The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is shining a spotlight on the people within our membership through this new feature in the Journal. This month we are pleased to introduce you to Cheryl Parker, an environmental health specialist III who works in the Environmental Health Section of the Houston County Health Department in Warner Robins, Georgia. Her work includes:

- Serving as the standardized body art representative for the North Central Health District on the Georgia Body Art Committee Team, which is responsible for advising and consulting with other county managers on any body art issues, program policies, procedures, and activities, as well as assisting the committee team with planning and developing the new body art rules and regulations for the state.
- Being the lead environmental health specialist responsible for conducting construction plan reviews and performing quarterly in-depth routine inspections, complaint investigations, and other duties for the Body Art Program in Houston County.
- Serving as the standardized food service establishment inspection officer and being responsible for performing quarterly in-depth routine risk-based inspections and complaint investigations in food service establishments, as well as performing temporary and nonprofit temporary inspections.

Parker attended the University of South Carolina Aiken and earned a bachelor of science in biology. She earned her master of public health in environmental health from Fort Valley State University. Parker has been in the environmental health profession for 12 years.

**Why did you join NEHA and what aspects of membership have you found most valuable to your career?**

I joined NEHA to learn more on how I can perform my environmental health duties proficiently and be able to share what I learn with others. The aspects of membership I have found most valuable to my career are obtaining credentials, taking continuing education courses, and speaking with colleagues and other environmental health professionals in the NEHA online Community.

**Why did you choose the environmental health field?**

I chose the environmental health field because I love to help others by educating the public about environmental health issues. I love to perform inspections and explain to business owners, managers, and artists the importance of managerial control in their establishments to prevent contamination, foodborne illnesses, bloodborne illnesses, and unsanitary conditions in food service and body art establishments.

If you were not an environmental health professional, what other profession would you like to work in?

If I was not an environmental health professional, I would like to work in the epidemiology area. I prefer, however, being an environmental health professional.

**What is your favorite vacation spot and why?**

I do not have a favorite vacation spot but I traveled to Ghana for the first time in December 2020. This trip was my first time traveling internationally.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of?**

I recently passed the Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian credential exam. I am very proud of this major accomplishment.

**Who do you look up to and why?**

I look up to older adults because I am able to learn more about life lessons. I also look up to environmental health professionals because I am able to learn from them so I can perform my environmental health duties better and educate the public. I am always welcome to guidance and encouragement from others.

**Is there a resource that you use frequently for your work that you would recommend for other environmental health professionals?**

NEHA has a great website to help environmental health professionals in their job duties. Also, state public health websites are great. Both websites are great to help environmental health professionals.

**What was the best professional advice given to you?**

No good deed goes unpunished was a saying I was told while being in the profession. We are always performing our environmental health duties to help others. Performing our duties, however, can backfire on us because we are doing our part to educate others but some people do not want to follow the rules or regulations, which can cause more issues. We have to continue to educate and perform our duties correctly.

**Is there anything else that we did not ask that you would like to share?**

I thank Houston County Environmental Health in Warner Robins, Georgia, and the North Central Health District in Macon, Georgia, for giving me the opportunity to volunteer and become an intern before becoming a full-time employee as an environmental health specialist.

We thank Cheryl Parker for sharing with us! You can read a full version of this spotlight at www.neha.org/membership/spotlights.