

Catching up with...

Kelan Stanfill

Backstory

Year Kelan Participated in PHI Program: 2009-2010

Undergraduate Degree:

BS Exercise Science, BA Spanish, minor in Latino Studies from Montana State University (2010)

Graduate Degree:

MS in Nutrition from the University of Utah (2014)

Current Occupation:

Registered Dietitian

PHI Placement & Mentor:

Gallatin County WIC, Darcy Hunter

PHI Research Project:

Help improve WIC services and outreach to the Latino population in Montana by translating WIC documents & outreach materials into Spanish

Advice to Students:

Be open to new options and volunteer in your field as much as possible. I love the field of nutrition because I could work in a hospital, work for WIC, teach college classes or work on public policy.

On when she's moving back to

Montana: *As soon as I can convince my fiancé, Phil, that it's in his best interest. He's an avid cyclist, skier, and fly fisher, so it really shouldn't be that tough.*

Healthcare Pipeline Report

Former MSU Student says MT INBRE Internship Shaped her Career Path

Reflecting on her senior year at Montana State University, Kelan Stanfill admits to feeling, “pretty lost as to what I wanted to do career-wise.” She knew that she was passionate about health, exercise, and working with underserved populations, but she was unsure how to meld all three into meaningful work after graduation.

During a fall-semester Latino Immigration course, Kelan struck up a conversation with her professor, Leah Schmalzbauer. Kelan asked the professor for advice on ways to become more involved in the Latino community in Bozeman. Professor Schmalzbauer told Kelan about INBRE program and encouraged her to apply for an undergraduate Public Health Internship (PHI).

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After applying, Kelan began an INBRE internship with Gallatin County Women, Infants & Children (WIC). A few weeks into her internship, Kelan described having an “ah-ha moment” regarding how to combine her academic interests and

passions, and she began researching masters programs in public health nutrition.

Kelan credits her INBRE public health internship for providing the direction and confidence she needed to enter the

nutrition field, as well as a strong desire to learn more. After graduation, Kelan applied for and accepted a yearlong AmeriCorps position at a community health clinic. While working at the clinic, Kelan was surprised

to find that providers frequently prescribed medications for diet-related conditions such as type-2 diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol – conditions Kelan knew could often be treated with proper diet and exercise.

“When I tried to encourage staff members to provide more nutrition education, they told me that there just wasn’t enough time and too few resources to educate patients. This moment really served as a catalyst, and it solidified for me why I wanted to become a registered dietitian.”

Kelan says she enjoys her career as a registered dietitian because she gets to provide people with the support they need to realize behavior change. “The most rewarding part of my career is convincing a client to focus on his or her overall health, rather than just the number on a scale.” ■

