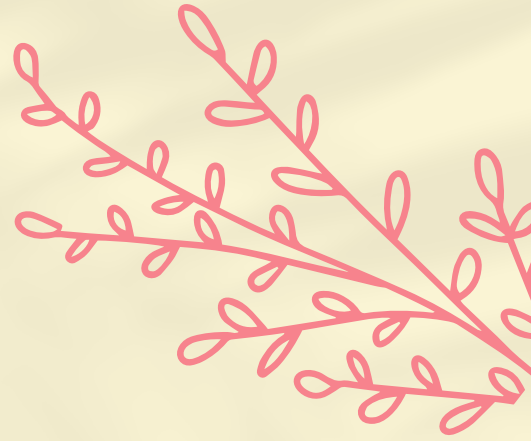


DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT & FAMILY SCIENCE

Spring Newsletter



 MESSIAH
UNIVERSITY®

SPRING 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message From Dr. Johns	2-3
Outstanding Alumni Recipient	4
HDFS Events	5
FCS News	6
NCFR News	7
MCFR News	8
HDFS Class Spotlights	9
Child Life Specialist Spotlights	10
Senior Honors Project & Internship	11
FCS Educator Day	12
2024-2025 Graduates.....	13



A Message From Dr. Johns!



Dear Friends of HDFS/FCS,

It's that time of year again when I get to sit at my laptop and reflect on a year in the life of the HDFS Department. What a year it's been! After some great work by everyone in the department, our new HDFS-MOT (Master of Occupational Therapy) accelerated program was passed and will begin fall 2025. Start sending students interested in occupational therapy our way; we'll get them started well! Also, this academic year we began our new HDFS with Child Life major, which has garnered a great deal of attention, both from prospective students and those already here. I heard that TikTok may have highlighted some content on child life specialists. Thanks, TikTok! (That's the only time you'll catch me saying that). I highlight these majors to let you know what's new, but also to make you aware of effort in the department to provide a few HDFS options with more defined career trajectories. Coming out of COVID, and perhaps before, students in general seem less interested in investing time and money in unclear career pathways. As many of you know, historically the flexibility of the HDFS major has been one of our greatest strengths. At present, we are seeking to maintain this strength through the generalized HDFS major for students unsure of what they wish to pursue. But we are also recognizing the need to provide more vocational clarity through programs like HDFS with Child Life, HDFS-MOT, and perhaps more to come. Please continue to pray for us as we discern what is best for contemporary students as they seek to pursue God's calling on their lives.

On a sad note, we lost an amazing person and adjunct instructor, Kristen Reitz, to cancer in February of this year. Kristen, a 2000 HDFS graduate, had valuable experience in the field that she brought to her teaching for nearly thirteen years! Loved by many, she will be sorely missed. Personally, having co-taught with Kristen for the last couple of years prior to her diagnosis, I have been reflecting on how important it is to share with those we care about how much they mean to us, even colleagues and students.

--Continued on next page--

Continued from Previous Page



A couple of years ago, on a whim I nominated Kristen for the very first adjunct teaching award given by Messiah. And, as an act of God's providence, she received the 2023 Adjunct Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence from Messiah University for her long-term commitment and devotion to the HDFS department and our students. Well-deserved! So, as I move on from seeing God's hand at work in this timing, I'm working on adopting the approach of "If I think it, I should say it" when it comes to valuing others. You just never know when life will take a drastic turn, either for you or them.

On a scary but ultimately much happier note, Raeann spent nearly a month and a half on medical leave this semester due to a very early and fortuitous detection of breast cancer. While scary for her and all of us, her treatment, by all indications, appears to have been successful, leaving her cancer free. As Raeann states about this result: "God is good!" To which I'll add, "all the time!" as we consider how Raeann is still with us and Kristen, even though she was not healed in this life, is now in the comforting arms of her Savior for eternity.

Lastly, allow me to take some of my own advice. I'm thinking it, so I'll say it. Working at Messiah University with my amazing colleagues and our fabulous students is such a blessing and privilege. I sure hope students know how much we as faculty and staff love and value them during their short stint with us. As I enter my 22nd year teaching at Messiah, I am struck by how much I have been transformed for the better by so many students and my amazing colleagues.

One final thought. After you finish reading this, immediately go and engage in a strengths-based, HDFS-inspired, positive relationship skill and tell someone you care about how much you value them. Think it, then say it!

Sincerely,
Paul A. Johns

2025 HDFS Outstanding Alumni Award

Congratulations to Tabita Quashigah Tugulia (HDFS '09)!

The Department of Human Development and Family Science Outstanding Alumni Award was initiated in 2012 and is designed to recognize HDFS alumni for distinguished contributions to the service of individuals and families.

The faculty of the Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) Department selected Tabita Quashigah Tugulia (HDFS '09) as the recipient for the 2025 Department of HDFS Outstanding Alumni Award! Tabita graduated from Messiah College with a major in Human Development and Family Science and a minor in Spanish. After graduation, Tabita worked for Dauphin County Children and Youth as a family engagement caseworker. She currently works in the Human Services Director's Office as a Contracting Manager which involves comprehensive review and approval of all provider program operating budgets. In addition to this position, she works tirelessly in her community through her involvement in the Dauphin County Cultural Celebration Task Force and as founder and executive director of Front End Family Solutions LLC, where she is dedicated to empowering families by providing referrals to supportive services and resource navigation for families in need. Tabita has recently become an adjunct instructor in the HDFS department here at Messiah University. She is currently pursuing her lifelong dream and is working on the publishing of her first children's book, *Pichi Goes to America*, which describes her journey to a new country and God's faithfulness throughout that time. We are thankful for her outstanding efforts to share her knowledge and vast network of community leaders with our students. We applaud her for being such a valuable community leader and for the incredibly significant work she has done and continues to do to meet the needs of local families.

Congratulations, Tabita!



HDFS EVENTS

5

Welcome Back Social



This year we held our annual Welcome Back social outside at the picnic tables. We had a beautiful evening by the creek with pizza and cookies for all! Students, faculty and staff all received their HDFS department shirts designed by this year's contest design winner, Lauren Garcia!



Christmas Party 2024

The annual HDFS Christmas Party is full of joy, fun, and holiday cheer! We enjoyed some Christmas games, a cookie contest, best dressed contest and our traditional White Elephant Gift Game! You never know what you'll go home with!! AND.....IT SNOWED!!



FCS NEWS

Big thank you to Isabella Benner, FCS Major 2025, for demonstrating cupcake decorating on October 30th for the Human Development and Family Science event for current FCS teachers and high school students interested in a career in Family and Consumer Sciences!



On Saturday, March 15, FCS professionals gathered for the PAFCS Central Area Meeting at Cumberland Perry Area CTC. The event featured insightful sessions on topics: the Art of Play for All Ages, Penn State Extension, AI for College & Career Readiness, and PDE updates. Jordyn Thompson was recognized as the recipient of the 2025 Undergraduate Scholarship, and Adjunct Professor Sasha Roble was recognized as the recipient of the 2025 Graduate Scholarship.

Dr. Raeann Hamon and Jordyn Thompson (FCS '26) were invited to speak about the Messiah Family and Consumer Sciences program at the South Central Regional FCCLA Regional Leadership Meeting at Gettysburg High School on October 30. About 70 students were in attendance. What a fun time to meet so many young people invested in families, careers and communities!



NCFR NEWS

Dr. Raeann Hamon (distinguished professor of family science and gerontology), Lauren Garcia (HDFS '25), Isabella Benner (FCS '25), and Jenna Moyer (HDFS '27) attended the National Council on Family Relations Conference in Bellevue, Washington in November.



7

"Attending the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Conference was an unforgettable experience that deepened my passion for family science and professional development. I had the privilege of presenting research alongside Dr. Raeann Hamon on "A Visual Depiction of the Historical Development of the Field of Family Science: A Strong Foundation for a Sustainable Future." Engaging with scholars, educators, and practitioners from across the country allowed me to see firsthand the impact of research in shaping the field. Designing our presentation and sharing it with professionals who expressed interest in furthering the discussion was incredibly rewarding. Beyond presenting, I attended insightful sessions on topics such as adoption and foster care, financial decision-making in relationships, and strategies for bridging difficult conversations. The opportunity to explore Bellevue with my classmates and mentor made the experience even more meaningful. The knowledge and connections I gained will undoubtedly shape my future career in Family and Consumer Sciences."

—Isabella Benner, '25

November 2024



Bellevue, Washington

Relationship Education Night

In the Fall of 2024, the Messiah Council on Family Relations held their first ever Relationship Education Night called Falling For Real: A Guide to Authentic Relationships. The goal of the night was to educate students about healthy relationships through a fun game of trivia that contained questions about popular relationship topics such as love languages, attachment styles and compatibility. Crumbl cookies were provided for the first 50 people along with a raffle for a self-care bag. The event was very successful, drawing in a wide variety of people who were very engaged in the conversation at hand. MCFR plans to hold more Relationship Education nights in the future in order to educate the Messiah community on more important relationship topics.



4X4 CHAPEL SERIES

In the Spring of 2025, MCFR sponsored a 4x4 chapel series alongside Messiah Lifeways. The series was called From Seniors to Students. Each week, a few Messiah Lifeways residents were invited to share their wisdom and experiences surrounding specific relationship-based topics. The topics discussed included marriage, friendship, parent-child relationships, and singleness.



HDFS CLASS SPOTLIGHT



Students in the Family Ethnicity and Human Services class recognized Children's Grief Awareness Day on 11/21 by wearing blue. Alexa Livelsberger visited the class and introduced students to grieving services offered through Highmark Caring Place Foundation.



HDFS CLASS SPOTLIGHT



Students in the Death, Grief, and Caring Class took a field trip to Golf Course Road Cemetery in Dillsburg on Tuesday to learn more about Trends in Burials!



HDFS CLASS SPOTLIGHT



Students are hard at work on their projects in HDFS 238 Textile Arts class!



HDFS Class Spotlights

HDFS CLASS SPOTLIGHT



Sarah (Berger) Davis, a Messiah FCS Ed alum, was a guest speaker in HDFS 245 on 2/26. She is employed as an Extension Educator in Food, Families & Communities with Penn State Extension of Adams County. She presented on the topic of time management and led two delish cooking demonstrations!

Here is a behind the scenes look at some fun activities this past semester in HDFS classes!

HDFS CLASS SPOTLIGHT



Students in the Community Services for Individuals and Families course celebrated the contributions of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. with Mr. Floyd Stokes. Floyd Stokes is the founder and director of the American Literacy Corporation (ALC), which promotes reading to children which he started in 2000. He is the author of over 30 children's books including Popcorn, Teddy, the Hungry Little Bear and The Story of Nelson Mandela.

Child Life Specialist Spotlight

10



Alayna Musser

"I am majoring in Child Life because of my own experience with hospitals. I originally came to Messiah as a nursing major hoping to work in Pediatrics. When I discovered nursing wasn't the right fit for me, HDFS became my home. Now, from day-to-day with working, not only with children, but adults as well, I get to discover who people are as a whole person and get to tap into my empathic side, allowing me to relate to others based off my own experiences."



Julia Bowen

"Majoring in HDFS with a focus on Child Life at Messiah has been an amazing experience so far. I've had the opportunity to learn about how Child Life Specialists tailor care to meet the unique needs of children. Additionally, I've gained insight into various therapeutic activities that help children feel comfortable in new settings, along with hands-on experience applying these techniques."



Kendall McIntyre

"Majoring in HDFS with Child Life provides me with valuable information that is highly applicable to everyday life. Helping children engage in normal activities during their hospital visits is rewarding not only for them but for me as well. My hope is to continue making a positive impact on children and their families through unfamiliar and challenging situations."



Alexia Kaplin

"I am majoring in HDFS with Child Life because I want to help children cope in the hospital setting as it can be a very scary place. I want to be an advocate for both the parent and the child to help normalize the hospital setting as much as possible. I want to help make healthcare a less traumatizing space for kids and to remind them they are strong no matter what they are going through."

Senior Projects

Karina Chavez Zunun: Internship

"Last semester, I had the privilege of interning with Catholic Charities in Harrisburg, working with the Empowering Women for Success (EWS) program, and it was truly one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. I had the chance to assist families by providing essential items like clothing, diapers, and household necessities, and the gratitude I witnessed from them was incredibly moving. Knowing that I played a part in making their day just a little bit easier was deeply rewarding. I also had the opportunity to help organize community events, from brainstorming ideas to helping set up, and it was heartwarming to see these events bring people together and provide the support they needed. In addition, I worked on creating promotional materials to spread the word about the services available to the community. It was fulfilling to know that something as simple as a poster could connect someone with the resources they desperately needed. Another incredibly meaningful aspect of my internship was co-teaching our students in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program, where I helped individuals build their language skills and confidence. I was able to have the opportunity to work with a variety of students in all different levels of English courses! Being a part of their learning journey was truly humbling. This internship not only deepened my understanding of community service but also filled me with a sense of purpose and gratitude for the chance to make a positive impact in the lives of others."



LAUREN GARCIA: HONORS PROJECT

"I was interning at Messiah Village when I noticed that a lot of married couples were living in separate areas of the retirement community due to having different care needs. In a conversation we were having about Strategies projects, HDFS grad and Messiah Lifeways VP of Operations Kim Valvo brought up this same phenomenon. When I scoured journals for research on these couples, I could not find any studies looking at my exact target population. So, for my honors project, I conducted a qualitative research study on couples living apart in retirement communities. Based on this research and other literature, I developed a Family Life Education program called "Together but Apart" in the Strategies course. Finally, I got the honor of implementing my program for residents at Messiah Village. It was so exciting to draw from my classes on gerontology, family theories, marriage, and research methods to do a research study and put together a real program that can impact real people and their relationships!"



Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Jordyn
Thompson**

- Hempfield High School (2022)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '26)



“The FCS program at Messiah is like a second home. The department has so many events that we all know each other well. The program ensures we are confident in teaching and knowing the content well. Professors want to see us succeed!”
— Jordyn Thompson

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Ella
Rhinehart**

- Walton Central High School (2024)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '28)



“I chose this major because I like the creative freedom I can have with lessons. I enjoy the variety of age of students I can teach, and the different experience I gain from each grade level. I have always loved being creative and the topics I can cover in my future classroom excites me. The skills I am learning from this major are interesting and beneficial in life, and I hope to bring these skills to students. Messiah University will prepare me to be the best educator I can be and use my skills to glorify God.”
— Ella Rhinehart

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Annie
Russell**

- Hempfield High School (2021)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '25)



“In my first year attending Messiah, I was studying engineering. However, in that year I learned that engineering did not bring me fulfillment. I enjoy working with my hands and being creative, which influenced my decision to change my major to Family and Consumer Sciences. In my three years studying FCS, I have loved learning about how to connect with others, how to holistically care for the body, and how to encourage others to be creative.”
— Annie Russell

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Isabella
Benner**

- Dock Mennonite Academy (2021)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '25)



“The FCS program at Messiah has been my home away from home. We are like a small little family, and when I first joined everyone was so excited to welcome me.”
— Isabella Benner

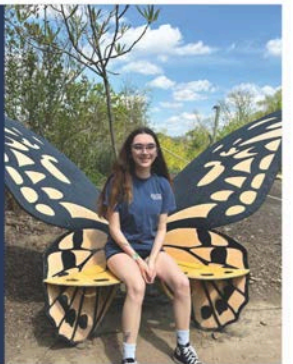
**Celebrating our FCS
majors on FCS
Educator Day which
was February 12th
this year**

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Madison
Woods**

- Gettysburg Area High School (2024)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '28)



“I chose FCS at Messiah because I am interested in pursuing a career in FCS education. Not only that, but Messiah's FCS Ed program is relational and provides a biblical perspective to the various topics of FCS. Also, my greatest FCS influence is a Messiah graduate from the FCS Education program!”
— Madison Woods

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Izzy
Latshaw**

- Northeastern High School (2024)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '28)



“I chose FCS because I have always been drawn to the idea of teaching, and I love how hands-on FCS is with textiles and cooking classes. In terms of picking the school, I love the community at Messiah and the positive environment it provides in promoting education and connection.”
— Izzy Latshaw

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Kari
Mindrebo**

- Morris Knolls High School (2024)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '28)



“I chose FCS at Messiah because its subject matter has always been one of my passions. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I just couldn't decide what I wanted to teach. FCS seemed like the perfect mix not only for teaching the grades I wanted to but also curriculum contents that I would enjoy teaching each day at work.”
— Kari Mindrebo

Department of Human
Development and Family
Science presents

Family and Consumer
Sciences profile

**Kathrine
Beck**

- Mechanicsburg Area High School (2023)
- Family and consumer sciences education major (FCSE '27)



“I chose Messiah because of the community here. There are always events occurring, and it is a great time to meet others and get to know those in your major. I also love that all my classes prepare me well for the future. I look forward to when I graduate and use what I have learned in my own classroom.”
— Kathrine Beck

**Congratulations to our December 2024
and May 2025 graduates! We are so
excited to see all that you will
accomplish!**

Tamara Airulla
Nyla Allen
Malkyah Bailey
Isabella Benner
Grace Bond
Karina Chavez Zunun
Eden Fanella
Alyssa Fortney
Lauren Garcia
Olivia Harrington
Payton Jackson
Kayla Kenny
Cassondra Menn
Alayna Musser
Diana Paredes-Jimenez
Laila Qarmout
Genevieve Ruff
Annie Russell
Lauren Sim
Tammy Tay
Hannah Witter