



**MILWAUKEE**

Wisconsin Area Health Education Center



## Virginia Thomas, MS, Nursing

Former CHIP Coordinator, 2001 - 2013

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### What are some of your memorable moments with Milwaukee AHEC?

"The Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) began in 1999 and I joined in April 2001 for ongoing coordination. Primary goals of CHIP were to attract students, especially from minority populations; to encourage students to enroll in learning STEM subjects; to provide hands-on experience working with experts in real-life projects; and to provide expertise from a broad range of professionals on current community health issues.

More and different community agencies participated, diversifying the project areas from traditional public health to areas where public health is hardly mentioned but the principles are applied nonetheless, like in farmers' markets, cafeterias, community centers and hospitals.

Some special memories of students include an intern's decision to change academic focus from medical records to community dentistry; pre-med students identifying new areas of community interest in medicine; lessons learned on the plight of undocumented individuals; insight into how to use formal college degrees in work on a reservation; and surprise at how much food is wasted every day.

I particularly enjoyed our weekly time for interns to share experiences and will never forget the students sloshing into the seminar in wader boots direct from lake water sampling!"

For more information on AHEC's 30th Anniversary celebration,

visit [www.milahec.org/30th](http://www.milahec.org/30th)