

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON FAMILIES

ADVANCING RESEARCH FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL FAMILIES



UMassAmherst

2019 - 2020
ANNUAL REPORT

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WHO WE ARE

CRF MISSION

- Promote, conduct, and translate **high quality**, substantive research on issues affecting families
- Teach, mentor, and support family researchers throughout their careers
- Engage with the community to **improve** family outcomes and inform social policy
- Advance social justice by promoting diversity, equity and inclusion through our research and programming

CRF VISION

The vision of the Center for Research on Families is to **advance research for the health and well-being of all families**. The Center for Research on Families (CRF) is unique in that it promotes interdisciplinary family research across the social, behavioral, and natural sciences to address pressing social problems and systemic inequalities through family research and community engagement programming. CRF epitomizes the land grant mission of UMass Amherst to provide teaching, research, and public service to benefit the families of the Commonwealth and nation. By supporting interdisciplinary research collaborations, CRF contributes innovative and evidence-based solutions to address the challenges families face while supporting their strengths and resilience.

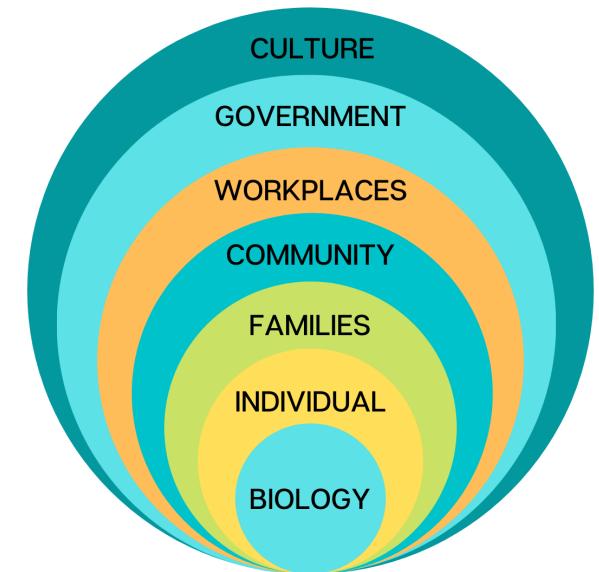
CRF HISTORY

The **Center for Research on Families** has a long history and deep roots at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. CRF was founded over forty years ago in the 1970s. A generous endowment given in 1996 by Dorothy Dunklee Gavin '43 and Joseph Gavin ensured a strong and sustainable future for the Center. In 2003, the original Center for the Family was transformed into today's Center for Research on Families. CRF is supported by the College of Natural Sciences, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, the Edna Skinner and Tay Gavin Erickson endowments, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, grants, and gifts from alumni and other generous donors.

Some of CRF Recent Areas of Research and Outreach

Emerging Covid-19 Issues Inequities based on Race, Gender, Education, Age, Ability, and Economic status and the Intersection of these Identities Influences of Stress on all Aspects of Development Parenting, Parent-Child Relations, and Children's Development Environmental Toxins and Health and Well-being

FAMILIES IN CONTEXT



WHAT IS FAMILY RESEARCH?

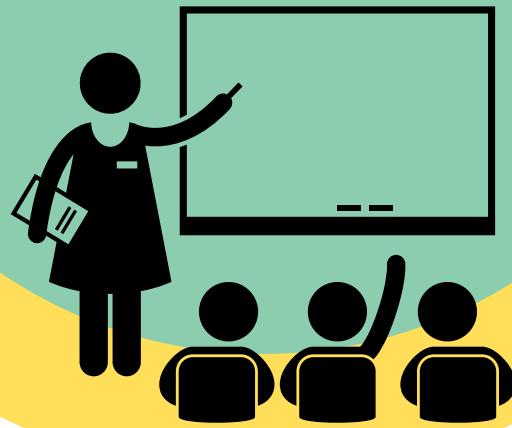
CRF recognizes that families take many diverse forms. We view research from all disciplines as relevant to our mission. We believe that families are best understood in the context of their social settings and through a lens of intersectionality, considering factors such as class, race, nationality, sexuality, age, and gender.

OUR APPROACH

RESEARCH AND METHODS



TEACHING AND MENTORING



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



FACULTY

FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

METHODOLOGY

CONSULTATION

ACADEMIC-YEAR SEMINARS

SUMMER METHODOLOGY WORKSHOPS

GRANT PROPOSAL SUPPORT

STUDENTS

GRADUATE GRANT WRITERS PROGRAM

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS

AWARDS: RESEARCH, TRAVEL, AND WORKSHOP SCHOLARSHIP

ACADEMIC-YEAR SEMINARS

TRAINING AND ACTION TO INCREASE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TAY GAVIN ERICKSON LECTURE SERIES

CHILDREN'S TRUST PARTNERSHIP

SPRINGFIELD RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

POLICY

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAUREEN PERRY-JENKINS, DIRECTOR

The year 2020 has been overwhelming, with a contentious and loud presidential election brewing in the U.S., an ongoing immigration crisis, and the coronavirus creating international turmoil and upsetting the routines of everyday life. At the same time, the profound uprising occurring in the U.S. and around the world, in the wake of the murders of Black women and men, has spotlighted systemic racism, white privilege, and the need for social justice. It is a call to action for us all to work together for equity and justice. During this unsettled and historic time, one of the things in my own world that keeps me hopeful and inspired is the role of science in informing advocacy and creating change. The scientists at CRF are my superheroes. They should be all of our superheroes. **In our toughest times, scientists strive to get it right. At their best, they use cutting-edge methods and approaches to collect the most valid and accurate data.** They strive to interpret their data without bias or agenda. They aim to solve problems. They work away in the eye of the hurricane, staying calm and centered as the storm swirls around them.

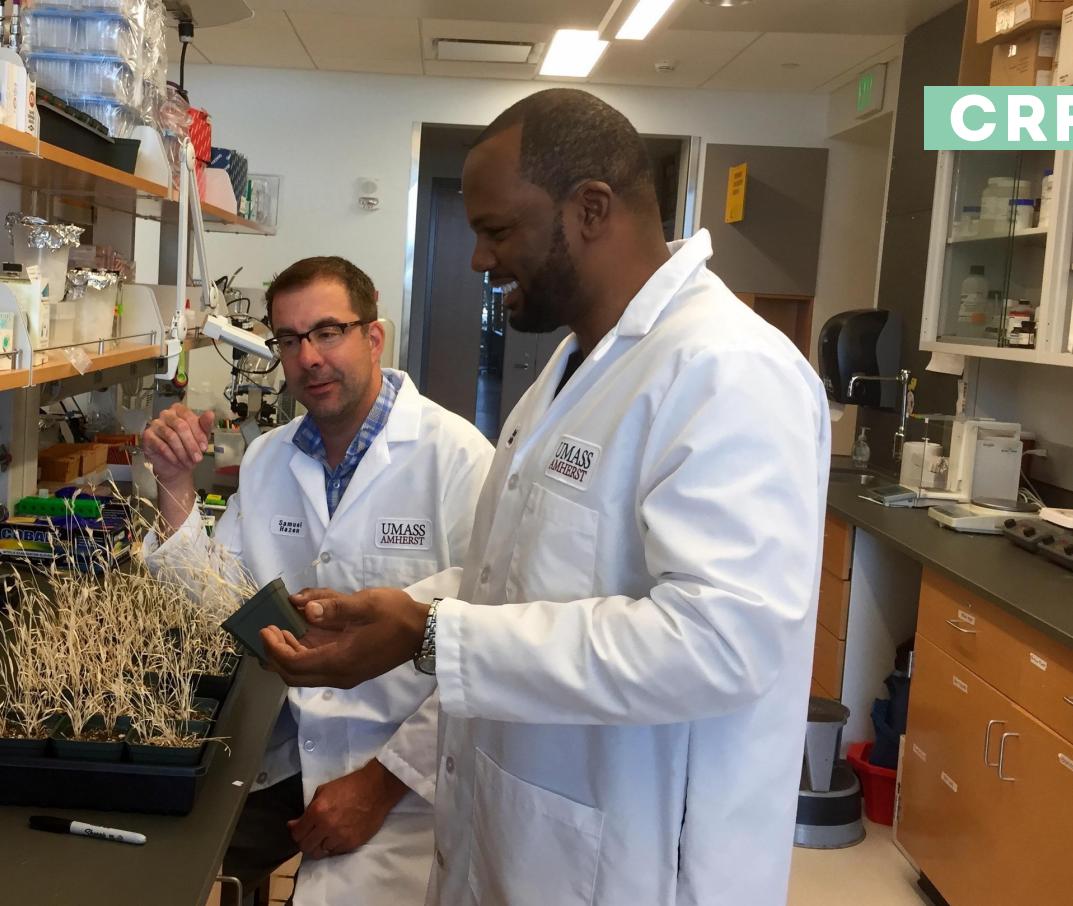
At the Center for Research on Families, these scientists are at work. They are addressing problems that range from understanding how toddlers' tantrums can, in some cases, predict later mental health problems, racial inequalities in maternal and child health, to the impact of cannabis use on driving accidents, to interventions for stress and health among Bhutanese refugees. Interdisciplinary teams of scholars are devising interventions to alleviate prenatal stress that can harm infant development and new parents' mental health. Graduate students are writing grants and conducting research on aging and cognitive decline, ADHD in toddlers, wearable devices to assess exercise and obesity, and environmental toxins and fertility, to highlight just a few topics. The energy, the excitement, and the passion involved in these scientific endeavors is not only inspiring but it is what gives me hope in the future. Science, often plodding, sometimes misdirected, always informative, will get us where we need to go. It takes time, energy, and resources. **If we provide the tools and the teams to work on these social problems, there is no doubt in my mind that we can solve them.** I get to see these tough issues being addressed every day by scientists who have made it their life's work to solve problems. They are our superheroes and in the following pages we highlight the science that can give us all hope for the future.

On another note, this is my final letter for the CRF Annual report as I have decided to step down from my position as Director of the Center for Research on Families to take on a new role in the College of Natural Sciences as the Associate Dean for Graduate, Postdoctoral, and Faculty Development. This is a bittersweet transition. **CRF is an amazing organization with a passionate and committed staff, faculty, and students who are making a difference in the world.** It has been my great honor to lead CRF and I will take many lessons to my new role, but I will always be a CRF scholar. My gratitude and thanks to all of you who have supported me and inspired me along the way.



"The energy, the excitement, and the passion involved in these scientific endeavors is not only inspiring but it is what gives me hope in the future."

CRF IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



The Center for Research on Families recognizes how challenging this time is for families, students, faculty, and researchers alike. Our world has been dramatically affected by the pandemic that has hit our global community. With so many unknowns and the uncertainty this brings, we remain focused on what we do know. **We know we need good science to address COVID-19; and we know we need to support families, now more than ever.** We need to use our combined expertise, our creativity, and resilience to address this challenge. Our hope is that we emerge from this unprecedented moment in time stronger, with new ways of thinking and collaborating that will advance the health and well-being of all families. During the pandemic, CRF continues to provide all our core services remotely that you will read about in this report.

MOVING TOWARDS RACIAL JUSTICE

We are horrified and heartbroken about the senseless and brutal killings of Black men and women, **George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many others throughout our nation's history.** We recognize that our Black staff, students, and faculty carry the heavy burden of injustice and this has to change. **We must all do the work to end racism and injustice now.**

Our CRF team is **committed to taking meaningful action** to undo the effects of systemic racism in our society, in our workplaces, in academia, in our communities, and in our country. CRF is actively collaborating with all schools and colleges, the Office of Faculty Development, and the Office of Equity and Inclusion to host workshops and trainings on dismantling racism and white privilege, and building true allyship. We will continue to support research that addresses inequality in the lives of Black families and families of color that exist at the intersections of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and abilities.

Our goal is that the faculty and student research that we support will inform policy and practices that will reduce and, ultimately, eliminate social, economic, and health inequities.

DIRECTORS' PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

MAUREEN PERRY-JENKINS DIRECTOR



- Co-President, Contemporary Council on Families
- Steering Committee Member: Institute for Diversity Science, UMass Amherst; Center for Health Equity Research, UMass Amherst; Rudd Adoption Center, UMass Amherst; Institute for Social Science Research, UMass Amherst
- Chair, National Council on Family Relations Fellows Award Committee
- Steering Committee, Square One Family Center, Springfield MA
- Co-PI: A Prenatal Intervention for Low-Income Parents, UMass Medical Center for Clinical and Translational Science
- Active member of Project ACCESS, supporting UMass-Springfield community-based research partnerships
- Review Committee, Montclair State Family Science and Human Development Program
- Numerous national presentations on work-family research
- Editorial Board of Journal of Marriage and Family, Community, Work and Family, and Journal of Family Theory and Review

HOLLY LAWS METHODOLOGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR



- Served as methodological consultant on daily diary study of sleep and well-being funded by the National Institute on Mental Health, and as methodological co-investigator in dyadic study of individuals with early stage Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias and their partners funded by the National Institute on Aging
- Conducted external workshop on multilevel modeling for longitudinal, intensive longitudinal, and dyadic applications for the Inter-University Consortium for Social and Political Research
- Co-facilitator of Social Science in Statistics Reading Group, and interdisciplinary learning group facilitated in collaboration with the Institute for Social Science Research and Statistical Consultation and Collaboration Services
- Numerous publications using dyadic and developmental methodological applications
- Invited to speak at a plenary session on novel methods for the analysis of change by the International Society for Psychotherapy Research meeting in 2020

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Through our three-pronged approach of research and methods, teaching and mentoring, and community engagement, CRF has accomplished much in 2019-2020:

1) Promoting and conducting high-quality, substantive research on key issues affecting family life

- Six CRF **Family Research Scholars** (FRS) met biweekly to develop competitive grants through intensive faculty and peer feedback, targeted instruction on the review process, and methodology support.
- Scholars from the **past four cohorts** continued to meet as a group or with the CRF director to revise/submit additional grants.
- Eighteen CRF Family Research Scholars submitted **22 grants totaling \$23,223,680**.
- CRF has active grants totaling **\$8,904,058**.
- CRF's **Graduate Student Grant Writing Program** continues to develop. Six students worked under the leadership of Professor **Rebecca Spencer** to prepare NSF and NIH fellowship applications. Four students scored and will resubmit their proposals. Six new scholars were selected for 2020-2021.
- **For the thirteenth year, CRF sponsored the Stress Research Group.** Researchers met regularly to discuss and examine the biological, behavioral, and social indices and outcomes of stress. **A new interdisciplinary Menopause Research Group met regularly.**
- CRF Scholars continue to have **success rates that are more than double** the national success rates.

2) Teaching, mentoring, and supporting faculty and student family researchers throughout their careers

- CRF awarded **\$2,400** in Student Family Research Grants to six graduate students and a total of **\$413,865** since inception.
- CRF provided approximately **400 hours** of formal advanced statistical and methodological consultation to UMass faculty and graduate student researchers, researchers at other universities, and community organizations.
- CRF is playing a **leadership role** in developing resources, workshops, and training to address racial inequality in the wake of the killings of George Floyd and others.
- CRF offered a successful new online **Stress Biomarkers Workshop** with sixteen participants from nine institutions around the country.
- CRF and the **Institute for Social Science Research** (ISSR) offered a Pre-Scholars Workshop to advise new faculty in grant preparedness and in the application process.

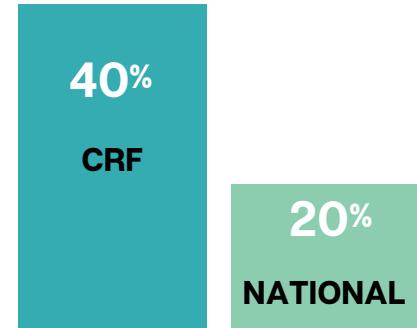
3) Engaging with the community to address and inform outreach and policy on issues critical to the well-being of families

- CRF hosted **5 public lectures** by renowned experts through the **Tay Gavin Erickson Lecture Series**.
- CRF researchers contributed **knowledge and evidenced based** guidance on issues facing families during the COVID- 19 pandemic through their research and publications.
- CRF collaborated with the **Children's Trust** to offer the course, "**Risk and Resilience in the Lives of Young Families**" for home visitors from across the state at the UMass Springfield Center.
- CRF Scholars **Rebecca Ready** and **Jamie Rowen** participated in the **Public Engagement Fellows Program** (PEP) to develop skills in translating their research to enhance families' lives.
- CRF disseminated news articles about family related research from sources including **Psychology Today**, **WGBH**, **The Conversation**, **Business Insider** (Malaysia), **London based Clarivate Analytics**, owner of the Web of Science, **VESTOJ** - The Platform for Critical Thinking on Fashion, Human Organization, Europeanist Anthropology, the **Journal of Clinical Social Work**, **Teen Vogue**, and more.
- CRF participated in the **Maternal Child Health Working Group Taskforce** to develop partnerships between researchers and community providers in Springfield.

COMPARISON BETWEEN
NATIONAL **NSF** SUCCESS RATES
AND CRF RATES



COMPARISON BETWEEN
NATIONAL **NIH** SUCCESS RATES
AND CRF RATES



RESEARCH ACTIVITY GRANT ACTIVITY

Grants submitted: **22** totaling **\$23,223,680**

Active grants: **13** totaling **\$8,904,058**

Federal Grants submitted since inception: **86**

Federal Grants awarded since inception: **40**

Total grant funding since inception: **\$27,198,722**

SUBMITTED RESEARCH GRANTS

Sofiya Alhassan (Kinesiology)

National Institutes of Health **\$3,903,573**

Physical Activity, Diet, and Sleep/Screen Time (PADS) During Early Childhood

National Institutes of Health **\$3,841,994**

Preschool-age Children Physical Activity: The impact of Aligning Activities into Early Education

Sarah Fefer (Student Development)

W T Grant **\$349,928**

Positive Parent Contact: A Proactive Positive Behavior Support Strategy to Encourage School-Family Partnership for Latinx Students

Adam Grabell (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$429,714**

Using Wearable Devices and Machine Learning to Forecast Preschool Tantrums and Identify Clinically Significant Variants

Devon Greyson (Communication)

National Institutes of Health **\$3,629,458**

Decision Making about Cannabis use during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: A Mixed Method Study

Linda Isbell (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality **\$350,169**

Emotional Influences on Diagnostic Error in Emergency Medicine in the Wake of the COVID-10 Pandemic

Youngbin Kwak (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$159,908**

Temporal Dynamics of Risky Decision Making in Adolescents

National Science Foundation **\$699,638**

CAREER: Uncovering the Temporal Dynamics of Risky Decision Making

Holly Laws (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$153,543**

A Daily Self-Regulation Intervention for Spouses of Persons with Early Stage ADRD: Measuring Social and Behavioral Pathways

National Institutes of Health **\$89,745**

The Dyadic Brain: Modeling Youth Risk Behavior

National Institutes of Health **\$83,335**

The Dyadic Brain: Peer Influence and Addiction Risk

Airín Martínez (Health Promotion and Policy)

National Institutes of Health **\$2,605,813**

The Effects of Structural and Interpersonal Racism in Relation to Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Biobehavioral Health in Latinx Parent-Youth Dyads

Jennifer McDermott (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$122,222** (Subcontract with University of Washington)

Cognitive Vulnerability for Psychopathology in Adolescence: Neural and Momentary Mechanisms of Early Childhood Adversity and Temperament

Mark Pachucki (Sociology)

National Science Foundation **\$534,491**

Childhood Adversity and Later-Life Social Status Disparities: Exploring Social, Biological, and Genetic Mechanisms

Krishna Poudel (Health Promotion and Policy)

National Institutes of Health **\$457,393**

Development of an App-Based Smoking Cessation Intervention

Shannon Roberts (Engineering)

W T Grant **\$350,000**

Reducing Socioeconomic Inequalities and Disparities in Teen Driving

Laura Vandenberg (Environmental Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$2,245,037**

Pregnancy as a Vulnerable Time Period for Women's Health

Nicole VanKim (Biostatistics and Epidemiology)

National Institutes of Health **\$614,645**

Physiologic Stress and Sexual Orientation Disparities in Risk for Type 2 Diabetes among Women

National Institutes of Health **\$1,466,130**

Sexual Orientation Differences in Chronic Pain Among Women

Jennifer Whitehill (Health Promotion and Policy)

Massachusetts Cannabis Commission **\$53,129**

Identifying Massachusetts Communities Disproportionately Impacted by Cannabis Prohibition

Ning Zhang (Health Promotion and Policy)

National Institutes of Health **\$467,643**

Obesity in Nursing Home Residents

ACTIVE RESEARCH

Nilanjana Dasgupta (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Science Foundation **\$1,499,993** and **\$539,822** (sub-award)

Peer Influences on Adolescent's Self-Concept, Achievement, and Future

Aspirations in Science and Mathematics: Does Student Gender and Race Matter?

Gerald Downes (Biology)

National Science Foundation **\$757,746**

Collaborative Research: GABA A Receptor Control of Hyperactivity in

Developing Zebrafish

Brigitte Holt (Anthropology)

National Science Foundation **\$793,815**

*Collaborative Research: Bone Strength and Physical Activity Over the Life Course
in a Physically Active Contemporary Pre-Industrial Population*

Linda Isbell (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality **\$1,712,843**

Emotional Influences on Diagnostic Error in Emergency Medicine: An Experimental Approach to Understand Diagnostic Failure and Facilitate Improvement for Patients with and without Mental Illness

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality **\$60,486**

Risk Aversion, Fear of Malpractice, and Medical Decision Making in the Emergency Department

Alexandra Jesse (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$152,794**

Electrophysiological Indices of Audiovisual Benefits to Speech Processing in Aging Adults

Agnès Lacreuse (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$1,545,557** and **\$111,892** (sub-award)

Sex Differences in Cognitive and Brain Aging: A Primate Model

National Institutes of Health **\$443,755**

Sleep, Hot Flashes, and Cognition: a Nonhuman Primate Model for Menopausal Symptoms

Holly Laws (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Institutes of Health **\$223,823**

A Daily Self-Regulation Intervention for Persons with Early Stage Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias and their Spouses

Richard Pilsner (Environmental Health)

National Institutes of Health **\$2,710,962**

Paternal Preconception Phthalates and Reproductive Health - Potential Mediation through Sperm DNA Methylation

Kalpana Poudel-Tandukar (Nursing)

National Institutes of Health **\$732,144**

Reducing Stress, Anxiety, and Depressive Symptoms via a Family-Centered Preventative Intervention for Immigrants

Jamie Rowen (Political Science)

National Science Foundation **\$500,000**

CAREER: Thank you for Your Service: The Instrumentalization of Law through Veterans Treatment Courts

Jeffrey Starns (Psychological and Brain Sciences)

National Science Foundation **\$300,000**

Effect of Visualization on Students' Understanding of Probability Concepts in an Innovative Learning Module



COVID-19 RELATED RESEARCH

Rebecca Ready (FRS 2008-09), Psychological and Brain Sciences, wrote a column for Psychology Today explaining that contrary to popular belief, older adults are no more lonely than younger or mid-life adults. Reducing social contact during the COVID- 19 crisis is essential for older adults whom are most vulnerable to virus, but Ready explains that once it ends, they will likely pick up where they left off socially.

Jamie Rowen (FRS 2017-18), Political Science, wrote an article in The Conversation describing the ways that military veterans are particularly susceptible to both health and economic threats from the pandemic, and “face homelessness, lack of health care, delays in receiving financial support, and even death”.

Betsy Krause (FRS 2011-12), Anthropology, studied how solidarity efforts - including gifts of masks, protective gear, and respiratory machines from the Chinese community in the town of Prato, Italy - emerged spontaneously. They saw a widespread shift in dominant attitudes toward Chinese migrants from one of xenophobia to one of respect.

In a recent article published in The Conversation, **Rebecca Spencer** (FRS 2009-10), Psychological and Brain Sciences, discussed the importance of maintaining a napping schedule for preschoolers during the pandemic. Not only is napping key to early education objectives, it is central to the emotional and cognitive development of young children.

Paula Pietromonaco (FRS 2015-16), Professor Emerita, Psychological and Brain Sciences, contributed expert commentary for an article for the Association for Psychological Science. She concluded that although couples will face multiple challenges from the COVID- 19 pandemic, the stress need not harm their marriage, and many relationships may even grow stronger as a result of overcoming adversity together.

Marsha Kline Pruitt (FRS 2014-15), Smith College School for Social Work, is completing research for a special issue on COVID-19 for the Journal of Clinical Social Work on clinical and community approaches to support co-parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic. She hosted a recent webinar to discuss how parents can work together - whether they are living in the same household or apart - to keep children safe and promote healthy development in a time of great uncertainty.

RACIAL JUSTICE RELATED RESEARCH

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (DPH) Office of Sexual Health and Youth Development has awarded a contract to **Aline Gubrium** (FRS 2017-18), Community Health Education, along with Elizabeth Salerno Valdez, to examine adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) inequities in Massachusetts. The funding will enable them to complete a comprehensive investigation to examine how structural racism, in combination with other systems of oppression, contributes to inequitable ASRH outcomes for youth.

Mark Pachucki (FRS 2018-19), Sociology, and **Nicole VanKim** (2019-20), Biostatistics and Epidemiology, have received a seed grant from the Institute of Diversity Sciences (IDS) to look at how exposure to the criminal justice system is associated with biological aging. They will examine the prospective association between reports of police discrimination and chronic stress at the cellular level amongst Black women. They hope to provide further evidence for the need for police reform and to inform health interventions in Black communities.

Kalpana Poudel-Tandukar (FRS 2017-18), Nursing, was recently awarded a National Institute of Health grant for \$732,144 to study the socio-cultural factors that increase immigrant stress and plans to develop, implement, and evaluate the efficacy of culturally competent, family-based interventions to reduce stress and depression in immigrants.

Lindiwe Sibeko (FRS 2015-16), Nutrition, is part of a Springfield based, community-engaged research partnership focused on tackling breastfeeding inequities through development and evaluation of interventions/programs aimed at increasing breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among African-American women. Breastfeeding has a significant protective impact on maternal and child health outcomes, including its role in infant survival and decreased risk of infant mortality.

ADVANCING RESEARCH ON FAMILIES

FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

HIGHLY SELECTIVE PROGRAM PREPARES FACULTY TO SUBMIT LARGE GRANT PROPOSALS

ADVANCES INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF DISCIPLINES

INCREASES EVIDENCE-BASED KNOWLEDGE ON THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES THAT ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED BY A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICES

SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES FEDERAL RESEARCH SUPPORT AT UMASS

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Anthropology
Biology
Economics
Education
Engineering
Kinesiology
Neuroscience
Nursing
Nutrition
Political Science
Psychological and Brain Sciences
Public Health
Sociology

HOW CRF SUPPORTS FAMILY RESEARCH

Instruction on Grant Development
.....
Feedback and Peer Review
.....
Methodological Support
.....
In-Depth Consultation with National Expert
.....
Course Release

2019-2020 FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS

Ian George Barron, PhD, Director of the Center for International Education and Professor in Student Development

Project: Processes Neuro-Biological Mechanisms, and Conditions That Lead to Reduced PTSD from EMDR for Incarcerated Youth

Adam Grabell, PhD, Assistant Professor, Psychological and Brain Sciences

Project: Using Wearable Devices and Machine Learning to Forecast Preschool Tantrums and Identify Clinically Significant Variants

Devon Greyson, PhD, Assistant Professor, Communication

Project: Decision Making about Cannabis use during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: A Mixed Method Study

Airín Martínez, PhD, Assistant Professor, Health Promotion and Policy

Project: The Effects of Structural and Interpersonal Racism in relation to Ethnic Racial Socialization and Biobehavioral Health in Latinx Parent-Youth Dyads

Nicole VanKim, PhD, Assistant Professor, Biostatistics and Epidemiology

Projects: Physiologic Stress and Sexual Orientation Disparities in Risk for Type 2 Diabetes among Women
Sexual Orientation Differences in Chronic Pain Among Women

Jennifer Whitehill, PhD, Assistant Professor, Health Promotion and Policy

Project: Identifying Massachusetts Communities Disproportionately impacted by Cannabis Prohibition

2020-2021 FAMILY RESEARCH SCHOLARS

Selected based on their **promising work** in family-related research

Alicia Timme-Laragy, Associate Professor, Environmental Health Sciences

Bruna Martins-Klein, Assistant Professor, Psychological and Brain Sciences

Emily Kumpel, Assistant Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering

Sarah Goff, Associate Professor, Health Promotion and Policy

Stephanie Padilla, Assistant Professor, Biology

Tara Mandalaywala, Assistant Professor, Psychological and Brain Sciences



From left to right:

Adam Grabell, Nicole VanKim, Devon Greyson, Jennifer Whitehill, Ian George Barron, Airín Martínez

"I felt very supported and developed better organizational skills regarding grant preparation. It was a steep learning curve for submitting an R01 but I feel like I really understand the process well. I've also learned some important lessons about persistence!"



MEET ADAM GRABELL FRS 2019-20

When is a preschooler's tantrum just a tantrum? When is it a sign of a more persistent mental health disorder? How might the home environment and the caregiver's interactions and temperament influence a child's response to frustration and the likelihood that a child might develop a mental disorder? What if we could detect tantrums before they occur and support caregivers with effective parenting strategies during tantrums?

Adam Grabell, a 2019-20 CRF Family Research Scholar and Assistant Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences, explores how mental illness emerges early in life and how to accurately detect it. Grabell and his team recently published papers showing that preschool children's facial expressions predict, "what their brains are doing and whether or not they might have a mental illness". Grabell and his team found that young children's facial expressions only predict mental illness if that expression includes the contraction of the orbicularis oculi, the outer ring of muscle around the eye.

In his CRF supported grant, Grabell proposes to use custom smart-watches equipped with specialized apps, worn by preschoolers and their caregivers in their homes to pinpoint the beginning and endings of tantrums in real time. His team will assess physiological and behavioral data, such as respiration, heart rate, gross motor activity, sleep, and vocal features, associated with the timing of tantrums. He believes that tantrum timing and bio-behavioral characteristics in the parent and child will accurately identify young children at risk for persistent mental disorders. His goal is to ultimately create automated home-based systems that will detect early mental disorders in children and assist in addressing these.

As a CRF Family Research Scholar, Grabell appreciates the accountability created by the program and the extensive feedback he receives from other scholars with different perspectives.

"Being a CRF scholar has been an amazing experience, not just for the mentorship and guidance on putting my proposal together but the opportunity to learn more about scholarship, professional development, and to connect with academics from other fields."

MEET AIRÍN MARTÍNEZ FRS 2019-20

The Latinx population suffers disproportionately from cardiometabolic risk factors, including the highest prevalence of female and pediatric obesity, youth metabolic syndrome, and prediabetes. **Dr. Airín Martínez, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Promotion and Policy, developed a proposal that will allow her to study how racism contributes to serious health issues in the Latinx community.** Her study looks at how chronic racial stress is a contributor to Latinx parent-youth's cardiometabolic risk. She plans to identify the biobehavioral pathways between structural and interpersonal racism and Latinx family's chronic disease risk in order to identify protective factors that can be integrated into local interventions and to provide evidence in support of equitable social policies.

Dr. Martínez notes that Latinx families, including undocumented workers, have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Many Latinx family members are essential workers, who have to continue working through the pandemic and are unable to socially distance at their jobs. They often must take crowded public transport, they are among the least likely to have health insurance. Their lack of insurance or fear of surveillance from federal and local law enforcement may discourage them from seeking treatment. The situation is even more dire for Latinx people who are incarcerated or in detention centers, which can serve as breeding grounds for infectious disease. The research Dr. Martínez conducts informs policies that could mitigate these disparities. She suggests that the government could put a moratorium on Immigrations and Customs Enforcement raids and deportations and release low-flight-risk detainees back into the population. It could implement policies to further "Medicare for All" and include undocumented immigrants in the stimulus package.

Dr. Martínez' year with CRF played an instrumental role in developing her research goals. "Having my proposal reviewed by fellow scholars from different disciplines allowed me to produce a proposal that was more accessible for scientific study section reviewers. The program led to a new relationship with my external consultant, Dr. Su Yeong Kim, at the University of Texas-Austin. I also learned more about dyadic analyses from Holly Laws, and would like to use that method more in future research."



"My experience as a CRF scholar was very positive. If it were not for the program, I doubt I would have found the time and support to develop an ambitious R01 proposal."

RECENTLY FUNDED SCHOLARS

JEFFREY STARNS, FRS 2017-18



"CRF helped me see the big picture."

Dr. Jeffrey Starns is helping people make good decisions in the face of uncertainty. Given all we are facing in the world these days with the COVID-19 pandemic, this research seems especially relevant. "Probability is a mental tool for dealing with uncertainty," he says. "It is a way to think about what is likely to be true when you have only partial information and a way to decide what is the best thing to do when you don't know exactly what is going to happen. People deal with uncertainty every day, and we are trying to develop ways to teach probability concepts that help people recognize the relevance to their everyday life and apply the concepts intuitively."

Dr. Starns, a 2017-2018 Family Research Scholar and Associate Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences was recently awarded a 3-year, \$300,000 National Science Foundation grant that he developed during his CRF Scholar year. Starns is developing methods for teaching people how to accurately update their beliefs when they encounter new information, a process known as Bayesian Reasoning. This tool of probability has become increasingly important in an age of misinformation. He says "a news story about a measles outbreak might mention that nearly half of the people who contracted measles in the outbreak had received the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. Facts like these are slippery because most people are prone to confusing one probability for another. This type of confusion or vague phrasing can give false impressions.

Starns and his team are developing learning modules that can be used in statistics classes which he calls, "the nerve centers for disseminating probability concepts". The module presents intuitive spatial methods for performing probability and then guides students through exercises that challenge them to translate these spatial methods into equations. Their goal is to make the concepts so intuitive that students will be able to figure out the math without direct instruction. Their findings, so far, are encouraging. They have collected data from people who learned spatial methods for probability reasoning from an instructional video or one-on-one tutoring. The majority of these students were able to immediately apply these reasoning skills correctly in their work. In addition, many students were able to translate the spatial methods into equations which demonstrated a deep understanding of probability concepts. Like many other researchers, his team is adapting some of their data collection approaches and timelines in response to the COVID-19 virus but they are optimistic about completing their project. CRF faculty and fellow scholars helped him think about how to link his research to things that the broader public care about, like promoting science literacy, empowering people to be more informed about the decisions they are making, and helping a wider diversity of students succeed in fields that rely on statistical methods.

JAMIE ROWEN, FRS 2017-18

In the criminal justice world, veterans are a uniquely sympathetic population. "We end up thinking about veteran trauma differently than we think about the trauma of growing up in the inner cities," says Dr. Jamie Rowen. **How do courts conceptualize war? Is it traumatic? Is it noble? Can it be both?**

Dr. Jamie Rowen, 2017-18 Family Research Scholar, socio-legal scholar, and legal studies professor, received one of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) most prestigious awards – the CAREER Award, which is the highest recognition NSF gives to early-career faculty. The five-year, \$500,000 grant is supporting Rowen's research into Veteran's Treatment Courts (VTCs) – a program that emerged as one response to a growing concern that veterans are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and have unique, unmet needs. Rowen studies the use of law to help vulnerable populations and to solve entrenched social problems. Rowen's early work focused more broadly on the effects of war on individuals. She studied refugees in South Africa, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Columbia, Vietnam, and Morocco to understand the long-term effects of war on those living in war zones. On her return to the U.S., she wondered what the U.S. was doing to help survivors of war, primarily veterans. "This grant is focused on VTCs as windows into understanding broader issues related to social justice and criminal justice in the United States," she says.

For her research team it is personal. They all have connections to the lives of veterans – one is a graduate student at the University of California Berkeley who is a child of veterans and another a legal fellow at the University of Miami who is a veteran. VTCs serve two purposes - one, retribution, similar to a traditional court, and two, to encourage and compel individuals to seek substance abuse and mental health treatment. The judge in these courts value feedback and suggestions from caseworkers working with veterans. Judges in these courts, unlike typical courts, consider both legal outcomes and treatment outcomes. What Rowen has found, so far, is that veterans involved in VTCs were already a vulnerable population prior to joining the military, often suffering from poverty, substance abuse, and trauma even before their war experiences. "These people are not getting enough resources before they go into the military, while in the military, and when they leave the military," she says. Rowen also found that sometimes VTCs can actually do more harm than good for veterans. She stresses that the VTCs are only as effective as the social services that they have access to and collaborate with to support veterans. Rowen will develop concrete suggestions for positive changes to the VTC system. She wants to ensure that the people working in VTCs know about the variety of resources available to veterans while ensuring that veterans have access to those resources.

Throughout this process, Rowen has been struck by how much the employees of VTCs are doing to support veterans. She says, "**The pride these people have in their work and the drive to do it better has been moving. They want to do better. People involved in criminal justice work, a lot of them, have the same mentality as those in social justice work.**" What if other vulnerable populations could also be seen by the courts from this dual perspective of justice and treatment? She hopes policymakers will open up their thinking about other criminal defendants.



"I would have never had this grant without the help of CRF. I say that to everybody. Never."

FACULTY AFFILIATE HIGHLIGHTS 2019 - 2020

M.V. Lee Badgett (FRS 2004-05), Economics, Public Policy and Administration, released a new book entitled The Economic Case for LGBT Equality. Business Insider Malaysia's included the book in its list of "12 Books of 2020 for Managers who want to Build Diverse Teams".

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (DPH) Office of Sexual Health and Youth Development has awarded a contract to Aline Gubrium (FRS 2017-18), Public Policy, and Elizabeth Salerno Valdez, to examine adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) inequities in Massachusetts. The funding will enable them to complete a **comprehensive investigation** to examine how structural racism, in combination with other systems of oppression, contributes to inequitable adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes for youth.

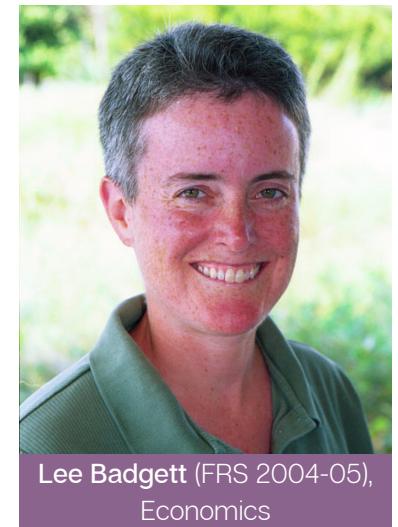
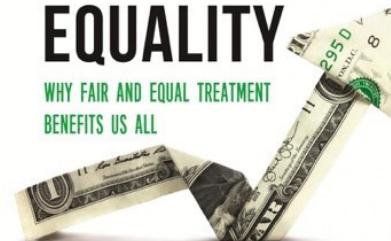
Kathleen Arcaro (FRS 2012-13), Veterinary and Animal Sciences, received a \$718,000 grant from the Department of Defense's Breast Cancer Research Program to develop a new screening for BRCA-Positive Breastfeeding Women. The new, noninvasive test uses women's breast milk to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages.

London based Clarivate Analytics, owner of the Web of Science, annually identifies influential researchers with high citation marks all over the world. This year, Laura Vandenberg (FRS 2015-16), Environmental Health Sciences, was among ten UMass Amherst researchers recognized for their **high citation rates**.

Marsha Kline Pruett (FRS 2014-15), Social Work, Smith College, was awarded The John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizing **outstanding contributions and achievements** by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR **LGBT** **EQUALITY**

WHY FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT
BENEFITS US ALL



Lee Badgett (FRS 2004-05),
Economics



Kathleen Arcaro (FRS 2012-13), Veterinary and Animal Sciences

METHODOLOGY PROGRAM

METHODOLOGY MISSION

CRF's Methodology Program provides consultation in **study design and statistical analysis**. The program has a particular expertise in methods for analyzing non-experimental data that arise in studies of families and dyads with an emphasis on multi-level modeling, structural equation modeling and analysis of nested and longitudinal data. The CRF Methodology Program also offers a series of methodology **workshops, seminars**, and other **training opportunities**, throughout the academic year and during the summer months.

CONSULTATION SERVICES

In 2019-2020, CRF's Methodology Consultation Services provided individual research and data consultation on the following topics:

- stress and health outcomes in relationships
- community-based suicide prevention intervention in native Alaskan communities
- patient-therapist matching as a predictor of outcome in psychotherapy
- family-based wellness interventions for immigrant communities
- postpartum depression interventions for low income mothers
- emotion regulation intervention for caregiver-care recipient dyads
- coping with early stage dementia

CRF Methodology Consultation staff provided services internally to UMass researchers from the following colleges:

- College of Natural Sciences - Psychological and Brain Sciences
- College of Engineering
- Public Health and Health Sciences - Kinesiology, Health Promotion and Policy, Nutrition, Communication Disorders
- Social and Behavioral Sciences - Sociology, Public Policy and Administration
- Isenberg School of Management - Sports Management, Management
- College of Education - International Education, School Psychology, and Higher Education

External consultation services were provided to the following research institutions:

- Mount Holyoke College
- Rutgers University
- University of Michigan
- Yale University School of Medicine, School of Public Health



Pictured left to right: Devon Greyson (FRS 2019-20), Holly Laws (Methodology Director), Ian Barron George (FRS 2019-20), Airín Martínez (FRS 2019-20)

SPOTLIGHT: METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH CONSULTATION

Enhancing Mental Health Care by Matching Patients to Providers' Empirically Derived Strengths

CRF Methods consultant **Alice Coyne** assisted in the multilevel longitudinal analysis of data from a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute-funded study conducted by **Dr. Michael Constantino**, Psychological and Brain Sciences. The study compared improvement rates during psychotherapy for patients matched with a mental health care provider who has established expertise in treating the patients' specific needs, to patient-therapist pairs matched by usual means (e.g., pragmatic considerations). The study found that matching patients significantly improved patients' well-being compared to case assignments-as-usual. The research suggests that mental health care can be improved not necessarily by changing **what therapists do**, but instead **who they see** in a manner that plays to their objective strengths in treating different mental health problems. The system of matching clients to therapist expertise produced particularly enhanced improvements for those who identified as racial/ethnic minorities, suggesting that therapist matching may also help address systemic disparities in terms of access to quality mental health care for racial/ethnic minority patients. **

** These statements are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), its Board of Governors or Methodology Committee

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Social Science Statistics Reading Group: This **interdisciplinary group** of faculty and graduate students meets weekly to discuss issues relating to the application of advanced statistical models to research questions of interest to those studying social and developmental processes. The reading group highlights CRF's dedication to an interdisciplinary approach to family research and best practices within research methods. **The group is cosponsored by:**

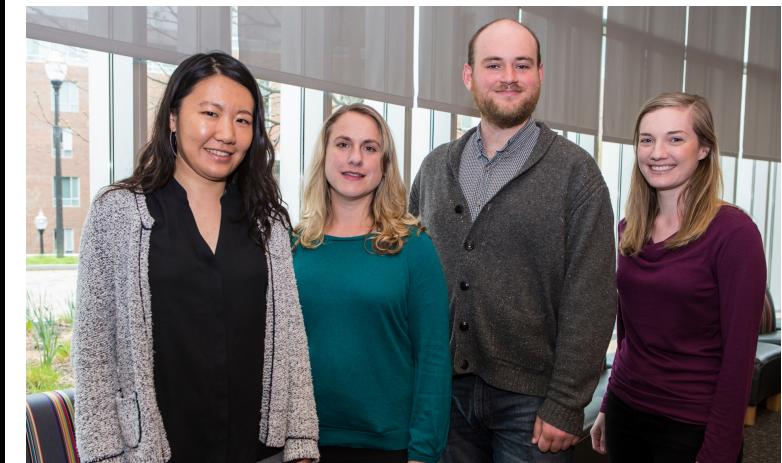
- CRF Methodology Consultation Staff
- Statistical Consulting and Collaboration Services (SCCS)
- The Consulting Center in the Department of Math and Statistics
- Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR)
- Computational Social Science Institute (CSSI)

CRF is a local evaluator for the **Young Women's Advisory Council** (YWAC) administered by the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. CRF is providing evaluation of the impact of the program on young women's self-efficacy, self-esteem, and community engagement. This is the third year of the partnership.

TRAINING: SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Building on the successful in-person **Stress Biomarkers Workshop** first taught in June of 2018, the workshop was adapted and expanded into a successful online offering in June of 2020. The workshop was led by **UMass Amherst** faculty **Jerrold Meyer**, along with co-instructors **Katie Dixon-Gordon**, **Lisa Troy**, and **Richard Hunter** from **UMass Boston**. The workshop introduced participants to the field of biomarkers of acute and chronic stress. Attendees included faculty members, postdocs, and grad students from UMass and nine other institutions from across the country who hope to incorporate such biomarkers into their research programs.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time in many years, CRF did not host **Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research** (ICPSR) workshops on the UMass Amherst campus. Our Director of Methodology, **Holly Laws**, taught an online workshop for ICPSR on **Multilevel Modeling with HLM and SPSS**. Multilevel models, also known as hierarchical linear models and mixed effects models, are widely used across a range of disciplines including sociology, psychology, political science, education, economics, and public health.



Pictured left to right: **Dongwei Wang** (Student Staff), **Holly Laws** (Methodology Director), **Joel Ginn** (Student Staff), **Alice Coyne** (Student Staff)

TEACHING AND MENTORING

GRADUATE GRANT WRITING PROGRAM

CRF's **Graduate Student Grant Writing Program** is directed by Dr. Rebecca Spencer and modeled after CRF's Faculty Research Scholars Program. **This program is designed to:**

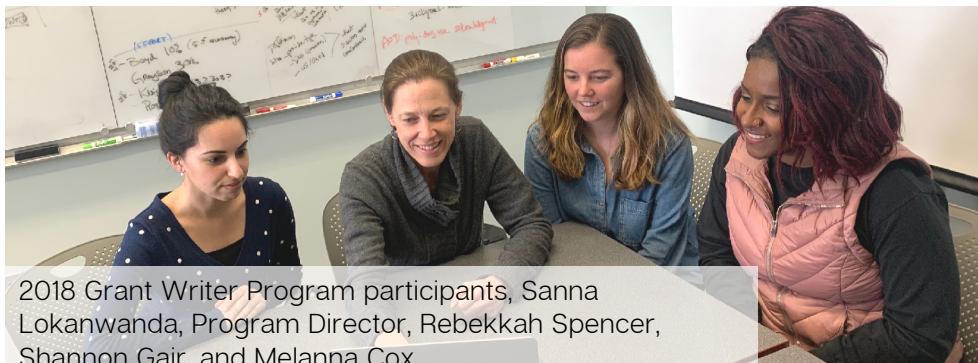
- support graduate students in the development of successful applications for NSF and NIH pre-doctoral fellowships
- increase the number of successful student fellowship applications and develop the next generation of family scholars

In the spring of 2020, a new cohort of students, all in the first three years of their doctoral work, were selected in a competitive process. They will receive support throughout their grant development process, including the **refinement and communication** of their research ideas, their approach, methodology, and submission.

SPECIFIC AIMS DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

New for 2020, The Center for Research on Families hosted a **two-part workshop** for graduate students designed to assist students in how to develop their research ideas into research aims and objectives.

Instructed by **Dr. Rebecca Spencer**, the workshop detailed how to **format aims and objectives** for NSF or NIH graduate fellowships. Through this "hands-on" workshop, students completed a draft version of their research aims to be used in applying for the Graduate Grant Writers Program.



2018 Grant Writer Program participants, Sanna Lokanwanda, Program Director, Rebekkah Spencer, Shannon Gair, and Melanna Cox

GRADUATE GRANT WRITING PROGRAM STUDENTS 2019



Jennifer Carroll



Melise Edwards



Gorana Gonzalez



Susan Park



Lindsey Russo



Elinor Waite

Jennifer Carroll, Ph.D. candidate, Epidemiology
Obesity, Food marketing, Dietary Intake, and Media Use in Preschool-aged Children

Mentor: Dr. Susan Sturgeon

Melise Edwards, Ph.D. candidate, Neuroscience and Behavior
The Role of Estrogen in Age-Related Cognitive Decline

Mentor: Dr. Agnès Lacreuse

Gorana Gonzalez, Ph.D. candidate, Cognitive Development Racial Cognition Stereotypes, and Attitudes in Racial-ethnic Majority and Minority Children
Mentor: Dr. Tara Mandalaywala

Susan Park, Ph.D. candidate, Epidemiology
Adverse Birth Outcomes among At-Risk Hispanic Women
Mentor: Dr. Lisa Chasan-Taber

Lindsey Russo, Ph.D. candidate, Biostatistics and Epidemiology
The Role of Physical Activity in Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Birthweight
Mentor: Dr. Brian Whitcomb and Dr. Ken Kleinman

Elinor Waite, Ph.D. candidate, Clinical Psychology
The Role of Parental Emotion Regulation in the Development of Bipolar Personality Disorder
Mentor: Dr. Katherine Dixon-Gordon

STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS

The CRF Student Family Research Awards Program recognizes and supports outstanding students for their innovative research on issues related to families. This year's talented students were selected to receive funding and support from CRF.

Awardees were selected from a broad range of disciplines and departments. Since the Student Family Research Awards program began in 2010, 131 students have received over \$413,400 to conduct research and present their research findings at professional meetings.

DISSERTATION AWARD RECIPIENTS



Bi-sek Hsiao, PhD candidate, Nutrition
Breastfeeding as a Protective Factor for African American Women
Mentor: Dr. Lindiwe Sibeko

Sarah McCormick, PhD candidate, Psychological and Brain Sciences
Understanding the Neural Mechanisms and Family Processes Supporting Social-Cognitive Development in Early Childhood
Mentor: Dr. Kirby Deater-Deckard



Merika Sanders, PhD candidate, Psychological and Brain Sciences
The Underlying Neural Mechanisms of Memory and the Nature of Memory Impairment
Mentor: Dr. Rosemary Cowell



Melise Edwards, PhD candidate, Neuroscience and Behavior
The Role of Estrogen in Age-Related Cognitive Decline
Mentor: Dr. Agnès Lacreuse



Youngjoon Bae, PhD candidate, Sociology
Weight Loss in Socially Isolated Elderly Men and Women in Korea
Mentor: Dr. Mark Pachucki



Olivia Laramie, Masters Candidate, Public Policy
Assessing Pure Water for the World's Menstrual Hygiene Management Program in Honduran Schools
Mentor: Dr. Satu Zoller

METHODOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP

Christina Rowley, PhD candidate, Clinical Psychology
Stress and Ethnoracial Composition of Parent Dyads
Mentor: Dr. Maureen Perry-Jenkins

"CRF has truly given me a space to step into my own academic identity"
Melanna Cox (2018)
Graduate Grant Writers Program

TRAVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS



Youngjoon Bae, PhD candidate, Sociology
Weight Loss in Socially Isolated Elderly Men and Women in Korea
Mentor: Dr. Mark Pachucki



Olivia Laramie, Masters Candidate, Public Policy
Assessing Pure Water for the World's Menstrual Hygiene Management Program in Honduran Schools
Mentor: Dr. Satu Zoller

STUDENT FEATURES



"I hope my research will help to inform when and how intervention and/or prevention strategies should be implemented for different racial groups."

Jasmine Dixon

**Graduate Grant Writers Program 2018 - 2019
Travel Award Recipient 2019**

"African Americans are twice as likely and Latinx individuals are one-and-a-half times as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as European Americans" says Jasmine Dixon, a Ph.D. candidate in the Psychological and Brain Science's Clinical Psychology Program. Dixon's research is driven by her desire to understand why these racial and ethnic differences exist. Dixon refers to this study as "[me research](#)". "Coming from an African-American community myself, so many people believe that dementia and cognitive decline are just a normal part of aging when they're actually not." Dixon received a [Travel Award](#) from the Center for Research on Families which supported her to present her research at the International Neuropsychological Society in February, 2019. She also took part in the CRF Graduate Student Grant Writing Program during the 2018-2019 academic year, where she developed a large grant proposal with the help of CRF mentors and other students.

Her research proposal will allow her to look at a multi-ethnic sample of midlife women to determine: 1) if stress contributes to differences in cognition across different racial and ethnic groups, 2) if stress is a factor in the long-term association between race/ethnicity and cognition, and 3) how women understand stressors in their lives.

"Racial and ethnic disparities in cognition are not well understood," states Dixon, "and chronic stress is a potential factor that contributes to these disparities given that racial and ethnic minorities, and particularly women of color, may experience stressors that their European American counterparts do not." Her research specifically looks at why there are racial and ethnic disparities in the risk for cognitive decline and dementia.

She believes that maintaining, and intervening if necessary, in the cognitive health of midlife women is vital to the overall health of the family system. "Midlife women are an integral part of the family system. Many of these women are caregivers for older adults and are simultaneously parenting young children and adolescents," she says. When midlife women are spending a lot of time caring for others, their own lives are also transforming due to developmental changes that can be psychologically and physically stressful.

Joseph McGuann

Undergraduate Research Assistantship 2019 - 2020

"When I was six years old, I learned that the surface area of the small intestine is the size of a tennis court, and I thought it was super cool," says Joseph McGuann. "As I got older, more and more people close to me started experiencing things like mental illness, and metabolic diseases." Joseph realized that not only was science cool and intellectually stimulating but that he could also use science to help better lives.

Joseph was the recipient of the **CRF Undergraduate Research Assistantship for 2019-2020**. A senior honors student double majoring in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Psychology. On the Neuroscience track, McGuann received a **\$3,000** award from CRF to support his honors thesis work with **Dr. Alexander Suvorov**, Environmental Health Sciences professor. McGuann's research seeks to understand how paternal age as well as paternal exposure to environmental factors, such as chemical toxins, may impact the neurodevelopment and behavior of offspring using mouse models.



"CRF funding was incredibly beneficial for supporting my work in multiple different projects"

Joseph seeks to understand how early life exposure to the flame-retardant BDE-47 increases the risk for fatty liver disease and other metabolic diseases later in life. Flame retardant chemicals are in many everyday objects including furniture and mattresses as well as cell phones, television remotes, computers, upholstered chairs, and numerous other consumer plastics.

The research team is also studying the mechanics behind how aging and environmental health affect the reproductive health of the next generation within a family. Since the 1930s, sperm concentration has decreased by approximately 50%, in Western countries, alongside an increase in sperm abnormalities and other reproductive defects in men. Additionally, paternal age at conception is increasing in western countries. Studies suggest that both age and exposure to chemicals, like the flame-retardant BDE-47, negatively affect male reproductive health by decreasing sperm concentration and quality. It is quite possible that both paternal aging and chemical exposure synergistically work together to influence this outcome. One goal is to uncover the molecular pathways in cells that are the most sensitive to chemical exposure and what the implications of this are.

What's next for Joseph? Through his research, he aims to understand the meaning behind changes in expression of each gene, and how these changes relate to one another. "Knowing that research has the potential to help so many people is incredibly meaningful for me," says McGuann. "My hope is that in the future, we will be able to help parents conceive who currently may not be able to have children, and to also protect children from the negative effects of late paternity and the chemical exposure experienced by their parents that we suspect may increase their susceptibility to certain diseases."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CRF IN SPRINGFIELD

Springfield, Massachusetts, the fourth-largest city in New England, has many strengths and challenges that profoundly impact families. CRF's goal is to partner with agencies and community leaders in Springfield to support their important work building resiliency across the city. **We aim to share the strengths that CRF and UMass Amherst can bring to the table in terms of education, research, and outreach.** CRF has set up an outreach office in Springfield and we have begun to establish a strong research and teaching presence in Springfield through initiatives based at the UMass Springfield Center.

CRF welcomes Jamina Scipio-McFadden, a deeply engaged community leader, who has been named the new Director of the UMass Springfield Center. "Jamina Scipio-McFadden has outstanding professional credentials and a wealth of strong ties to the community," said Steve Goodwin, deputy chancellor at UMass Amherst. "As the center builds upon its achievements and identifies opportunities to be more deeply connected to the community, she is well prepared to provide the leadership essential to success." We look forward to working closely with Jamina to further CRF initiatives in Springfield.

CRF PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN'S TRUST

"**Risk and Resilience in the Lives of Young Families**" is an innovative course that CRF developed in partnership with the **Children's Trust**, a statewide agency whose goal is to prevent child abuse. Children's Trust funds and provides training and support for the Healthy Families programs across the state. This unique, interdisciplinary course taps into the knowledge of home visitors while bringing a research-based framework to bear on topics such as parenting styles and strategies, high-risk families, families and culture, and more. CRF was excited to help bring this course first to Springfield, MA in Fall of 2017 and then to the UMass Mount Ida Campus in Newton in Spring of 2019. CRF Director **Maureen Perry-Jenkins** taught the class in Springfield in Spring of 2020 and several other UMass faculty members also committed their time and expertise to presenting their research, along with community practitioners. The course was a true collaboration between the Children's Trust, CRF, the supervisors who supported staff to participate, the programs that gave them release time, and the students themselves.

The following students shared their end-of-semester projects with their colleagues:

Parent-Child Interactions: Understanding the Importance and How to Make it Fun

Shannan Swinton, Springfield Healthy Families

Early Literacy with Father Involvement

Ashley Carreiro, Fall River Healthy Families

Praising Your Kiddos!

Princess Phillip, Springfield Healthy Families

Helping Families Cope with the Recent Death of a Parent

Kathleen Codair, UMass Undergraduate Student

Overcoming Co-parenting Conflict

Jessika Antinori, UMass Undergraduate Student

TAY GAVIN ERICKSON LECTURE SERIES

CRF shares family research and engages with the public through the **Tay Gavin Erickson Lecture Series**. Established in 1999 through an endowment in memory of Tay Gavin Erickson, the lecture series brings internationally recognized speakers with expertise in family research to campus each year. In 2019-2020, CRF hosted five prominent researchers who gave public lectures and provided in-depth consultation to CRF scholars.

Beyond Opioids: Adolescents' Misuse of Four Prescription Drug Classes

Carol J. Boyd, PhD, MSN, RN, FAAN Deborah J Oakley Professor Emerita Director of the Center for the Study of Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking and Health in the School of Nursing Research Professor Emerita in the Addiction Center University of Michigan
Consulted with **Devon Grayson**, February 20, 2020



BEYOND OPIOIDS: ADOLESCENTS' MISUSE OF FOUR PRESCRIPTION DRUG CLASSES

Carol J. Boyd
PhD, MSN, RN, FAAN

Deborah J Oakley Professor Emerita

Director of the Center for the Study of

Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking and Health in the

School of Nursing

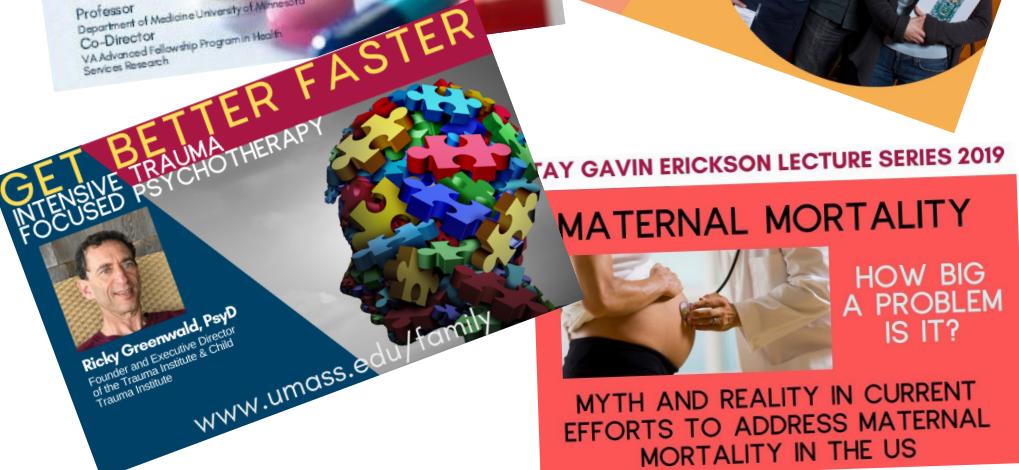
The Impacts of Language Brokering on Mexican American Adolescent Immigrants and their Families

Su Yeong Kim, PhD, Professor, Human Development and Family Science at the University of Texas at Austin and Editor of Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology
Consulted with **Airín Martínez**, February 18, 2020



Understanding and Addressing Racial Disparities in Pain and Pain Treatment

Diana Burgess, PhD, Professor, Department of Medicine at the University of Minnesota and Co-Director at VA Advanced Fellowship Program in Health Services Research
Consulted with **Nicole VanKim**, January 30, 2020

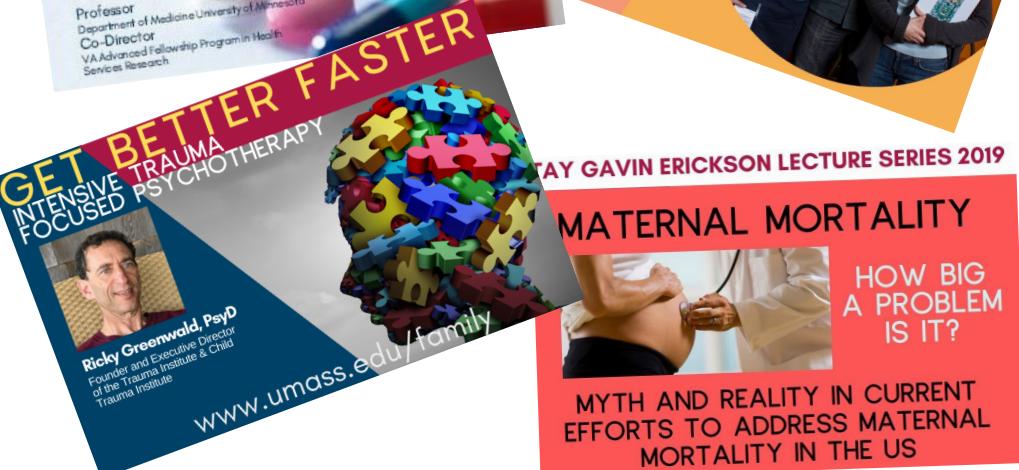


Myth and Reality in Current Efforts to Address Maternal Mortality in the U.S.

Eugene Declercq, PhD, Professor of Community Health Sciences at Boston University School of Public Health and School of Medicine
Consulted with **Mary Paterno**, December 5, 2019

Get Better Faster: Intensive Trauma Focused Psychotherapy

Ricky Greenwald, PsyD, Founder and Executive Director of the Trauma Institute and Child Trauma Institute
Consulted with **Ian George Barron**, November 14, 2019



INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

CRF is committed to creating opportunities for research collaboration and forming intellectual communities that bring students and researchers together across disciplinary boundaries.

CRF collaborates with other centers, departments, schools, and colleges within **UMass Amherst** to develop multidisciplinary projects. Faculty from the Five Colleges and other UMass campuses also engage in joint ventures with CRF, which has led to innovative projects and an extended network of research opportunities.

SUPPORTING FACULTY "THINK TANKS"

Bringing together **interdisciplinary** teams of faculty with shared interests in issues and topics of importance to families such as stress, work and family, early child development, and adolescence.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT (PEP)

The Public Engagement Project **supports** and **trains** faculty members from all disciplines to use their research to contribute to social change, inform public policy, and enrich public debate. CRF, in collaboration with **ISSR**, the **School for Public Policy**, and the **Psychology of Peace and Violence Program**, spearheaded this program, which has resulted in national exposure for faculty in public media outlets such as PBS, the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and the Huffington Post, to name a few. **Two former CRF scholars, Jamie Rowen and Rebecca Ready were selected as PEP scholars this past year.**

MENOPAUSE RESEARCH GROUP (ESTABLISHED DURING 2019-2020 ACADEMIC YEAR)

CRF is excited to host a new research collaboration this year. The Menopause Research Group is a loosely knit group of researchers who come together each month in order to share their interests in older women's health. Started by Lisa Troy (Nutrition) it includes faculty from multiple UMass colleges as well as Smith College. The members of the group study menopause, midlife, and aging in human, macaque, and rodent models using a variety of methods, including secondary data analyses, questionnaires, fMRI, muscle biopsies, movement monitors, hormone levels, ambulatory hot flash monitors, and more. Members frequently collaborate on grant proposals and publications. The group uses their time together to present their work to each other and sort through challenges. The members find that having so much expertise and different points of view in the same room makes for a supportive and enjoyable environment that nurtures ongoing and future research.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MENOPAUSE RESEARCH GROUP:

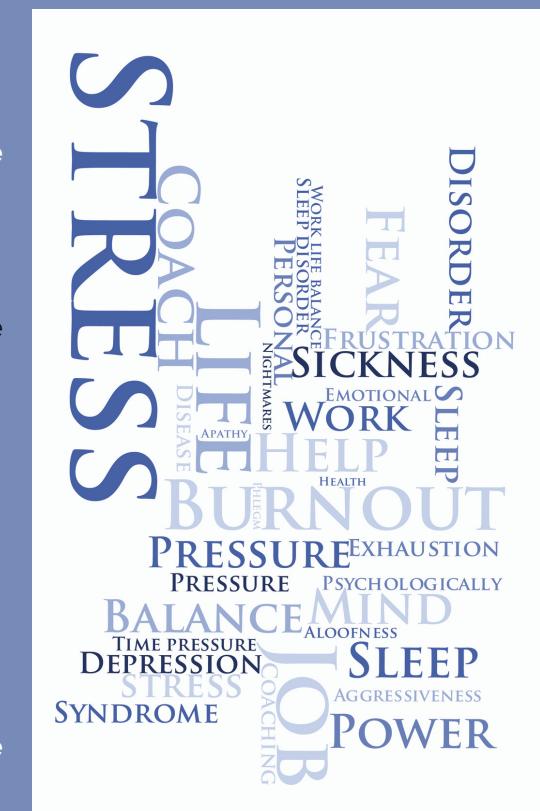
- **Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson** and **Brian Whitcomb** (School of Public Health) study age at menopause and changes in levels of anti-Müllerian hormone (a measure of ovarian follicle reserve) across the lifespan
- **Nicole VanKim** (School of Public Health) collaborated with **Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson** and **Lynnette Sievert** (Anthropology) in a study of age at menopause and symptoms at midlife among lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual women in the Nurses' Health Study II
- **Jane Kent, Mark Miller**, and **Stuart Chipkin** (Kinesiology,) focus on the physiology of aging and share an interest in understanding and preventing the age-related loss of muscle performance
- **Sarah Witkowski**, an exercise physiologist, joins the group from Smith College. Witkowski studies the relationship between fitness, exercise, and hot flashes
- **Agnès Lacreuse** and postdoc **Emily Rothwell** (Psychological and Brain Sciences) study cognitive changes, sleep, estrogen, and hot flashes in aging macaques
- **Stephanie Padilla** (Biology) uses a rodent model to understand how kisspeptin neurons are involved in the trigger of hot flashes
- **Michael Busa** (Department of Kinesiology and the Center for Human Health & Performance) and **Katie Colfer** (CHHP) are working to develop better hot flash monitors that eventually integrate a device-based cooling intervention
- **Lynette Sievert's** (Anthropology) current project examines hot flashes in relation to brown adipose tissue activity

STRESS RESEARCH GROUP

CRF's interdisciplinary Stress Research Group (SRG) consists of researchers who have been meeting since 2008 to better understand the critical role of stress in the lives of individuals and families. Their research examines the causes of stress, the effects of stress, and unique methods for measuring stress in animals and humans. The Stress Research Group has been working across disciplines to integrate techniques, tools, and perspectives to examine how and why stress manifests in the body throughout life, how the manifestation of stress influences relationships and mental health, and how we can address the negative effects of stress to improve health. The Stress Research Group applies a lifespan approach to study, measuring stress from gestation and infancy, through adolescence and young adulthood, and to menopause and beyond.

In the past year, the SRG established a smaller working group that met six times. One of the projects that has emerged from the group is a promising collaboration between Dr. Karen Kalmakis (Nursing), and Dr. Jerrold Meyer (Psychological and Brain Sciences). Researchers have known for some time that small amounts of the stress hormone cortisol are excreted in sweat. The long-term aim of their project is to ascertain whether sweat-derived cortisol can be developed into a novel non-invasive way of assessing chronic cortisol secretion and changes in secretory activity associated with long-term stress.

They are using commercially available skin patches that are normally used for drug testing but hadn't been used to assess cortisol. The patch is placed on the skin (arm, abdomen, thigh) and left in place for 7 days. The procedure they developed has shown that they could extract and quantify both cortisol and sodium (to control for sweat volume) from patches worn for the 7-day period. They are now working on showing that the material extracted from the patches and analyzed in the lab behaves like authentic cortisol. Once human subjects testing becomes more feasible, they will proceed to determine (1) how closely one week of sweat-derived cortisol relates to daily cortisol output measured using salivary cortisol levels, and (2) whether ongoing stress that reliably elevates salivary cortisol has a similar effect on sweat cortisol. If these aims are attained, then they will have developed a new approach to quantifying physiological stress over weekly periods of time, a measurement period that is not currently available using present methods of cortisol assessment.



RUDD ADOPTION RESEARCH PROGRAM

The [Rudd Adoption Research Program](#) and the Center for Research on Families are closely linked through their overlapping missions and strategies. CRF provides administrative support to the Rudd program, and their close proximity and shared research strengths benefit both programs. [The Rudd Adoption Research Program is a leader in producing and disseminating state-of-the-art research on the Psychology of Adoption through conferences, workshops, graduate and postdoctoral training opportunities, and stimulation of research activities.](#) Dr. Harold Grotevant is the Rudd Family Foundation Endowed Chair in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences and leads the Rudd Adoption Research Program.

Rudd offered an exciting new course in the fall of 2019; "[Foster Care: Psychological and Societal Perspectives](#)" which involved many of Rudd's community partners who served as consultants for the development of the course and as guest speakers.

The Rudd Program has also created two organizations for UMass students who are adopted – the [Adoption Mentoring Partnership](#) (AMP), in which students serve as mentors for adopted children in the Amherst community, and the [Adopted Student Advisory Panel](#) (ASAP), a registered student organization that involves camaraderie, education, and advocacy, led by capable, energetic students. Dr. Grotevant says, "We continue to work toward the goal of creating an adoption-friendly campus. UMass is already becoming a 'destination of choice' for people with personal connections to adoption, and we hope that will continue to grow."

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ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF CRF

In 1919, **Edna Skinner** fostered one of the first Home Economics programs in the country; the aim of this program was to use science to better understand and enhance family life. Since that time, courses on topics such as nutrition, financial planning, child development, that were a part of Skinner's curriculum, have become their own disciplines. Home Economics was the first discipline to put the study of families at the center of inquiry. The program morphed into the Department of Consumer Studies in 1991 which consisted of programs in Family and Consumer Studies, Family and Community Studies, and Textiles and Apparel – **all programs aimed at understanding how individuals, families, communities, and the social environment interact to shape our lives.** Students from these programs, many of whom went on to careers in human services, education, policy, financial planning, and more, were trained to understand that the enormous challenges facing families could not be solved with one simple solution. **Rather, solutions had to merge knowledge across disciplines and consider the range of influences on families.**

The Consumer Studies program closed in 2001, but a key cornerstone of its mission continues on today through our Center, with its earliest roots in Home Economics. This mission was revitalized in the Center for Research on Families in the 1990s. We are excited to be connecting with alumni from these former programs. Several attended our recent Annual Research Forum and Awards Dinner; **Miriam Clement '57** and retired **Judge Rebekah Crampton-Kamukala,'59**, alumnae from the former Home Economics and Family and Consumer Science program. We were also very pleased to reconnect with **Mary Ann Higgins**, a graduate from the Sociology Department and longtime friend of our Center. Ms. Higgins shared her thoughts at our **Annual Dinner** and was recognized for her lifelong commitment to children and families through her work with the Department of Health and Human Services.

Alumni from the early days of Home Economics, to Consumer Studies, to CRF - **the legacy of all of your programs is alive and well at the Center for Research on Families!** We hope you will continue to stay connected and committed to our mission. We are very grateful for the many generous friends and donors who support the CRF mission.

We couldn't accomplish what we do without you!



Pictured left: Judge Rebekah Crampton-Kamukala,'59, Steven Goodwin

Pictured right (top to bottom): Miriam Clement '57, Jonathan Crowley, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Judge Rebekah Crampton-Kamukala,'59, Mary Ann Higgins

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CRF is supported by the **College of Natural Sciences**, the **College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**, The **School of Public Health and Health Sciences**, the **Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement**, the **Edna Skinner Fund**, **Dorothy and Joseph Gavin**, and many other generous donors.

IN MEMORIAM

Louis Graham, 1982-2019

We were deeply saddened to learn that Louis Graham passed away suddenly on December 29, 2019. Louis was a Family Research Scholar from 2016-2017, a member of our Stress Research Group, and a member of the Public Engagement Project. His research focused on understanding the psychological determinants of mental and sexual health among ethnic minorities and sexually marginalized groups - including depression, anxiety, and HIV prevention among black and Latino gay and bisexual men and transgender women. He used community-based participatory research methods to facilitate power sharing amongst researchers and community stakeholders. **"Louis Graham was a scholar. He was a thoughtful, critical, curious, and flexible thinker. He loved new ideas and new ways of questioning the status quo."** said CRF director, Maureen Perry-Jenkins. His work with the Men of Color Health Awareness (MOCHA) in Springfield was a perfect example of how research can be used to support and empower oppressed groups and he became a part of MOCHA in a way that was meaningful and real. Louis Graham was a kind, warm, and caring human being. He used his voice to raise up all around him, the community members he worked with were not 'subject participants' but colleagues, friends, and allies working together to improve the health and well-being of all. He left us before his work was done but he left a whole army of individuals better prepared to work towards fairness, equality, and health. He is missed so much.

The UMass School of Public Health and Health Sciences (SPHHS) has created **The Louis Graham Memorial Scholarship** to support graduate students from underrepresented groups in the Department of Health Promotion and Policy. This scholarship carries on Dr. Graham's commitment to tackling structurally-rooted health inequity, improving LGBTQ health, and engaging communities to address the multifaceted effects of racism on health. Louis' impact continues through the Stories Matter curriculum he developed with MOCHA, and in the UMass Amherst Center for Community Health Equity Research (CCHER), which he helped to found. CCHER seeks to understand and address the complex relationship between oppression and health. Louis was a valued member of the communities he served. His passion, humor, warmth, drive, and kindness will be dearly missed. We will always remember Louis for his important contributions to the field and for his advocacy.

To hear his voice and learn first-hand of his passion and creativity please view his unique digital story, *A Walk in the Woods*: <https://www.umass.edu/pep/sites/default/files/oaass.mp4>



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