

FAMILY SCIENCE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Department Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2025

FSHD Scholarship Program Features New Memorial Award

Through our annual Scholarship Program, the Family Science and Human Development Department proudly offers several tuition-based awards to undergraduate students. These scholarships recognize academic achievements and community service, and make education more accessible by helping students afford tuition.

This year, we are excited to present an award in memory of Phyllis Harbach, a 1964 alumna of Montclair State College who earned her B.A. in Home Economics, the precursor to Family Science and Human Development.

Established by her husband James, Harbach's award will recognize a student with financial need enrolled in the Families, Children and School Settings concentration and the Teacher Education Program, as Harbach dedicated her entire career to education.

She taught Home Economics at Wayne Hills High School in Wayne, NJ, for nearly 20 years. After marrying James and moving to Long Island, she earned her master's degree in Home Economics Education and was hired as an outreach teacher by Nassau County Board of Cooperative Educational

Services (BOCES). She traveled all over the county presenting programs about foods and nutrition, money management, and other topics at senior citizen centers, drug and alcohol rehab centers, various charitable agencies, and both the men's and women's units at the Nassau County jail.

The FSHD Department is grateful to the Harbach family for supporting our students with this generous and meaningful gift, and honoring our alumna.



Phyllis Harbach

FSHD students who have at least one semester remaining at Montclair are eligible to apply for our scholarships. The application deadline is Monday, February 24, 2025; the form can be [found here](#) and in the FSHD Canvas communities. ■

Department Chair's Corner

Someone pinch me - how is it already February? I hope you are all well, and the first three weeks of the Spring term have started without a hitch and will continue to be smooth sailing moving forward.

This month, FSHD is launching our brand new course, *From Trauma to Healing: Healing-Centered Approaches to Trauma in Families and Communities*, offered in partnership with the New Jersey Office of Resilience in the Department of Children and Families.



Dr. Lyndal Khaw

This is the first time FSHD is offering a course purposefully designed to be community-serving and responsive. Our 12-week program features an interactive and comprehensive look at trauma and how community members and professionals can be more trauma-informed in their everyday practices. Our first cohort will begin their class on February 17, and the course will be facilitated by our very own doctoral student Erin Scott, who is also a trauma-certified licensed clinical practitioner.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

February 17

Presidents Day -
Classes held as scheduled

February 24

Deadline for FSHD
scholarship applications

March 1

- Deadline for FSHD Internship
Registration for Summer 25
- University's priority
deadline for FAFSA

Empowering Communities: Strengthening Inclusive Philanthropy and Leadership for Latinx Engagement

By Yanira Amadeo, MS

Leading the recent Indiana United Ways training session on inclusive philanthropy and community-led engagement for a thriving Latinx community was a truly transformative experience for me as a doctoral scholar and doctoral representative on the Department of Family Science and Human Development's Social Justice Advisory Board. The session brought together dedicated United Ways Board leaders and professionals from across the state of Indiana committed to advancing equity for Latinx communities, and it was powerful to witness how collective learning can drive meaningful change.

The most impactful moments of the session occurred when we explored race equity and cultural humility concepts, specifically focusing on how these ideas intersect with the lived experiences of Latinx individuals in Indiana. Understanding the Latinx demographic data, financial assets, and surrounding cultural nuances, like language preferences, immigration status, and generational dynamics, is vital in building authentic relationships and trust. Sharing key state-level statistics on Latinx contributions and challenges helped ground the conversation in real-world context.

Sharing my professional and academic experience with inclusive philanthropy, I encouraged United Way leaders to sup-

port Latinx communities by working alongside them, listening to their needs, and making sure their voices help shape solutions. I spoke about the significance of building trust, and that starts with understanding cultural values and making sure funding truly supports what Latinx communities need to thrive.

I've seen how investing in Latinx-led organizations creates real, lasting change because the people closest to the challenges are also the ones driving the solutions.

My training partner, Estefanie Ceballo, a Ph.D. candidate in the Counseling program, shared her insights on mental health and cultural competency. She spoke about the cultural stigmas surrounding mental health in Latinx communities and the barriers many face when accessing care. Estefanie highlighted the need for culturally responsive interventions and encouraged participants to think about how organiza-



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February is Black History Month

The 2025 Black History Month national theme, *African Americans and Labor*, focuses on the various and profound ways that Black people's work has been transformational throughout the U.S., Africa, and the Diaspora. All work – free and unfree, skilled and unskilled, vocational and voluntary – intersects with the collective experiences of Black people, and stands at the very center of much of Black history and culture.



After fighting for their freedom in the Civil War and in the country's transition from an agricultural to an industrial-based economy, African Americans became sharecroppers, farm laborers, landowners, and then wage earners.

Over the years, to combat wage discrepancies, employment discrimination and exploitation, Black professionals (teachers, nurses, musicians, and lawyers, etc.) and occupations (steel workers, wash women, dock workers, etc.) organized for better working conditions and compensation. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids, the first Black union to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor.

Montclair State University has scheduled a series of activities to commemorate Black History Month, including art and library exhibits, a Black Success panel, trivia, film festival and a bus trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. The complete list of events can be [found here](#). ■

Source: Asalh.org

Social Justice Initiatives

Empowering Communities

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tions can create safe, inclusive spaces for open dialogue about mental well-being.

Both Estefanie's and my segments of the training resonated deeply with participants, sparking thoughtful dialogue and action-oriented reflection. The interactive discussions on identifying stereotypes and addressing biases, along with activities on recognizing and responding to microaggressions, helped participants engage with the material in meaningful ways.

"Leadership in philanthropy requires...

humility, listening, and

a willingness to challenge systems

that have excluded marginalized voices."

Indiana United Ways leadership expressed how the session aligned with their commitment to fostering more inclusive community engagement. Summarized feedback from a post-training survey was positive, and content was considered insightful and relevant. One participant shared, "Your leadership in this space appears encouraging to Latinx leaders in the United Way network that feel nothing has changed during their lifetime."

The training concluded with a thoughtful Q&A session, where we focused on strengthening partnerships by addressing capacity gaps and trust-building. I encouraged participants to

co-create solutions with the Latinx community rather than for them. As next steps, I highlighted future recommendations and leadership resources with a digital toolkit for dissemination to the 71 training attendees. The expectation is to foster well-being and partnership opportunities of the neighboring Latinx communities by addressing systemic barriers and empowering community-led solutions.

For Family Science and Human Development students looking to step into leadership roles in this work, there are actionable ways to get started:

- **Join or Lead Campus and Community Initiatives:** Seek out multicultural student organizations, mental health advocacy groups, or volunteer with local nonprofits serving Latinx families. Taking leadership roles in these spaces can help you develop the skills needed to drive community-led initiatives.
- **Pursue Cultural Competency Training and Research:** Engage in workshops or research projects focused on race equity and culturally responsive practices. Collaborating with community leaders or faculty on applied research can bridge academic learning with real-world impact.

Reflecting on this experience, I'm reminded that leadership in philanthropy requires more than just strategy—it requires humility, listening, and a willingness to challenge systems that have excluded marginalized voices. United Way's commitment to inclusive philanthropy is a step forward, and I'm hopeful that with continued collaboration, we can empower Latinx communities to thrive.

If you're ready to lead in this space, start by building relationships and staying curious. Social change happens when we listen deeply and act boldly. ■

Yanira Amadeo, MS, is a PhD candidate in Family Science and Human Development, and a doctoral student representative on the FSHD Social Justice Advisory Board.



**HAPPY
PRESIDENTS
DAY**

Alumni Spotlight

Jean-Marie Beeks

Jean-Marie Beeks graduated from the FSHD program in January 2025 with a concentration in Family Services and a minor in Gerontology.

Her Story: Twenty years into her career in the food industry, Chef Jean-Marie Beeks was running after-school programs in the Bronx and Brooklyn to teach children healthy cooking and eating habits. While chopping vegetables with a 7-year-old girl, the child revealed that her mother had diabetes and her father was in jail. At that moment, Beeks began to reevaluate her life.



"Here we are chopping a carrot, and this young child feels safe enough to tell me this stuff. I remember thinking, Where does my heart really lie? It's not about chopping vegetables," Beeks says. "It was such a massive turning point for me." That's when she decided to pivot and pursue a degree in Family Science and Human Development at Montclair State University.

Her Path: Childhood experiences help Beeks relate to children facing socioeconomic struggles. Growing up in social housing in Ireland, she remembers the shame associated with receiving day-old bread from the nuns. When she moved to New York at age 17 to become a nanny, that job fell through and she found herself waiting tables. After casually mentioning her dream of attending college, a customer helped Beeks get started at a community college, marking the beginning of her long academic journey. Enrolling in Montclair years later as an adult student — and a wife and mother of two young children — wasn't easy as she juggled family, home, and a college workload.

Early on, she faced some challenges, especially with math due to a traumatic childhood experience when a teacher told her she was stupid, and would never amount to anything. "I felt that if I don't know how to do math, then I'm not smart." She overcame that anxiety with the help of Montclair's Mathematics Chair Ashwin Vaidya who "made math fun...and reminded me that I'm a chef, so I'm doing math every day," she says. Ultimately, Beeks excelled academically, graduating from the FSHD program with honors and a 3.7 GPA.

Associate Professor Olena Nesteruk, who taught Beeks in several FSHD classes, praises her as an active participant who brought invaluable perspectives. "Her experiences as a mother, wife and immigrant enriched our class discussions," Nesteruk says. "Even while managing school and family life, she stayed dedicated to her studies, setting a great example and motivating others."

FSHD Department Chair Lyndal Khaw says Beeks "is one of the most accomplished students we have had in FSHD. We are super proud of how far she has come and the impact she will continue to have on the people and communities she serves." ■

Adapted from the story by Montclair Staff Writer Sylvia A. Martinez

Department Chair's Corner

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February is known for a lot of things but perhaps none as familiar as Valentine's Day. While I don't buy into the whole marketing hype around one day to celebrate love (and typically the romantic kind of love), I do think as a whole we all could use a little bit more love. Love isn't just an expression or a feeling, but also a motivator and driving force to do good and do better. Imagine a world where we did everything and treated everyone we encounter with love... what would that even look like?

Most recently, we witnessed the horrific fires that ravaged parts of Los Angeles last month, but we also saw the love poured into these communities by strangers all over the world. What if students approached every Montclair course and every learning experience along the way with a love for knowledge and a love-inspired desire to help make this world a better place - both in real life and in virtual ones? And in today's society where our political and personal worlds seem to collide regularly, it becomes apparent that if we did our everyday work out of love for our students, colleagues, and the families or communities we serve, what a great difference it would make.

Engaging people and social issues with love, good intentions, and kindness, rather than prejudice or hate, could seem like a foreign concept these days but perhaps the late civil rights icon Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

On that thought, I hope we keep the love going in FSHD! Let that be a driving force in everything that we do. ■

Register for Your Summer FSHD Internship by March 1

If you're planning to do your FSHD 409 Internship this summer, you must submit your Internship Registration form no later than March 1. You do not need to have a site confirmed by that date. If you have any questions about the process or need help finding a site, contact Angel Cruz, Career & Internship Advisor, at CruzAn@montclair.edu.

Community & Social Services Career Expo

Tuesday, February 25

4:00-6:30pm

University Hall Conference Center, 7th Floor

Are you looking for a job or internship? Are you curious about the career paths you can pursue with a degree in FSHD? If so, the Community and Social Services Career Expo is an amazing opportunity to meet employers that align with your professional interests.

Whether you're a freshman or a graduate student, this event is designed to help you explore career possibilities, develop networking skills by talking with employers, and make connections that can lead to a job or internship. You'll meet non-profit, government, and corporate employers with a service-oriented mission.

[Register now via Handshake](#). Open to current students and alumni in any major or graduate program.

[Check out all the CCHL Career Events and Resume Drop-in Hours](#)

Boost Your Skills in Canvas & Google

Take your digital confidence to the next level and build your tech skills with a session on **Canvas, Google Drive, and Google Docs**. Participate either in a hands-on environment or online (you will indicate your choice during registration).

Wednesday, February 19

6:00-7:30pm

On campus or via Zoom

Tailored for adult learners, this session is part of the Tech Talk Series offered by Montclair's Instructional Technology and Design Services. Don't miss this chance to elevate your tech game! [Register here](#).

It's Time to File Your FAFSA

The 2025-26 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) is now available online. Don't delay in completing the form. Montclair's priority deadline is March 1, 2025. Questions? Visit the [FAFSA website](#). ■

Farewell to Colleen Casenta

Colleen Casenta, our award-winning Career & Internship Advisor, has decided to devote her



time to being a full-time mom to her three small children.

Colleen has genuinely loved every minute of working with our students and we certainly will miss her. We wish her all the best!

Angel Cruz is the new Career & Internship Advisor for FSHD students. Contact him at 973-655-7903, CruzAn@montclair.edu, or in the Student Success Center, University Hall first floor, Suite 1180. ■

Our Achievements

Dr. Jonathan Caspi empowers parents to foster positive sibling relationships in his new book, *Raising Loving Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting and Help Your Kids Connect*.



Family Science and Human Development

University Hall 4144

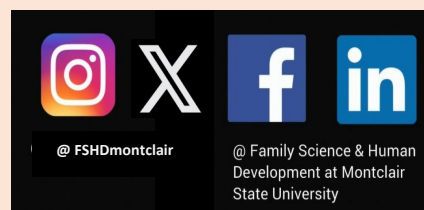
(973) 655-4171

FSHD@montclair.edu

[FSHD Website](#)

Dr. Lyndal Khaw, Chair

Lisa Mills, Newsletter Editor



Last Chance to Register!

From Trauma to Healing: Healing-Centered Approaches to Trauma in Families and Communities

This 12-week fully online and interactive course offers a comprehensive exploration of healing-centered approaches to addressing trauma, in families and communities, within a context of social justice. Moving beyond traditional trauma-informed care, the curriculum emphasizes a practice-shift towards recognizing and nurturing the inherent strength and resilience of individuals, families, and communities affected by trauma.

Course Term & Fee

February 17 – May 11, 2025 (12 Weeks)
\$550

Course Highlights:

- Gain a deep understanding of Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACES) science; examine how early experiences shape brain development, and explore long-term outcomes of trauma across generations
- Learn about pioneering research on neurobiological responses to trauma with practical applications tailored for family and community contexts
- Be guided by a trauma-certified, licensed mental health professional and faculty in the department of Family Science & Human Development
- Special attention is given to cultural humility, intersectionality, and the impact of structural racism on trauma experiences
- Develop culturally responsive skills to support healing within family systems and community structures
- Earn CEUs and a micro-credential certificate from the Department of Children and Families' Office of Resilience and Montclair State University



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF

**CHILDREN
& FAMILIES**

OFFICE OF RESILIENCE

Click here to register
or scan the QR code below



Contact Information:

**Family Science &
Human Development**
973-655-4171
fshd@montclair.edu