This report highlights activities of the Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services (CREEHS) for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 (FY16), with information on services provided, graduate student development, conference presentations, and staff expertise.

The vision of CREEHS is to be a value-added partner to our clients in the planning, strengthening and sustaining of the services they provide for the health, education and well-being of individuals and their communities.

The mission of CREEHS is to empower and enable professionals to plan and evaluate programs that best serve the broader community and improve people’s lives. CREEHS fulfills this mission by conducting high quality program evaluations, applying innovative and collaborative techniques to bridge the gap between research and practice. This includes building capacity and providing hands-on learning to individuals who serve or will serve the community.

During FY16, CREEHS achieved several notable accomplishments:

• More than $637,000 in earned and collected revenue
• 30 revenue-generating projects commissioned, including 18 funded external contracts and grants (non-MSU clients), and 12 funded internal projects (MSU clients)
• 6 papers presented at national conferences, 2 presentations at statewide meetings
• 6 full-time staff, 6 graduate students, 2 part-time project staff working as part of the CREEHS team
• CREEHS staff service to MSU, including membership on University and College boards, commissions, searches and committees:
  * Institutional Review Board (IRB)
  * President’s Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Diversity
  * Middle States Accreditation Self-Study Working Group
  * African American Caucus
  * CEHS Advisory Group on Social Justice
  * CEHS Advisory Group on English Language Learners
  * CEHS Staff Advisory Committee

Please read about some of the highlights of our FY16 successes on the following pages. On behalf of the CREEHS team, we look forward to continuing to grow the Center’s reputation for high quality community-engaged work, a supportive environment that develops evaluators and applied researchers, ongoing contribution to the University community, and continued success in revenue generation.

Sincerely,

Eden N. Kyse, Ph.D.
Director, CREEHS

Email: kysee@mail.montclair.edu
Phone: (973) 655-7045
Web: montclair.edu/cehs/creehs
Examples of Research and Evaluation Services Provided

In FY16, CREEHS provided a range of services to clients on 30 revenue-generating projects. Select examples of these FY16 services are highlighted below.

For the ShapingNJ Healthy Communities Grant Initiative, CREEHS staff developed a series of reports to share evaluation findings. Each report was tailored to the audience who would use the information. A Report of Findings explains the key findings of the initiative overall. A Highlight of Community Accomplishments provides a snapshot of each of the 30 grant projects. A visual Summary Report offers an at-a-glance of the findings. These reports may be found here.

As part of a project with the Ridgewood Community Center Advisory Board (CCAB), CREEHS worked collaboratively with the CCAB to analyze data from an assessment of the characteristics, assets, needs and future plans of Ridgewood residents, aged 55 and older. Together, CREEHS and CCAB developed an analysis plan based on the CCAB’s key questions and interpreted the results together during a “data party”.

CREEHS developed a social network survey in order to create a network map depicting the support ties between novice teachers for the Newark-Montclair Urban Teacher Residency (NMUTR). This survey was completed by graduates of the program who identified their type of support relationship (pedagogical, professional, logistical, and emotional) with all stakeholders of the program.

CREEHS conducted a needs assessment for the Madison Health Department to gain a better understanding of the characteristics and future plans of residents aged 55 years and older in Madison, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township. The assessment employed a resident survey, focus groups with residents and community partners, and community forums. CREEHS also created an asset map of the three communities.

CREEHS worked with NJ AmeriCorps grantees, through a technical assistance contract with the NJ Department of State, to hone their evaluation designs and plans for measuring program outputs and outcomes.

CREEHS provided proposal development services to the Montclair State University Counseling Program to submit an application for a grant to encourage graduate student fieldwork experiences in organizations that serve youth in underserved communities. CREEHS crafted the evaluation design as well as provided feedback on the project goals and objectives.

CREEHS staff worked collaboratively with the Bloomfield Department of Health and Human Services to support the development of their Community Health Improvement Plan. This work included drafting measurable goals and objectives as well as designing a monitoring plan to track and evaluate key initiatives as they related to the objectives of the plan.

CREEHS developed a scorecard to longitudinally assess the mentoring and induction practices of schools involved in the Being United in Leadership Development (BUILD) project. In the pilot, principals scored their schools’ current mentoring and induction practices in nine categories. After the pilot administration, the scale was modified and operationally defined at each interval, specific to each of the nine categories.
Training and Technical Assistance Services

Throughout FY16, several agencies contracted CREEHS to provide training and technical assistance services, building client capacity, and sharing staff expertise in applied research and program evaluation.

Some examples include:

- *The New Jersey Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program at the New Jersey Department of Health* contracted CREEHS to train WIC managers and coordinators in evaluation design, data collection and data interpretation techniques. The trainings focused on sharing best practices and lessons learned among local WIC agencies.

- CREEHS provided technical assistance and consultation services to both the *New Jersey Department of State* and its AmeriCorps grantees. Formal statewide training events covered logic model development, performance measurement, data collection, and reporting. In addition, CREEHS provided one-on-one consultation to grantees for help with specific measurement and data collection concerns.

- As part of a larger project contracted by *The Community Center of Ridgewood Foundation*, CREEHS staff conducted a training for community advocates on leading community forums. The interactive training emphasized the skills and information necessary to prepare, convene and facilitate community forums.

Conference Presentations

- CREEHS staff presented three papers at the 29th annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association (AEA), the premier national professional conference for evaluators, with total attendance of about 4,000. The presentations were an opportunity to share lessons learned and best practices, promote CREEHS and MSU, and learn from other presenters and attendees. Presentation titles include:
  - *Facilitators and Barriers to Building and Sustaining an Evaluation Center in a Public University*
  - *Strategies for Building Capacity for Evaluation in the Community*
  - *A Step by Step Guide to Collaboratively Developing a Shared Measurement System*

- CREEHS staff presented two papers at the 143rd annual meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the national professional conference for public health researchers and practitioners, with total attendance of over 12,000. Presentation titles include:
  - *Putting the Puzzle Pieces Together in an Active Living and Healthy Eating Micro-Grant Initiative*
  - *Meeting the Evolving Needs of a Local Aging in Place Initiative Through a Collaborative Evaluation Process*

- CREEHS staff conducted a workshop at the 2nd annual meeting of the National Walking Summit, sponsored by America Walks and the Every Body Walk! Collaborative. The workshop, *Walkability Success-o-meter: How to Lead, Measure and Fund Community Change*, provided participants techniques for developing a system of shared measures for action and change in community initiatives in collaboration with partners.

- CREEHS staff presented at the *Building a Culture of Health in New Jersey: Advancing the Population Health Agenda* conference. The presentation, *A Step by Step Guide to Collaboratively Developing a Shared Measurement System*, highlighted the process by which measures to track progress were collaboratively designed for the Eat. Play. Live…Better initiative.
Graduate Student Development

• CREEHS houses Montclair State University’s Graduate Certificate in Program Evaluation. Guided by the Center’s Faculty Advisory Committee and taught by MSU faculty and CREEHS senior staff, the 4-course, 12-month certificate program is grounded in the interdisciplinary and applied evaluation work of CREEHS. The program prepares individuals to meet the growing demand for professionals with evaluation and applied research skills, equipping students to plan programs, measure success, and identify and use data to meet accountability and program improvement needs. In FY16, students in the first cohort completed the certificate program and the second cohort of students began coursework.

• CREEHS hosted six Graduate Assistants in the Center during FY16, providing training and professional development as they contributed to commissioned research and evaluation projects. These students came from public health and counseling graduate programs. They gained experience in instrument design, data collection and analysis, report writing, community engagement and client management.

CREEHS Faculty Advisory Committee

The CREEHS Faculty Advisory Committee supports the Center by serving as ambassadors for CREEHS to their respective academic departments; linking CREEHS to the larger academic environment, and vice versa, and; providing support to the Center’s work in ways connected to each member’s areas of expertise, particularly around the Graduate Certificate in Program Evaluation and graduate student development.

Current CREEHS Faculty Advisory Committee members:

Amanda S. Birnbaum, Ph.D., Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences
Brian V. Carolan, Ph.D., The Graduate School
Elizabeth J. Erwin, Ed.D., Department of Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education
Leslie Kooymen, Ph.D., Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership
Lisa D. Lieberman, Ph.D., Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences
Jennifer Brown Urban, Ph.D., Department of Family and Child Studies
Full-Time CREEHS Staff

Dr. Eden N. Kyse (Director) has been a member of the CREEHS team since the start of its operation in 2011 and has served as the Center’s Director since 2013. Dr. Kyse has managed dozens of large- and small-scale evaluation and applied research projects, including those focused on teacher education; teacher professional development; P-12 education; and community needs assessment. This work has been funded by public agencies at the federal and state levels, local educational agencies, community organizations and foundations. Dr. Kyse also serves as the Graduate Program Coordinator for the Center’s graduate certificate in Program Evaluation and teaches courses in educational psychology, research design, and program evaluation. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from The Graduate Center at the City University of New York (CUNY), specializing in Quantitative Methods in Educational and Psychological Research.

Rebecca Swann-Jackson (Senior Research Associate) leads the Center’s education and human services team. She has over ten years of experience as an evaluator of educational programs and community-based initiatives serving urban children and families. She has managed evaluations for school districts, state departments of education, community organizations, foundations, and child welfare agencies. An experienced methodologist, she has applied evaluation principles to projects focused on school-based programs for at-risk youth, school reform, family homelessness, community revitalization, systems integration and systems change, child welfare, substance use, and school violence. Ms. Swann-Jackson holds a Master of Education from Rutgers University, with a concentration in Statistics, Measurement, and Evaluation. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Family Studies from MSU with an emphasis on fathers and parent identity formation.

Erin M. Bunger (Senior Research Associate) leads the Center’s public health team. She has experience using collaborative and participatory approaches to evaluate, research and plan public health initiatives. She has managed several evaluations and research projects related to policy and environmental changes to prevent chronic disease and promote wellness. These have included state and local level obesity and tobacco prevention initiatives in a variety of settings such as community-based organizations, schools, early care and education centers and local governments. She also has expertise in planning and evaluating partnerships, clinical interventions and health-related legislation. Ms. Bunger holds a Master of Public Health in Health Behavior and Health Education from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lina M. Acosta (Research Associate) is on the Center’s public health team. She has experience in conducting clinical research, administering clinical assessments, and collecting, managing and analyzing data. She has coordinated research studies focusing on Multicultural Psychotherapeutic Interventions for Child Sexual Abuse funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services Federal Appropriations Grant. In addition, Ms. Acosta has worked collaboratively with law enforcement, prosecution, child protection, mental health and medical professionals to advocate and provide support to child victims of abuse and their families. Ms. Acosta holds a Master of Public Health in Quantitative Methods from Rutgers School of Public Health - Newark.

Dr. Jennifer Prichard (Research Associate) is on the Center’s education and human services team. She is a community psychologist with a background in evaluation and applied research. Prior to CREEHS, she led various projects in Baltimore, MD, for governmental agencies and non-profits, including a study of the transition to evidence-based nurse home visiting programs for at-risk pregnant women. From this work, she created a roadmap of best practices for other jurisdictions across the county. Her work in Baltimore also included evaluation of a program providing out of school time activities, health services, and family resources to middle schools. She is experienced in qualitative research as well as advanced statistical methods. She holds a Ph.D. in Community Psychology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) where she specialized in juvenile crime research with an emphasis on the interplay between race and crime.

Tina Seaboch (Program Assistant) has been the Program Assistant for CREEHS since its inception, supporting all aspects of the Center’s operation. She has worked in the College of Education and Human Services since 2006. Prior to coming to Montclair State University, Tina worked in private sector administrative roles in San Francisco, California and Copenhagen, Denmark.