

## NEHA NEWS

**NEHA Staff Profiles**

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to two NEHA staff members. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on pages 46 and 47.

**Nick Bohnenkamp**

Eager to leave Iowa in my early 20s, I roamed the West Coast for a few months, eventually landing in Colorado. After a few years working in the ski industry, I found that living in Denver both quenched my thirst for access to the outdoors as well as

provided professional opportunities for an idealist interested in environmentalism and city building. I was fortunate to be involved in building one of the first bike sharing networks in the nation in Denver. Our nonprofit bike share system became a model for dozens of cities across the U.S. I left bike sharing with a love for bikes and a love for running a successful nonprofit.

Through that work I developed the experience and skills I use daily at NEHA. As the program and operations manager of Program and Partnership Development (PPD), I am responsible for the operations of the department. The responsibilities can be both broad and deep, including supporting our project coordinator efforts to meet scope, schedule, and budget across their portfolios; developing contracts and subaward agreements; redirecting project funds as plans change; assigning project cost codes; and supporting our cooperative agreement reporting efforts throughout the year. Behind the scenes I love thinking through standard operating procedures, process improvements, and striving to achieve a state of operational excellence across PPD.

When not at my keyboard I am fully engaged in the lives of my two young daughters—reliving my own childhood through them as I see them learn to ski, swim, build, bike, play, and most of all, negotiate every little thing.

**Michèle Samarya-Timm**

When I began my career as a registered environmental health specialist in a local health department, I found there was a great depth and breadth to the profession and realized I needed additional confidence, more training, and a pathway to

upskill my competencies. I came across the *Journal of Environmental Health* and decided to become a member of NEHA. And so, my connection with NEHA was born.

After becoming a member, I noticed a promotion in the *Journal* that was looking for NEHA members who were interested in participating on a committee to review food safety curricula. Through this call for members, I identified something I could do on my own time to apply my skills and add to my professional experiences and résumé. As such, I responded to the call. The NEHA staff welcomed me to the cadre of project volunteers and actually thanked me for my efforts—something that did not happen often in my experience in local environmental health. I was hooked and asked if I could volunteer more. The answer from NEHA was a resounding yes!

Over time, I had the pleasure of volunteering with NEHA on both core and groundbreaking projects: Epi-Ready, the Food-Safe Schools Action Guide, food defense, position statements, handwashing initiatives, surface sanitization infographics, and promoting women's leadership in environmental health. I also had numerous opportunities to help coordinate and present a wide range of topics at the NEHA Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition as a section chair and technical advisor in food safety and protection, women's issues, and workforce and leadership.

My active membership with NEHA defined and amplified my career. As I continue my professional journey, it was a perfect match for me to join the NEHA staff to “practice forward” and continue to concentrate on essential and innovative environmental health topics to assist the environmental health workforce in the same manner that NEHA has always done for me.

I am excited to have joined the NEHA Washington, DC, staff as part of the PPD team, specializing in preparedness. For me, this work is personal. Environmental health is regularly facing new and reoccurring challenges, and my focus is concentrating on projects to help our profession be more nimble, more prepared, more capable, and more visible. At its core, this work is about you—the NEHA members and boots-on-the-ground environmental health workforce—and the communities we have the pleasure and privilege to serve and protect.

Keep an eye out in the *Journal* and on the NEHA social media accounts and communications for resources and opportunities in the area of preparedness, as well as in other topics of value to the profession. I am so energized to be working with NEHA in this space! I look forward to engaging and reengaging with all. 🐾

**Did You Know?**

You can now view the history of the NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition on the NEHA History Project webpage at [www.neha.org/neha-history-project](http://www.neha.org/neha-history-project). The posted AEC reports provide a rich history of the events with pressing topics, award winners, and images from our past.