It is sometimes hard to believe how quickly time flies – it seems just moments ago that I started my new job as the Department Head of HDFS, and I realize how quickly the past year has flown by. As I was sitting down to write this, I remembered one of my first days on the job last year and the experience of walking into the building. I happened to reach the door at the same time as a little girl who attended the Early Childhood Center. I said hello, and she looked at me, looked at my lunch box, looked at her lunch box, and said with great enthusiasm, “Do you go to school here, too?”

Her enthusiasm is such a great reflection of the excitement of the fall – the excitement of a new school year with new teachers and new challenges, the beginning crispness in the air, the smell of sharpened pencils, new backpacks (and lunchboxes!), the exciting reconnections with friends you’ve not seen over the summer, and those new friends you are just meeting for the first time. This is the excitement we feel as a department as we grow and expand our foundational mission to foster positive development across the lifespan.

What does it mean to “foster positive development across the lifespan”? It means we work – through our research, scholarship, teaching, and outreach activities – to promote resilience, well-being, and strength. It means that we look for solutions at the intersection of science and application so that our programs have a direct and practical impact on bettering the quality of life for the people of Colorado, the nation, and the global community. This commitment is evidenced in our projects that address challenging social problems such as youth violence and substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, disabilities, and the graying of our population, and as we celebrate the positive strides we make in promoting successful programs and projects that resolve some of these challenges. It is communicated in our classes that teach students to be critical thinkers, and compassionate and creative problem solvers. It is at the forefront of our centers that serve the community – the Early Childhood Center, the Center for Family and Couple Therapy, and our partnership with the College of Applied Human Sciences’ Center on Aging. We bring this passion to communities in partnership with CSU’s Cooperative Extension and Continuing Education programs.

Over the next year we will be updating our website, www.hdfs.cahs.colostate.edu, to showcase our teaching, research, and outreach programs and accomplishments. We invite you to visit us online to learn more about what we are doing.

As I close this letter, I think about another fall tradition – Thanksgiving. I want to thank you for all of your gifts – students, for entrusting your education in us and challenging us to be the best educators we can be; parents, for entrusting us with your sons and daughters; alumni, friends, and supporters, for the countless ways you help us meet the many challenges and opportunities we face. Thank you! And, enjoy the fall!

Lise Youngblade, Department Head
Highlights in Undergraduate Education

HDFS is a very popular major at CSU. We have talented students who are engaged in learning the tools they need to creatively resolve societal challenges faced by children, families, and our aging population.

・Our undergraduate program continues to grow, and with close to 600 undergraduates, we are the 7th most popular major on campus.
・We were proud to graduate 210 students in the 2006-2007 academic year and send them off with our wishes for an outstanding future. We also were very happy to welcome this year’s incoming freshman class of 75 students.
・We have officially launched an online undergraduate degree completion program, and are working to make education more accessible to individuals across the state, especially those working full-time and who do not have the option of coming to campus. We are especially interested in supporting early childhood professionals who seek a 4-year baccalaureate degree. A federally funded project in the department specifically helps Head Start teaching staff complete their Bachelor’s degree through our online program in HDFS.
・The HDFS Academic Interest Group started up again in Spring 2007. This volunteer student leadership group supports the department through various service activities and is an opportunity for HDFS undergraduates to gain entrepreneurial, service, and outreach experience.

Spotlight on Research and Graduate Education

Through our research and graduate education programs, our goal is the discovery and application of knowledge about the life span development of individuals and families toward the goal of promoting optimal development. Highlights include the following:

・Our master’s program, offering specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy and Family and Developmental Studies, continues to thrive. We continue to partner in interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs, and are developing a Ph.D. program in Applied Developmental Science. Please check our website over the upcoming year to find out more about this planned doctoral program.
・We are very proud of our graduate students who graduated this past year – five with a master’s degree and three with a Ph.D. – all of whom are off to exciting positions in clinical practice, social service agencies, and academic positions at universities.
・Faculty in the department were quite productive in research and discovery last year, publishing 33 peer-reviewed papers, and making 36 national conference presentations.

Faculty efforts resulted in 14 new research grant proposals submitted, and a record year of $735,000 in research expenditures during 2006-2007. Recent funded projects examine community models for supporting children’s access to health care; the role of self-concept organization in coping with daily stress; successful transition to grade school for at-risk children; prevention of early sexual activity in young adolescents; prevalence of psychopathology in individuals with intellectual disabilities; evaluation of programs that teach youth to resist stereotypes of gender, race, and class; community-based youth violence prevention programs; professional development of early childhood professionals; support for farmers and ranchers with disabilities; and interventions for promoting emotional availability and secure attachments with parents and in child care.

We are working to expand our reputation and expertise in prevention and intervention science, as well as early childhood education and intervention. We are currently recruiting two new faculty members to add to our expertise in these areas.

Alumni Connections

Let us know how you are and what you are doing. We want to celebrate and share the milestones in your life. Our new website will have alumni updates and events, and we invite you to connect with us through some of these activities. We will be featuring alumni in every upcoming newsletter, and telling the story of how HDFS impacted their lives. We are in the process of updating our contact information, so please take a moment and help us by sending a quick e-mail to us with your current information (please send to Kris Worl, kworl@cahs.colostate.edu). And, if you are in the vicinity, please stop by and say hello – we would love to see you!

Java Jolt

The HDFS Academic Interest Group (AIG) participates in fundraising for the department. A new and successful activity involves running a coffee cart on the first floor of Gifford Hall. The proceeds will support student activities in HDFS.
Focus on Outreach

As an academic unit in a land-grant university, we are very proud of our ability to bring research and discovery to programs that impact individuals, families, and communities.

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) trains future child educators through student internships, and provides quality care in an enriched environment to young children in our CSU and Fort Collins communities. This year, the ECC held its first summer program, went on an exciting off-campus field trip to a train garden, and had a float in the CSU Homecoming Parade. The ECC was proud to graduate 34 children in Spring 2007.

The Center for Family and Couple Therapy provides high-quality, affordable therapy services to residents of Northern Colorado, while serving as a premier training site for graduate students in the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program. Thus far in 2007, MFT graduate students, working closely with MFT faculty members, have assisted approximately 140 individuals, couples, and families in improving their lives and relationships.

Faculty and students from HDFS participate in the Center on Aging (COA) at CSU. The COA runs the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Studies Program, and 20 students last year completed a Certificate in Gerontology. The COA is also actively engaged in research and outreach. Current projects include partnering with the Larimer County Caregiving Coalition to develop and evaluate caregiver support services using a community coalition approach. The COA organized the 2007 Mary Scott Lectures, featuring a world renowned scholar in psychological well-being and health in adulthood and aging, Dr. Carol Ryff from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The COA also co-hosted the Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging in October 2007.

In partnership with HDFS, Cooperative Extension’s Growing Strong Colorado Families Work Team focuses on strengthening and educating Colorado parents, caregivers, and early childhood and school age professionals to facilitate the development of caring, competent, connected, confident, and healthy children. Examples of some of these state-wide programs include Partners in Parenting, Strengthening Families, Second Time Around Grand Parenting, and Make Parenting a Pleasure. Another focus of HDFS’s Cooperative Extension activities is supporting ranch/farm family members with disabilities through the Colorado AgrAbility Project.

CSU Center on Aging
Aging Research Colloquium Series (ARCs)
Open to the Public!
• Bringing together aging researchers and students to build an active community of like-minded people.
• Featuring basic and applied research.
Second Monday of each month
Noon to 1 p.m.
Lory Student Center, Room 220-2

Milestones

• Many thanks for years of service to Professor Gene Abkarian, who retired in May 2007, after 25 years at CSU – 13 of which were spent in HDFS.
• Congratulations to Shelley Haddock, who was recently promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure.
• Congratulations to Zeynep Biringen, who was promoted to Professor.
• We welcome several new people to the Department:
  • Manfred Diehl joined the faculty in Fall 2006 as Professor and Director of the Center on Aging.
  • Lise Youngblade joined the faculty as Professor and Department Head in Fall 2006.
  • Sarah Barrett and Kris Worl have joined the administrative support staff in the main office.
  • Anne Van Arsdall is our Undergraduate Coordinator and Key Advisor.
  • A familiar person in the Early Childhood Center for many years, Linda Carlson is our new Interim Director of the ECC.
Reaching for Greater Heights

HDFS is on the forefront – researching the many facets of individual and family development across the life span in a rich diversity of contexts; educating students with the skills necessary to address societal challenges faced by children, families, and our aging population; and providing outreach through the intersection of science and application to foster positive development. Please join us in these efforts in whatever way you can. Gifts to our scholarship funds help support students. Gifts to our department enrichment fund are unrestricted and we can use these funds to leverage additional sources of support for new programs and projects. Gifts of time and energy can help in multiple areas. All gifts are greatly appreciated!

Department of Human Development and Family Studies Gift Form

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