

Family & Consumer Studies Newsletter

SPRING 2016

Greetings from the Department Chair

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The Department of Family and Consumer Studies has a new chairperson. Professor Lori Kowaleski-Jones took over as Chair in July 2015. She is interested in the ways in which the health and well-being of youth and adults are impacted by family structure, community resources, and public policy. Her most recent work explores the familial and contextual determinants of youth and adult energy balance. She has extensive expertise in conducting studies linking physical activity to health outcomes using NHANES data as well as data from the Utah Population Database (UPDB). Her work has been funded by United States Department of Agricul-



ture and National Institutes of Health as well as foundations such as the William T. Grant Foundation.

The Department of Family and Consumer Studies (FCS) is an interdisciplinary department where faculty and students examine the well-being of family/household members, consumers, and members of neighborhoods and

communities. We investigate how the social, economic, political and physical environments affect (and are affected by) individuals in these various contexts. The department emphasizes applied social science research and teaching with a strong emphasis on ecological frameworks and policy relevance. Kowaleski-Jones is looking forward to helping to guide the department in the coming years.

Student Spotlight: Sydney Magana

Sydney Magana is a 3rd year Human Development & Family Studies major with a minor in Leadership Studies and a certificate in Applied Positive Psychology. In addition to these many academic pursuits, Sydney Magana is taking full advantage of opportunities to apply her learning outside the classroom. Her

interest in pursuing research outside a laboratory in a real-world setting with people led her to working with Professor Marissa Diener on a study examining children's distress during hospitalization, specifically during IV placements, a common yet highly distressing procedure for hospitalized children. After volunteering

as a research assistant for a semester, Sydney applied for the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program. This program enabled her to get paid for working as a research assistant, which was important because Sydney is a non-resident student from California, and so had expenses to pay despite her scholarships. (continued on page 3)

Child Life Specialist

Certified Child Life Specialists are experts in child development who work to ensure that life remains as normal as possible for children in healthcare settings. Child life specialists help children and families feel safe. Our mission is to help make the healthcare experience easier for pediatric and adolescent patients and their families. Each child and family has different needs. Certified child life specialists work together with patients, families, and the healthcare team to provide the services that meet the unique needs of each child and family.

Child life specialists help children and their families understand and explore what they will see, hear, taste, smell, and feel during a procedure. When children and their families learn about what is going to happen before it happens, they are more likely to feel safe and less scared during the procedure. They help patients decide what they want to do during a procedure to help them feel a sense of control and predictability. This is called a coping plan. Children can choose activities such as blowing bubbles, taking deep breaths, thinking about their favorite place, playing a game on a tablet, and many other options. When a parent can be pre-

sent during a procedure, child life specialists coach parents how to support their child through procedures.

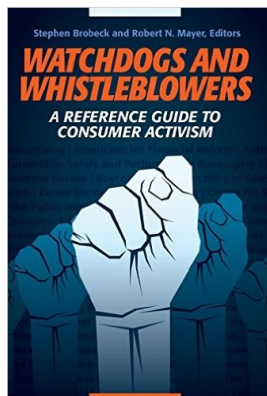
Patients and their siblings are encouraged to explore their healthcare experience in safe ways by engaging in medical play facilitated by a child life specialist. Small cloth dolls and real medical supplies are used to give the children opportunities to increase understanding and decrease fear and anxiety related to their specific healthcare experiences. In addition to healthcare play, child life utilizes multiple forms of play as tools to promote normal growth and development.

Another important aspect of child life work is memory making. The goal is to promote positive memories while at the hospital. This is done through helping families create keepsakes or plan special activities such as birthday or holiday celebrations, or recognizing significant milestones such as end of treatment or going home after a long admission. Child life specialists treat the whole family. Sibling work is a vital and important part of any intervention plan. Through this approach siblings feel more connected to the experience of their sibling and feel important. Through

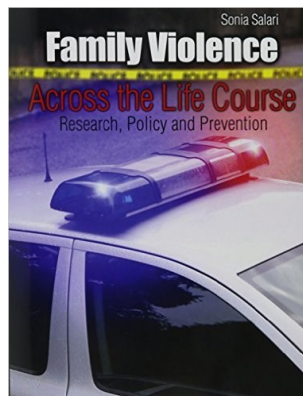
sibling interactions, attention is paid to their social and emotional needs.

Healthcare experiences can be life changing. Child life specialists help patients and their families navigate difficult conversations that occur as a result of accident, illness, and death. Age appropriate support is also provided during times of grief and loss. Therapeutic conversations help patients and families process their healthcare experience. Children are provided opportunities to express fears, concerns, and frustrations that arise as a result of hospitalization. Through these interactions the child life professional can validate feelings, address misconceptions, and advocate for the needs and wants of each child. For information regarding the Child Life Track with M.S. in Human Development and Social Policy, please visit our website at <http://fcs.utah.edu/graduate/child-life.php>.

Recent Published Works



Watchdogs and Whistleblowers
Stephen Brobek and Robert N. Mayer



Family Violence Across the Life Course
Sonia Salari

Sydney Magana (cont.)

Over the course of the previous 5 semesters, Sydney has increasingly taken a leadership role in the research. She is an author on a paper based on the research that will be published in *Children's Health Care* and continues to be involved in data collection, entry and analysis.

Sydney also obtained a paid internship with the Student Success and Empowerment Initiative on campus, supporting the Student Success Advocates and working with undergraduate students to tell their stories of success at the University of Utah. As she took on more responsibility in her internship, she became part of the marketing and public relations team to help publicize this new initiative on campus, designed to ensure the success of University of Utah undergraduate stu-

dents. She is now working as the lead Student Ambassador for the Student Success and Empowerment Initiative. She works in outreach, familiarizing students with the resources that Student Success Advocates provide. As a first generation undergraduate student, she is familiar with some of the challenges that students new to higher education face. Her outstanding performance as an undergraduate research assistant and as an intern with the Student Success and Empowerment Initiative led her to be chosen as the peer mentor for a new interdisciplinary BlockU course entitled Families and Health. This BlockU course provides an integrative learning cohort for first-year students in a supportive learning community. The course is unique in that it integrates material from gen-



eral education courses and provides a capstone community-engaged experience. The peer mentor role prepares Sydney for her ultimate career goal, working in academic and student affairs. She plans to pursue a master's degree in educational leadership and policy when she finishes her undergraduate degree.

Alumni Highlight: DeAnn Tilton



DeAnn Tilton graduated Summer 2015 in Human Development and Social Policy from the Department of Family and Consumer Studies. As a survivor of intra-familial child sexual abuse, DeAnn's Master's Project focused on the legal time limits that survivors have to get to court to seek redress against their abusers. DeAnn testified as a survivor, during the 2015 Utah legislative ses-

sion on behalf of a HB277, which eliminated the legal time limits (statutes of limitation) going forward, for civil court. As part of her Master's Project, she trained to be certified as a victim's advocate. That way, her skills would allow her to sensitively handle difficulties that may spring from survivor's unprocessed trauma. To help alleviate the pressures created by secrets and norms of privacy surrounding family abuse, DeAnn founded "Talk to a Survivor," a survivor-led organization. This brings openness to the process of healing, to promote resilience and advocacy. Prevention requires open dialog, to bring these abuses out of the shadows. With increasing frequency, those who are for-

merly abused have been publicly disclosing survivor status to the degree they feel comfortable. Finding others who have experienced similar mistreatment at violence awareness/prevention events tends to provide support to survivors and promote resiliency. Empowerment and policy changes can help reduce isolation, a major contributor to all forms of family violence. With these issues in mind, DeAnn has embarked on a new journey with the creation of her consulting firm Talk to a Survivor, that will work with health care (i.e., OBGYN offices) and other organizations to address the needs of survivors who have suffered trauma from family violence.

Departmental Support

We would love to hear from you! If you would like to be featured in the Alumni Highlight section of our newsletter, or if you have knowledge of any employment, internship, field work, or work study opportunities for current students, we ask that you contact our administrative officer, Ashley Johnson, at ashley.johnson@fcs.utah.edu.

The Family and Consumer Studies Department sincerely appreciates our alumni and friends whose generous contributions enrich the lives of our students. Through donations, grants, in-kind gifts, and planned gifts we are able to fulfill our commitment in providing excellent education and research. [Please click here](#) if you are interested in donating to Family and Consumer Studies.