of the event marketing. Proceeds will fund year-round Concrete Safaris after-school programs.

For five years, Levine toggled between school and work—an often exhausting struggle to balance competing priorities. The effort ultimately enhanced both pursuits, Levine says. “I was able to go to class, learn theory, and go to work and practice it, then go back to the classroom.”

Connected

Q&A



Helen Edelberg has worked as a geriatrician, an academician, and a biopharmaceutical executive. In 2013, she made the leap to drug safety, the latest step in her quest to optimize healthcare options for an aging population. Edelberg, MD, MPH '02, credits every step of her trajectory to

the accumulated wisdom and insight of a vast global healthcare and policy network that's served as her personal sounding board and guide. In April, she became founding chair of the Alumni Board's Mentoring Committee, which brings together alumni of all generations with current students and staff from the Mailman School's offices of Career Services and Academic Affairs to organize a wealth of networking opportunities.

What's your goal for this program? I'm passionate about bringing people together to enrich one another's lives and help them develop professionally.

How can people participate? There's a range: informal mixers, panel discussions featuring alumni in a particular field, speed networking events—which bring together a variety of people with different backgrounds—and opportunities for one-on-one connections.

Who do you want to recruit? Anyone. Everyone. The beauty of this effort is our collaborative approach. We're involving current students, new graduates, alumni who are mid-career, those at the pinnacle of their career, and retirees with a lifetime of knowledge. This is an opportunity for people to share what they have learned out in the world with people just beginning their careers and those transitioning to something new.

To get involved: msphalum@columbia.edu

WANTED: JOB OPPS FOR MAILMAN GRADS

Post your opening with the Office of Career Services. For details: tinyurl.com/MSPHJobs



Data Driven

Owen Ryan, MPH '07

WORLDWIDE, HIV INFECTION IS ON THE DECLINE.

Yet among key populations—female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and transgender individuals—the epidemic rages. As deputy director of public policy for the nonprofit amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, Owen Ryan, MPH '07, crunches the numbers to promote evidence-based interventions to serve such vulnerable people. "A lot of our work is about how to get more services to key populations without putting people at risk," says Ryan. "We're drawing attention to populations some folks would rather we didn't pay attention to."

Much of that work happens behind the scenes, with analyses of donor funding patterns and budget allocations that reveal how governments and nonprofits combat HIV. "We're trying to build new data while also understanding what's already out there," he explains.

In 2012, Ryan coauthored an analysis in *Health Affairs* that found US government aid for HIV was allocated less to countries with epidemics among key populations than to nations with infections among the general population—even when the former had more HIV-positive people. Another analysis showed that several governments redirected funding away from men who have sex with men, despite donor funding agreements stipulating otherwise. "We find time and again that the systems built to serve those most vulnerable to HIV are often most influenced by stigma and discrimination," Ryan says. "Now we've got the data to prove it."

Previously a program officer for HIV policy and advocacy at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ryan also serves as vice chair for the board of directors of Funders Concerned about AIDS and as an alternate board member to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. He is also a global health advisor for the Global Health Corps and FSG—Social Impact Consultants.

As supervisor of amfAR's Allan Rosenfield Research Fellowship—named for the Mailman School's former dean—Ryan emulates his own mentor, Vaughn I. Rickert, PsyD, a longtime professor of clinical Population and Family Health now at Indiana University. "As I went on the job market, there was a fire hose of options coming at me," Ryan recalls. "Dr. Rickert helped me understand my skills and how they translate to the real world and showed me how to turn them into a career."

RACIAL DISPARITIES
IMPERILED NEW JERSEY
WOMEN AND THEIR
INFANTS. ILISE ZIMMERMAN,
MPH '79, INTERVENED.



Great Grad

Zimmerman honored

In June, Dean Linda P. Fried, MD, MPH, presented the Allan Rosenfield Alumni Award for Excellence to Ilise Zimmerman, MPH '79. Zimmerman is co-executive director of the Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey. The partnership coordinates maternal and child health services in eight counties, a region including 24 acute-care hospitals and accounting for more than half of the births in New Jersey each year.

Previously, as president and chief executive of one of the organizations now included in the partnership, Zimmerman established the Black Infant Mortality Reduction Resource Center to address racial disparities in perinatal outcomes. Her work led to the understanding that race is a critical factor in mortality rates and health outcomes, independent of economic factors and education levels. The finding ultimately persuaded former Governor Christine Whitman to authorize \$2 million for a statewide campaign, Black Infants Better Survival.

"Ilise's work has significantly improved the health of some of the most vulnerable communities in the state," says Fried. "Her focus on disparities in mortality among different racial groups is producing changes in outreach and care that will save many more lives across the country. Hers is a noble and important undertaking of which Dr. Rosenfield surely would have been proud."

Per Annum

Andrusco arrives

In May 2013, Arianne Andrusco joined the Office of Institutional Advancement as director of alumni affairs and annual fund. As the manager of annual giving at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, she significantly increased the annual fund and enlarged membership in donor-giving societies. She was previously associate director of annual giving at Sarah Lawrence College and assistant director of annual giving at Union College. "I'm thrilled to be working with so many amazing public health professionals at the Mailman School," says Andrusco. "Working at NewYork-Presbyterian, I saw the end results of poor health. It's great to be working now to promote public health on a global scale, before people get into crises."



Outspoken

Michael Rosanoff, MPH '08

IN FEBRUARY 2007, THE CDC RELEASED A SPECIAL REPORT on the incidence of autism spectrum disorders in the United States. For decades, experts had speculated that the disease affected just one in 1,000 children. In the meantime, its prevalence had soared to one in 150; the public, advocacy organizations, and scientists were galvanized.

At the time, Michael Rosanoff, MPH '08, was finishing his thesis on the genetic epidemiology of neurological conditions. But he'd already posted his résumé online. Soon after, the phone rang. *Would you like to develop a global autism health initiative?* asked the caller. The non-profit Autism Speaks wanted prevalence data on autism worldwide. Rosanoff was a perfect fit.

The incidence of autism has since doubled to one in 88 children in the U.S.; global awareness has soared. "As we started to support prevalence studies, we realized we were inadvertently creating a situation that placed demand on public health systems that weren't prepared," says Rosanoff, now an associate director for public health research and scientific review at Autism Speaks and staff lead for its International Autism Epidemiology Network. "These are countries worrying about drinkable water, not mental health."

In response, Rosanoff and his colleagues on the development team for the Global Autism Public Health Initiative partner with local stakeholders—parents, educators, government officials—to identify local challenges and develop strategies and services based on the latest science. "The idea was to make sure we weren't going in and saying *Here's what you need to do*," says Rosanoff, who has traveled to more than a dozen countries so far. "The partnerships are key as we identify local leadership and local resources to support the development of sustainable programs."

In 2012, Rosanoff began a doctorate of public health at the Mailman School. In April, he helped to organize a Columbia University Epidemiology Scientific Symposium co-hosted by the Department of Epidemiology and Autism Speaks, where he remains a full-time employee. "Autism has been a part of my life for 25 years," says Rosanoff, who has an adult cousin profoundly affected by the disease. "One of the most important things I've learned is that the research is only as good as the ability to share it with policymakers—and translate science into meaningful outcomes for families."

Field Report

Mailman School student bloggers run the gamut. They are entrepreneurs, patient advocates, and educators. They find patterns in data and design programs to promote healthy behavior. They clown around with kids and distribute food in low-income neighborhoods. After class, they run races and direct plays. The student blog offers glimpses into their personal and professional lives as they report from the field, the classroom, and beyond. Check them out at: columbiapublichealthstudentvoices.wordpress.com.



1 Carolyn combats HIV in Mozambique. **2** Tim tours in South Africa with U.S. Clowns Without Borders. **3** Grace shops for fresh food in the Heights. **4** Becky directs the Vagina Monologues at CUMC. **5** Mari chases work-life balance by running half-marathons. **6** Brian pursues a dual degree in social work and public health. **7** Laura promotes adolescent sexual health with Senegalese peer educators.



“My practicum was a great opportunity to apply my education. I engaged deeply with survey research and presented my findings at the NIH equivalent in France. And I’m excited that my host site has encouraged me to write an article for publication.”

Miki Duruz, MPH '14
FPHL SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENT

Over the summer, Miki Duruz, MPH '14, researched the perceptions of risk that motivate people to protect themselves against the threat of emerging tropical diseases in France. She looks to a career that enlists marketing savvy to combat public health crises both locally and globally. Thanks to the generosity of alumni who support the **Fund for Public Health Leadership**, she can afford to pursue her studies and make her dream a reality.

Each year, the Fund supports more than 20 bright, promising minds like Miki's. Visit mailman.columbia.edu/fphl or call **212-305-4797** today to lend your support. When you contribute, 100% of your gift will go directly to scholarship aid.

**BECAUSE THE
WORLD NEEDS
PUBLIC HEALTH
LEADERS,
OUR STUDENTS
NEED YOU.**