

## NEHA NEWS

**Call for Nominations**

By Angelica Ledezma ([aledezma@neha.org](mailto:aledezma@neha.org))

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is governed by a board of directors who oversee the affairs of the association. There will be four board positions up for election in 2020:

- Region 1 vice-president (represents Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington; 3-year term);
- Region 5 vice-president (represents Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas; 3-year term);
- Region 7 vice-president (represents Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee; 3-year term); and
- second vice-president (national officer; 5-year term that progresses through the national offices and will serve as NEHA president in 2023–2024).

We seek diversity on the board in terms of gender and ethnicity, as well as a balance between regulatory, academia, and industry professionals. Most importantly, we want people who will help us develop a new strategic vision, have experience managing diverse organizations, and can open doors for NEHA in building relationships with industry, academia, federal and state agencies, foundations, and other associations.

Requirements to serve on the board include

- membership with NEHA (individual or life) for three consecutive years prior to assuming office on July 16, 2020;
- not simultaneously holding a voting position on the board of a NEHA affiliate;
- endorsement by at least five voting NEHA members (from members residing in the region for regional vice-president candidates and from members residing in at least three different regions for second vice-president candidates); and
- willingness to commit the time necessary to actively serve on the board.

If you are interested in serving on our board of directors, please visit [www.neha.org/about-neha/governance/elections](http://www.neha.org/about-neha/governance/elections) for information on the nomination and election process. You can also contact NEHA Immediate Past-President Vince Radke, chairman of NEHA's Nominations Committee, at [immediatepastpresident@neha.org](mailto:immediatepastpresident@neha.org). The deadline to submit a nomination is **December 2, 2019**.

**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 page 49.

**Natasha DeJarnett**

In November 2018 I was honored to join NEHA's staff as research coordinator. NEHA's commitment to research and evaluation gave way for a great opportunity for me to join an organization that I had long admired. In this role, I lead research activities, including identifying the research needs of our staff, establishing our research agenda, developing strategies to increase publishing across

our organization, and advancing our internal research culture. In addition, I lead children's environmental health activities. Professionally and personally, this endeavor fulfills my quest for advancing health equity, which is driven by protecting our most vulnerable from hazardous environmental health exposures. Lastly, I lend my expertise to our climate and health portfolio, which I deem urgently important as the environmental health workforce is an essential solution to address the greatest threat to public health we are currently facing.

It is an exciting time for research at NEHA. A partnership between NEHA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Baylor University allowed for the creation of the groundbreaking Understanding the Needs, Challenges, Opportunities, Vision, and Emerging Roles in Environmental Health (UNCOVER EH) initiative, of which the first research paper was published in the June 2019 *Journal of Environmental Health* ([www.neha.org/uncover-eh](http://www.neha.org/uncover-eh)). Results from this study demonstrate the challenges and opportunities facing the environmental health workforce. Publishing this research is a powerful method of storytelling. Telling this story is important but these results also provide our organization clear direction on the types of programs and training needed to best support the environmental health workforce. I look forward to utilizing the results from UNCOVER EH to better understand the needs and more strategically serve environmental health practitioners.

Prior to NEHA I was a policy analyst in environmental health at the American Public Health Association (APHA). I had the opportunity to manage APHA's unprecedented 2017 Year of Climate Change and Health, which raised awareness and mobilized climate and health action. My effectiveness as a policy analyst was enhanced by my sound understanding of the science that informs policy, which I attribute to my experience in academic research and graduate education. As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Louisville, I investigated the cardiovascular risks of air pollution exposures. I also completed my Master of Public Health and doctoral degree there, both concentrating in environmental health sciences. My experiences in informing environmental health policy and research are brought full circle in my role here at NEHA.

I am a board member for Citizens' Climate Education and Physicians for Social Responsibility. I also sit on the steering committees for the International Transformational Resilience Coalition and the

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Environmental Law Institute's Emerging Leaders Initiative, and am a member of the National Recreation and Park Association's Climate and Health Advisory Panel. Outside of work, I enjoy time with my family and dabble in photography and graphic design.

Since becoming a NEHA member in 2015, NEHA's members, staff, programs, and activities have inspired me and afforded me opportunities to become a stronger environmental health professional. Because of that, I am all the more grateful to serve NEHA through my position.



### Joyce Dieterly

I began working at NEHA in November 2018 when I was hired on as evaluation coordinator. My role centers around assessing and strengthening the quality and impact of NEHA's work. This past year I have conducted program evaluation on funded projects supporting hurricane preparedness, response, and recovery. After serving as a Peace Corps

volunteer in Mozambique, I discovered a passion for public health, went back to school, and received my Master of Public Health from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Though it was through on-the-job learning, I found that evaluation allowed me to work with data while telling a story about the long-lasting impacts of public and environmental health programs.

I was able to continue learning from evaluation experts during my time as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, working with national heart disease and stroke prevention programs. After about 2 years, I made the move to Denver to begin working at NEHA and have enjoyed the opportunity to discover exciting things the area has to offer, including taking my dog out on the trails that run through the city.

As I am approaching 1 year with NEHA, I am looking forward to finding ways we can continually improve, as well as work with internal and external partners to build evaluation capacity across the association. I am excited to apply my evaluation expertise to the field of environmental health and ensure that the work we are doing is beneficial, useful, and impactful. 🐾

### DiracTalk

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cesses, everything else happens organically. Relationships matter.

**Talent Type #2:** Someone who is intellectually engaged and applies themselves. Notice I didn't say smart. The world is rife with bright people who don't fully apply their talents productively or never seem to finish their work or finish on time. I believe organizations that try more things are more successful. Period. We benefit from a blend of employees who are linear thinkers and those who are more eclectic. We then figure out how to maximize the juice of both types, preferably in the same room at the same time.

**Talent Type #3:** Someone who is switched on. This characteristic is an intrinsic human quality that I can't figure out if it's inherent in the individual, a timing issue, or trickles to surface through organizational culture. This kind of person genuinely cares about members, their member experiences, and goes the extra step without being cajoled to meet that need. I was in Puerto Rico a couple weeks ago in support of our workforce efforts when a department of health employee gushed about the personal and individualized treatment



*The National Environmental Health Association staff on July 24, 2019. Photo courtesy of Santiago Ezcurra*

she received at our 2019 AEC in Nashville, Tennessee. That's what I'm talking about.

We have experienced rapid growth over the last 4 years and it is unlikely we can maintain this rate into perpetuity. This dynamic environment has introduced amazing opportunities for us to demonstrate leadership. At the same time, let's embrace the truth that there are few opportunities to achieve great things. I believe now is one of those opportunities. By hiring the wrong people, organizations

sized similar to ours tend to be like Calder Mobiles, you touch one part and the entire apparatus bounces and jiggles. This response is great if you are an infant experimenting with the effects of tactile stimulation but not so much if the machinery is firing on all cylinders, as it is for us now. 🐾

*Dave*

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