



FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023

Department Chair's Corner

As we bid farewell to another busy, exciting, and transformative year, I want to take a moment to wish everyone a joyous holiday season filled with warmth, laughter, and peaceful moments. May this time bring you the gift of togetherness and the opportunity to create lasting memories with those you hold dear.



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

2023 has been marked by a lot of wonderful highs in FSHD. We moved into our new college home, the College for Community Health and have been settling in, and our faculty and staff have been busy! We

are doing what we always have done, from our faculty's scholarship endeavors that promote family and community health and resilience, to supporting the academic success of our students. Our department is built on the foundation of creating an equitable and socially just world, and our alignment with the College for Community Health only strengthens our resolve towards meeting that goal. As we approach the new year, we are energized by the possibilities that lie ahead.

To close, I also want to acknowledge those in our community who find this time of the year particularly challenging for various reasons, including grief and loss. Having experienced a recent loss myself, I see you, I share this space with you, and sincerely hope that you take the time to do what you need in order to take good care of yourself.

To all, I wish you a festive holiday season and a bright and Happy New Year ahead. May 2024 be the best year yet! ■

FSHD Professors Headline First CCHL Research Seminar

The College for Community Health (CCHL) kicked off its new Research Seminar Series with "Bridging the Gap: Empowering Urban Minority Youth through a University-Community Partnership."

Dr. Robert Reid and Dr. Pauline Garcia-Reid, professors in the Family Science and Human Development Department, presented their research and boots-on-the-ground approach to battling and preventing substance misuse in the community of Paterson, NJ through [Project C.O.P.E.](#) (Communities Organizing for Prevention and Empowerment).



The CCHL Research Seminar Series is designed as a platform to highlight the exciting research and community work happening within the college, as well as to identify collaborative opportunities among Montclair faculty and graduate students.

To learn more about "Bridging the Gap" and/or Project C.O.P.E., email either reidr@montclair.edu or garciareidp@montclair.edu. ■

Introducing the CCHL Collabolutions Podcast

The College for Community Health is launching a new podcast to open a supportive dialog with local agencies and organizations.

Collabolutions, an amalgamation of "collaboration" and "solutions," creates an atmosphere where interdisciplinary experts from community and university settings can openly brainstorm solutions to persistent structural and social inequities that undermine health and well-being.

The first episode, titled "Trust Fall," will be recorded live at the college's Pre-Launch Event on December 4, and will be hosted by FSHD Professor Brad van Eeden-Moorefield, the college's Senior Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Fellow. ■

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 4
Deadline to register for Winter Commencement

December 15
Fall 2023 semester ends

December 18
Winter 2024 session begins

January 7
Deadline for Internship Approval for Spring 2024

January 15
Deadline to apply to FSHD PhD Program

Dr. Olena Nesteruk Awarded for Innovative Classroom Project

The Family Science and Human Development Department proudly congratulates Professor Dr. Olena Nesteruk for being selected as a first place winner of the 2023 Cognella Innovation in Teaching Awards for Family Science in partnership with the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). She was recognized for implementing an international Pen Pal Project with her *Immigrant Families* class.

Nesteruk, a native of Ukraine, connected each student in her class with a pen pal in a Ukrainian middle school to learn about each other's cultures, families, schools, and dreams. In an unintentional twist, the Montclair students also experienced first-hand accounts of life in war-torn country, as seen through the eyes of children. The international pen pals communicated via emails, video calls and social media. When the war caused widespread power outages and shut down their internet, the Ukrainian students resorted to old fashioned post cards to stay in touch.

The Cognella Innovation in Teaching Awards for Family Science recognize outstanding Family Science instructors who introduce cutting-edge teaching practices to their courses to better engage students and advance scholarship in the discipline.

Highly impressed with Nesteruk's implementation and success, the judging panel said the project "has had and will continue to have incredible impact on your students, the individuals with whom they are building relationships in Ukraine, their future clients, and so many others along the way. This program is teaching compassion, cultural competency, creativity



In addition to being acknowledged by the National Council on Family Relations for her Ukrainian Pen Pal Project, FSHD Professor Olena Nesteruk presented her poster about the successful initiative at the annual conference of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement.

through technological innovation and outreach, global understanding of culture and family dynamics, and so much more."

Nesteruk said she is "honored and humbled" to receive this award, adding, "I could not have done it without all of the pen pal participants and supporting staff who made this collaboration happen."

The award was presented during the NCFR Annual Conference in November. NCFR is the preeminent professional organization in the United States for understanding families through interdisciplinary research, theory, and practice. ■

RYTE Institute Focuses on Character Development

FSHD Professor Dr. Jennifer Urban, co-director of the Institute for Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation (RYTE), and Mirka Feinstein, RYTE's Assistant Director of Operations, were instrumental in organizing the Global Innovations in Character Development conference in Kenya in October. Funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation, the event was part of a wider initiative to expand the frontier of human development by supporting research on the contribution of character strengths to human flourishing.



Pictured at the conference in Kenya are (l to r) RYTE Institute team consultants Dr. Monica Hargraves and Jane Buckley, along with Mirka Feinstein and Jennifer Urban.

RYTE explores questions related to youth thriving, developmental science, and program evaluation and planning from a systems science perspective. ■



Jennifer Urban was featured on K24 Television in Kenya explaining the conference's mission and goals.

Dr. Lyndal Khaw Hailed for Feminist Work in Family Science

FSHD is proud to announce that our Department Chair, Dr. Lyndal Khaw, has been nationally recognized for her research in feminism in family science. The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) awarded her the prestigious 2023 Alexis J. Walker Award for Mid-Career Achievement in Feminist Family Science.

An active NCFR member for 19 years, Khaw has served in multiple leadership roles on the Board of Directors, the Affiliates Council, and the Feminism and Family Science section. She has received numerous NCFR awards, including Outstanding Research Proposal from a Feminist Perspective, and Outstanding Leadership and Service, among others. Through these leadership and service roles at the national and affiliates level, she has consistently demonstrated excellence in feminist praxis.

At the 2023 NCFR Conference in November, Khaw was recognized for “developing a cohesive and impactful program of research on survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), including mothers’ processes of leaving abusive partners, weaving together feminist critical perspectives with theories of change, ambiguous loss, and boundary ambiguity. Through all of her work, Dr. Khaw applies a social justice lens and intersectionality framework to center the experiences of diverse survivors of IPV, for example, queer adults and youth, Asian American women, Pakistani women, and homeless youth.”



NCFR is the foremost professional association in the United States for studying families through interdisciplinary research, theory, and practice. ■

Unique FSHD Doctoral Program Marks a Decade of Success

The PhD in Family Science and Human Development at Montclair State University is celebrating its tenth anniversary. After welcoming the first cohort in 2013, our program has proudly produced nearly 40 doctoral alumni who function as social justice leaders in universities and communities across the country and the world. More than three dozen additional PhD students are currently enrolled in the program.



Montclair has the distinction of offering the only FSHD doctoral program in New Jersey, one of only 52 in the nation. For the past decade, our students have been learning to use a social justice perspective to understand and strengthen diverse individuals, families, and communities through research, policy, and prevention and education programming.

Our graduates pursue a wide range of professional opportunities such as program administrators, higher education faculty, researchers, policymakers, and in vital roles at organizations focusing on children, youth, adults, older adults and families.

The deadline to apply for the next PhD cohort is Monday, January 15, 2024. To learn more about our program, please join us for two upcoming webinars. Click on the title to register.

[General Information Webinar](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the program, including the mission, curriculum, student learning, funding, career options, and basic application requirements.

Thursday, December 7 from 7:00—8:00 pm

[Application Information Webinar](#) explains the application process in detail and offers suggestions on how to write personal statements, prepare writing samples, and select recommenders.

Wednesday, December 13 from 12:00—1:00 pm

Register today to learn more. If you have questions, contact Vian Sabat at phdFamily@montclair.edu. ■

Internship Insights

Interns: Time is Running Out

Family Services students eligible for the Spring 2024 internship must have a fully approved internship by **January 7**. Digital paperwork must be fully APPROVED by the site supervisor and Career & Internship Services. To allow time for approval, please submit the Handshake Experience by mid-December.

Meet the Newest CCHL Family Member



Congratulations to Colleen Casenta, the FSHD Career & Internship Advisor, on the birth of her third child, Kiera Ann, in November. Obviously Colleen is on leave, therefore, students who need assistance with internships or career information can contact the advisors in the Career & Internship Services office:

- Call: 973-655-7866
- Email: CCHLcareer@montclair.edu
- Visit: University Hall 1180 ■

Career Corner

With a degree in Family Science and Human Development, you can pursue a career as a...

Family Mentor

A Family Mentor is a professional who provides guidance, support, and education to individuals and families facing various challenges or transitions. The primary role of a Family Mentor is to empower and assist families in developing healthy relationships, enhancing communication, and overcoming obstacles.

Job responsibilities could include:

- **Support and Guidance:** Offer emotional support, active listening, and empathy to individuals and families as they navigate through challenges such as parenting difficulties, relationship issues, or adjusting to major life transitions.
- **Skill-Building and Education:** Provide practical tools, resources, and strategies to help families develop essential life skills, improve communication, manage stress, and strengthen their overall well-being.
- **Goal Setting and Planning:** Assist families in setting realistic goals and creating action plans to achieve them. ■

Alumni Spotlight

Karina Escobar

Karina Escobar graduated from the Family Services concentration in the Family Science and Human Development program in May 2020.



Her Story: Upon entering Montclair State University, I chose FSHD as my major because I wanted to pursue a teaching degree, but when I took an Intro to Gerontology class, I was immersed in the world of social work (and I still remember the professor - thank you, Lauren Cosentino). Therefore, I redirected my academic focus and shifted my concentration to Family Services with a minor in Social Work. This decision let me figure out what I wanted to do with my life!

Post-graduation, I pursued my Master's in Social Work at Columbia University, where I immersed myself in the intricacies of social work through a policy practice track. My concentration in International Social Welfare and Services to Immigrants & Refugees further fueled my commitment to effecting positive change on a global scale. I was given the opportunity to intern at the United Nations and advocate for policy change in topics that I felt passionate about. I believe that my time at Montclair and Columbia equipped me with invaluable knowledge and versatile tools to navigate both micro and macro settings.

Her Career: Fast forward to today, I find myself back at the institution that ignited my passion for social work – Montclair State University. In my current role within the Office for Social Justice and Diversity, I oversee two resource centers, the Red Hawk Pantry and Rocky's Closet. I am dedicated to fostering student success, increasing access to community resources, and actively promoting equity and inclusion. My mission extends to destigmatizing the utilization of these resources, and creating a nurturing environment for those seeking support.

Her Thoughts: Never be hard on yourself! Choosing social work or any area within FSHD is learning that this career is not linear, and that is OKAY! Connect and network with professors, advisors, and staff. You never know where these connections might lead, and you always want to leave a good impression.

I am here to support any students who are interested in a career in social work. Reach out to me anytime at escobark@montclair.edu. ■

Social Justice Initiatives

35th Commemoration of World Aids Day

Every year on December 1, **World AIDS Day** highlights the global struggle to end HIV. This annual commemoration honors those we have lost, and serves as a rallying cry to continue working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat. Although AIDS is not often mentioned in the media, it remains a highly contagious illness. More than 39 million people worldwide have HIV, including 1.2 million in the U.S. where upwards of 30,000 new cases are diagnosed every year.



In 2023, we mark the 35th anniversary of this important event with the theme “World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit.” Through remembrance, we draw strength and determination to redouble our efforts in fighting

the disease and supporting HIV patients with compassion, empathy and solidarity in the face of adversity. The “commit” aspect of the theme emphasizes our collective responsibility to act. Each of us can make a difference by:

- working to improve health equity and ending the disparities in access to prevention, care, and treatment
- promoting scientific education and awareness
- supporting organizations that work tirelessly to serve those at risk and living with HIV

Since the first World AIDS Day in 1988, significant progress has been made in battling HIV/AIDS, thanks to advancements in medical research, increased access to treatment and prevention, and a broader understanding of the virus. We have also seen a tremendous global advocacy community unite to take on challenges and hold institutions accountable for ensuring access to these advancements.

“The 35th commemoration of World AIDS Day is an opportunity to reflect on our journey, acknowledge and celebrate the progress we’ve made, and recognize the challenges remaining,” said Admiral Rachel L. Levine, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “However, many people with HIV still lack access to essential healthcare and support services. We must strive to increase equitable access and outcomes for HIV testing, prevention, treatment, and care services. The battle is far from over.” ■

Source: HIV.gov

December 20 is Human Solidarity Day

The United Nations identifies the concept of solidarity as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st century, and supports a global partnership determined to lift people out of poverty, hunger and disease. Convinced that promoting a culture of solidarity is important for combating poverty, in 2005 the UN General Assembly proclaimed December 20 as International Human Solidarity Day. Three years earlier, they established the World Solidarity Fund to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries, in particular among the poorest segments of those populations. ■



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