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Inspiration + Motivation

"To make it in anything in life,
you have to combine your
talents with extremely hard
work"

-Shelly Fairchild

"Just because it's what's done
doesn't mean it's what should
be done"

-Cinderella, *Cinderella*

"Perfection is not attainable,
but if we chase perfection, we
can catch excellence"

-Vince Lombardi

"If everyone does some good,
think of what a good world
this will be"

-Jackie Chan

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Public Health Memos

Fall 2025, Volume II



Public Health in Full Color!

The Tennessee leaves aren't the only
thing in full color this month- our
public health students have been
harvesting recognition in the
classroom, conference center, and
community!

The Art of Songwriting: An Evening with Shelly Fairchild!

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 ✨
 6:30 – 8:00 PM ✨
 UTK Campus ✨
 Student Union 372C ✨

The Art of Songwriting

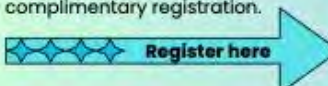
**FEATURING SINGER-SONGWRITER
SHELLY FAIRCHILD**

Sponsored by the University of Tennessee Department of Public Health

How do ideas become songs?

Have you ever been curious how songs get written or how recording artists choose which songs belong on an album? Join **Shelly Fairchild**, a singer-songwriter and Billboard Hot Country Singles charting recording artist, as she discusses the songwriting process and explores how ideas get turned into lyrics and recorded songs.

Regular in person or virtual attendance is complimentary for UTK employees and students. A valid student or personnel ID number will be required to receive complimentary registration.


[Register here](#)



LEARN THE SECRETS OF SONGWRITING!



About Shelly

Born in Mississippi, her musical upbringing brought her to Nashville, where she started writing and recording at 19 years old. Shelly has toured with Martina McBride, Keith Urban, Tim McGraw, and many more. As a songwriter, Shelly has had over 100 television placements as well as having her songs recorded by multiple artists including Little Big Town, Tanya Tucker, Ty Herndon, to name a few. Shelly is a regular guest on The Grand Ole Opry and will be releasing her fourth studio album in Fall 2025.

Register with the link below!

https://utk.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eE7F2TiMLEsrVky

CHES Study Group!

Public Health CHES STUDY GROUP

every other
Wednesday

12:00 PM

VIA ZOOM

Contact Dr. Perion for more information!

jperion@utk.edu



Public Health Vols at TPHA!

Congrats to Public Health Vols McKenzie Granata Green, Kirby Renalds, and Jennifer Robinette on presenting at this year's TPHA conference!
Way to go, Vols!



A special *thank you* to all students and faculty members who aided in representing the Department of Public Health at TPHA this year!

Professional Development Events!

Professional Development Events

Fall 2025



Certified in Public Health (CPH)

October 17th 12-1 PM EST

Join NBPHE to learn about the CPH certification including benefits, eligibility, requirements, and more!

Career Deep Dive: Overdose Prevention, Emergency Management, & Genomics Research

November 10th 11 AM - 12 PM EST

Join Jennifer Burnette from ORAU to hear about how she leveraged her MPH into a career of life-long learning.

Spring MPH Registration!



Spring into Registration!

MPH ZOOM DAY

MPH students can come to
Zoom link

<https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/394924416>

OCTOBER 20

9:00 AM – 8:00 PM EST

to meet with faculty to
discuss spring registration

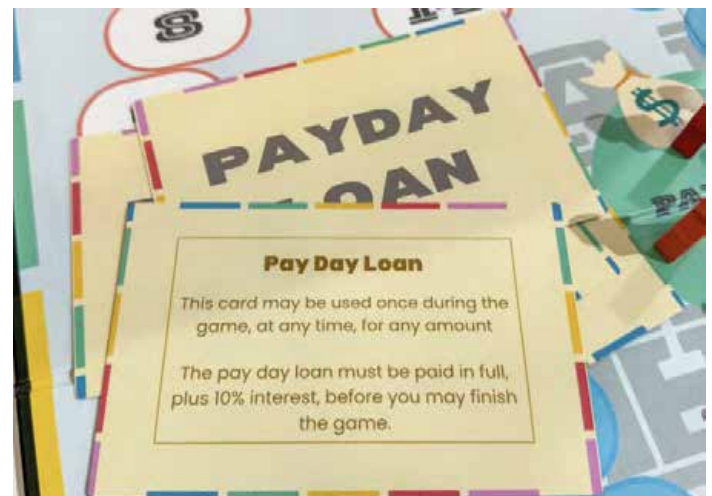
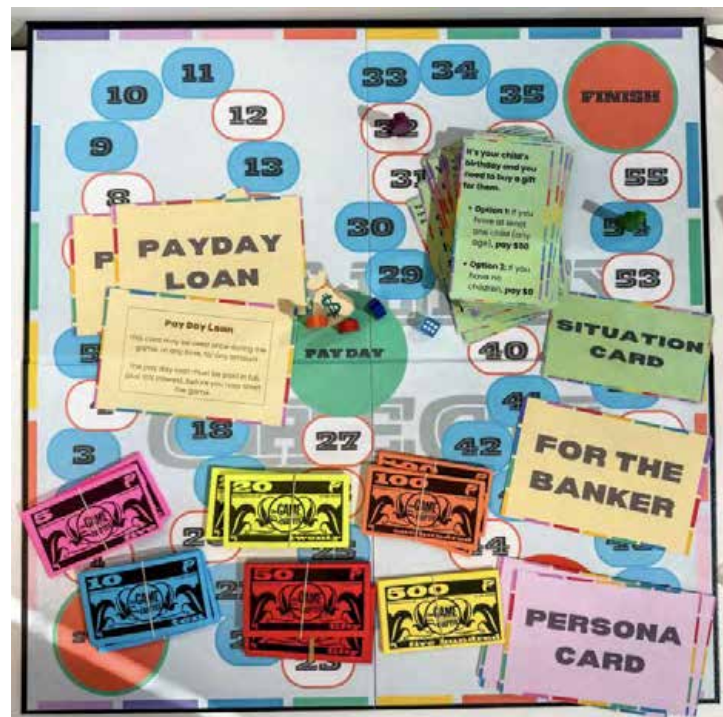
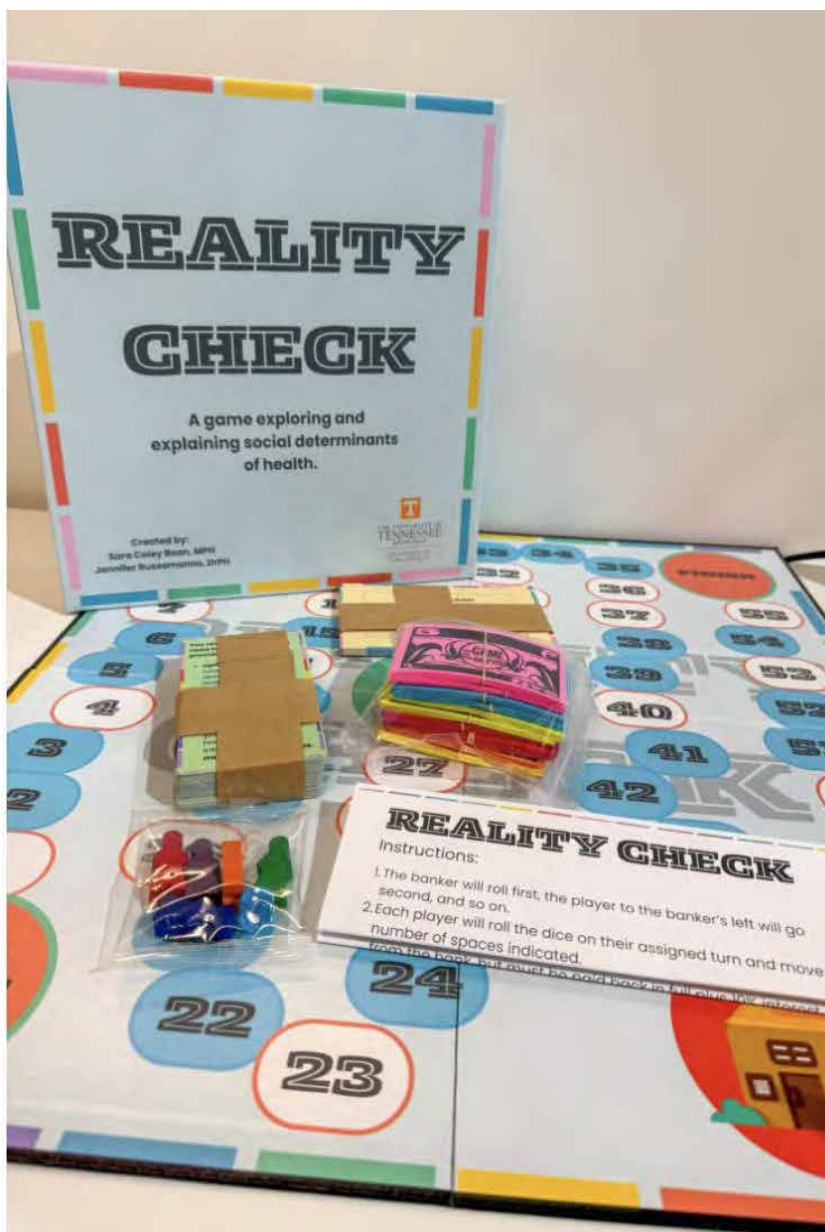


Reality Check Board Game!

Have you heard?!

The Reality Check board game, created in 2022 by Dr. Jennifer Russomanno and her APEX student, Sara Coley Bean (MPH 2022), is now licensed and available online! Engaging and research-informed, Reality Check is designed to educate players about the social determinants of health and how identity factors- such as income, education, geography, and age- intersect to influence health outcomes.

A huge congrats to Dr. Russomanno and Sara on this incredible accomplishment!
For more information on Reality Check, [VISIT THIS WEBSITE](#)



Alumni Spotlight!

Amanda Krueger

Amanda Krueger (MPH DE 2023) is the Community Health Services Director for the South-Central Regional Office - Tennessee Department of Health. Amanda transitioned into this role this Summer after serving as the Community Health Improvement Plan Coordinator for little over a year. In her current capacity, Amanda oversees health education programs in the region and provides coordination, support, and resources to the twelve county health councils in the region. She also assists in wide range of public health initiatives and prevention efforts in the region.

Amanda and her team are currently assisting the Health Educators in the region as they navigate the county health assessment process. This process enables communities to identify key health priorities and collaboratively develop three-year action plans aimed at improving overall health outcomes in their community. Each county health council is made up of diverse community members who collaborate to address local challenges and implement meaningful, community-driven solutions.



“My journey towards my MPH with University of Tennessee Knoxville Distance Education program truly reignited my passion for public health. It opened my eyes to possibilities I hadn’t considered and prepared me in ways I couldn’t have imagined. I’m incredibly grateful for the education and experience—it’s a big part of why I’m where I am today. The program’s flexibility enabled me to progress at my own pace, achieve my academic goals, and remain fully present in my roles as both a wife and a mother. Whether it was program planning or Statistics, I feel as though it helped mold me into the public health professional I am today.”

Faculty Spotlight!

Dr. AJ Wray

Dr. Alexander 'AJ' Wray is an Assistant Professor of Community Health Education, coming to UTK from The University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. While he never rode a snowmobile to school, he regularly had to still go to school in minus 22 Fahrenheit weather growing up.

Dr. Wray earned his Doctorate and Master of Arts in Geography from Western, and an undergraduate in urban planning from the University of Waterloo. His research focuses on how the built and natural environment affects health with a particular focus on youth populations. Though he is always open to chatting about maps and the planning of cities. In the community, he serves on the Board of the International Town and Gown Association and is Past President of the Town and Gown Association of Ontario. Outside of work, Dr. Wray enjoys cooking, cross-stitching, playing Magic the Gathering with friends, lake fishing, and alpine skiing.

Welcome to UTK, Dr. Wray!

