

# FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## Department Newsletter

APRIL 2026

### April Events Underscore Protection and Prevention

#### Pinwheels for Child Abuse Prevention

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment, yet too many families face challenges that put their children’s well-being at risk. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to take action to support strong families, thriving children, and healthier communities.

The Family Science and Human Development Department supports the national **Pinwheels for Prevention** awareness campaign, championed by Prevent Child Abuse America. Look for our twirling blue-and-white pinwheel garden outside University Hall.

Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, we can equip parents with the proper tools and help stop child abuse before it happens. ■

#### Red Sand Project Fights Human Trafficking

The **Red Sand Project** is a global initiative that raises awareness about human trafficking and modern-day slavery using powerful imagery. On April 15 at 2:00pm, the Montclair community will pour red sand into sidewalk cracks around the Student Center Quad, symbolizing the vulnerable and marginalized individuals who often “fall through the cracks” of society and become targets for exploitation. Filling the spaces with bright red sand creates a striking visual reminder that trafficking victims often remain unseen and unheard. (See info on page 6.)

Sponsored by the Family Science and Human Development Department in collaboration with several other groups, this event also features the screening of a documentary on human trafficking survivors at 2:45 pm in Calcia Hall 140, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. ■

#### Denim Day Raises Sexual Assault Awareness

In 1999, Italy’s all-male Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction, claiming the victim was wearing tight jeans and must have helped her attacker remove them, thereby indicating consent. In protest, female politicians wore denim jeans to work, carrying signs that read *Jeans: An Alibi for Rape*. Their uprising inspired the international **Denim Day** campaign during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April.

Montclair’s Denim Day on April 29 at the amphitheater from 9am-12pm will feature victim stories, DJ music, crafts, and a campus walk. As one of 30+ partners of the event, the Family Science and Human Development Department will be tabling with denim giveaways and a hands-on activity. Put on your denim and come out to raise awareness and support survivors of sexual violence. ■

### Department Chair’s Corner

Happy April! As we cross over the hump into the second half of the Spring semester, it is a great opportunity to reflect on the last 11 weeks or so. For some of us, these weeks flew by without a hitch, but for others, these may have been the longest 11 weeks ever. Give yourself a pat on the back for making it this far, take a deep breath, and keep yourself going for just a few weeks more. It will be here before you know it, so make the most of it, and make it count. You’ve got this!



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

The Department of Family Science and Human Development wrapped up a pretty productive March, with the FSHD Conference just a few Fridays ago, organized by our very own FSHD Graduate Student Advisory Board along with their advisor, Dr. Brad van Eeden-Moorefield. As I sat and listened to our students share their research with much enthusiasm, I simply can’t help but swell with pride in the

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### DATES TO REMEMBER

**April 3**  
Good Friday—No classes

**April 15**  
Red Sand Project Day

**April 23**  
World’s Fair Day

**April 23-26**  
Family Weekend

**April 29**  
Denim Day

## Cheerful Notecards Bring Smiles to Older Adults

FSDH hosted a note-writing event on *National Letter to an Elder Day* to put smiles on the faces of adults in long-term care centers.

Armed with hundreds of blank notecards and coloring pages, we set up shop in the Student Center lobby at lunchtime and asked everyone who passed by to stop and write a quick message to someone they've never met. Something as simple as receiving a handwritten letter can be an essential piece of healthy living for many older adults.

In true Red Hawk fashion, nearly 200 people took the time to jot a cheerful note offering love, encouragement, humor and even creative drawings! The cards were delivered to Complete Care at Chestnut Hill in Passaic, NJ, and Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in Saddle Brook, NJ, two long-term care and rehabilitation centers where the residents were thrilled to receive such joyful mail! ■



## Social Justice Initiatives

### Black Maternal Health Week

April 11-17, 2026

Black Maternal Health Week is an annual campaign led by the Black Mamas Matter Alliance to amplify the voices, perspectives and lived experiences of Black mothers.

The week intentionally begins on April 11, the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights, securing the opportunity to join organizations worldwide in advocating for the elimination of maternal mortality.

This year's theme, *Rooted in Justice & Joy*, acknowledges the campaign's 10-year anniversary and reflects the strength and resilience of Black-led reproductive health organizations that cultivate change by challenging systemic oppression, reproductive injustices, and health inequities.

This milestone celebrates the power of the collective movement, shaping a liberated future rooted in justice, healing, and joy. ■



Source: [BlkMaternalHealthWeek.com](https://www.BlkMaternalHealthWeek.com)



## Where Prevention Begins

By Reham Bader, MSW



I still think about the moments that never make it into reports. The hesitation before someone shares what they've been through, the quiet calculations people make to stay safe, the strength it takes to ask for help. My time working in a domestic violence agency shaped how I understand sexual violence and child abuse. I don't see them as isolated incidents, but as patterns that continue because of silence, stigma, and gaps in the systems meant to protect people.

Too often, we respond only after harm has already happened. We step in with crisis services, counseling, and legal support, but prevention asks more of us. It pushes us to act earlier and with more intention. It challenges us to look at the conditions that allow violence to continue in the first place.

In real life, prevention is not always comfortable. It looks like having honest conversations that people sometimes avoid. It means talking with young people about consent and boundaries before anything happens. It means helping families recognize early warning signs. It also means creating spaces where people feel safe enough to speak and know they will be believed. Through community outreach, I have seen how access to culturally responsive education and resources can shift not just individual experiences, but the way entire communities understand these issues.

A trauma informed approach is critical, but it has to be more than something we say. It needs to show up in how services are designed and delivered. People are often dealing with multiple barriers at once, including language, immigration concerns, and stigma. Supporting them takes more than immediate help. It requires building trust, being consistent, and treating every person with dignity. It also requires us to reflect on our own biases and the systems we are part of.

For students entering Family Science and Human Development, this work calls for both compassion and clarity. You will come across systems that fall short and moments where there is no clear answer. In those situations, your role is not to have everything figured out. It is to show up, listen without judgment, and advocate for people whose voices are often overlooked. Look for opportunities that push you to grow, build both clinical and community based skills, and stay connected to the values that brought you to this work.

Prevention is not one program or initiative. It is an ongoing commitment to changing culture, strengthening communities, and addressing inequities. Sexual violence and child abuse continue where silence exists and support is out of reach. Our responsibility, as social workers and future practitioners, is to break that silence and help build systems that center both safety and healing. ■

*Reham Bader, MSW, is a community representative on the FSHD Social Justice Advisory Board. She is the Director of Community Health and Well-Being at the Arab American Family Support Center.*



### Anonymous Writing Workshop for Sexual Trauma Survivors

*TPT workshops provide safe spaces for survivors of sexual trauma to practice writing as a transformative and healing process. This two-hour workshop helps sexual trauma survivors take the power back through writing.*

*Survivors will come together to write anonymously in a safe, online discussion forum while building community.*

**Monday, April 6**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

Scan the QR code to register  
for the workshop  
[or click this link](#)



To learn more, go to [textpowertelling.org](http://textpowertelling.org)  
or email:

Jackie Regan @ [reganj@montclair.edu](mailto:reganj@montclair.edu)

# Meet Our Alumni

Major: Family Science & Human Development / Minor: African American Studies



Class of '21

## Maya Joyner

### About Me

I'm a Crisis Intervention Specialist with Children's Mobile Response, a 24/7 program helping families de-escalate youth in crisis. For up to 8 weeks, we stabilize and connect them to services like in-home therapy, behavioral assistance, and parental support.

### Favorite Part

That no two children are the same. Even if they are from the same family, each child needs to be cared for in their own unique way. I really enjoy the fact that the families allow us in their home and to temporarily be a part of their dynamic.

### Advice For Students

*Give yourself time.*

## World's Fair Day

Thursday, April 23

12:00—3:00 pm

Alumni Green



Each year as the semester draws to an end, the campus community joins together for World's Fair Day to celebrate the rich diversity and culture of our students and employees.

It's a chance to taste a variety of ethnic foods, play traditional games, learn about different cultures, and hear music from around the world — all shared by the university's clubs, organizations, offices and academic departments.

This is one of the best events on campus. Don't miss it! ■

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

scholarly work that our doctoral students do and the important issues in society they are contributing to, such as aging and health, parenting children with disabilities, and intimate partner violence. I am also in awe of all of our doctoral faculty advisors who give their all to inspire, mentor, and support their students' journeys from novice scholars to active contributors in the field of family science and human development. It reminds me that what we do here matters and I am so proud of our FSHD family. Congrats to the GSAB team for a successful 2nd Annual Conference! (See photo on page 5.)

April is certainly looking to be a busy month! In addition to participating in the upcoming Accepted Students Days and Denim Day, FSHD is co-organizing the Red Sand Project, with a documentary screening and panel on April 15 starting at 2 pm on the front steps of the Student Center (see flyer on page 6). The Red Sand Project is a part of a national movement that brings awareness to the global crisis of human trafficking. We will spread red sand through sidewalk cracks around the Student Center Quad, bringing visibility to all of the children, women, men, and communities who have fallen through the cracks because of human trafficking.

Following this portion of the event, head over to Calcia Hall 140 around 2:30 pm for a short documentary viewing of *Hope: Stories of Survival*, produced by the Salvation Army, followed by a panel discussion with our community partners and a survivor-leader. Snacks will be provided and everyone is welcome, so bring friends! A shoutout to our wonderful Montclair partners, the Global Center for Human Trafficking and the Office of Community Resilience and Officer Wellness, as well as to our community partners, the Salvation Army and the Red Sand Project.

We have lots on the horizon coming up before we wrap up another successful Spring semester, so stay tuned and join us when you can. I wish everyone a great rest of the semester, and remind you to always hold space for self-care, kindness towards others, and a peaceful and just world. ■

## Our Achievements



*The FSHD Graduate Student Advisory Board hosted its second Annual Conference in March, creating a platform for our PhD students and faculty to discuss their research projects and trumpet the impactful work they are conducting within our communities. Chaired by doctoral student Anglin Thevaraja, the conference featured presentations by seven aspiring PhDs and five faculty members, while allowing plenty of time to engage, share ideas and wisdom, and learn from each other in meaningful ways. FSHD extends gratitude and congratulations to the Graduate Student Advisory Board and all who were part of this successful event.*



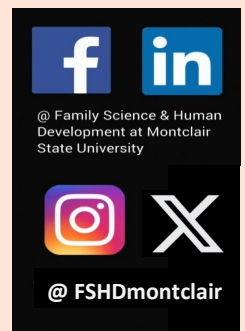
*Members of the Research on Youth Thriving and Evaluation (RYTE) Institute presented at the Advancing Character Across Education Conference in Phoenix, AZ. Pictured (l-r) are Dr. Jennifer Urban (professor), Anglin Thevaraja (doc student), Yasmine Perry (doc student), Dr. Elyse Postlewaite (senior research scientist), and Elaine Les (doc student).*



## Family Science and Human Development

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Dr. Lyndal Khaw, Chair  
Lisa Mills, Newsletter Editor



# For Those who Fall through the Cracks

## Red Sand Project and a Salvation Army Documentary



Join us during Human Trafficking Prevention Month as we spread red sand in sidewalk cracks on campus.

Symbolizing victims who “fall through the cracks” of society, this powerful imagery sparks our conversation and action against modern slavery and exploitation.

### Wednesday, April 15, 2026

**2:00 - 2:30 pm** Red Sand Project - spreading red sand in sidewalk cracks (Student Center Quad)

**2:45 - 3:45 pm** *Stories of Survival* film screening (Calcia 140)

**3:45 - 5:00 pm** Survivor/Community panel (Calcia 140)

Family Science and  
Human Development  
College for Community Health

Global Center on  
Human Trafficking

Office of Community  
Resilience and  
Officer Wellness



Red  
Sand  
Project