



FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2025

FSHD Introduces Fully Online Degree

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Family Science and Human Development has proudly become one of Montclair State University's fully online degrees offered through the popular *Montclair Online* program.

Beginning in Fall 2025, new transfers and readmitted students with 45+ college credits who enroll in FSHD's **Family and Human Services online concentration** can design fully remote, flexible schedules to balance coursework with their



busy lives, while still engaging with faculty and classmates.

The FSHD courses designed for *Montclair Online* are offered in 7-week sessions throughout the fall, spring and summer terms, providing year-round access to education and a faster path

to graduation. All university courses with section numbers in the 50s are specifically reserved for the online program.

In-person and synchronous online classes continue to be offered for students who prefer a face-to-face educational experience, including all students in the School Settings concentration, which has been renamed *Child and Lifespan Development* as of Fall 2025.

Why FSHD?

FSHD is an ideal major for anyone interested in supporting the well-being of people at all ages and stages of life. Students gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the cultural, community and socioeconomic factors that shape how individuals, families and communities develop.

The FSHD curriculum prepares students for high-demand jobs in human services, teaching, mental health, non-profit organizations, community advocacy, research, and many other areas. FSHD also provides an exceptional foundation for graduate study in fields including social work, public health, counseling and law.

Upon graduation, students in the Family and Human Services concentration can earn an additional credential as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) through the National Council on Family Relations.

Is Online for Me?

Montclair Online builds connections to campus resources and professional networks within and beyond the boundaries of the university to advance access to educational opportunities, upward mobility, and global competitiveness. Rolling admission is open throughout the year. To explore this online opportunity, visit [Online Bachelor's in FSHD](#) or email online@montclair.edu. ■

Department Chair's Corner

As we reopen our doors to the new academic year of 2025-2026, on behalf of the staff and faculty of Family Science and Human Development, I would like to warmly welcome back our returning students, and say hello and a huge welcome to those joining our department for the first time. Welcome to the FSHD Family!

Whether you are joining us as a freshman, a transfer student, or virtually via Montclair Online, you are now part of a vibrant, social-justice and inclusive-driven community committed to understanding, supporting, and empowering all families, individuals, and children, across all stages of life. I am so glad you are here.

This academic year starts in the midst of particularly challenging times that impact family life

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Dr. Lyndal Khaw

DATES TO REMEMBER

Welcome Back!

September 1
Labor Day—no classes

September 3
Ph.D. student orientation

September 8
Last day to add/drop

September 27
Homecoming

September Celebrates Healthy Aging: Exploring Family Resilience, Aging, and AI

by Dr. Soyoung Lee, FSHD Associate Chair for Social Justice

This summer, I had the exciting opportunity to engage in a global conversation on family resilience and aging in the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) through an online seminar hosted in Indonesia. The discussion brought together participants from around the world to examine how AI can both support and challenge the goal of promoting family resilience for aging family members.

One truth we all share is that the world is getting older—some countries more rapidly than others. Aging is a universal experience, yet it often remains a “hush-hush” topic due to stressors and stereotypes associated with it (a.k.a. ageism). Our conversation revealed that attitudes toward aging—and toward AI’s role in elder care—vary widely across cultures, families, and individuals.



An aging man is introduced to a robot companion in the BBC video clip “Can Robots Take Care of the Elderly?”

Participants shared mixed feelings: AI technologies can make life more convenient, but many still prefer human care for their aging loved ones. This ambivalence reflects a broader societal tension—balancing the benefits of technological innovation with the deeply human need for connection and empathy in caregiving.

If this topic sparks your curiosity, our department offers excellent courses that explore aging and its relevance to our lives:

- FSHD 202 Adult Development and Aging
- FSHD 340 Aging and Social Policy
- FSHD 360 Families in later Life

You can even take these courses toward a [Gerontology minor](#). For more details, contact the program coordinator, Dr. Ashley Ermer at ErmerA@montclair.edu.

However, before diving into making a serious academic commitment, you might enjoy exploring these interesting media resources:

- [The Future of Elder Care in Denmark](#)
- [Can Robots Take Care of the Elderly?](#)
- [Robot & Frank \(2012\)](#)

These examples illustrate how AI is already being used—or imagined—for elder care worldwide. Some countries are moving quickly toward these technological solutions, prompting important questions about how we adapt to these changes.

As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) describes in its [Human Development Report 2025](#), development depends less on what AI can do, and more on how we mobilize human imagination to reshape economies and societies to make the most of it.

So let’s think together creatively about how AI can serve people and support healthy aging—strengthening families, enriching lives, and enhancing the human services profession. Our goal should be to use these tools to improve lives, without limiting our vision or capacities to what AI alone can offer. ■

*“Getting older is a fascinating thing.
The older you get, the older you want to get.”*

– musician Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones

Celebrating Hispanic Culture

Our nation's rich Hispanic history and culture are commemorated annually during Hispanic Heritage Month. The 2025 theme, *Collective Heritage: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future*, emphasizes the importance of Hispanic and Latino traditions and contributions, while also looking forward to their continued impact on society.

**"One of the greatest things
you have in life
is that no one has the authority
to tell you what you want to be."**

**~ Jaime Escalante, teacher and
subject of the movie *Stand and Deliver***

First introduced in 1968 by President Lyndon Johnson as a week-long event, the celebration was expanded to a full month in 1989 under President Ronald Reagan. It kicks off

each year on September 15, the date that five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua—gained independence from Spain two centuries ago.

The Latino presence in America spans centuries, according to the National Museum of the American Latino, and this population has been an integral part of shaping our nation since the Revolutionary War in 1775. Through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Treaty of Paris that ended the Mexican-American and Spanish-American Wars respectively, the United States gained territories in the Southwest and Puerto Rico, further expanding the presence of Hispanic Americans. Today, Latinos continue to fuel our economy and enrich our nation as entrepreneurs, executives, athletes, artists, scientists, public servants, and much more.

According to the US Department of State, Hispanic Americans are the largest minority group in the United States, with a population over 64 million. Montclair State University ranks among the top 100 Hispanic Serving Institutions in the nation, and celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with programs presented by the [Office for Hispanic Initiatives](#). ■

Department Chair's Corner

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in a multitude of ways. All around the country, communities are navigating economic uncertainty, political divisions, changes in educational policy, and persistent inequities that deeply affect the everyday well-being of those we serve. While it is easy to feel super discouraged by the news cycle and what we see happening every day, these realities are also reminders of why the work we do here in FSHD matters so much—and why your choice to invest in an education in Family Science and Human Development is not only timely, but essential. This field provides a sound knowledge base, rooted in applied science to help you understand and address the problems that are most pervasive in families and communities of today and of the future.

Although many changes are happening, our department has still not lost sight of our mission. The mission of FSHD is to *"strengthen the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities, over the life course, using a multidisciplinary approach, especially those efforts aimed at reducing social inequities. Central to our mission is an unwavering commitment to inclusion and social justice."* In our classrooms, research, and community-engaged work, we continue to prepare educators, leaders, advocates, and practitioners who can think critically, act compassionately, and work collaboratively for a more just world. Your voices, ideas, and determination will be at the heart of this work.

I wish everyone a productive and successful year ahead. Don't hesitate to stop by our main suite in University Hall 4144 anytime this semester to say hello and meet our wonderful staff and faculty.

Be safe and be kind. ■

FSHD is...



Relationship-
Focused



Evidence-
Based



Strengths-
Oriented



Preventive



Applied

Suicide Prevention Month

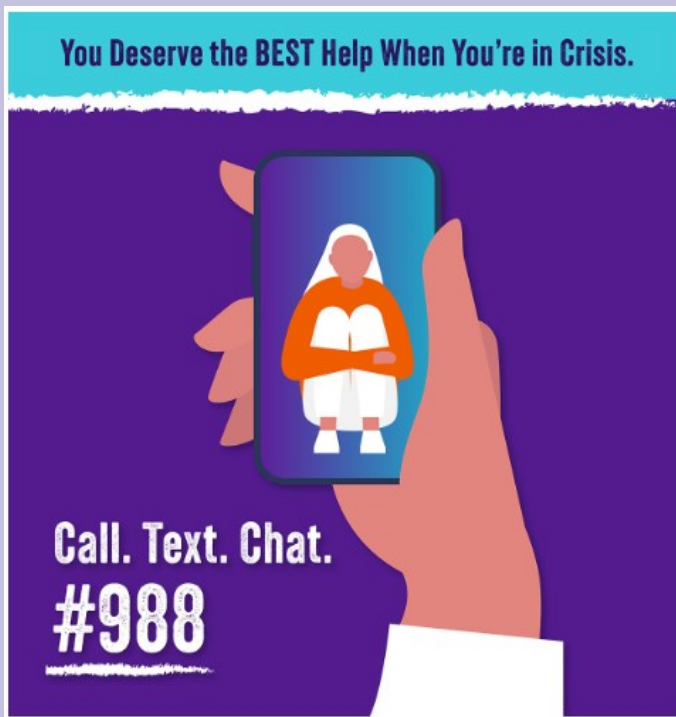
September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to promote hope, and normalize help-seeking. Suicide affects millions of people every year, yet too many struggle in silence. Whether someone is facing challenges or supporting a friend or loved one, every voice matters.

With the theme, *Changing the Narrative on Suicide*, this month is dedicated to recognizing the warning signs for suicide, encouraging open conversations about mental health, and connecting people to proven treatment and resources, including the Suicide Prevention Hotline with the simple, easy-to-remember number: **988**.

Within the Montclair State University community, support is available at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):

- Call 973-655-5211 or make [an appointment online](#)
- Have a confidential, informal visit (in person or on Zoom) with a mental health professional through the [Let's Talk](#) program.
- Access [free teletherapy](#) through the university's partnership with UWill, a leading student mental health service.
- In an emergency or crisis situation outside business hours, call the University Police at 973-655-5222.

By standing together in strength, dignity, hope, and purpose, we can make a difference. We can help save lives. ■



Source: SAMHSA.gov

9/8/2025 Deadline for Academic Assignment Tasks

All students must complete the **Academic Engagement** assignment in each of your Canvas courses (even if your professor is not using Canvas). The required assignment simply asks you to write a brief description about what you hope to learn from each course.

Developed to support learning and engagement, this task also meets compliance requirements of the U.S. Department of Education. It verifies that you are attending the course, and enables the Financial Aid Office to release your federal financial aid funds, if applicable.



The deadline to submit the assignment is **Monday, September 8, 2025**. Log into Canvas, click on each class that is in session, select the *Assignment* or *Module* tab, and complete the *Academic Engagement* activity. Remember, if you are registered for 7-week courses in Session C, those academic assignments cannot be completed until the courses begin on October 27. ■

Save the Date:

Community Health Expo

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

2:00-4:00 pm | Student Center Ballrooms

The Health Expo enables students to meet and network with employers in community health fields and explore the job opportunities available in those organizations. Registration opens on September 8 in Handshake. ■

Family Science and Human Development

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@ Family Science & Human Development at Montclair State University

How We Spent Our Summer Breaks



Dr. Lyndal Khaw cruised to the Bahamas with her family and relished in the incredibly blue waters and sandy beaches of Paradise Island.



Dr. Ashley Ermer and her family traveled to Ohio for a wedding with extended family.



Dr. Soyoung Lee's family visited the Children's Museum at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Austria where they were instantly transformed into a royal family.



Dr. Gerry Costa and his wife Kellie relaxed with their toes in the sand at Deerfield Beach, Florida.



Lisa Mills and her family absorbed the sun-soaked beauty of Hawaii on the islands of Maui and O'ahu.



Dr. Olena Nesteruk enjoyed a slower pace of life while spending time with her husband and daughters.



Shannon Bellum enjoyed sightseeing in New York with family visiting from Texas.



Dr. Miriam Linver enjoyed quality time with her family in Tel Aviv.



Dr. Leslie Moorman and her family cherished their time making memories together in Barnegat Light.