

# HDFS NEWS

Family, Nutrition & Exercise Sciences (FNES) Department  
Human Development & Family Science Newsletter - 2019



*Dear Human Development and Family Science Students and Alumni,*

*We are delighted to share with you the 2019 HDFS Newsletter. We hope things are going well with you, and you are enjoying your lives and careers in human development and family science!*

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# Human Development & Family Science Program News

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We continue to have a very strong Human Development and Family Science specialization. In Fall 2018, we revised the name of the specialization from Human Development and Family Studies to Human Development and Family Science, in line with similar programs from around the country and to reflect the strong scientific background of the program.

## HDFS Alumni Survey

We are thanking our alumni for responding to our HDFS alumni survey in 2019! We were delighted to see the many positive perspectives expressed about our HDFS program and faculty.

We wanted to share a few of the comments:

“I liked learning about families and different cultures. I liked that we had to do multiple PowerPoint presentations because they really prepared me for graduate school and my career. I liked that many of our exams were written instead of multiple choice because it challenged me to really know my stuff.”

“I enjoyed that the program was broad enough to cover different areas related to families and how to help them in different stages of life. I enjoyed the professors who were knowledgeable and were always available to support students.”

“What I liked most about the program was the exposure to different professionals in fields relating to the major. They all provided great insight into their careers.”

## Welcome, New Adjunct Faculty!

We are delighted to welcome new adjunct faculty in the HDFS Specialization!

**Laura Lombardi, LCSW**, is currently the director of clinical and forensic services at Queens Child Advocacy Center. Queens Child Advocacy Center is a multi-discipline agency that investigates allegations of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse and provides trauma-focused comprehensive services to child victims. Laura provides program oversight for the delivery of all direct clinical and forensic services and provides clinical supervision and training to a team of clinical forensic specialists. She helps families begin to heal and have hope after experiencing potentially traumatic events. Laura's career as a social worker includes working with children in child welfare, children impacted by domestic violence, and children impacted by community violence.

## Welcome Back to our Returning Adjunct Faculty!

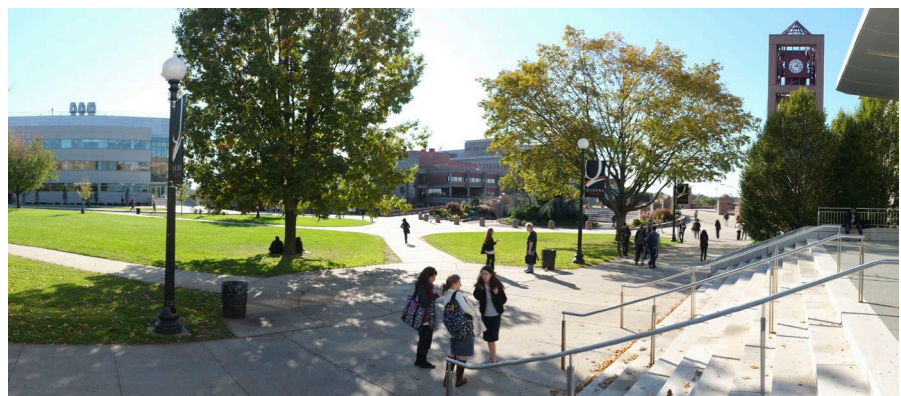
**Alan Stein, MA**, has been an adjunct professor at Queens College since 1998. His professional background includes a BA in psychology and in political science, a MA degree

in psychology, and a MA degree in social work. He is also trained and certified in psychoanalysis. Professor Stein has been teaching several courses over the years at Queens College, including Problems in the Family (FNES 248), Conflict Resolution (FNES 349), and Counseling Sexuality (FNES 356). He has been continuously teaching the course on Family Relations (FNES 147). His teaching is greatly benefiting from his rich clinical experience. He is incorporating his experiences working with individuals and families as examples of typical family-related issues that he sees every day outside the classroom. In addition to teaching at Queens, Professor Stein teaches two classes on clinical social work at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service. He also maintains a private practice in Manhattan and on Long Island and is the director of behavioral medicine at Winthrop University Hospital.

## Faculty Updates

**Dr. Elizabeth Riina** continues her work on understanding the social and cultural contexts for parenting and child development. She was awarded a PSC-CUNY enhanced award for 2019–2020

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to examine the role of parenting practices and parenting styles for adolescent dietary behaviors. Using newly available data from the Family Life, Activity, Sun, Health and Eating (FLASHE) Study, developed by the National Cancer Institute, Riina and colleagues aim to elucidate the family context for adolescent health.

In addition, Riina recently published a paper on the associations between neighborhood qualities and parenting in the *Journal of Family Issues*. The paper, titled “Neighborhood Qualities and Parenting Among Mothers with Young Children: Variation by Relationship Status,” found that certain neighborhood risks and resources are related to parenting and especially salient for single mothers.

In personal news, Riina welcomed her son Calvin in October 2018. He joins Natalie (3) who has proudly taken on the role of big sister!

**Dr. Mihaela Robila** has been the Chair of the International Section (2017–2019) of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR), and because of this role she was also part of the NCFR Annual Conference Planning Committee (2018, 2019). NCFR is the oldest, multidisciplinary, non-partisan professional association for family researchers, family practitioners, and family life educators in the U.S. whose members represent the nation’s foremost experts on families ([www.ncfr.org](http://www.ncfr.org)). The International Section (IN) supports a better understanding

of families around the world by promoting research and facilitating communication among international family scholars. Robila wrote the 2018 and 2019 International Section Newsletters which are posted on the International (IN) section website (<https://www.ncfr.org/membership/member-groups/sections/international-section>).

The HDFS specialization is approved for the Family Life Education Certification (CFLE) by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) since 2005.

*We strongly encourage our HDFS students to become members of NCFR, as it provides opportunities to network for career advancement and resources, learn best practices, and have access to professional resources!*

## Student News

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### Congratulations to our 2019 Student Awardees!

**Daomi Burch** (2019) has been awarded the **FNES Department Award** for high scholarship and future promise in any area of family and consumer sciences.

**Ashley Bonilla** (2019) has been awarded the **Anne Whelan Dwyer & Patrick Andrew Dwyer Award** for high scholarship in family and consumer sciences.

### Professional Development

We strongly encourage our students to become involved in the social service agencies that are all around the city. Please also volunteer, network, and attend conferences and workshops in our field.

Here are examples of the activities our students are involved in.

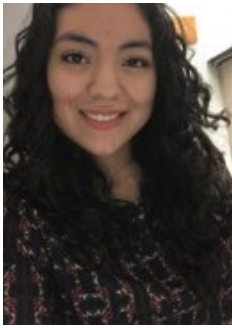
**Fernando Hernandez** works at Queens Center for Progress (<https://www.queenscp.org>) as a direct support professional. He helps individuals by reading their chart and case notes and helping them achieve their goals, giving them medications, and conducting recreational community activities. Every individual has his/her own set of goals. For every shift, he is assigned to work with two individuals. Fernando finds this job opportunity very rewarding. In his own words: “It’s rewarding to see an individual smile and be happy because you’re the one that made a difference in their lives today, and that’s honestly one of the best feelings I’ve ever had in life.”

**Rachel Wilburn** works as behavior therapist at Achieve Beyond. She works with children diagnosed

with Autism Spectrum Disorder under the supervision of a BCBA (Board Certified Behavioral Analyst), implementing the behavior intervention plan they create. During her time with the child, she keeps the child engaged, uses spontaneous situations as learning opportunities, and teaches appropriate play and social skills while providing positive reinforcement. Rachel is also pursuing a minor in the Peer Counseling Program at Queens College. In her time as a counselor-in-training, she learned how to appropriately counsel and aid students in distress. She also learned about the policies and resources in place to aid Queens College students for the variety of concerns they may have. The Peer Counseling program has taught her how to not only become a counselor, but a better listener and friend.

## HDFS Student Spotlights:

### Emely J. Velez



Emely J. Velez

“I am currently an undergraduate double major in psychology and human development and family science, working part-time as

an aide assisting injured patients with exercise in physical therapy. As a work-study student, I work in the Queens College Psychological Center Mental Health Clinic where among many responsibilities, I take phone screens on new referrals, assist in child-care while parents are in session, score patient questionnaire reports, and attend case studies conferences. I was part of Self-Injurious-Behaviors (SIBS) club where I utilized behavioral interventions and worked 1:1 with a 10-year-old girl diagnosed with autism. I want to serve and help people with developmental disabilities and plan to follow a career in applied behavior analysis. I am currently beginning an internship at AHRC where I am part of the Adult Day Program and will be providing behavioral interventions to individuals with developmental disabilities. I am also a chaplain (*International Federation of Chaplains and Human Rights, MM. INC*) where I participate in monthly NYPD Precinct council meetings to address community issues. I also work alongside my local church (House of Grace) and organize a monthly food and clothes drive to the East Elmhurst neighborhood. My plans after graduation and future aspirations are to begin a master’s in ABA and work in the field as a behavioral therapist, continue to dedicate my time to

expanding my ministry as chaplain by serving communities, and study theology in seminary to strengthen my ecclesiastic ministry.”

### Andrew Ha

“Many things happened in the **Peer Counseling** program at Queens College, such as learning in class, going to an overnight retreat, tabling, fundraising, having office hours, having peer parents, and making new friends. However, if I had to describe my experience in three words, it would be vulnerable, growth, and family. Vulnerable because with the new friends I made going to class and going to a retreat, we dived into deep conversations and discussed our lives. This required us to open up and explore our lives, which helped me to discover new perspectives and reasons why I’m a certain way. Growth, because with the materials I’ve learned in class and with the things I’ve discovered about myself, I was able to be more aware of the areas I need to improve in, not only as a person, but also as a counselor. By being more aware about myself, I improved as a person, and by doing counseling roleplays with my peer mentors, I was able to learn where to improve as a counselor. Finally, I describe this program as a family because with all we did together and all the time we spent

together, we became closer to the point of calling each other our family. Overall, this program is a great program if you want to grow as a person, as a counselor, and if you want to be involved in a great community.”

### AAFCS Student Club

Dr. Riina is the faculty adviser for the club. Please contact her ([eriina@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:eriina@qc.cuny.edu)) if you would like to be a guest speaker for the club.

We have five incoming officers for the 2019–2020 academic year: Niketa Balkeran and Nessa Wardek (Co-Presidents), Raiza Bayolima (Vice President), Jamie Esposito (Treasurer), and Tanisha Marte (Secretary). As always, our doors are open to new students.

The club was very active throughout 2018–2019. We invited several new and returning guest speakers to present about the wide range of graduate school programs, resources, and careers available to students in our field. Of note, we welcomed alumni Rebecca Heller and Shana John-Cortes, who came to speak about their experiences in obtaining their MSWs. Riina also led a graduate school workshop where she shed light on the graduate school application process.



Andrew with colleagues from the Peer Counseling Program

## Alumni News

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We encourage all our alumni to stay in touch with us and let us know about career paths and achievements. We are very grateful that we had a chance to have you in our program!

**Daomi Burch** graduated in May 2019 and works as a certification coach at Forestdale ([www.forestdaleinc.org](http://www.forestdaleinc.org)). This job recruits prospective foster parents and helps them along the way to become certified.

**Crystal Gonzalez** (2015) completed a master's degree in public administration with a concentration in Human Resources & Operational Management at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2018. Just like at Queens College, she received a service award upon graduation at John Jay College for making significant contributions of service to the college community. She is currently working at the Port Authority of NY & NJ as an auditor. She evaluates the adequacy of internal controls over central business processes and systems and ensures compliance with Port Authority policies and procedures.

**Fariha Mahmud-Syed** (2011) completed her master's degree in marriage and family therapy, with distinction, from Mercy College.

**Lois Munoz** (2017) completed her master's in social work at Columbia University with honors and will be working at Safe Horizon as a Clinical Forensics Specialist.

**Cara Rosenblum** (2016) earned her master's in social work at Hunter College, CUNY and is now a social worker at The Grand Rehabilitation and Nursing in Whitestone.

**Judean Woelfle** (2007) pursued her master's in special education and currently volunteers assisting other children and families with educational supplies in her home country of Jamaica.

**Nicole Kesoglides (Guarino)** (2017): "I graduated from QC in 2017 and began a graduate program at NYU Steinhardt the following fall. It was intimidating to go from a close-knit community in a small department to the bustling streets of downtown NYC that NYU calls home. I adjusted to the differences fairly quickly but always longed for a walk back on QC's quad. The HDFS program truly prepared me for my studies at NYU. Even more so, getting involved in research as an undergrad was beneficial to the process of completing a master's thesis. Having that experience enabled me to feel more capable of developing a code system on my own and running analyses on large data sets. Now that I have just graduated in May, I am searching for a full-time position. I am hopeful to gain employment working in child development research, whether it be in academia or the non-profit sector. I am especially interested in early childhood intervention programs working with low-income populations. The support of the HDFS family and the foundation of knowledge which was built during my time as a student at QC was priceless to my success in grad school."

### Alumna Spotlight: Tiara Dicks



Tiara Dicks

**Tiara Dicks** (2015) graduated from Converse College in Spartanburg, SC with a master's in marriage family therapy in 2018. She completed her practicum at Emerge Family Therapy Center & Teaching Clinic in Spartanburg, SC. She currently works for the South Carolina Department of Mental Health as a school-based mental health counselor for the Cherokee County School District. She works mostly with high school students but also has experience with middle school and elementary-aged children and their families. She is currently awaiting approval to sit for her MFT licensure exam.

**Commencement - 2019!**  
**Congratulations to all our wonderful graduates!**



From left to right: Zeltzin Martinez, Brianne Dyer, Nalam Kim, Angela Marie England, Daomi Burch, Craig Booker, Amber Jenkins, Ashley Bonilla, Dr. Robila, and Whitney Wallace.

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