**HDFS DEVELOPMENTS**

The latest updates in Human Development and Family Studies in The Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign brought to you by the HDFS Undergraduate Ambassadors

*Editors: Molly Harmon and Jasmine Brown*

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**Dr. Nancy McElwain**
Awarded a 2-year grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the Maternal Speech and Children's Physiological and Behavioral Regulation Project

**Jan Brooks**
Jan Brooks was the recipient of the 2014 NACTA (North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture) Teacher Fellow Award

**Kimberly Crossman**
Kimberly “Kimi” Crossman was awarded the highly competitive 2014-2015 Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the UIUC Graduate College

**Kale Monk**
Joseph H. Fleck Outstanding Graduate Student Award

**Jewell L. Taylor National Fellowship**
Fellowship from the American Association of Family and Consumer Science (AAFCS)

**Sarah Curtis**
Joseph H. Fleck Outstanding Graduate Student Award

**Dr. Brian Ogolsky**
Human Development Graduate Student Organization Award for Outstanding Faculty Member

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"I just wish the program lasted longer it was so much fun and I learned a lot!"
-Mariela (HDFS High School Camper)

**HDFS Summer Academy 2014**

HDFS offered the first ever Illini Summer Academy program for high school students interested in human development and family studies. A group of current undergraduate students, Molly Harmon, Erin LePoire, Devin Weiss and Danette DeWeese joined Bob Hughes (HDFS faculty) in planning and implementing the program. During the week, we explored how scientists study children and families, discussed relationship issues affecting teens, and helped out in making some teaching materials for The Autism Center at UIUC in Christopher Hall. The participants in the program produced messages for other teens about relationships on BuzzFeed. Found: [http://www.buzzfeed.com/hdfsillinois](http://www.buzzfeed.com/hdfsillinois)

**HDFS Ambassador’s Habitat for Humanity Trip 2014**

Goldsboro, North Carolina

“The trip to North Carolina was nothing short of eye opening. Being immersed in the Deep South was a culture shock to say the least. However, at the end of the day, we were helping good humble people who just needed a little help getting back on their feet. But for me personally, the most valuable time spent was outside of the construction site. I was able to open up with my professor and schoolmates in ways I never thought possible. This trip reminded me that everyone has a story and to truly get to know a person before judging them. We are all just people.” -Devin Weiss

[Pictured left to right: Samantha Addante, Devin Weiss, Molly Harmon, and Jill Bowers (HDFS Ambassadors Advisor)]
Graduate Student Spotlight

Aisha Griffith, Ph.D.

I recently graduated in May 2014 from the HDFS doctoral program. I worked with Dr. Reed Larson with a focus on youth development programs. I was attracted to graduate studies after teaching middle school students for five years. The most meaningful honors that I received during graduate school include: receiving funding from American Psychological Association to coordinate a series of workshops to promote ethnic minority graduate student retention; being an EAR/SA Summer School Young Scholar to work with top scholars at a week-long program in Greece; and receiving the Joseph Flick Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the department. I also widened my understanding of child development when assisting Dr. Marcela Raffaelli on the Brazil Study Tour.

My dissertation was titled The Formation of Adolescents’ Trust in Adult Leaders at Project-Based Youth Programs. Using semi-structured interviews, I had youth describe which adult leader (if any) they trusted, how that trust formed, and how it helped them. From my analysis I proposed a model on how trust forms in such contexts. I am currently preparing an article from my dissertation on how trust magnifies what adolescents gain from youth programs.

I am starting a post-doctoral fellowship at Youth-Nex, University of Virginia’s Center to Promote Youth Development. As a post-doctoral fellow I will continue to sharpen my research skills, prepare articles, and conduct a developmental evaluation the center is planning for the upcoming year. I will also decide whether I want to go into academia or in a non-academic setting such as a research institute. (I have a list of such non-academic settings focused on youth development that I would be happy to share. My new email address is ang6f@eservices.virginia.edu).

Research Lab Highlight

Dr. Jennifer Hardesty Research

About half of divorcing spouses have children under 18. Many divorced parents maintain a coparental relationship as they deal with child-related issues after divorce. The quality of coparental interactions is known to affect parents’ and children’s mental and physical health, but past research is limited in two key ways. First, few researchers have examined coparenting relationships after divorce over time (longitudinally). Second, researchers have not examined coparenting relationships among parents who experienced violence during marriage.

Understanding these complexities can help inform legal decisions regarding child custody arrangements and contribute to the safety and well-being of divorcing parents and their children. Dr. Jennifer Hardesty’s research team in the Department of Human and Community Development (HCD) is currently conducting a major longitudinal study funded by the National Institutes of Health. The Make It! Project (Mothers’ and Kids’ Experiences in Transition) was designed to examine mothers’ and their children’s physical and psychological well-being during divorce transitions and explore how mothers negotiate coparenting relationships with their former spouses. The study includes 190 mothers with and without a history of marital violence. It is generating unique information that can be used to develop divorce and health care policies and programs serving mothers and children who may be vulnerable to ongoing conflict, violence, and negative health outcomes. In addition to the Make It! Project, Dr. Hardesty and her team have several related projects, including one that used a vignette approach to examine 603 custody evaluators’ beliefs about mothers’ domestic violence allegations during divorce. A manuscript based on this study was just accepted for publication in the Journal of Child Custody, which highlights the large influence a mother’s demeanor has on judgments of her credibility. The study has implications for educating professionals about the potential effects of domestic violence on mothers’ presentation during court proceedings.

In addition to her co-investigator, Marcela Raffaelli (Professor, HCD), Dr. Hardesty’s research team has included many fabulous students whom have made it all happen: Kimberly Crossman (PhD candidate, HCD) and Kristen Bochenek, Lauren Finkel, Adam Huska, Jeremy Kanter, Jordan Magold, Rachel McCool, and Lauren Stevig (undergraduate students, HDFS).

Jeremy Kanter said, “Working in Dr. Hardesty lab has been a great experience. Getting first-hand experience with research processes and how to build strong research has build a strong foundation for my future endeavors in graduate school.”

Another student Jordan Magold stated, “Working with Dr. Hardesty and Kimi has been an amazing experience! It has allowed me to gain real experience in the research process. It has also allowed me to be better educated about a specific topic, abuse and control in relationships, which I am extremely interested in for my career.”

There are many opportunities this summer and next year for undergraduate students to get involved in Dr. Hardesty’s research lab! Contact her (hardesty@illinois.edu) or Kimberly Crossman (kcrossm2@illinois.edu) for more information. Interested students will be asked to complete a brief interview to assess fit and qualifications.