



# FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## Department Newsletter

MARCH 2025

### International Women's Day Strives to Accelerate Action

International Women's Day on March 8 is a global celebration acknowledging the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. In conjunction with this year's theme, let's all step forward in solidarity to *#AccelerateAction* for gender equality. This worldwide message calls for increased momentum and urgency in eradicating the systemic barriers and biases facing women in both personal and professional spheres. At the current rate of progress, it will take another 125 years to reach full gender parity, according to data from the World Economic Forum.

Together we can accelerate action by supporting the impactful groups and initiatives across the country and around the world delivering critical strategies, resources, and activities that assist women and girls in areas such as:

- making informed decisions about their health
- forging economic empowerment
- recruiting, retaining and developing diverse talent
- supporting opportunities in leadership, decision-making, business and STEM
- promoting sustainable agriculture and food security
- providing access to quality education and training
- elevating participation and achievement in sports
- promoting creative and artistic talent

[Learn more here](#) about how you can get involved. Be sure to follow FSHD's social media throughout March as we highlight women and their accomplishments during Women's History Month (find our handles on page 5). ■



Source: *InternationalWomensDay.com*

### Department Chair's Corner

As we step into March, the coming weeks and months of Spring often bring a sense of renewal and rejuvenation. Looking outside my window, I already see a different scene from days ago: a bright sunny day, a busier crowd of students walking on the grassy quad, and hints of foliage and buds waiting to make their springtime debut. Perhaps the pep in our steps is also due to the fact that it is also almost Spring Break, a week we all collectively look forward to. In fact, any kind of break is understandably welcomed at the moment.

In the past two months, we have watched new national mandates taking issue with a number of things our department actually believe in, such as rights for transgender people; humane, fair, and equitable treatment of people; access to healthcare; and especially, evidence-based research and science to promote the health and wellbeing of the families and communities we love. DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) has inexplicably been turned into a negative phrase, and any efforts that try to accomplish DEI have been targeted or face major scrutiny.

Like so many of us in this community, I feel particularly troubled by this latest turn of events, for a number of reasons. Our work, our  
(Continued on page 2)



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

### DATES TO REMEMBER

#### March 8

Daylight Saving Time begins tonight—turn clocks ahead

#### March 8-16

Spring Break

#### March 14

Deadline to [apply](#) for May graduation

#### March 17

7-week Session C begins

#### March 28

Fall 2025 registration begins

## March is Social Work Month



Social workers possess the education, training, and expertise to empower people so they can live life to their full potential. Recognizing that those who enter the social work profession genuinely care about other individuals, this year's theme for Social Work Month is *Social Work: Compassion + Action*.

Social work is one of the fastest growing career fields, with approximately 720,000 professionals employed in the United States and 3 million worldwide. Many FSHD majors pursue a career in this field and go on to earn their Master's in Social Work. Learn more about Montclair's [MSW program](#) here. ■

### Department Chair's Corner *(continued from page 1)*

mission, and our purpose have always been to promote a socially just world, where all people - no matter what they look like, where they were born, what they worship, who they love, and how they identify - feel safe in their communities, have access to what they need, and can achieve their highest dreams.

As department chair, I have thought a lot about what all these mean to our faculty who have dedicated years of their professional lives to the scientific discovery of knowledge that impacts family life and human development, the lived experiences of our diverse student population, our community partners, collaborators, and adjunct faculty who work directly with folks and see firsthand the mental, social, and physical struggles people go through daily.

***"Our faculty ... have dedicated years of their professional lives to the scientific discovery of knowledge that impacts family life and human development"***

Given March is Women's History Month, I also think of my predecessors. Strong, resilient women before me who have led, endured, persevered, and fought against sexism, misogyny, and tyranny - how far they have transformed the world, lifted each other up, and leaped us forward. Over the past few months, I fret about how much is being undone and how far we are being pushed back.

*Not very far, if I can help it.* Now imagine if everyone said that too. As individuals, and as a collective, we too, can lead, endure, and persevere. We too, can lift each other up. The work isn't over.

While it is always good to take care of your mental health and take breaks from the news and media when you need to, I still encourage you to check in every now and then. If you can, take part in the events and conversations, to learn from the stories of those who have paved the way, and to continue pushing for progress in your own spaces of influence. Together, we can honor the past while we resist an unjust and inequitable future. ■

## Our Achievements



**Dr. Gerard Costa** contributed two chapters and co-edited the new book *Uniting Infant Mental Health and the Pyramid Model: Connecting Principles and Practices to Improve Outcomes*.

**Dr. Brad van Eeden-Moorefield** (right) attended the First International Conference on Strong Blended Families in Malta. He presented a session titled *"Building Strong Step-families Around the World"* with colleagues Dr. Francesca Adler-Baeder from Auburn University and Brian Higginbotham from Utah State University.



# Advancing Social Justice and Professional Practice: My Journey with the Institute for Families at Rutgers University

By Rebecca Swann-Jackson, PhD, EdM

In 2013, I joined Cohort 2 of the Family Science and Human Development doctoral program as a part-time student. At the time, I was a married mom of two boys (ages 2 and 6) and a full-time Senior Research Associate at the Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services (CREEHS) at Montclair State University. I had been a program evaluator and applied researcher of educational programs for about ten years and would have described myself as an early-mid career professional.

Shortly after earning my PhD, I joined the Institute for Families (IFF) at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. IFF is dedicated to educating child and family-serving professionals, reaching over 15,000 state workforce members annually. We provide training, technical assistance, and education through collaborations with NJ public agencies, community-based organizations, national thought leaders, and individuals with lived experiences.

Our institutional credo emphasizes evidence-based and culturally responsive programming, equitable and inclusive practices, and the values of diversity and belonging. Our mission is to advance the professional practice and knowledge base of individuals and organizations, creating brighter futures for children, youth, and their caregivers.

At IFF, I lead research, program planning, needs assessment, and evaluation projects to identify best practices and emerging topics for educating human services professionals. I work closely with state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families, Department of Human Services - Division of Family Development, Office of New Americans, Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority (NJ MIHIA), and Department of Community Affairs.

My work spans multiple social justice areas, including language access, child welfare, homelessness and housing insecurity, equity and anti-racism, perinatal health, substance misuse, adolescence, parenting, child support, and early childhood education. For example, I am collaborating with NJ MIHIA and a team of experienced doulas to design a curriculum for full-spectrum doulas aligned with Nurture NJ, which aims to ensure equity in maternal and infant health outcomes for Black and brown women and reduce overall maternal and infant mortality and morbidity in the state. I regularly present my work at professional conferences such as the American Evaluation Association, UCONN Training Institutes, National Staff Development and Training Association,

and Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association, preferring this mode of dissemination over manuscript publication.

Within the School of Social Work (SSW), I also serve as an elected member of our school's [Inclusion, Intersectionality, Diversity, Equity and Advancement \(IIDEA\)](#) committee, tasked with implementing the SSW's strategic plan.

I am privileged that my work at IFF allows me to continue my advocacy and service efforts. I am part of a task force with the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF), designing a racial equity learning pathway for child welfare professionals across the state. The task force is reviewing existing and emerging learning/training opportunities around racial equity, supervision and coaching, and leadership, and designing new material.

This work is led and facilitated by Harvesting Opportunities for People Everywhere, LLC (HOPE LLC). Once complete, the structured and transformative Racial Equity Learning Pathway will equip DCF staff with the tools to understand racial equity and actively shift behaviors, mindsets, and practices that perpetuate racial inequities in the child welfare system. The ultimate goal is for DCF to lead the way in fostering a racially equitable and healing-centered organization.

Outside of Rutgers, I serve as a member of Montclair's Family Science and Human Development Social Justice Advisory Board. I also maintain a relationship with the Center for Parent and Teen Communication at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, collaborating on the development and evaluation of a Parenting Supports and Teen Enrichment Program at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia.

My work is incredibly rewarding, focusing on the immediate application of research to professional practice and identifying methods and procedures that improve how human services professionals support NJ's most vulnerable children and families. IFF's staff includes instructional designers, subject matter experts, social workers, and human services specialists. We frequently seek staff for various positions. Please keep our institute in mind as you look for opportunities in our field: <https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/about/careers>. ■

*Rebecca Swann-Jackson is a PhD alumni representative on the FSHD Social Justice Advisory Board.*



# Women's History Month



For 2025, the National Women's History Alliance (NWHHA) proudly presents the theme **"Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations."**

This theme celebrates the collective strength and influence of women who have dedicated their lives to education, mentorship, and leadership. Through their efforts, they have served as an inspiration for all generations — both past and present.



## IMPORTANCE & RELEVANCE

Throughout history, the process of information sharing has been a powerful catalyst for change. An honest, open examination of new insights and knowledge can create a framework for collaboration. This, in turn, promotes the well-being of groups, businesses, communities, and society as a whole.

From classrooms to boardrooms, and from grassroots movements to global initiatives, women educators and leaders have played a pivotal role in nurturing minds and inspiring transformative action.

Our 2025 theme spotlights the contributions women have made to the American educational system, the free marketplace of ideas, and the very fabric of our democracy.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- **Honor:** Recognize the achievements and contributions of women educators, mentors, and leaders.
- **Inspire:** Motivate all generations to pursue education and leadership roles.
- **Educate:** Raise awareness about the unheralded legacies of women from every walk of life, highlighting their unique contributions and diverse backgrounds, including socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, abilities, and personal experiences.
- **Unite:** Bring together communities to explore, share, and celebrate women's history and achievements.
- **Envision:** Create a blueprint for the future that honors our foremothers and builds bridges for the next generation of women.



[www.nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org](http://www.nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org)

## Career & Internship Insights

### FSHD's New Internship Advisor



FSHD is excited to introduce you to Angel Cruz, the new Career & Internship Advisor for our students in the Family Services concentration. Angel can guide you through the entire internship process. Most students complete the internship in their last semester, but it's never too early to learn what's involved!

Contact him at [CruzAn@montclair.edu](mailto:CruzAn@montclair.edu),

973-655-7903, or in the Student Success Center, University Hall first floor, Suite 1180.

### New Internship Requirements

After much consideration, the FSHD Department has revised the FSHD 409 Internship requirements from 9 credits to 6 credits, and from 300 hours to 200 hours, effective Fall 2025. Also, in an effort to streamline the Internship coordination processes, we have eliminated the "First Step" form. Eligible students will now receive outreach emails and information from CCHL's Career & Internship Services staff to help begin and facilitate their internship site search. Students may also reach out directly to Angel Cruz, Career & Internship Advisor, at [CruzAn@montclair.edu](mailto:CruzAn@montclair.edu) for assistance at any time.

### Looking for an On-Campus Job?

**Wednesday, March 5**

**1:00-3:30pm**

**Student Center Ballrooms**

The On-Campus Job Fair offers students the opportunity to meet with on-campus employers interested in hiring various part-time positions. [Register via Handshake!](#)

### Career & Internship Fair

**Thursday, March 20**

**1:00pm-4:00pm**

**University Hall Conference Center (7th floor)**

Launch your career and gain experience through a full-time job or internship. Students of all levels are invited to network with 65+ employers in a wide variety of industries.

The fair is open to all students, alumni, and community members. Dress professionally; visit [Rocky's Closet](#) for free business attire! Registration is required through [Handshake](#). ■

[Click here for all CCHL Career Events and Resume Drop-in Hours](#)

## Congratulations to our Winter 2025 FSHD Grads



Aristy, Grace S.

Beeks, Jean-Marie M.

Bello, Angela

Cabrera, Gabriela

Church, Jessica M.

Considine, Abigail L.

Cordova, Stephanie

DeLuca, Diana M.

Duncan-Munnerlyn, Itaya N

Elmahy, Mena G.

Fico, Isabella V.

Gavilano, Rafaela E.

Jimenez, Kimberly M.

Lobelo, Vivian C.

Lopez, Melanie N.

Lynch, Jillian M.

Matos, Yenny E.

Montano, Jordyn E.

Morfa, Jayleen M.

Parikh, Sonia D.

Pena, Pamela L.

Perez, Sofia L.

Quartuccio, Gabriella

Rahmey, David J.

Ramsthaler, Irish G.

Rivera, Liz

Salazar, Matthew J.

Sanchez, Anavelis C.

Soto, Caroline

Squeo, Alyssa M.

Vadi, Jessica C.

Valido, Mia N.

Wear, Jenna T.

Weber-Zazzu, Macy C.

Wells, Melissa

Wright, Alana M.

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