

FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

MARCH 2026

Collective Efforts Drive Women's Equality

International Women's Day — celebrated around the globe every year on March 8 during Women's History Month — is a pivotal moment to focus the world's attention on parity and empowerment for women. It is a time to reflect on progress, call for change, and celebrate the determination of those who have altered the face of gender equality.

Interestingly, IWD features two themes, both aiming to advance women's equality from different angles. The United Nations sets an official theme focusing on global policy and human rights, providing a framework for international cooperation among governments and NGOs. The [International Women's Day website](#) provides a broader, more actionable slogan designed to be used by corporations and communities for events and awareness campaigns. Let's explore both 2026 themes.

UN Calls for Justice

The 2026 United Nations' global theme for International Women's Day is **Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls**. It calls for the dismantling of all barriers to equal justice: discriminatory laws, weak legal protections, harmful practices and social norms that erode women's rights.



According to the UN, no country has yet closed the legal gaps between genders. Women worldwide still have only 64 percent of the legal rights that men hold. In fundamental areas of life — work, money, safety, family, property, mobility, business, and retirement — the law systematically disadvantages women.

No matter how deeply rooted the sexism or how discouraging the politics, women refuse to step back. Instead, they climb together for the rights and empowerment of all women and girls. IWD amplifies their collective determination.

"The story of women's struggle for equality," said world-renowned feminist/activist Gloria Steinem, "belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."

Contributing to women's advancement creates a more supportive and interconnected world. When women thrive, we all rise. ■

Giving to Gain

Women's History Month and International Women's Day invite Family Science and Human Development majors to recognize women not only as individuals, but as leaders shaping more just and sustainable futures. Across communities and continents, women are advancing environmental, economic, and social well-being and insisting that gender equality is a fundamental human right.

Many lead multilingual, transnational lives, navigating migration, caregiving across borders, and advocacy in more than one language. These experiences are not only personal journeys but also powerful forms of global career development that connect local communities to worldwide movements for equity and opportunity.

This year's IWD theme, **Give to Gain**, encourages us to translate values into action — at work, at home, and in our communities. When we give to women and girls, everyone benefits. The campaign calls on us to contribute in concrete ways: offering respect, visibility, mentoring, resources, and opportunities; advocating for safety, fair pay, and recognition; and creating spaces where women's voices and leadership can flourish.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

March 1
Priority deadline to file FAFSA

March 7-15
Spring Break

March 18
Career & Internship Fair

March 20
Registration begins for Fall 2026 and Winter 2027

March 23
Last day to add/drop for Spring 2026 Session C

That's What She Said




“Don’t think about making women fit the world — think about making the world fit women.”

Gloria Steinem




“I HAVE LEARNED YOU ARE NEVER TOO SMALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

GRETA THUNBERG



“WE CANNOT SUCCEED WHEN HALF OF US ARE HELD BACK.”

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



“Always stay true to yourself ... never let what somebody says distract you from your goals.”

Michelle Obama

Congratulations to our Winter 2026 FSHD Grads



Aceves-Garcia, Victoria Elena	Nascimento Alves, Thamisir
Alder, Maggie E.	Oviedo, Leslie A.
Barge, Emily N.	Pallero, Aliyah D.
Bautista, Oscaterin B.	Perez, Cecilia R.
Calleja, Isabel J.	Pico-Alzate, Valeria C.
Casey, Kate E.	Proenza, Maggie
Costanzo, Paige A.	Qureshi, Masuma Z.
Cruz, Nelson	Ramirez, Frances S.
Davis, Krystle	Reisher, Amanda A.
Ejaz, Mamona	Rivera, Crystal L.
Flecha, Alaysha	Roha Burgos, Domenica V.
Garcia, Arianna D.	Sadeddin, Jameela R.
Giles, Jestiny	Samarathunga, Dilani M.
Harris, Nicole	Schaefer, Madison V.
Hinostroza, Nilda J.	Shepetofsky, Jason R.
Howard, Cookie J.	Sibello, Alexa M.
Lewis, Samiyah	Szymborski, Kaitlyn N.
Lihmaidi, Rana	Tejada, Arleen E.
Lucci, Gianna K.	Vamvakaris, Jennifer F.
Maiorino, Cecelia J.	Verna, Nadine
Maslyn, Sara E.	Weglarz, Melisa



FSHD's newest doctoral graduates, Dr. Krystle Davis (second from left) and Dr. Nadine Verna (second from right), celebrate their achievements at the January 2026 Commencement Ceremony with their professors, Dr. Jason Williams (left), and Dr. Jennifer Urban (right).

Meet Our Alumni

Major : Family Science & Human Development / Minor : Psychology

Renee Sahar

About Me

I'm a school counselor (elementary level). I provide short term individual and group counseling on various topics such as emotional, social, & familial issues.

Favorite Part

Making a difference in my students' lives everyday! No two days are ever the same as a school counselor and I love how it never gets boring! It also makes me happy to see their smiling faces everyday, and give them the love, care, and support they need.



Class of '19

Advice For Students

"The struggle you feel today creates the success you'll enjoy tomorrow." Being a school counselor is not an easy career, but it is extremely rewarding and fun!

Our Achievements

Dr. Robert Reid and **Dr. Pauline Garcia-Reid** met in Washington, DC, with representatives from the offices of Senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim to highlight the real-world impact of Project C.O.P.E., their long-standing substance use prevention work in Paterson, NJ. They underscored how government-funding supports critical front-line public health programs, and conveyed the serious consequences to communities like Paterson if the funding is not sustained.

They also attended the CADCA Annual National Leadership Forum in Maryland, meeting with other anti-drug coalition leaders to share evidence-based strategies that create resilient communities with lasting impact.

Dr. Soyoung Lee presented a session titled, *Preparing Students to Work with Diverse Families and Children: Teaching and Learning about AI as a Tool* at the university's Faculty and Staff Showcase on AI. ■

Social Justice Initiatives — Women's History Month

Giving to Gain

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For FSHD faculty, staff, students and families — especially those with multilingual, multicultural, or transnational backgrounds — *Give to Gain* can be lived out through research, community engagement, and everyday relationships that uplift women locally and globally.

Students entering careers in policy, education, research, and community practice can treat their own family stories and cultural roots as professional assets. Migration histories, multilingual skills, and cross-cultural experiences deepen our capacity to serve diverse families and to promote inclusive, equitable systems.

At the same time, this month reminds us to honor the women whose care, labor, and resilience laid the groundwork for our opportunities — grandmothers, aunts, mentors, and community elders whose contributions often go unrecognized. Reaching out with a call, message, or simple expression of gratitude can be a meaningful way to acknowledge their impact.

We can also help cultivate this mindset in the next generation by sharing stories that highlight girls and women as changemakers. Children's books, such as *Malala's Magic Pencil* by Malala Yousafzai, *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly, the *Little People, Big Dreams* series, *Shaking Things Up* by Susan Hood, and *Mama Miti* by Donna Jo Napoli, introduce young readers to global leaders and everyday heroes.

These narratives encourage respect for women's contributions, appreciation of cultural roots, and solidarity across

To Achieve Justice, We Need More Women in Justice

Women remain significantly underrepresented in the judiciary, particularly in senior leadership positions.

On March 10, International Day of Women Judges champions the theme, *Women in Justice, Women for Justice*.



As agents of change, women judges bring different perspectives and experiences to our justice system. In leadership positions, they help strengthen accountability, disrupt collusion and fight corruption. The mere presence of women judges enhances legitimacy, sending a powerful sign that our courts are open and accessible to those who seek justice.

On March 10, we promote the full and equal participation of women at all levels of the judiciary, to ensure that women and all people are met with fairness and equality before the law. ■

languages, nations, and generations. You may find the list of recommended books from the following websites:

[Brightly](#) [Teach Starter](#) [The Core Collaborative](#)

As we celebrate Women's History Month and International Women's Day, consider your own *Give to Gain* action. What will you offer — time, mentorship, advocacy, or care — so that together we can build more just and nurturing families, campuses, and communities? ■

Career & Internship Fair

Are you ready to gain work experience or launch your career with a job or internship? The Office for Experiential Education and Career Connections invites students of all levels (and alumni too!) to the Career & Internship Fair where you can network with employers from a wide variety of industries.

Wednesday, March 18

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

University Hall Conference Center, 7th Floor

Bring lots of resumes and your Montclair student ID.

[Registration is required through Handshake.](#) ■

Family Science and Human Development

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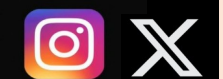
[FSHD Website](#)

Dr. Lyndal Khaw, Chair

Lisa Mills, Newsletter Editor



@ Family Science & Human Development at Montclair State University



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