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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



NORTON SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

Frances McClelland  
Institute for Children,  
Youth & Families



### **Greetings from the Frances McClelland Institute,**

We are pleased to share updates with you during this busy spring semester! We hope you can join us for the final two talks of the semester in the Turbeville Speaker series. In a talk rescheduled from earlier this semester, Dr. Thao Ha from Arizona State University will join us tomorrow (March 20th), to share findings from her research on technology and adolescent romantic relationships. This is a pressing issue in today's society. Next week on March 27th, we will hear from Dr. Dan McDonald, Director of the [Take Charge America Institute](#) located here in the Norton School and his University of [Arizona Cooperative Extension](#) colleagues as they present on their ongoing work on community-based financial literacy education. This talk is an exciting opportunity to highlight some of the critically important program and applied research work Cooperative Extension is doing across the state. See below for details.

Read on to learn about our faculty as we spotlight Dr. Russell Toomey this month. You will also learn about KindCats outreach at the Tucson Festival of Books last week, recent publications by faculty, and opportunities to engage with our community partners.

Thank you for supporting our mission to use the power of research to inform opportunities for children, youth and families, especially those from marginalized communities, to thrive. Please follow us on social media and visit our [website](#) to stay up-to-date on our events and to access the [resources](#) we share.

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## **Upcoming Turbeville Speaker Series**

The Frances McClelland Institute  
for Children, Youth, & Families  
invites you to...



NORTON SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
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Youth & Families

**SPRING 2026**

## TURBEVILLE SPEAKER SERIES

**Speaker:** Dr. Thao Ha,  
Department of Psychology,  
Arizona State University

**Title:** *From Love to Harm: The  
Development of Adolescent  
Romantic Relationships in the  
Digital Age*

**Time:** Friday, March 20, 2026  
from 1 PM - 2:15 PM

**Location:** McClelland Park Room  
402 Or Zoom



REGISTER NOW

The Frances McClelland Institute  
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NORTON SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
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Institute for Children,  
Youth & Families

**SPRING 2026**

## TURBEVILLE SPEAKER SERIES

**Speakers:** Dr. Dan McDonald &  
Colleagues, faculty and representatives  
from various organizations

**Title:** *Engaging Community  
through Financial Literacy  
Education*

**Time:** Friday, March 27, 2026  
from 1 PM - 2:15 PM

**Location:** McClelland Park Room  
402 Or Zoom



Dr. Dan McDonald



Madeleine deBlois



Ashley Dixon-Kleiber



Noel Wilkinson



Vicki Haddler Wissler

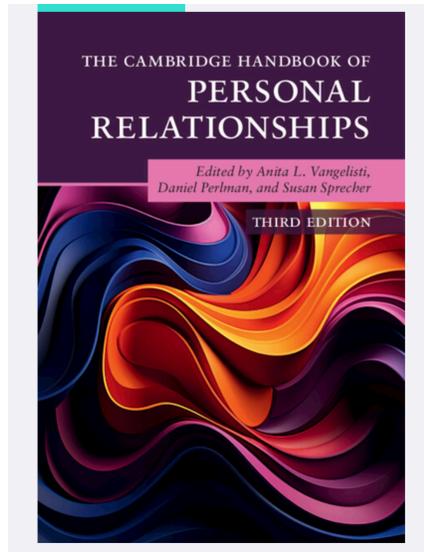


Debbie Curley

REGISTER HERE

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## Research From The Institute



**Dr. Melissa Curran**, Xiaomin Li (former HDFS doctoral student) and Olena Kopystynska (former HDFS doctoral student) as well as colleague Luke Russell added a new chapter to [The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships](#) this year!

**Chapter 11-** Family Systems and Family Relationships: Family Subsystems Across Diverse Families.

READ HERE



Anti-transgender legislation poses mental health and safety risks for transgender and gender diverse (TGD) youth and their families.

**Dr. Russ Toomey** contributed to the Society for Research in Child Development latest policy brief as an expert reviewer!

READ MORE

**You can find this brief on our website under Community Resources, along with other helpful resources we encourage you to explore!**

COMMUNITY RESOURCES PAGE

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## Interested in Contributing to Research?

Dr. **Sabrina Helm** is looking for participants to take part in an informational research study. It's a great opportunity to share your perspective and support valuable work. Scan the QR code to learn more or fill out the interest survey.



Research, Innovation  
& Impact

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, LIFE  
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Norton School of  
Human Ecology

### Exploring The Impact of Climate Change on Millennials' Home-Buying Decisions

Are you born between 1981 and 1996 and interested in participating in a study on **Climate change and its impact on your home-buying decisions**?

Our research study explores how climate change is impacting millennials' choices about where, when, and whether they will buy a home.

We invite you to participate in a Zoom interview to discuss your thoughts about this important topic. The interview will last up to 1 hour and will be compensated.

**This study has been approved by the UA IRB.**



Scan the QR code for  
information on the study and  
available time slots.

Please contact Marissa Hettinger  
or Sabrina Helm, PhD, for more  
information  
([marissajo96@arizona.edu](mailto:marissajo96@arizona.edu),  
[helm@arizona.edu](mailto:helm@arizona.edu)).



INTEREST FORM SURVEY

## Meet Our Faculty



### Interview with Dr. Russ Toomey

Interview conducted by graduate student, **Sofia Suxo-Sanchez**, a PhD student in the Human Development and Family Science program.

**Q: Can you state your name, title, position, and general research area?**

**RT:** I'm Russ Toomey, a professor in HDFS and a university distinguished scholar. My research looks at risk and resilience among youth who identify at the margins, including youth who are sexual or gender minorities, as well as Latine, Latinx youth.

**Q: What made you interested in that area of research?**

**RT:** As an undergraduate at Ohio University working in the LGBTQ Student Resource Center, I noticed many peers struggling with mental health. While taking a Death and Dying course, I wrote a research paper on suicide ideology and behaviors among LGBTQ populations at the time, there was only one peer-reviewed paper on youth, written by my future graduate mentor, Steven Russell. I entered a master's program planning to work in LGBTQ community spaces but fell in love with research, met Steven at NCFR, and realized I needed a PhD to pursue it.

**Q: Where did you earn your master's degree and PhD?**

**RT:** I completed my master's degree at Kent State University in Ohio and my PhD at the University of Arizona.

**Q: What implications does your research have in people's daily lives?**

**RT:** I have never wanted my research to live only in academic journals; it's important to translate it for the general public and affected communities. My work has been used in policy hearings and best practices across the country and globally, giving parents strategies to support their children when they come out. It also informs school policies, supports teachers, and helps create environments where youth can thrive regardless of identity.

**Q: What is one of the biggest challenges facing your research today?**

**RT:** Federal policies and practices have directly affected our work, including a six-month project pause. Recruitment is also challenging because Latinx, Latine, queer, and trans youth and their families may not want their names affiliated with federally funded research due to the larger socio-political climate.

**Q: How do you remain optimistic during difficult times?**

**RT:**I remind myself of my vision: to reduce the disparity in suicide behavior to zero between LGBTQ youth and their peers. I want youth to live, grow up, and thrive. I also draw hope from my collaborators. Science takes a team, and we lift each other up and create space for one another to shine.

**Q: What has been your favorite part of being a researcher, PhD, and professor?**

**RT:**Mentoring students and watching them thrive. I often think about five graduate students I mentored during the pandemic; now four are assistant professors and one works outside academia. It feels like we formed a family.

**Q: What is your favorite part of teaching and conducting research?**

**RT:** In research, it's seeing my work used by communities to better their existence. In teaching, it's the "light bulb" moment, whether undergraduates realizing concepts in adolescent development or graduate students gaining the ability to conduct their own analyses after learning statistics.

**Q: What upcoming projects are you looking forward to?**

**RT:**With our NIH-funded grant, we are recruiting for focus groups and developing measurements before collecting full family data from parents and youth within the same family. This work has major implications for family therapy and youth-focused pediatric therapy practice.

**Q: What advice would you give someone who wants to be a professor and researcher?**

**RT:**Write a vision and mission statement so you can return to it during difficult times and celebrate successes. Know what sparks your joy in research, ground yourself in that passion, and find balance; whatever gives you that balance outside of work is critical for longevity in a career.

[READ MORE INTERVIEWS](#)

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## SciKind Updates

### KIND CATS

The Kind Cats were at Science City during the Tucson Festival of Books this month, sharing the science of kindness through interactive activities for youth and adults. Visitors spun the Self-Kindness Wheel to land on a self-kindness behavior—like gratitude, rest, or positive self-talk—and reflected using guided prompts. Guests also enjoyed kindness-themed coloring pages and other hands-on activities designed to spark conversation and creativity. Together, these activities highlighted how attitudes, social norms, skills, and supportive environments shape kind behavior—and reminded us that caring for others begins with caring for ourselves. They were at the UA Mall March 14–15.



# Stronger Together: Community News & Events

## Community Connections

Whether you're hosting a workshop, highlighting a resource, or want to share a success story (no identifying info, please)—we'd love to help spread the word. If you have something to share, please email us at [families@arizona.edu](mailto:families@arizona.edu) with:

- **A short description of your event or opportunity**
- **Any relevant links or contact info**
- **Image or flyer (if applicable)**

*To be included in the following month's issue, please send your submission by the 15th of each month.*

We're looking forward to uplifting the great work happening across our community!

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**PACES Community Coalition of Southern Arizona  
presents:**

# Free Lunch & Learn for Pediatric Healthcare Providers

**Unlocking the Biology of Resilience: How Understanding Childhood Adversity Can Transform Pediatric Care**

**Featuring: Margery A. Shoptaugh, MD**  
Medical Director, Center for Resiliency & Wellbeing,  
Phoenix Children's Hospital



**Description:**  
This may be one of the most important topics you never studied in school. Dr. Shoptaugh will share how learning about the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on the developing nervous system transformed her approach to medicine. Participants will learn how ACEs-informed care will strengthen patient relationships, improve communication, and support better long-term health outcomes.

**Register & learn more :**



**RESERVE YOUR SPOT HERE!**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Date:**  
Thursday, March 26th

**Time:**  
11:30am - 1:30pm

**Location:**  
Pima Community College Downtown Campus- Amethyst Room

1255 N. Stone Ave.  
Tucson, AZ



**Sponsored By:**



**Interfaith Community Services presents:**  
Spring into action by joining us for a hands-on volunteer experience that's energetic, uplifting, and perfect for individuals, families, friends, coworkers, and

groups of all sizes.

We're teaming up with the Community Food Bank for our Free Produce Giveaway, and we need a few helpful peeps to turn truckloads of veggies into smiles across Tucson. The Food Bank delivers pallets of fresh produce to six sites, and with your helping hands, we can make sure every cucumber, potato, and pepper finds its way to a neighbor who needs it most.

Think of it as a springtime assembly line of kindness. Volunteers work together in our fast-paced, drive-thru style distribution to sort, bag, and load fresh produce into cars. Expect teamwork, laughter, and a whole lot of feel-good moments as we turn compassion into community impact.

We're looking for 20–25 volunteers at each site to keep things running smoothly. It's a small-time commitment with a big-hearted impact and a beautiful way to show that love truly feeds our community.

**Volunteer Locations, Dates & Times**

- **Friday, March 20th (17 Volunteers still needed)**

El Pueblo Community Center  
 101 W. Irvington Rd  
 7 AM-930AM

- **Friday, April 10th (5 Volunteers still needed)**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church Campus  
 601 E Ft. Lowell Rd  
 7AM-930AM

- **Saturday, April 11th (16 Volunteers still needed)**

ICS Northwest Food Bank  
 2820 W. Ina Rd  
 5:00 AM–7:30 AM (Early birds, we see you!)

[Click here to sign up](#)



**Free Produce Giveaways  
 November 2025 - May 2026**

Area	Location/Time	Days
Ina/Shannon	ICS Food Bank 2820 W. Ina Rd. 5:30 to 7:30 a.m.	Nov. 8, Dec. 6, Jan. 10, Feb. 7, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 8
Ft. Lowell/1st Ave	Sacred Heart Catholic Church 601 E. Fort Lowell Rd. 8 to 10 a.m.	Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 9, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, Apr. 10, May 8
Ft. Lowell/Tucson Blvd	Northminster Presbyterian Church 2450 E Fort Lowell Rd. 8 to 10 a.m.	Nov. 13, Dec. 18, Jan. 15, Feb. 12, Mar. 12, Apr. 16, May 14
Valencia/6th Ave	Unleashed Christian Church 265 W. Valencia Rd. 8 to 10 a.m.	Nov. 14, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 17, May 15
6th Ave/Grant	Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church 210 E. Lester St. 8 to 10 a.m.	Nov. 15, Dec. 13, Jan. 17, Feb. 14, Apr. 18, May 15
Irvington/6th Ave	El Pueblo Community Center 101 W. Irvington 8 to 10 a.m.	Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 23, Feb. 20, Mar. 20, Apr. 24, May 22

No Documentation Required. Receive Produce From:



**Schedule of Free Produce Giveaways  
 November 2025 - May 2026**

Location	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Campus of Sacred Heart Catholic Church 601 E. Ft. Lowell Rd.	7th	5th	9th	6th	6th	10th	8th
ICS Northwest Food Bank 2820 W. Ina Rd.	8th	6th	10th	7th	14th	11th	2nd
Northminster Presbyterian Church 2450 E. Ft. Lowell Rd.	13th	18th	15th	12th	12th	16th	14th
Unleashed Christian Church 265 W. Valencia Rd.	14th		16th	13th	13th	17th	15th
Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church 210 E. Lester St.	15th	13th	17th	14th		18th	16th
El Pueblo Community Center 101 W. Irvington	21st	19th	23rd	20th	20th	24th	22nd



Thank you for your support of the Institute. Stay in touch with us by following FMI on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

In Partnership,  
**Melissa Barnett, Ph.D.**

Director, Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families

Norton Endowed Chair in Fathers, Parenting, and Families

Professor, Human Development and Family Science

Please support our work by making an investment in the Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families.

[GIVE NOW](#)



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