

# Fostering the Profession: RDPG Mentorship Program Begins

By Sara Wax, MS, RD, LDN and Tara LaRowe, PhD, RD, CD

The Mentorship Committee is excited to announce eight mentor/mentee pairs have been selected to participate in the Inaugural RDPG Mentorship Program. The committee's co-chairs, Sarah Wax and Tara LaRowe, selected pairs based on written application, number of mentors to match with mentees, and mentor/mentee shared interests. The pairs were notified mid-October to participate in the 6-month program from November 2017 to April 2018. Mentor and mentees were required to sign an agreement detailing method and frequency of communication and acknowledge roles mentors and mentees should follow. An article about effective mentorship was provided to read prior to their first meeting. Mentees, along with their mentor's guidance, submitted a development plan for the program identifying short and long term goals.

In January, the Mentorship Committee will work with each pair to evaluate the program and will conduct a final evaluation at the conclusion of the program in April. The mentorship committee has already received positive feedback from mentors and mentees.

Mentee Jennifer Garner stated that, "in the relatively short period of time since we were introduced, Dr. Taylor has already shared his time generously. At FNCE®, we had a chance to discuss career opportunities over coffee and his advice regarding the application process was invaluable. I'm very thankful to this program for connecting us."

The RDPG Mentorship Program hopes to have a second call for mentors and mentees in late spring or early summer 2018. In future iterations, the Mentorship Committee would like to have more participation especially from potential mentors. In the words of a long-standing RDPG member and current mentor, Dr. Christopher Taylor, "a great advantage of capitalizing on the RDPG membership for the Mentorship Program are the vast experiences and interests that coexist with the mentees and the mentors that can foster a supportive environment for professional growth. For the mentor, it provides an avenue to pay forward the mentorship, encouragement and guidance she or he has received through the DPG that has built them to the level suitable to mentor."

Be on the lookout for the next opportunity to participate in this exceptional program.



Sarah G. Wax, MS, RD, LDN, Moncrief Army Health Clinic, Chief of the Clinical Dietetics Branch. She received a BS in dietetics from Appalachian State University and earned her MS from the U.S. Military-Baylor University Graduate Program in Nutrition. She completed her dietetic internship at San Antonio Military Medical Center.

Her research interests include the influence of food insecurity on the military population, the relationship between the military environment and intuitive eating practices, and nutrition strategies to reduce musculoskeletal injuries in initial military training.



Tara LaRowe, PhD, RDN, CD completed a BS in Food and Nutrition at North Dakota State University, followed by a PhD in Nutritional Sciences and Postdoctoral Fellowship in Family Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research interests include dietary intake assessment methods, nutritional epidemiology, nutrition

and physical activity interventions to prevent obesity, sports nutrition, and nutrition policy. Tara's research highlights included leading evaluations for Wisconsin's statewide Farm-2-School programs and programs to promote physical activity and nutrition policies and practices in child care. This work was showcased at the 2012 Let's Move! Child Care Recognition awards. In 2013, she completed an ISPP program and became a RDN. Since becoming an RDN, she held positions as a Preventive Cardiology Clinical Nutritionist at the University of Wisconsin Health and Graduate Program Director in Dietetics at Mount Mary University in Milwaukee, WI. Currently, Tara is a Faculty Associate in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she instructs and coordinates the Didactic Program in Dietetics, and she also is the chair of a four-member committee for the Wisconsin Dietitians Credentialing Board.