

POWER Continued from page 1

So far, according to Jeanette Johnson of the Women’s Health Project, it has been a huge success. “The women are fully committed to the training schedule,” said Johnson “and they love the discussions. Each week, they are becoming more comfortable in their role and more confident about the information they can provide to others.”

At a recent training, POWER outreach assistant Maria Hansberry shared her pride in the work she is doing. “I am the first pioneer to be a part of a movement in the community to educate, empower, and bring self-awareness to my peers,” said Hansberry. “Human services is very self-gratifying.” Arylee Ojumo said she became involved because she wants to “help the young people and the old. If they need someone to talk to, I can find someone for them and guide them.”

According to Rob Curry, Sr. Vice President for External Affairs at UHPP, “The Women’s Health Project is helping to connect women of color in Hudson with existing family planning and reproductive health services. The

benefits of POWER will impact not just the peer educators, but the entire community. The outreach assistants are gaining confidence and knowledge about affordable healthcare. The community will be provided with information on how to obtain and schedule health care appointments. UHPP is learning important information about the barriers that prevent low-income women from taking advantage of existing services—information we can use to adjust our service delivery and reduce those barriers. It is a very positive collaboration for all involved.”

The Women’s Health Project is directed by Dr. Annis Golden of the University at Albany and made possible by a grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.



POWER educator Tiffany Garriga shares outreach success with Jeanette Johnson from the Women’s Health Project

According to Golden, “We are extremely pleased to be working with this group of women from the community. In every activity they have participated in so far, they show their commitment to bringing women of Hudson together with locally available reproductive and sexual healthcare services. We are looking forward to continuing our work together in the coming months.” ●

CHOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UPPER HUDSON PLANNED PARENTHOOD
SERVING ALBANY, COLUMBIA, GREENE & RENSSELAER COUNTIES

REMEMARKS

WINTER 2011

POWER for Bliss Towers

Bliss Towers residents take up the cause of health education in their community

Four adult women who live in Bliss Towers, a subsidized housing apartment building located in Hudson, New York, are now on the front lines of an initiative to encourage low-income women of color to take positive steps toward improving their own health—and particularly their reproductive health. The women have been hired by the Women's Health Project to serve as adult peer outreach assistants. Sylvia Jones, Arylee Ojumo, Tiffany



Garriga, and Maria Hansberry (pictured left to right) call their program P.O.W.E.R. (Peer Outreach Women Educated on Reproductive Health).

The Women's Health Project is a community-based initiative of the Center for Elimination of Minority Health Disparities at the University at Albany, with Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood serving as the primary community partner. UHPP External Affairs staff have worked directly with Women's Health Project staff from the onset of the grant in 2009 and are

providing training and support to P.O.W.E.R.

The four P.O.W.E.R. outreach assistants are earning a small weekly stipend while they participate in training. The goal is to provide the participants with basic knowledge of health topics such as the importance of annual "well woman" GYN exams (including breast and cervical cancer screenings), reproductive anatomy, birth control, sexually transmitted infections and safer sex. They will learn about

outreach skills and techniques, from how to approach people in a non-intrusive way to how to handle those who may react negatively. They will also learn specifics about where women can go in the local community for affordable health care services, and options for insurance coverage.

The training program will culminate in a graduation event in December. Already, the women have begun to staff information and referral tables in the lobby of Bliss Towers on a weekly basis.

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN US!:

First Statewide Lobby Day of 2012

Monday, January 9, 2012

10 am to 3 pm

Location:
State Capital Building
Albany, NY

For more information contact Blue at 518.434.5678, ext. 133 or email blue@uhpp.org. Registration Information will be sent by email in December.

Annual Roe v. Wade Celebration

Thursday, January 19, 2012

5:30 pm to 7 pm

Location:
Fort Orange Club
Albany, NY

For more information, visit www.uhpp.org or call Amber at 518.512.9028.

Continued on page 8



President's Corner

From Patricia A. McGeown, President/CEO

CHOICE 2 REMARKS

This year has been a challenging one for those of us who support reproductive rights. There have been aggressive attacks, unfounded accusations and threats, including numerous attempts in Congress to defund Planned Parenthood and Title X, the federal family planning program. There have been efforts to prevent birth control from being available under health care reform. Congressman Cliff Stearns has opened a congressional investigation of Planned Parenthood, demanding reams of documents dating back years. And all this activity on the national level has been mirrored or exceeded in the states where similar extreme initiatives have been introduced to make abortion, birth control and sex education inaccessible.

But, amid the barrage of negativity, there is good news. In Mississippi, the state with the highest percentage of people living in poverty and the sixth

highest unemployment rate in the country, citizens might understandably be distracted by the economic realities of their lives. Faced with an aggressive and extreme effort to pass a personhood amendment declaring that a person exists at the time of fertilization, the people rallied. Mississippians for Healthy Families, a coalition of concerned individuals and organizations that included the ACLU and Planned Parenthood, made 412,699 phone calls; recruited 219 new volunteers; knocked on over 20,000 doors; and raised more than \$1.5 million. In what Gallup ranks as the most conservative state in the nation, voters of all political persuasions soundly rejected the measure!

Closer to home, here in New York, we have good news as well. Of course, we can't think back on the past year without smiling again about the victory for marriage equality. We can also feel good about the quick withdrawal of a bill to defund Planned Parenthood in the New York State Assembly. And pro-choice residents of the Capital Region, including a large contingent of young

people, filled buses to attend rallies in support of Planned Parenthood in New York City and Washington.

Locally, UHPP continues to see the demand for our services and our education programs grow. Our waiting rooms are filled, as are our schedules. We are in the pleasant position of contemplating adding hours and personnel. Our Capital Campaign is within \$115,000 of our \$1.692 million goal. All of the funds were raised in a short, two-year time frame, during a recession!

It is important to mark and celebrate our victories, both large and small. As we look toward the end of this trying year with the full knowledge that 2012 will match it in challenges, we are buoyed by the work in Mississippi and New York and the successes right here in the Capital Region. ●

Deborah Rosen Zamer

Chairperson
Board of Directors

Patricia A. McGeown

President/CEO

Blue Carreker

Editor

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518.828.4675

TROY

Hendrick Hudson Bldg.
200 Broadway, Suite 200
Troy, NY 12180
518.274.5640

www.uhpp.org





Blue's 60th Birthday Bash Benefits UHPP

Blue Carreker, Vice President for Public Affairs & Marketing, organized a 60th Birthday Bash at McGeary's Irish Pub on October 1 to benefit UHPP!

Carreker channeled her singer and guitarist alter ego Blue Wilder, and gave a high energy performance with her band Slate Hill. Folding Sky followed with a dynamic set of blues and rock. Both bands donated their performances and McGeary's provided the venue. About 30 family members, friends and fans raised \$385 for UHPP while enjoying McGeary's delicious hors d'oeuvres and dancing the night away. Carreker was particularly appreciative of Tess Collins, manager at McGeary's. "Tess was supportive from the start. Her decision to donate the food was totally unexpected but typical of her generosity. We are lucky to have those like Tess in our business community who are ready to host a benefit or spread the word to help organizations and those in need."

You can celebrate your wedding, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion while benefitting Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, too! To learn more, please contact Laura Alpert, Vice President for Development, at 518.512.9027 or LauraA@uhpp.org.

GENEROUS GIFT TO UHPP ANNUAL FUND

UHPP is happy to announce receipt of a \$25,000 gift to the UHPP Annual Fund from the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Foundation in support and recognition of the importance and impact of our agency's work.

DONOR PROFILE: Deborah Rosen Zamer

Capital Region native Deborah Rosen Zamer's passion for reproductive rights and sexual health has led her down unusual paths. The seeds of support were nurtured by her parents, Judy Laufer Rosen and The Honorable Larry Rosen, who also donate to UHPP.



WINTER 3 2011

As a volunteer teacher with the Peace Corps from 1999 to 2001, Zamer taught six high school classes in West Africa and out of 300 students, only 60 were girls. "The girls needed more information about how women get pregnant and how our bodies work," Zamer recalls. "Unfortunately, it was common for women in their region to have no say about when they got pregnant or how many babies they had."

To host a Sex Ed Day, Zamer and another Peace Corps volunteer bribed security guards to protect the girls while a local female doctor taught them about their bodies, pregnancy, sexual health and how to prevent HIV transmission.

When she returned to the United States, Zamer served as a Fellow with the Center for Women in Government and pursued a Masters of Social Work at the University at Albany School of Social Welfare. This led her to work as an analyst at the NYS Division of Budget until her first child was born.

While in graduate school, Zamer also worked for an alcohol and drug abuse recovery program at the Albany County Jail. "The women inmates had many regrets, which included having children for whom they were unable to care and worrying that their children would not be returned to them."

Zamer's husband, Dr. Joshua Zamer, who participated in a medical residency rotation at Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, encouraged Zamer to utilize the family planning services at our Albany health center. Living around the corner from the former Lark Street center gave the Zamer's a bird's eye view of the constant protests and inspired Deborah to get more involved with UHPP's mission. "I particularly enjoy my volunteer and activist work."

In 2007, Zamer was invited to join the Board of Directors and in 2011, Zamer was elected Chairperson.

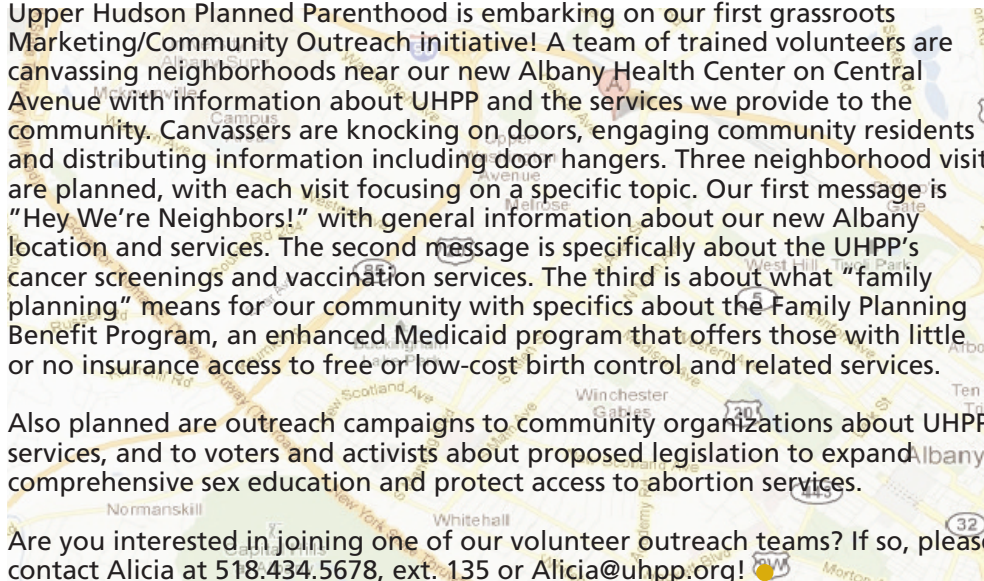
"I grew up in this community, and I feel a responsibility to give back. What better way than by serving Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, which provides such exceptional services to the Capital Region?" ●

Volunteers Utilized for Grassroots Outreach Effort

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood is embarking on our first grassroots Marketing/Community Outreach initiative! A team of trained volunteers are canvassing neighborhoods near our new Albany Health Center on Central Avenue with information about UHPP and the services we provide to the community. Canvassers are knocking on doors, engaging community residents and distributing information including door hangers. Three neighborhood visits are planned, with each visit focusing on a specific topic. Our first message is "Hey We're Neighbors!" with general information about our new Albany location and services. The second message is specifically about the UHPP's cancer screenings and vaccination services. The third is about what "family planning" means for our community with specifics about the Family Planning Benefit Program, an enhanced Medicaid program that offers those with little or no insurance access to free or low-cost birth control and related services.

Also planned are outreach campaigns to community organizations about UHPP services, and to voters and activists about proposed legislation to expand comprehensive sex education and protect access to abortion services.

Are you interested in joining one of our volunteer outreach teams? If so, please contact Alicia at 518.434.5678, ext. 135 or Alicia@uhpp.org!



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



NYS Senate Switchboard: 518.455.2800 • NYS Assembly Switchboard: 518.455.4100

CHOICE 4 REMARKS

2012 Legislative Priorities

Secure Access to Family Planning Services

In tough economic times, the ability to plan the timing of a wanted pregnancy, to prevent an unwanted pregnancy, and to access early screening and treatment for disease all become increasingly important for both individuals and families. As family planning advocates, we must work with state legislators and Governor Cuomo to ensure that all New Yorkers retain access to affordable, confidential, preventive services including birth control, GYN exams, cancer screenings, pregnancy testing and

options counseling, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

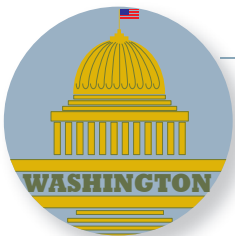
Secure Access to Abortion Services

Across America, hundreds of new state restrictions and regulations have been imposed on women who seek—and doctors who provide—abortion services. Several dramatic bans are clearly designed to challenge the right to legal abortion as determined by the U.S. Supreme Court. It is time to update our state’s laws on abortion so that, at least in New York, the decision to continue a pregnancy remains personal, private and protected.

Improve and Expand Sex Education

The United States continues to lag behind most Western nations in our provision of early, age-appropriate and

medically accurate sex education, while we lead most of these nations in rates of abortion and sexually transmitted infections. While the majority of parents in New York State recognize the importance of their own role as sex educators for their children, they also want and need the support of schools in delivering this critical aspect of life education. Yet, there is no state mandate or set of standards for the provision of comprehensive sex education. For the sake of our youth, we need to launch a coordinated effort between local schools, parents, youth, youth-serving professionals, legislators and the State Department of Education to improve and expand sex education. It is past time to provide our youth with the knowledge and information they need to make responsible decisions about sexual health. ●



Capitol Switchboard: 202.224.3121

A Congressional Hold Out

Since the opening of the 112th Congress, three of the four legislators who represent residents of the Capital Region have consistently stood up for Planned Parenthood. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and

Parenthood or to limit access to family planning and abortion services; and they have spoken out to colleagues and at public assemblies with compassion and knowledge about the importance of these services to the health and well being of their constituents.



Congressman Chris Gibson, however, remains alone among our federal representatives on these issues. He continues to vote in favor of bills that would cut off federal funding for Planned Parenthood and has asserted to the media that Planned Parenthood agencies may be misappropriating federal funds, using dollars designated for family planning services to support abortion services.

Congressman Gibson and his staff have met on several occasions with Patricia McGeown, UHPP President/CEO, as well as with key staff from other Planned

Parenthood affiliates in his district. We have also arranged meetings between Congressman Gibson and local concerned residents, students and agency representatives. He is aware that annual independent audits have shown no improper use of funds at local Planned Parenthoods and that thousands of his constituents rely on the services provided at our health centers for affordable, confidential, preventive health care.

Still, Gibson remains a holdout. We encourage all readers of *Choice Remarks* who live in the 20th Congressional district to contact Congressman Gibson and let him know how you feel about his voting record and his statements related to Planned Parenthood. We must demonstrate the power of our numbers if we are to protect these services. We also encourage you to convey to our other federal legislators your appreciation for their leadership and commitment in these areas. ●



Charles Schumer, and Congressman Paul Tonko have voted consistently against measures to defund Planned

To contact your representatives by email:
 cgibson@mail.house.gov • ptonko@mail.house.gov • senator@gillibrand.senate.gov • senator@schumer.senate.gov



Great News From Mississippi!

Hurray for the voters of Mississippi who defeated the “personhood amendment,” also known as Amendment 26. PPFA and 36 affiliates across the country lent support in the form of staff and volunteers, donations and phone banks. But the victory still belongs to the grassroots group, Mississippians for Healthy Families. This grassroots organization, formed in response to Amendment 26, included people from all walks of life—parents, teens, clergy and medical professionals. Based on recent polling, they were able to close a 31-point gap in just 10 days!

As Cecile Richards, President/CEO of PPFA stated, “Mississippi voters rejected the so-called ‘personhood’ amendment because they understood it is government gone too far, and would have allowed government to have control over personal decisions that should be left up to a woman, her family, her doctor and her faith, including keeping a woman with a life-threatening pregnancy from getting the care she needs, and criminalizing everything from abortion to common forms of birth control such as the pill and the IUD.” Colorado defeated a similar ‘personhood’ amendment by wide margins in 2008 and 2010. ●

Campus VOX Groups Fully Engaged in Education and Outreach



Laura Kocubinski, VOX member

Brittni Gulotty and Alexa Previto of the University at Albany and Nita Padavil of RPI have all done an outstanding job this fall of organizing VOX: Voices for Planned Parenthood groups on their mutual

campuses. In September, both groups participated in a PPFA National Week of Action around sex education, staffing information tables, collecting petition signatures and holding film screenings of “Let’s Talk About Sex,” a new film that contrasts approaches to sex education in the Netherlands and the United States. In October, RPI VOX conducted a Halloween “dorm storm” to distribute safer sex kits and University at Albany VOX presented a “Get Yourself Tested” workshop. Both groups organized student text campaigns to the White House in November in defense of birth control coverage without co-pays. They also held screenings of the inspiring film “No Woman, No Cry” featuring personal stories of women in Africa and Latin America and the challenges they face accessing reproductive health services. In December, campus activities are being planned around World AIDS Day. ●

UHPP Launches Discussion Groups

Over the month of November, a group of twenty women and men from the local area gathered at UHPP to hear about, and discuss, the mounting threats to reproductive health and choice. The discussion group was the inspiration of a UHPP friend and donor, Thalia Cassuto. Thalia, or “Tobby” as she is known by friends and family, worked with staff from both UHPP and the New York Civil Liberties Union, Capital Region Chapter, to develop a series of three presentations entitled “Women’s Health Care Under Attack,” “Abortion Rights Under Attack,” and “New York As a Bulwark State.” Schedule speakers included Patricia McGeown, UHPP President/CEO, Melissa Goodman, Senior Litigator and Policy Counsel for NYCLU and Tracey Brooks, President/CEO of Family Planning Advocates of NYS.

The goal of the series was to engage and inspire new local ambassadors and advocates to speak about the current threats to reproductive rights and services. As Tobby put it in her letter of invitation, “we need to know the specific strategies being employed across the country to discredit Planned Parenthood and to deny access to critical health care services so that we can tell others. We need to defend women’s health care with solid information as well as with our passion.” As this newsletter goes to press, we are half way through a well attended and exciting series. Consideration is being given to another series to be held in Columbia County in 2012. ●

UHPP VOLUNTEER MANAGER Honored by Citizen Action

Alicia Ortiz, UHPP Volunteer Manager, was recognized at Citizen Action’s 19th Annual Jim Perry Progressive Leadership Awards event. Ortiz and the organization she founded, Queer Rising, were being recognized, along with Sheila Sable of Empire State Pride Agenda and Nora Yates of the Pride Center of the Capital Region, for their contributions and leadership in the fight to win Marriage Equality in New York State.



Chelly Hegan Nominated for Non-profit CFO of the Year



Congratulations to Chelly Hegan, who was a finalist for *The Business Review’s* 2011 CFO of the Year award. Hegan was nominated in the nonprofit category and was one of four

CFO’s selected to be recognized. Currently serving as Senior Vice President for Operations, Hegan started with UHPP in 2006 as Vice President for Human Resources. ●





**Seriously Talking
About
Responsible Sex**

Community Education

CHOICE 9 REMARKS

UHPP's Education Mantra: Meet Young People "Where They Are"

Over the years, Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood has worked hard to earn its reputation as one of the principal sources of quality, professional classroom-based sex education in the Capital Region. We have also earned local and national recognition for our S.T.A.R.S. (Seriously Talking About Responsible Sex) high school peer education programs in Albany and Columbia Counties. But UHPP sex education is not just about school-based learning.

In fact, UHPP education staff and S.T.A.R.S. peer educators are all about "reaching teens where they are." This is an effective public health model which translated this year into staffing tables and street outreach teams at more than 35 fairs, forums and community events.

From Tulip Festival to African-American Family Day; from Pride

Former S.T.A.R.S Peer Educator: Nicole Dallas



Nicole Dallas was a peer educator from 2001 to 2004 in Columbia County. After graduating from Taconic Hills High School in 2004, she attended Columbia-Greene Community College and earned her degree in Human Services. While attending college, Nicole continued her involvement with the S.T.A.R.S. program as the program assistant. In 2007 Nicole was promoted to the Youth Program Facilitator position in the Hudson office. Outside of work, she helps to raise her five younger brothers and sisters and enjoys music and traveling.

Day to World AIDS and six days at the Columbia County Fair, our teen peer educators worked together with staff and volunteers to reach out and provide information to youth. In fact, this year alone, we were able to reach more than 8,000 teens in this fashion, distributing more than 5,000 condoms and an equal amount of printed materials about UHPP hours, services and centers.

"Where teens are" is also on social media sites. According to Meghan Carroll, UHPP's Director of Education, "It is important that we utilize both traditional outreach and new online methods for reaching teens. Even more than adults, teens are constantly exposed and over-exposed to media messages. We need to reach them in different ways, multiple times, to ensure they receive the information and can act upon it." The S.T.A.R.S. peer educators worked with education and marketing staff this year to reach teens through Facebook, YouTube and our own website (www.uhpp.org). The UHPP web site receives more than 3,000 hits a month from patients seeking information about UHPP's services.

Whatever methods are used, the focus is on going where teens congregate and using popular teen media to reach area youth with information about their opportunities and rights to confidential information and services. Using this model, we work first to educate about the risks and impact of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, as well as the importance of self-respect, self-esteem and respectful relationships. These education messages are then coupled with



At AIDS Walk 2011 UHPP staff, volunteers and peer educators raised awareness AND over \$400 to support HIV/AIDS resources in Columbia County.

information on available services, health center locations and directions, hours of operation, special teen services and the availability of free or low-cost services.

UHPP's Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (CAPP) has a strong commitment to ensuring teen access to reproductive health information and services, with the goal of preventing pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

For information about UHPP teen programs and services, or how you or others, including teens, can get involved, contact us at info@uhpp.org or 518.434.5678 ext. 137. ●





UHPP Capital Campaign Challenge Deadline is Extended Through December 31, 2011!

Now you can double the impact of your Capital Campaign donation through the end of the year! All donations will be matched dollar for dollar. To help us meet our goal, contact Director of Development Amber Sickles at 518.512.9028, or mail your gift in the enclosed envelope and simply mark it "Capital Campaign Challenge." ●

Annual Celebration 2011 Wows Guests

Nearly 150 guests at our Annual Celebration 2011 got a taste of real Las Vegas showmanship on Thursday, October 20 at the New York State Museum.

During the cocktail reception, "The Gentleman Thief" Apollo Robbins disguised himself as a member of Classé Catering's wait staff, scoping out guests who were good "marks." During the performance, he stole guests' watches, wallets and ties without their knowing, and made playing cards and coins disappear and reappear. Apollo's "partner in crime" Ava Do confounded guests by guessing the numbers and words in their minds.

"Having spent one of the most enjoyable evenings I can remember," Patricia McGeown, UHPP President/CEO said, "I'm satisfied to leave the performance a mystery."

This unforgettable event provided critical support to Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood's programs and services provided to more than 12,000 patients per year. Our generous sponsors were Albany Medical Center; First Niagara Bank; Bond, Schoenck & King; Doyle & Golden; Hugh Johnson Advisors; PharmPak; and Rowlands+Barranca Agency, Inc. ●

Gifts in Tribute

Giving tributes is a special way to remember or honor someone, while helping others in our community. If you would like more information about tributes, please call 518.512.9028.

In memory of Arlene Boochever

Mrs. Adelaide Muhlfelder and Mr. Thomas W. Clash

In memory of Mary Joyce Day

Ms. Regina K. Treffiletti and Mr. Timothy Carney

In memory of Teddy Siegel

Ms. Anne Horwitz and Mr. Jim Horwitz

In honor of Dr. Adele Strominger's birthday

Charles Kite, M.D. and Tara A. Lindsley, Ph.D.

This list is inclusive from August 16, 2011 to October 31, 2011. Please notify us if we have made any errors and accept our apologies.

WINTER 7 2011



Top left: Apollo Robbins and longtime UHPP supporter Mary Kahl, Ph.D. entertain the audience with sleight of hand.

Top right: Guests are surprised to display a phone number that a volunteer randomly selected from a local phone book.



Bottom left: (Left to right) Christine Pluviose, M.D., UHPP's Vice President for Patient Services enjoys the cocktail reception with Ingrid Allard, M.D., Albany Medical College's Associate Dean for Community Outreach and Medical Education.

Bottom right: (Left to right) UHPP Board Member Tara Lindsley, Ph.D., Board Chairperson Deborah Rosen Zamer, and Patricia McGeown, UHPP President/CEO, welcome guests to Annual Celebration 2011.