



FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

APRIL 2024

Exploring Interdisciplinary Aging/Gerontology Possibilities

The Family Science and Human Development Department hosted a gathering of interdisciplinary university representatives to initiate a conversation about aging and gerontology studies within the university, and to explore opportunities for the Montclair community to address this population's needs.

The **Aging Studies Lunch & Learn** symbolized the first step in identifying individuals within the university who are currently focused on, or interested in, aging and gerontology. Moderated by FSHD's in-house gerontologist, Assistant Professor Ashley Ermer, and FSHD Chair Lyndal Khaw, the program brought together two dozen faculty and staff who conduct research on health issues and ageism, serve older clients in clinical settings, and/or teach courses that touch on aging issues.

The participants represented multiple departments including Public Health, Exercise Science & Physical Education, Counseling, Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, Communication Sciences & Disorders, and Hospitality & Tourism. University Provost Junius Gonzales joined the discussion to share his vision and ideas about developing new programs and academic offerings for Montclair students.

Future meetings will take place to further explore the opportunities in this field. ■



FSHD Chair Lyndal Khaw (left) and FSHD Associate Professor Ashley Ermer moderated the discussion.



Participants at the Aging Studies Lunch & Learn represented departments within CCHL and across the university.

Department Chair's Corner

As we marked the first day of spring about 10 days ago, I hope this message finds you all well, rested, and raring to go for the second half of the semester. The spring has been a busy one for us in FSHD, as we work on a number of exciting initiatives to innovate our programming, create inclusive spaces and raise awareness, collaborate with others around Montclair and beyond, and explore new ways to meet community needs.

One such need is to expand our capacity to work with aging populations. The field of Family Science and Human Development focuses on individuals and families in "all slices of life," from life with babies and kids to life as older adults, from birth through death - and all phases in between. It is no surprise that aging families and communities are



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

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DATES TO REMEMBER

April 4
FSHD Internship Info Session

April 5
Registration begins for Fall 2024 and Winter 2025

April 16
CCHL Awards Ceremony

May 1
Last day to register for Fall 2024 FSHD Internship

Careers in Aging: Student Reflection

Why choose Gerontology as a minor or certification? If you have patience and compassion, why not apply it to older adults who are in need of your support?



Mary Healy

ever, the need for geriatric care and support is so important and crucial to ensuring a happy, healthy lifestyle.

I had the opportunity to work as a Recreational Assistant at a long-term care facility in Caldwell, NJ. I remember seeing a flyer in my high school for the open position and thought it would be an interesting change of scenery from my typical work environment. However, I was apprehensive. I remember thinking to myself, "Is this really a good fit for me?" and "I have no idea what I am doing." I decided to give it a try.

While working there, it really opened my eyes to the various needs of older adults and the impact that I could have on their lives. Perhaps what I learned from the experience the most, is the impact that one can make by tending to the physical and emotional needs of the resident. Unfortunately, it is too easy for their mental wellbeing to be overlooked; one might think that they lead a stress-free life. Their needs remain and you can make a world of difference just by listening to them.

Part of what I loved about the job was that each day was different so it helped to keep me engaged and on my feet. Although there was some routine in the schedule, I never knew exactly what the day had in store.

A typical day would begin by assisting residents with eating breakfast and transporting them to the recreation room, where I would engage in activities with them. Every day, we would begin the activity by reading the Daily Chronicle together, which was a newsletter that helped to keep residents

in the loop on current events, and served as an opportunity to reminisce on past ones.

After opening the conversation to group members, we would do a physical activity, such as bean bag toss, keep-it-up with a balloon, or pool-noodle exercises! I would often use the time after to catch up with each resident – ask them how they were feeling and what they would like to do for the day. But more importantly to them, they would want to know what was new with me!

After our conversations, I would transfer the residents to their tables and serve them lunch. Similar to the breakfast routine, I would assist those who needed help eating.

One of my favorite memories was when my father came to drop off my lunch one afternoon. He walked into the recreation room to hand it to me, and one resident, despite being in a wheelchair, rushed to greet my father at the door. He enthusiastically articulated how incredible I was and how thankful he was for all of my help. "You have a good one, sir," he told my father.

Perhaps even more special were the one-on-one conversations that took place. I began to realize the amazing life stories that each resident possessed which gave me a better sense of who they still are, regardless of their current living situation. Through conversations

like these, I learned that some of the residents sitting in wheelchairs in that recreation room were former Olympian runners and superintendents of school districts.

After lunch was TV time when, more times than not, *The Golden Girls* would be requested. Another activity followed, which usually consisted of coloring or bingo. Although they may seem like mundane activities, these were favorites for some of the residents and I was fortunate enough to have been gifted some of their drawings, which I still have to this day, as a reminder of what a gift they were to me.

I would not have traded that experience for the world, and I encourage you to consider the same. ■

Mary Healy is a Montclair State University student in the master's program for Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She holds a BA Psychology and works as a graduate assistant in the Department of Family Science and Human Development.



Gerontology Minor Opens Career Doors

With 1 in 7 adults in America at age 65 or older, the field of Gerontology — the study of aging — is expanding at an alarming rate. The growth in this segment of the population creates a demand for professionals in multiple disciplines, from sociology to business to tourism.

The Family Science and Human Development Department offers an interdisciplinary minor in Gerontology that examines the social, cultural, psychological and physical aspects of aging, and challenges students to think critically about these areas.

The 18-credit program is suitable for students in most majors. Required courses focus on adult development, public policy, and families in later life, while electives explore a diversity of additional disciplines. This coursework helps students clarify their career and/or graduate school goals by understanding that a gerontology background can be applied in public, private and non-profit settings.



For additional information about the Gerontology minor, contact Dr. Ashley Ermer at ErmerA@montclair.edu, visit our [web-site](#), or scan this code. ■



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

Activities Director

Senior living facilities, healthcare environments and community centers employ Activities Directors who plan and oversee recreational activities such as games, arts and crafts, or musical entertainment for older adults. Their primary objective is to enrich participants' lives on physical, social and psychological levels.

The responsibilities of Activities Directors could include:

- Planning a calendar of activities and effectively communicating it to participants
- Coordinating and communicating with staff members, volunteers, community organizations and vendors
- Overseeing or leading group activities
- Evaluating client satisfaction
- Arranging travel to off-site activities
- Managing the budget and applying for grants
- Purchasing equipment and supplies
- Monitoring patient health and providing reports to caregivers
- Communicating with nutritionists and physicians about participants' treatment plans ■

Department Chair's Corner

(Continued from page 1)

growing in numbers, and as such, growing in need for affordable, accessible, and reliable care and services that cater to this demographic. The FSHD Department offers our Minor in Gerontology (see article above) which enables Montclair undergraduate students in any major to experience a select contingent of courses to learn more about the important issues that are faced by this population.

We have always known that our work is far from done, and thanks to FSHD's faculty gerontologist Dr. Ashley Ermer, clinical developmental expert Dr. Gerry Costa, and Associate Chair for Social Justice Initiatives Dr. Soyoung Lee, this semester we finally saw the needle inching forward! Just a few weeks ago, we were able to gather folks from across campus who actively engage in aging research or practice, or have an

interest in supporting aging populations.

To my knowledge, this is the first time such a meeting has been convened, with nine different academic units being present around the table - all sharing the goal and acknowledging the need for the Montclair community to do better in meeting the demands of an aging world. This gathering was indeed a long time coming and the first of many to come. I am super excited to see what this collective of minds and efforts will bring.

This is just one example of the work we are proud to lead and be a part of. I want to thank our amazing FSHD staff and faculty who help move that needle ahead and keep things going. With spring comes renewal and hope, and my hope is that this semester continues to inspire our FSHD community in any big or small ways!

Have a wonderful April ahead. ■

Social Justice Initiatives

A Photo Journal of Diversity and Privilege at Montclair

Students in Dr. Soyoung Lee's *Working with Diverse Families and Children* class (FSHD 418) study different approaches to working with families and children in human service, community, and educational settings. As a small group assignment on understanding diversity, students were asked to explore the Montclair campus and capture photographs symbolizing diversity and privilege. Here's what they found.

Special thanks and photo credits go to:

Amanda, Cecelia, Jailyn, Jonah, Kaitlyn, Luke, Neena, Nicole, Sophia, and Stephanie.

Fashion Art: The fashion industry tends to have a very narrow view of what beauty is, but the Fashion Art Gallery in Finley Hall shows diversity within the fashion world. Many of the models depicted in the different illustrations and collages are of different body types and ethnicities. The display also shows cultural diversity by exhibiting works inspired by different cultures around the world. This exhibit breaks down the barriers of the beauty standards that provide privilege to a select few (Eurocentric, white, skinny).



Medical Care: Having a doctor on campus offers equitable and affordable access to medical care, prescriptions, and medical testing. The Health Drop-in Center provides students with information and guidance about safe sex options and sexuality, alcohol and other drugs, tobacco, body image, mental health, stress and sleep.



Food Insecurity: The students felt there is a large disparity among the amount of people who have privilege on campus, especially surrounding access to food. Only one food pantry on campus aims to serve the 22,000+ MSU students, and it is hard to find if someone is not comfortable asking. It is not listed on the campus map and has limited hours.



Library Services: Students identified Sprague Library as an amazing place that offers events about diversity as well as many amenities for the entire MSU community.

Campus Recreation: The Student Recreation Center gives all students free access to an on-campus gym, indoor pool and basketball court.



Gender/Race: Event fliers posted around campus depict events such as Drag Queen Bingo, Black Excellence Trivia, and a casting call. These represent diversity among the LGBTQ+ community, programs for students of color, and the emphasis of arts on campus.



Love and Understanding: This decoration, spotted on a dorm bulletin board, shows how to love another and how to love oneself. It expresses the privilege we hold when we love another, how not to be deceitful or hurtful, and how to understand our own and others' boundaries. ■



Student Spotlight

Sofia Perez

Sofia Perez is a senior FSHD major with a concentration in Family Services, and a minor in



Leadership Development through Civic Engagement.

Her Story: Upon my arrival to Montclair State University, I found myself in a state of uncertainty, grappling with the

weighty decision of selecting the “ideal” major, one that seemed destined to shape my future. Despite switching majors three times, I soon discovered that this decision didn't solely define my trajectory.

Montclair offered a plethora of supportive individuals and resources to guide me on my journey and it wasn't until the fall semester of my sophomore year that I officially declared my major in Family Science and Human Development. This field provided me with a diverse array of career possibilities, granting me the flexibility and liberty to explore and deepen my understanding of various paths.

Her Plan: Post-graduation, my aspiration is to immerse myself in community involvement and public service, fostering connections and offering tailored resources to uplift individuals. My passion lies in uniting people and empowering them with the tools they require. Looking ahead, I aspire to collaborate with organizations such as Worldpackers, the Peace Corps, or AMIGOS, which seamlessly blend my passion for community work with my love for travel and exploration.

Words of Wisdom:

- Get involved on campus! You never know who you are going to meet and the memories you are going to create.
- It is okay to ask for help. There are people on and off campus who want to see you succeed and can provide you with proper guidance to get to where you want to go.
- You don't have to know everything right away. You'll learn from experience what you truly want to do. ■

Social Justice Initiatives

Help Prevent Child Abuse by Moving from Challenge to Change

National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April 2024 carries the theme, “Doing Things Differently: Moving from the Challenge to the Change.” The theme urges individuals and organizations to intentionally explore, engage,

and invest in innovative, new ideas to transform the way we partner with families to deliver ser-

vices and supports. It is essential for us to create a child welfare system that can overcome challenges and provide equitable support to all families.

The campaign is grounded in the vision of the U.S. Children's Bureau to promote equity in state child welfare systems, along with the following goals:

- Develop and enhance the child welfare workforce
- Support kinship caregivers
- Prevent situations causing children to enter foster care
- Ensure youth leave foster care with strengthened relationships, holistic supports, and opportunities ■



The FSHD Department is doing its part to raise awareness on campus. Look for our twirling Pinwheel Garden outside University Hall. Pinwheels are the national symbol of child abuse prevention because they represent childhood, happiness and whimsy.



Our Achievements



Family Science and Human Development faculty and staff are proud and excited to congratulate **Dr. Veronica Barrios**, a 2018 graduate of the FSHD doctoral program, for earning tenure and a promotion to Associate Professor of Family Science and Social Work at Miami University of Ohio. She has certainly earned it!

Internship Insights

Summer Internship Combines Engagement with Research

The FSHD Summer Community Engagement Internship is an exciting, unique, site-specific alternative to our regular internship. This 9-credit experience combines community engagement with action research through a substance misuse and HIV/AIDS prevention program targeting racial and ethnic minority youth and young adults in Paterson, NJ.

The program includes 300 field hours from May 13 to September 1. Students who complete all the requirements will receive a stipend.

The deadline to apply is May 1. For further information, contact FSHD Department Administrator Shannon Bellum at bellums@montclair.edu.

Register Now for Fall Internship

If you are a senior planning to take FSHD 409 Internship in Fall 2024, you must declare your intent by submitting the [Internship Registration Form](#) no later than May 1. If you have questions or need additional information, attend the Internship Information Session (see article below) or reach out to Colleen Casenta, Career and Internship Advisor, via email at casentac@montclair.edu.

Get Answers at the Internship Info Session

If you are an FSHD student in the Family Services concentration, don't miss the **FSHD Internship Information Session**, in person or virtual, where you'll learn more about the required senior year academic internship, FSHD 409.

Thursday, April 4, 2024
11:30 am—12:30 pm
ADP Center Room 1143 or Virtual

This session is especially encouraged for students planning to complete the internship this fall, but it's open to all grade levels because it is never too early to start preparing! [Register via Handshake](#). ■

Learn about Careers In Human Services

The Employer/Student Lunch & Learn is a panel discussion open to FSHD juniors and seniors with limited capacity. This event will feature an informal conversation with Human Services professionals who will share their insights about careers in this field.

EMPLOYER/STUDENT LUNCH & LEARN

Human Services Careers

1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 18
University Hall, Student Success Center, Rm 1180

FSHD Seniors/Juniors only
18 student max capacity
Lunch will be provided

Invite-only event | **RSVP REQUIRED** via Handshake

Contact: Colleen Casenta, casentac@montclair.edu

Student Success Center
College for Community Health



Family Science and Human Development
College for Community Health

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