Congratulations to our PNPG 2021 Award Winners

Research Grant Awards

Congratulations Lori Bechard, PhD, M.Ed., RDN for being awarded the PNPG Research Grant Award for the project *Muscle Catabolism and Its Impact on Functional Outcomes in Children Following Cardiac Surgery*. Lori and her team will identify changes in quadriceps muscle length thickness using muscle ultrasound in children undergoing complex cardiac surgery and examine the relationship to functional status. This work in characterizing changes in protein catabolism and changes in LBM will aid in the future design of intervention studies. Dr. Bechard is the clinical research manager of the Pediatric Critical Care Nutrition program at Boston Children’s Hospital. She mentors students and faculty in pediatric nutrition and has published over 45 peer-reviewed journal articles. We look forward to seeing the results of this innovative study.

Congratulations Jessica Garay, PhD, RDN, FAND, CSCS for being awarded the PNPG Research Grant Award for the project *Mitigating Effects of Nutrition on Pediatric Inflammation via DNA Methylation*. Jessica and her team will identify the nutritional effects on inflammation and oxidative stress in 4-year old children living in poverty in New York. Results of this study will help dietitians to better understand the link between diet and inflammation among young children. Dr. Garay is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at Syracuse University. She is a regular presenter at conferences and is an active leader in nutrition and dietetics. She has a successful record of grant funding for her research as well as student projects. We look forward to learning more about the relationship between diet status and DNA methylation.

Creative Nutrition Education Award

Congratulations to Megan Dougherty on receiving the Creative Nutrition Education Award for the *Formula Mixing and Human Milk Fortification Demonstration Kit*. This inventive kit provides caregivers with supplies, videos, pictures, and customized instructions on how to properly mix and store formula. This education tool facilitates administering appropriate formulas for several infants discharged on modified formulas. Megan is a clinical nutrition manager at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. She continually delivers pediatric nutrition education to her staff, students, dietitians, and other healthcare workers.
Published Research Award

Congratulations Kirstie Ducharme-Smith on receiving the PNPG Published Research Award for your paper, *Exposure to Baby-Friendly Hospital Practices and Breastfeeding Outcomes of WIC Participants in Maryland*. Kirstie Ducharme-Smith is a doctoral candidate in the Program in Human Nutrition at The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The results of this study found women participating in Women, Infants, and Children who delivered in Baby-Friend Hospitals were more likely to exclusively breastfeed. This article provides evidence to support Baby-Friendly Hospitals. Thank you for your hard work and contribution to pediatric research!

Recognized Neonatal RDN

Congratulations Laura Gollins for receiving the PNPG Recognized Neonatal RDN Award! Laura is the Clinical Program Coordinator for the Neonatal Nutrition Program at Texas Children's Hospital. Laura actively participates in research and is currently involved in several studies evaluating intestinal failure, lipid injectable emulsions, and human milk fortification. She participates in writing clinical guidelines at her institution and has created over 30 abstracts for professional conferences and has shared her work in neonatal nutrition with over 15 professional audiences. Laura unselfishly mentors others and volunteers her time to national nutrition organizations. She served as the PNPG Member Support Chair and the PNPG Infant Nutrition,Breastfeeding, and Neonatology Chair. Laura is a past member of the Academy’s House of Delegates and past Secretary of the Academy Foundation’s Board of Directors. She also volunteered as an item-writer and content expert for the Commission on Dietetic Registration. Thank you Laura for your strong contribution to neonatal nutrition!

Pre-Professional Scholarships

Congratulations to Alexis Guttilla for receiving the PNPG Pre-professional Scholarship! Alexis recently graduated from University of Michigan with a Master in Public Health in Nutritional Sciences and will be completing the Children’s Hospital Colorado Dietetic Internship Pediatric Concentration. She was involved with several different organizations for children including Sprouting Chefs and the Summer Food Service Program during COVID. She is excited to lead a fulfilling career in dietetics that supports the recovery, health, and flourishing of children and adolescents.

Congratulations to Krissi Thomopoulos for receiving the PNPG Pre-Professional Scholarship! Krissi is currently a PhD student at Drexel University where she is investigating relationships between the prefrontal cortex, food, and behavior. She exhibits a strong interest in pediatric nutrition research and currently is part of a research team for a study involving individuals with cystic fibrosis at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). She also serves as this year’s Leadership in Education and Adolescent Health (LEAH) Nutrition Fellow at CHOP. She aims to inspire others to specialize in research as well as pediatric nutrition to advance the dietetics profession overall and the specialty of pediatric nutrition.
Congratulations to Lauren Hopkin for receiving the PNPG Pre-Professional Scholarship! Lauren recently graduated from Brigham Young University and will be starting her dietetic internship at Rush University Fall 2021. Lauren’s passion for pediatric nutrition is evidenced by her work as a NICU technician and a research assistant in pediatric malnutrition. She significantly contributed to the publication of *Changes in Handgrip Strength in Children with Cystic Fibrosis Compared to Children without Cystic Fibrosis* in Clinical Nutrition ESPEN. She desires to continue working in clinical pediatrics and promoting pediatric nutrition research.