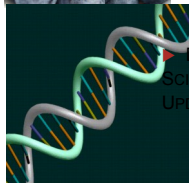




▶ CHECK OUT DNS
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PAGE 3-4



▶ DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITIONAL
SCIENCES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
UPDATE, PAGE 5-6



▶ FACULTY PROFILE:
DR. JOHN SIEVENPIPER,
PAGE 11

● DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

● UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Nutri news

Nutri-News is issued periodically and features the latest news in the Department of Nutritional Sciences.

CUPE Local 3902 Unit 1 Strike, the Union perspective...

By: Andreea Zurbau

While countless UofT students suffered through the CUPE Local 3902 Unit 1 strike this past semester, many are still unsure of the ins and outs of the events. Alex Schwartz, our department's former CUPE steward, clears up some of our most burning questions in this exclusive Nutri-News interview.

AZ: Strikes are always the last option. What events lead to this strike?

AS: About one year prior to our contracts expiring, CUPE began requesting meetings with the University of Toronto to negotiate contract renewals. A hierarchy of concerns to be addressed in the forthcoming contracts was created from a survey of CUPE members. UofT, however, was persistently deferring scheduling meetings and refusing to negotiate. The university was not interested in negotiating in good faith, and so a strike became inevitable to bring forward the concerns of CUPE members.

AZ: What were the key drivers of the CUPE strike?

AS: The primary motive was to increase minimum stipends. Our current stipends place us below the poverty line and make it extremely challenging to live in this city. But we were also fighting for the right to promote increased stipends for all students, as not every graduate student is a CUPE member.

AZ: There were many messages from the CUPE representatives and the UofT President's office. How did you feel about the communication to students and the public from each side?

AS: When a strike starts, things get very hectic. At the beginning, CUPE communications could have been enhanced but I think overall we kept our members and the students promptly updated on our position as the strike proceeded. I've learned a lot about the University of Toronto administration and their efforts to maintain a positive and respected public image. It was disappointing to see the means to which they went to pertain their name and pin these events solely on CUPE members, who are also students and instructors at the University. UofT largely focused on our current TA wages but avoided mention of our limited positions and hours. Graduate students are struggling through their degrees; I expected our university to be more supportive of us.

AZ: The UofT CUPE strike and YorkU CUPE strike were in parallel in the news. How were these two linked?

AS: They started to strike a couple of days later but they were very supportive of us. Their last work stoppage was insane which helped placed them in a much better position in terms of negotiating this time. Their strike was a little bit longer but in the end

The Strike Explained (continued)...

they went to the negotiating table. Their university was trying to negotiate in good faith; it wasn't like UofT at all. I think the difference is that at York they have a lot more faculty support, which may be because the university is less *in pockets* than UofT and faculty may be more socially conscious as YorkU focuses on poly-sci while UofT focuses on sciences.

AZ: What was the final result of the strike?

AS: That is still to be determined. We had a vote to decide whether we should go to arbitration, with the majority voting to proceed to arbitration and end the strike. They are meant to go to arbitration in May.

AZ: What do you expect the results to be?

AS: I don't even know. The end of the strike was childish. The university agreed to a bunch of things but they just didn't want to put it on paper. The fact that they verbally agreed to things, indicates to me that any arbitrator should be able to say "You guys agreed to this so now we're putting it on paper" end of story. But whether it plays out like that I am not sure. I am pretty disenfranchised with how the entire process is and everything that has been happening.

AZ: You informed the department that you have stepped down from the steward position. Why did you decide to step down?

AS: I stepped down as steward immediately after the strike. The big thing that really bothered me was that key members from the department crossed the picket line. People just didn't care. Maybe it was a failure on my part as a steward to hash out the information. Or maybe it was because of the nature of our funding compared to other departments that are even less fortunate. Until we have it bad enough, I don't think that we deserve representation by our department. I was happy that most students did engage in work stoppage but the general attitude was that people did not care. I just thought why am I doing this?



Photo Credit: MALLIKA MAKKAR/THE VARSITY

ACHIEVEMENTS

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Kotsopoulos J, Shafrir AL, Rice M, Hankinson SE, Eliassen AH, Tworoger SS, Narod SA. The relationship between bilateral oophorectomy and plasma hormone levels in postmenopausal women. *Horm Cancer*. 2015 Feb;6(1):54-63. doi: 10.1007/s12672-014-0209-7. Epub 2014 Dec 19.

Nikitina D, Llacuachqui M, Sepkovic D, Bradlow HL, Narod SA, **Kotsopoulos J**. The effect of oral 3,3'-diindolylmethane supplementation on the 2:16 α -OHE ratio in BRCA1 mutation carriers. *Fam Cancer*. 2015 Jan 23. [Epub ahead of print]

Pettapiece-Phillips R, Narod SA, **Kotsopoulos J**. The role of body size and physical activity on the risk of breast cancer in BRCA mutation carriers. *Cancer Causes Control*. 2015 Mar;26(3):333-44. doi: 10.1007/s10552-014-0521-0. Epub 2015 Jan 13.

Sagaidak S, **Wen B**, Taibi A, **Villa C**, **Comelli E**. Development and Application of a Novel Real-Time PCR Assay for *Citrobacter rodentium* Quantification *FASEB J* April 2015 29:757.5

Scourboutakos MJ, **Semnani-Azad Z**, **L'Abbe MR**. Added sugars in kids' meals from chain restaurants. *Preventive Medicine Reports*. 2014 Dec 1. [Epub ahead of print]

Smolin LA, Grosvenor MB, **Gurfinkel D**. *Nutrition: Science and Applications*. Second Canadian Edition. Mississauga, Ontario: John Wiley and Sons, Canada, Ltd. 2015.

Villa C, Chen J, **Wen B**, Taibi A, Ward W, **Comelli E**. Improvement of Metabolic Parameters in Mice Supplemented with Vitamin D throughout Life *FASEB J* April 2015 29:274.1

Wen B, Chen J, Taibi A, **Comelli E**. *Citrobacter rodentium* Infection Alters Murine Colonic microRNA Signature *FASEB J* April 2015 29:252.3

AWARDS

Professor Debbie O'Connor was the 2015 recipient of the Khursheed Jeejeebhoy Award for Best Application of Clinical Nutrition Research Findings to Clinical Practice

Dr. Debbie Gurfinkel was the recipient of the 2015 Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in Life Sciences Award
CIHR Master's Scholarships were awarded to **Sara DiLauro**, **Andree-Anne Farfad St. Germain**, **Robin Glicksman**, and **Sheida Noorhosseini**

DNS Alumni Travel Awards were received by **Effie Vigouliouk**, **Bijun Wen**, and **Joseph Jamnik**

Teri Emrich was the recipient of the Canadian Nutrition Society PhD Dissertation Award

Sheida Noorhosseini won the Canadian Nutrition Society George Beaton Award

Marie-Eve Labonte was awarded a CIHR Postdoctoral Fellowship

Mavra Ahmed received a CIHR travel award to attend the Canadian Student Health Research Forum

EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY—Boston

A large number of DNS students, staff, and alumni presented their research at the *Experimental Biology* conference held in Boston from March 28th to April 1st including:

Mavra Ahmed

Jodi Bernstein

Laura Chiavaroli

Vivian Choo

Andree-Anne Fafard St-Germain

Joseph Jamnik

Viranda Jayalath

Arash Mirrahimi

Chelsea Murray

Daiva Nielsen

Stephanie Nishi

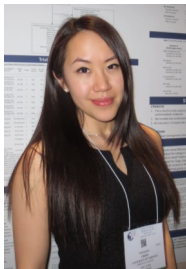
Sofia Sagaidak

Mary Scourboutakos

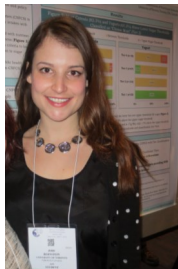
Effie Vigiliouk

Christopher Villa

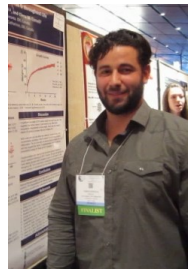
Several DNS students took home top honours in various ASN competitions...



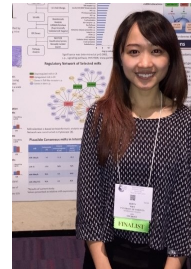
Vivian Choo (Sievenpiper Lab) won first place in the ASN Emerging Leaders in Nutritional Science Poster Competition in addition to winning the Student Interest Group 3 Minute



Jodi Bernstein (L'Abbe Lab) was a finalist in the Emerging Leaders Competition and won the PhD award from the Nutrition Translation Research Interest Section



Christopher Villi (Comelli Lab) won third place in the Emerging Leaders in Nutritional Science Competition



Bijun Wen (Comelli Lab) won third place and received a travel award in the Emerging Leaders in Nutritional Science Competition

Check out the ASN Video Blog to see...

You Tube

Vivian, Jodi and Chris describe their research (<http://bit.ly/1PIbfcN> and <http://bit.ly/1J02y7Y>) . Dr. Sievenpiper describing his favourite scientist (<http://bit.ly/1dtGKpV>) and Dr. L'Abbé giving advice to young graduate students (<http://bit.ly/1FMz10z>).



Left: Dr. Sievenpiper, Dr. A. Jenkins, Dr. Vuksan and Dr. L'Abbe at EB!



Right: The L'Abbé Lab having a good time at the ASN Mixer

DNS Alumni Association Events

2014 DNS Mentorship Program Holiday Party

By: Joanne Brathwaite

DNSAA Mentors and Mentees celebrated the holiday season at our second annual Mentorship Holiday Party and Dinner on December 3rd, 2014. Throughout the academic year, Alumni Mentors and Student Mentees meet to discuss academic, career and life topics on a one-on-one basis. With so many different alumni, students and experiences, the Holiday Party lets us meet, mix and mingle with someone different at every delicious course! Held in the Hart House Music Room, this year's event featured props for our own photo booth - the DNS really know how to have a good time! The Mentorship Program would not be so successful without our dedicated alumni mentors. If you would like to learn more about becoming a mentor, please contact Morgan Tilly at morgan.tilley@utoronto.ca.



2015 DNSAA Career Panel Night

By: Fiona Wallace

On February 4th 2015, the Department of Nutritional Sciences Alumni Association hosted an alumni driven career panel for DNS graduate and undergraduate students. This is the fifth year now that this event has been running and there was a record turnout for this years speakers: **Dr Alfred Aziz** (Food Directorate, Health Canada); **Cristina Cuda** (Regulatory and Scientific Affairs, Nestlé Canada); and **Professor Valarie Tarasuk** (Nutritional Sciences, UofT). All of the speakers shared information and insights about careers in their respective institutions, how they got to where they are now, and provided sage words of advice to students about where their degree might take them and how to go about approaching that first job. The Alumni Association would like to thank each of the speakers for donating their time and energy to this event, which is one of the key milestones in the DNS Mentorship program. The speakers and students mingled afterwards at a reception in the Fitzgerald building so that the conversations could continue and more networking could be done.

Thank you to our sponsor, **Manulife Financial**, for helping to make this event possible!

DNS Alumni Association Events



DNS Young Alumni Cooking Class

By: Kathryn Hopperton

Twenty-five young alumni gathered for the second ever **DNSAA Young Alumni Event**, which took place at the Loblaws at Maple Leaf Gardens on Tuesday April 21st 2015. The event began with a cooking lesson, during which a professional chef taught attendees to make horseradish glazed rainbow trout with a mushroom orzotto – delicious! At the end of the lesson, **Samara Foisey**, the Senior Manager- Dietitian of Product Development at Loblaws, gave a lecture about her career at Loblaws and told alumni about some of the knowledge translation activities that take place in the store. The event brought out many new faces, and many attendees enjoyed becoming reacquainted with some of their former classmates. DNS Young Alumni have gone on to a wide variety of careers; with some using their degrees as stepping stones to professional schools, such as medicine, dentistry or pharmacy, while others applied their degrees to jobs in fields such as regulatory affairs in the food industry, or promoting healthy living in elementary schools. Graduates of the DNS are truly inspiring young people, and the DNSAA looks forward to fostering its young alumni community through many more events in the future!

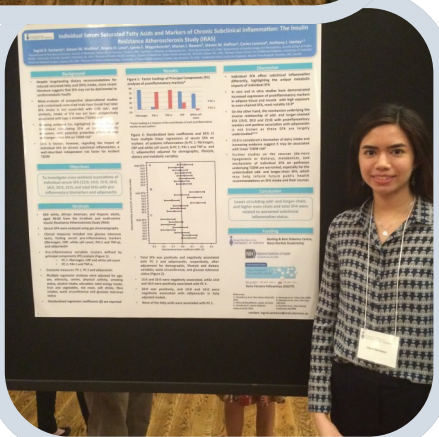
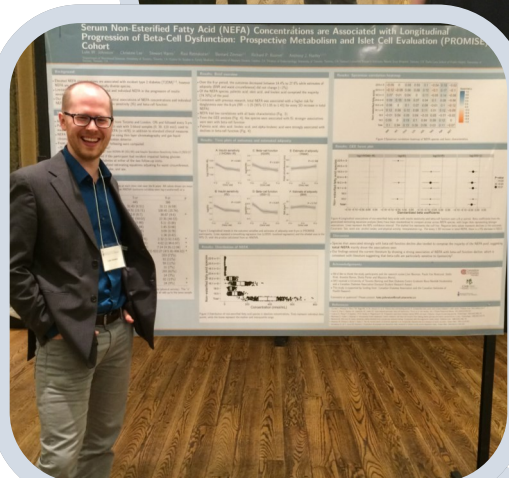
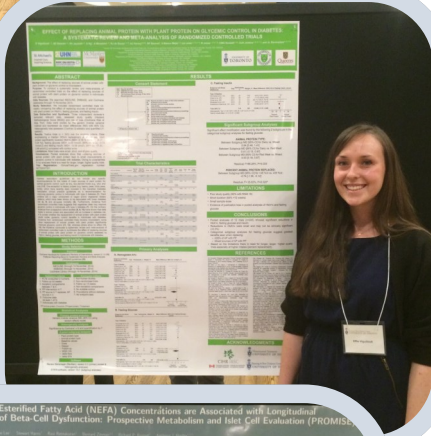


Recent Events

Banting and Best Diabetes Centre 26th Annual Scientific Day

On Friday, May 8th, 2015 DNS students attended the 26th Annual Scientific Day at the Old Mill Inn. The event is held for BBDC members and trainees to “*exchange scientific information and ideas, and to assist in the development of collaborative diabetes-related research activities*”.

The key note speaker at the event was **Dr. Domenico Accili**, Professor of Medicine at Columbia University and Director at Columbia Diabetes Research Centre. Other guest speakers also included: **Drs. Kim Connelly, Margaret Hahn, Roger McIntyre, Xavier Revelo, and Michael Wheeler** from the University of Toronto.



In and Around DNS

A Reflection on the DNS Journal Club

By: Rodney Au-Yeung

As a first year Master's student, it is safe to say that reading literature is an occupational requirement. Considering the numerous hours buried in paper or—for the environmentally aware—electronic articles, joining the Journal Club has provided a refreshing take on a mundane activity.

Founded by **Mary Scourboutakos** and **Kathryn Hopperton**, the Journal Club is open to all nutritional sciences students. The club meets every second week before the departmental seminar and also runs during the summer to discuss interesting literature in a relaxed atmosphere. This includes all literature relevant to nutrition and is not restricted to journal articles.

Given the research diversity within the department, it was not surprising to read about a wide breadth of research topics. Over the past four months, we have peeked into the sodium controversy, the environmental impacts of dietary patterns, the rise and fall of nutrition as a science, and many other topics. For me, this is an interesting and healthy introduction to nutrition research as a whole. This allowed me to diverge from the usual literature and explore other outlets of interest that would have been unknown to me.

However, the most enjoyable aspect of Journal Club is the discussion. After a quick summary of the articles, the person who proposed the day's topic facilitates discussion. The atmosphere is always warm and inviting, and contributions are voluntary. With graduate student's backgrounds ranging from basic sciences to public health, it has been very rewarding to learn from my colleagues' knowledge and experiences.

Incidentally, this type of discussion, more often than not, generates a few questions only an expert could answer. In my opinion, this speaks to the critical appraisal we give to each session, which has been insightful for my own research. The unanswered questions, and complexity of the issues, provide me with additional motivation for learning, diving deeper into the field of nutrition research.

Although the time has been short, attending Journal Club over the past semester has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience. The discussions are always provoking and the topics are never dull. Of course, the best part has been the company of students, friends and colleagues, which makes for a fun and eventful meeting. I recommend that everyone should give Journal Club a try, especially over the summer.

Community Outreach

NSGSA at the Ronald McDonald House

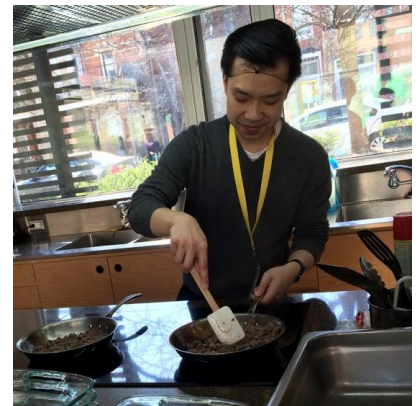
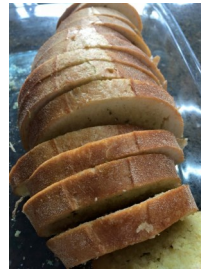
By: Effie Vigiliouk

On March 20th, 2015 the NSGSA hosted their annual **Ronald McDonald House Home for Dinner Event**. Graduate students and alumni volunteered to cook-up a home-made meal for approximately 135 ill children and their families. This year's menu featured crisp Caesar salad, roasted veggie and ground beef cheesy pasta bake, warm garlic bread, and an assortment of freshly baked cookies and tropical fruit punch. Many thanks to all those who helped out with this years event!

Photo credit: Vivian Choo



DNS students and alumni at the Ronald McDonald House (post-cooking and clean-up)



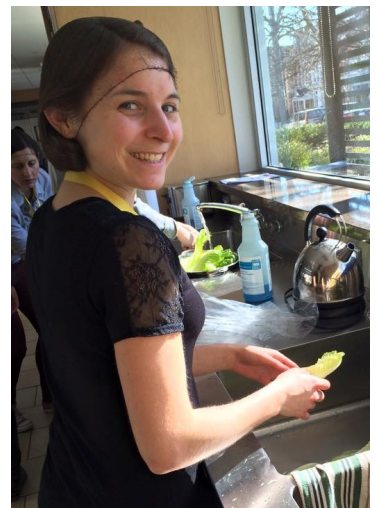
Rodney Au Yeung, MSc student, cooking up the meat for our pasta dish



Eleanor Reid (left) and Daiva Nielson (right) preparing the garlic bread



Our volunteers making Caesar salad



Left photo: Shana Kim (left) , Hannah Da Silva (middle), Carly Visentin (right)

Right photo: Sarah Stewart



Community Outreach

NSGSA at Science Rendezvous

By: Effie Vigiliouk

On May 9th, 2015 the NSGSA took science out of the lab and onto the street at the annual **Science Rendezvous festival!** DNS graduate students and alumni volunteered on this sunny afternoon to run various fun-filled nutrition activities for children of all ages. Many thanks to all those who came out!

Photo credit: Vivian Choo



Katie Hopperton (left) and Rodney Au Yeung (right) leading the food group toss activity



Christine Tsilas, alumni student, ready to answer some nutrition trivia questions

Nanci Guest at the PanAm Games

By: Mary Scourboutakos

Our very own **Nanci Guest**, a PhD student from the El-Sohemy lab, will be the head Dietitian at the Pan Am games in Toronto this summer. Nanci has been involved with menu-planning, creating nutrition fact sheets for the athletes and will also be working in the medical clinic for the duration of the games. Nanci was previously the head dietitian at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, and said her interest in sport nutrition grew from her background in personal training. In anticipation of the experience, Nanci said she is most looking forward to “being part of the energy,” she commented “being right in the athlete’s village, you can feel the electricity in the air, everyone is excited, it’s a gathering of such exceptional talent, so many sport celebrities in the same place, it’s a great atmosphere.” When asked to describe a nutrition strategy employed by athletes, Nanci explained that endurance athletes will sometimes train in a fasted, glycogen depleted state devoid of antioxidants, as means to produce more mitochondria. Finally, Nanci said the key to being a good sports nutritionist is to know both physiology and sports really well, she stated “athletes are a different species, you have to make sure that you’re well schooled in the population you’re serving, the things you hear in the popular media can be turned around to be the opposite when it comes to athletes.”



Faculty Profile

A Sweet Interview with Dr. John Sievenpiper

By: Effie Vigiliouk

Dr. Sievenpiper is a new Associate Professor within the Department of Nutritional Sciences. He holds an HBS in Nutrition from Ryerson University; an MSc, PhD and Postdoctoral Fellowship in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Toronto; and an MD from St. Matthew's University School of Medicine. He completed postgraduate residency training in Medical Biochemistry at McMaster University, leading to his FRCPC certification. In addition to being an Associate Professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences, Dr. Sievenpiper is a Consultant Physician in the Division of Endocrinology & Metabolism; a Scientist in the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute; and the Knowledge Synthesis Lead in the Toronto 3D Knowledge Synthesis & Clinical Trials Unit at St. Michael's Hospital. His current research interests focus on using meta-analytical techniques and randomized controlled trials to investigate diet and disease relationships. He kindly agreed to an interview for the edition of Nutri-News.



1) What is your best piece of advice for young graduate students?

Take on as many opportunities outside of your course work and thesis that will help broaden your interests and to follow your interests.

2) What inspired you to pursue nutrition research?

As an undergraduate student, my favourite courses were in statistics and research methodology, which is what led me to pursue an MSc and PhD. The reason why I chose to pursue research in nutrition was because I saw nutrition as one of the most important tools to affect primary prevention of chronic diseases.

3) What sparked your research interest in sugars?

My interest in sugars was initially sparked by a debate at the 2002 Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) meeting between Dr. Tom Wolever and Dr. Rhonda Bell (University of Alberta) on the health effects of fructose. I was struck by the disconnect between the animal data presented by Dr. Bell and the human data presented by Dr. Wolever and thought that this would be an area in which systematic reviews and meta-analyses would be useful in resolving the emerging issue surrounding the health effects of fructose. Another reason was my interest in addressing gaps in the guidelines, which led me to my current position on various guideline committees for the CDA, CCS, EASD, and ASN, among others.

4) What do you think is the biggest challenge in nutritional science?

The biggest challenge in nutritional sciences is in the translation to clinical practice guidelines and public health policy. It is overcoming the absence of large randomized trials on clinically meaningful outcomes/events and the reliance on data from prospective cohort studies which have inherent limitations in the measurements of dietary exposures based on self-reported intake.

5) What do you love most about what you do? What do you dislike most?

What I love most is interacting with trainees. It is tremendously stimulating, challenging, and gratifying, as well as an experience from which I learn the most. What I find the most frustrating is the incongruence between science and policy and the politics of grants, papers and guidelines.

6) What is your favourite past time?

Unfortunately I wish I had more time for my hobbies and interests, but in the wintertime I enjoy downhill skiing and reading various political commentaries and essays by individuals like Noam Chomsky and medical biographies. I also enjoy bike riding, which I can make time for as it my main mode of transportation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DNSG 2015

33rd International Symposium on Diabetes and Nutrition



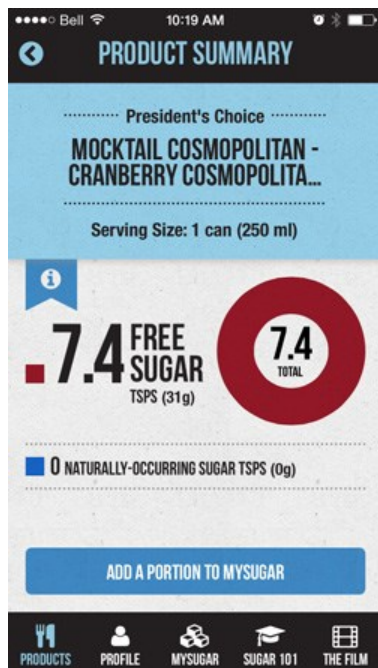
The 33rd International Symposium on Diabetes and Nutrition will be hosted in Toronto from
June 9 to 12, 2015.

The symposium represents the annual meeting of the Diabetes and Nutrition Study Group (DNSG) of the European Association for the study of Diabetes (EASD). It will bring together international scientists, physicians, and dietitians to showcase the latest advances from basic science to clinical trials in diabetes and nutrition through plenary lectures, panel discussions, and oral and poster abstract presentations.

The theme of this year's scientific program will be:

"Dietary patterns and food based approaches in diabetes"

For more information, please visit: <http://www.dnsg2015.ca/>



One Sweet App

Check out *One Sweet App*, the first mobile application that identifies the free sugar content of foods, developed by **Dr. Mary L'Abbe** and **Jodi Bernstein** in partnership with the producers of the recent documentary film *Sugar Coated* airing on TVO Saturday May 30th at 9:00pm. The app is available online and free of charge from the Sugar Coated website and through iTunes.

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to the Nutri-News contributors and editorial team:

Rodney Au-Yeung

Joanne Brathwaite

Katie Hopperton

Joseph Jamnik

Mary Scourboutakos

Zhila Semnani-Azad

Effie Vigiliouk

Fiona Wallace

Andreea Zurbau, and

our Faculty Advisor Dr. Carol Greenwood

If you'd like to get involved with Nutri-News, please get in touch at any time by emailing maryscourboutakos@gmail.com. Also, please feel welcome to send us your pictures from DNS events, tell us about your accomplishments and pitch ideas for topics/events you think we should cover!