

# Mathile Institute: *Partnering for global health*

The *Mathile Institute – UNC Global Nutrition Scholars Program* currently supports Yanire Estrada, a UNC-trained master's student from Puerto Rico, in her doctoral work at UNC.

Estrada's scholarship is an outgrowth of research conducted in Intibucá, Honduras, by Peggy Bentley, PhD, nutrition professor and associate dean for global health at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, and Anna-Maria Siega-Riz, PhD, epidemiology and nutrition professor at the School. The Mathile Institute supported a UNC-affiliated nonprofit organization, Shoulder to Shoulder, to work with Bentley and Siega-Riz to test a ready-to-eat, complementary food for its efficacy in improving infants' and toddlers' growth and development. Estrada, as the team's project coordinator, lived in a remote, rural area of Honduras for 18 months. Her doctoral dissertation will report the project's research findings and implications for child nutrition and development.

Bentley is delighted with the Mathile Institute's support. "Our Department of Nutrition attracts the most outstanding students in the world, and applications are increasing dramatically. International students are attracted by the cutting-edge work of our faculty, the excellence of our graduate programs and alumni, and the fact that we are truly a global academic center."

Unfortunately, Bentley says, limited funding and the high costs of sponsoring international students severely restrict the School's ability to offer training to many brilliant and enthusiastic researchers from around the world.

"The Mathile Institute is a visionary organization that supports nutrition research worldwide," Bentley says. "This scholarship enables a bright, hard-working international student to obtain a doctorate from a top-ranked nutrition department and become a leader in her country's health system in the future."

"We are very pleased to be working with UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and its exceptional faculty and students," says Greg Reinhart, PhD, vice president of nutrition and research for the Institute. "Yanire Estrada, Drs. Bentley and Siega-Riz, and the Shoulder to Shoulder organization did a remarkable job conducting this study in a very remote and mountainous region of Honduras. Young children and the international community will benefit from the findings."

"I am very excited to receive this scholarship and continue working with Drs. Bentley and Siega-Riz," Estrada says. "Mathile has allowed me to fulfill my dream of working with Central American and Caribbean countries to improve their nutritional health outcomes."

– Bobbi Wallace



(Left to right) Doctoral student Yanire Estrada, with Drs. Peggy Bentley and Greg Reinhart, in Honduras

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