Families facing Challenges

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When it comes to today’s families—what they need, where improved understanding of them is needed, and how family life can be enhanced—the Center for Families at Purdue University is positioning itself at the forefront. Through research, education, collaboration, and outreach, we seek to develop and share insights with those whose decisions affect the quality of life for families.

**Focusing on Families Facing Challenges**

When families have the resources they need to nurture and educate their members, they can pursue viable, rewarding futures. But with our nation at war and facing economic challenges not experienced since the Great Depression, many families are finding themselves facing unexpected challenges.

The Center for Families and its largest initiative, the Military Family Research Institute, are dedicated to improving the quality of life for families facing challenges. We do so through discovery, learning, and engagement, in collaboration with expert partners at Purdue, in Indiana, and around the world. As we make new discoveries based on solid, informed research, we are helping to deliver evidence-based programs that support families in Indiana and beyond. Our faculty partners are helping us launch tomorrow’s leaders in the field through their work with top-notch undergraduate and graduate students. And the Center for Families and MFRI are meeting global challenges with their work on pressing contemporary issues, including helping families to thrive despite challenges.

Previously based in the College of Consumer and Family Sciences at Purdue University, and now a part of the new College of Health and Human Sciences, the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute were created with several goals in mind:

- To generate new knowledge that helps us understand families’ experiences and develop resources to promote family resiliency;
- To integrate discovery, learning, and engagement to support families; and
- To create collaborative partnerships among professionals within the academic, practitioner, legislative, corporate, and nonprofit communities.

*All this we do so families can thrive.*
STEP INSIDE PURDUE UNIVERSITY’S CENTER FOR FAMILIES
Spotlighting Success

BY DENNIS SAVAiano
DEAN, COLLEGE OF CONSUMER AND FAMILY SCIENCES, 1995-2010

Distilling the contributions of the Center for Families at Purdue University into a few pages is a difficult task, one which doesn’t do justice to the efforts of a team of faculty and staff who have done so much to improve the quality of life for families. Our hope in this report is to demonstrate the breadth, depth and significance of the contributions of the Center for Families, launched in 1994 as a catalyst for initiating and integrating outreach, teaching and research activities supporting families.

From its first funded project—the It’s My Child Too, curriculum for noncustodial fathers—the center has gone on to offer many more, including: a long-running series of annual Family Impact Seminars for government leaders, focusing on the day’s most critical issues; Communities Against Rape; and the groundbreaking, timely work of the Military Family Research Institute.

I invite you to browse this sampling of activities, visit the center’s website, and join us in supporting this critical, family-centered work.

Creating New Opportunities

BY CHRIS LADISCH
DEAN, COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES, 2010-PRESENT

A Purdue University education is transformative, inspiring and invaluable. Similarly, the Center for Families, a catalyst for change and growth, is doing transformative and inspiring work on behalf of families, a precious resource for our society.

During the past 15 years, the Center for Families has engaged in research that has generated new understanding of families. Through supportive programs and dedicated research, the center promotes both well-functioning families, and a society that thrives socially, economically and culturally. The Military Family Research Institute has received national recognition for its work on behalf of military families, and its innovative research, collaborative partnerships and educational efforts reach throughout the state, the nation and the world.

I hope you will consider how you can participate in the vision and the mission of these two organizations, as their work is far from complete. As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Center for Families, and the 10th anniversary of MFRI, I invite and welcome your support for the important work already accomplished and, even more importantly, the important work yet to come.
Betty Krejci, Donor and advocate for families

Betty Levien Krejci’s values and life’s work were inspired by her parents, Leo and Elva Levien.

The youngest of four, Leo was raised by his mother during the Great Depression. His father died when Leo was six years old. Like many of his generation, Leo’s formal schooling ended in the 9th grade, when the need to earn a living forced from the classroom to the farm. Later, Leo joined the Navy, and while on leave reconnected with a farm girl, Elva, whom he’d known as a child. Before the leave was over, he convinced her to marry him when the war ended. They married two weeks after his discharge, and went on to raise four children. Betty was the youngest.

Leo and Elva Levien moved their young family to a farm so their children could benefit from the rural life that had shaped their own childhood—room to run, chores to be done, and, always, family. For Krejci, it was a childhood of family celebrations, picnics and vacations that expanded her world.

A Passion for Families

“My parents valued family and instilled that in me,” Krejci says. “My father left home as a boy with one suitcase and made his way in the world. That is why family, creating a home, was so important to him.”

Her mother, too, was family-centered. “We never went to school without a warm breakfast together. And Mom’s favorite days were snow days when she could have us all at home to build a fort out of the dining room table or teach us to stitch dish towels,” Krejci recalls.

Belief in the Center for Families and its critical work prompted Betty Krejci to sign on as an advocate and supporter in 2009.

“I was blessed to be raised in a family with strong values, mutual respect and an appreciation for the value of hard work,” she says. “We learned to make do with what we had and to find the best happiness in being together.”

Krejci thrived in that environment. She grew up, studied consumer and family sciences at Iowa State, became a teacher and then worked 15 years in the cooperative extension service in Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana.

During her five years at Purdue, Krejci held a post at the Center for Families, where she launched the Family Impact Seminar program. Since 2004 she has resided in Washington, where she is director of development for estate planning at Western Washington University in Bellingham.

Leaving a Family Legacy

Krejci raised two sons, which led to what she calls her current grand adventure: being a grandmother. “My goal is to be the same accepting, fun and nurturing presence to my grandchildren that my parents were to me and my children.”

She also wants to honor, in a larger fashion, her parents’ belief in family. She is doing that through a generous gift in their honor to the Center for Families.

“In these ways, I will continue their legacy,” she says. “I have long believed in and advocated for the Center for Families and its outreach, teaching, and research mission. Because the center supports the work of professionals who serve families, the impact of every effort and each success is repeatedly multiplied.

“I hope you will consider joining me by becoming a believer, advocate and supporter of the Center for Families, as well.”
The Center for Families supports new research and learning opportunities for students and faculty interested in family-related careers or already devoted to that pursuit.

Supporting Research, Fellowships, and Internships

A major part of the Center for Families’ work is supporting those who are in the process of doing the research that will lead to new understanding of families. We know that as we learn about families and their needs, we will better equip those who regularly work with them to have greater impact for good.

One way that the Center for Families addresses the challenges of families is by funding research internships, policy internships and research enhancement awards. The awards are developing the next generation of leaders, while they support the search for new discoveries that will improve the quality of families’ lives. Some of the most complex challenges that families face in today’s global society are being addressed by these innovative scholars.
Highlighting Achievements

Fellowships Supporting Faculty Research
Kontos Faculty Fellowships, named for the center’s founding director Susan Kontos, support work that focuses on optimizing children’s development. Recent fellowships were awarded to Professor Jakob Jensen in the department of Communication for his project Plain language, native language, and family healthcare decisions: Addressing health literacy barriers for low income, Spanish-speaking families, and to Professor Jennifer Dobbs-Oates for her project Evaluation of a volunteer shared-reading program in preschool classrooms.

Hancook Faculty Fellowships, named for Associate Dean Ann Hancook who helped to create the center, support studies about the health, development and well-being of adult family members. Recent fellowships were awarded to Professor Xinran Lehto in the department of Hospitality and Tourism Management for her project The Right Vacation for the Overworked: Examining the buffering effect of family vacation activities on work stress and Professor Ximena Arriaga in the department of Psychological Sciences for her project Psychological consequences of partner violence: What happens when victims deny or justify their partner’s violent behavior?

Fellowships Supporting Graduate Student Research
Two fellowships are available to graduate students through the Center for Families: the annual Marthellan Van Scoyoc Memorial Fellowship provides $1,000 for two months of summer scholarly activity relating to the quality of life for children and families, and the Edward V. and Mary E. McAllister fellowship, which supports collaborative scholarly activity related to quality of life issues for children and families. The McAllister fellowship is awarded every 4 to 5 years, and provides a stipend and tuition support for one student for one year.

The first Van Scoyoc Fellowship was given in 2002, with a total of 13 fellowships administered through 2009. Since 1995, eight students have received McAllister fellowships. In 2009-2010, McAllister recipient Elizabeth Munz is completing her research Communication as Preparation: Linking How Caregivers and Children Talk about the Transition to Kindergarten with Attachment Security under the guidance of Professor Steven Wilson in the department of Communication.

Awards Supporting Undergraduate Students’ Involvement in Research
The Center’s Research Enhancement Awards provide up to $2,000 to faculty members to make it possible to involve undergraduate students in their research activities, including travel to professional conferences. The center looks to provide students with the tools to prepare them for a future in research.

Internships
The center’s work in the area of family policy provides an annual opportunity for a graduate student to serve as a policy intern. Each intern works with the Indiana Consortium of Family Organizations, the advisory committee of state legislators, and nationally prominent speakers to help to plan and implement each year’s seminar.

Employment
The Military Family Research Institute offers research employment for both undergraduate and graduate students. Our students hail from diverse backgrounds and varied disciplines, including management, public health, educational technology, psychology, engineering, marriage and family therapy, and political science.

Student learning encompasses topics ranging from the management of a research organization to the design and execution of a multi-wave research project. Many of these skills have a high degree of transferability for students when they leave MFRI and pursue other professional interests, even those career interests that fall outside of the academic research domain.
Center Creates Undergraduate Research Enhancement Award

Carol Boushey, nutritional epidemiologist and Purdue associate professor of foods and nutrition, was overjoyed when she learned she received the Center for Families’ first research enhancement award. It wasn’t the largest grant she’d ever received, but it was the first ever to support her work with an honors undergraduate student. The award allowed her to further the development of a bright young researcher while pursuing her own research goals.

Opportunity for Undergraduates

“The goal of the research enhancement awards is to encourage faculty to involve undergraduates in their research and to offset some of the costs of doing so,” says Center for Families and Military Family Research Institute director Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth.

Boushey was serving as the coordinating data collection center for an 11-state project, Parent and Household Influences on Calcium Intake Among Early Adolescents. Honors student, Leslie Cradler, was working with her, compiling data and writing a thesis on one aspect.

Enhancing Learning

“We expect our students to comprehend the application of research as evidence to drive practice,” Boushey says. “Evidence-based practice is big, so being involved in research enhances their learning. It gives them a new confidence as they read a wide array of published peer-reviewed papers and look at them with a critical eye.”

The award provided Cradler new insights into academia, while honing her research and interpretive skills.

“I was very lucky because the grant helped me with some of my work and helped send me to a conference where I presented my preliminary findings,” Cradler says. There, she also met others from around the country involved in the research. “Through the project, I learned how data are collected and how to interpret findings. I think my critical thinking skills are better because of the skill set I now have.”

BY THE NUMBERS

- 5 Kontos faculty fellowships have been awarded
- 8 Hancook faculty fellowships have been awarded
- 14 Van Scoyoc graduate fellowships
- 8 McAllister graduate fellowships have been awarded
- 1 Undergraduate research enhancement award has been given
Looking to the Future: Increased Support

The single best way to ensure that families remain high on the list of research and study priorities at Purdue is to support the work of the faculty and students who share that passion. By making it possible for faculty to pursue their research interests and for students to complete their graduate degrees, the fellowship programs of the Center for Families help to ensure the continuing presence of a vibrant intellectual community focused on the processes and dynamics of family life.

We are very pleased that several fellowship programs are sponsored by families to honor much-loved members. This inspiring way of ‘paying forward’ the contributions made by husbands and wives and mothers and fathers in ways that benefit others, and ultimately society as a whole, is tangible evidence of the power of families.
Increasing knowledge about families, their challenges and opportunities to help them overcome life’s hurdles is part of the Center for Families’ focus.

Learning About Family Experiences

Both the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute create and execute rigorous research to generate important new scientific knowledge. We strive for approaches that pay close attention to diversity in family structures and experiences so that programs and policies can be tailored to families’ needs.

Since 2007, Jim Elicker, Melissa Franks, and Cleveland Shields have served as theme leaders in the Center for Families, acting as catalysts to attract other researchers to affiliate with the center, generate project and program ideas, and helping to formulate the center’s strategic plan.
Highlighting Achievements

Paths to QUALITY™, a partnership between Purdue, the Indiana Department of Health, and communities around the state; the TIME project, an exciting research collaboration between labor, management, and Purdue scientists; and Operation Diploma, an outreach program with a substantial research component, all are examples of ‘engaged research,’ bringing campus and community partners together to generate new milestones in learning.

Helping Indiana to Help Parents
Professor Jim Elicker leads efforts focused on families nurturing young children. One of Professor Elicker’s most significant efforts has been to help the Bureau of Child Care of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration evaluate its innovative child care quality rating system. Paths to QUALITY™ aims to improve child care quality and children’s developmental outcomes by giving parents information about what constitutes quality care in family child care homes, child care centers, and registered child care ministries, and also provides resources to help child care providers improve quality of care. This project has received national and global visibility, resulting in invited lectures in Washington DC, China, the Netherlands, and Germany.

Helping Labor Unions and Management Understand Families
The Center for Families was able to take an opportunity and turn it into valuable information for two sometimes opposing groups. Center for Families’ board member Noel Beasley made it possible for the center to work with the Bemis Company and UNITE, the union representing the workers there.

The impetus for the research was the union’s desire to respond to the concerns of younger union members who were troubled by lack of time with their families. The center saw this as a perfect opportunity to initiate the conversation between management and the union. Professor Robert Perrucci in Purdue’s department of Sociology led the research effort.

Once the initial research was conducted, Noel Beasley was instrumental in having Bemis Company apply for a workplace flexibility grant through the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. This grant led to the collection of extensive qualitative and quantitative data, which provided Bemis with the solutions and opportunities they sought.

Operation Diploma
With support from the Lilly Endowment, Operation Diploma collaborates with higher education institutions throughout Indiana to help them foster the success of student service members and veterans on their campuses. Because so little is known about this new group of ‘GI Bill’ students, Professor Shawn Whiteman is leading an effort to gather data from student service members and veterans, ROTC students, and civilian students to try to determine the ways in which they are similar and distinct, and how well the strategies being tried by their campuses are working. With this up-to-date information in hand, campuses will be much better-equipped to support these students who have served their nation.
professionals who work with young children and their parents to help families deal effectively with the issues resulting from deployment, injury or death of a military parent.

ZERO TO THREE is using the evaluation’s findings to help improve the quality of care for very young children in military families and to increase awareness and sensitivity about the needs and concerns of such military families.

Outside Expertise Valued
“ZERO TO THREE maintains very close connections to the academic community because we believe in the power of research to help us to more effectively help families. We value our collaboration with the Military Family Research Institute because they understand not only the importance of rigorous research, but also the real constraints and opportunities that come with evaluating programs as they are delivered to practicing professionals in the ‘real world.’ We are looking forward to continuing to strengthen our programming with the evidence gathered by MFRI”

LYNETTE FRAGA • DIRECTOR OF MILITARY PROJECTS
ZERO TO THREE

BY THE NUMBERS
- Over 50 faculty collaborations with the Center for Families and MFRI
- Over 70 grants received, totaling over $25,000,000
- Almost 45 projects completed

UP CLOSE  Improving Training, Improving Outcomes

How well are we doing?

That was the question posed by ZERO TO THREE when it turned to the Military Family Research Institute. ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit founded in 1977 that informs, trains and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.

Grounded in multidisciplinary, collaborative, culturally responsive, clinically informed and accessible research and experience, ZERO TO THREE translates research and knowledge about the kinds of early experiences that help children thrive into a range of practical tools and resources.

Evaluating a ZERO TO THREE Program
ZERO TO THREE asked the institute to evaluate its Coming Together Around Military Families program, which trains professionals who work with young children and their parents to help families deal effectively with the issues resulting from deployment, injury or death of a military parent.

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LYNETTE FRAGA • DIRECTOR OF MILITARY PROJECTS
ZERO TO THREE

Center projects work to ensure that young children have the best possible environments in which to grow and develop.
Looking to the Future: Broadening and Deepening Our Learning

Programs, practices, and policies have the most positive impact when they are informed by the most recent scientific evidence about what works. It is increasingly important for the Center for Families to grow a pool of ‘innovation funds’ that can be used to conduct pilot studies to lay groundwork for larger externally-funded research, and to support the translation of research findings into practice.

In an effort to nurture an increasing number of faculty research collaborations focused on family issues, the Center for Families is launching a new methodology conference series to gather interested researchers from around the country to learn about emerging research on families and health. This project was identified and is being led by Melissa Franks, one of the center’s theme leaders.
UNDERSTAND

Our work extends beyond simply conducting research studies to learn about the experiences of families. Understanding the findings and developing practical applications for this new knowledge is our ultimate goal.

Promoting Understanding of Families’ Needs

Making it possible for students and faculty to conduct research, and implementing worthy projects is not enough. At Purdue, we believe in ‘discovery with delivery.’ The Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute are committed to engaging with communities of professionals who serve families, such as business leaders, legislators, educators, and human service professionals.
Highlighting Achievements

Among many milestones in understanding families are the creation of the Military Family Research Institute, and the internationally-known Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Research on Work and Family.

Military Family Research Institute Expands Mission

Founded in 2000 with funding from the Department of Defense, the Military Family Research Institute expanded its mission in 2007 with significant funding from the Lilly Endowment. In addition to our original mission as a research organization, MFRI also develops and delivers outreach and engagement programs for civilian and military groups with the goal of improving the quality of life for military families.

From research about military families and the challenges they face, to providing support for those who assist military families, the institute is addressing a variety of needs through grants, educational materials, youth camps, a resource library, training workshops and conferences, and public policy work.

Kanter Award Recognizes Key Family Research

Is there a motherhood penalty in workplaces? What are the sources of earning inequality? Are there gender differences in free time? Researchers who published findings on these topics are among the winners of the Kanter Award, given annually since 2000 to spotlight groundbreaking research and promote greater understanding of relationships between work conditions and family life.

Named for Rosabeth Moss Kanter, known for her influential work-and-family contributions in the 1970s, the award is a partnership of the Center for Families and the Center for Work and Family at Boston College. For several years, the award has been exclusively sponsored by the Alliance of Work-Life Progress (AWLP), the major national organization of work-life professionals. It raises awareness of family research among scholars, business leaders and practitioners, elevates the quality of work-family research, and promotes a scientific evidence base for workplace programs, policies and practices that affect families.

Winners are selected by a team of 35 scholarly reviewers from 11 countries who read more than 2,500 articles in some 70 scholarly journals to find the best of the best. The partnership with AWLP brings information about the research to thousands of professionals who make decisions in workplaces that affect millions of families.

BY THE NUMBERS

- Kanter Awards have been given annually for 10 years; each year a ‘best of the best’ report publicizes the top research to scholars, business leaders, and others
- 12 annual Family Impact Seminars have been spearheaded by the Center for Families, in cooperation with the 11-member Indiana Consortium of Family Organizations
- 2 national or international Research Symposia on Military Families have been convened
- MFRI guidance has been sought by both state and federal leaders. MFRI has provided invited testimony or briefings five times at the federal level and twice at the state level. MFRI was quoted in new rules issued by the Department of Labor for administration of the Family and Medical Leave Act with military families.
Family Impact Seminars

Faced with hundreds of legislative efforts, Indiana’s state lawmakers are challenged annually to learn, focus and act on a myriad of matters. To help them understand key issues about family needs, each year the Center for Families leads a consortium of 10 other organizations in hosting annual Family Impact Seminars for state legislators. The topic of each seminar is selected by legislators themselves.

Focused Presentations by Experts
Held in November prior to the legislature’s convening day, the seminar focuses on a single, family-centered topic each year with a non-partisan presentation by leading researchers and experts. The seminar is open to legislators, their aides, state agency representatives, educators and service providers. The objective is to present unbiased information on current issues affecting families.

“We have so many different things that bombard us—hundreds of different groups that want our attention for their cause, so it’s good for us to focus in on families and the impact different issues have on the family,” says Senator Dennis Kruse. “The researchers who present give us incentive and information we can use to formulate legislation. It educates us.”

Time at the sessions each year is “very worthwhile,” says Representative Sheila Klinker. “Legislators have taken away a lot of ideas that they would not have known otherwise. And you get different points of view, hearing what both sides are thinking, which is very helpful.”

In 2009, the topic was *Maximizing the value of P-12 educational resources in Indiana*. That was a great choice, Klinker says. “Nothing impacts families more than education and education’s costs,” she says. “The future of families is what will make this state great.”

Other topics have included *The burden of the unbanked in Indiana; Meeting the challenge of moving youth into the workforce: Reducing dropouts and increasing educational attainment; and Financing healthcare for Indiana families.*

Information Impacts Legislation
Often, the information presented leads to legislation positively affecting families. Examples include passage of a bill establishing full-day kindergarten and a bill regulating family child care, both addressed in two previous seminars, Healthy Environments for Young Children and Enhancing the Educational Experience: Policy Alternatives.

A seminar on middle school violence and safety led to legislation requiring that a school safety specialist establish procedures on discipline, safety, crime, violence and bullying and another enacting a zero-tolerance for bullying policy. Following the financing healthcare seminar, the legislator voted to increase the state cigarette tax to fund a health insurance program for low-income, uninsured residents.

When the clock is ticking and the calendar is full, legislators appreciate the seminar’s content and format, Kruse says. “Those who attend the seminars like them and think they’re useful.”
Looking to the Future: Greater Understanding

To pursue our goal of expanding understanding of families by all of our stakeholders, the center plans to recruit more faculty partners, expand our work with and for military families, engage a larger number and wider range of government leaders, and reach out more actively to employers.

With the creation of the Global Policy Research Institute at Purdue, the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute have the opportunity to ensure that Purdue is at the forefront of policy research and activities related to families.

TESTIMONIALS
Recognizing Excellence and Increasing the Impact

‘Translating research into practical applications’
“Our sponsorship of the Kanter Award delivers a unique blend of credibility and practical application to organizations across all industry sectors. Our collaboration to translate research findings into practical applications is yielding results.

“It completes our mission to recognize excellence in work-life practice, research and emerging talent, and the winning Kanter studies provide insight into some of the more intractable human capital issues.”

- KATHIE LINGLE • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ALLIANCE FOR WORK-LIFE PROGRESS @ WORLDATWORK

‘Clear communication, unbiased perspective’
“Policymakers in Washington D.C. are dealing with complex issues and don’t have a lot of time. They need to understand the how, why and what of an issue as quickly as possible.

“The Center for Families has great command of the substantive research on work and family and is able to package the information in a way that is useful to policymakers on both sides of the aisle. The center is always at the top of my list when I think about work-family researchers who communicate clearly and present the most accurate, unbiased perspective.”

- KATIE CORRIGAN • CO-DIRECTOR
WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY 2010, GEORGETOWN LAW
Growing stronger families, greater resources and more responsive and resourceful communities are goals that fuel the work of the Center for Families.

Growing Communities’ Capacity to Help Families

Supportive communities can enrich and strengthen families. That’s why the Center for Families is dedicated to working directly with organizations who regularly serve families. For example, the Adults and Children Together Against Violence initiative has trained community professionals to prevent violence through better understanding of child development, anger management, and social problem-solving, using train-the-trainer programs developed by the American Psychological Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. MFRI partners with Indiana librarians through the annual Our Heroes’ Tree program to raise awareness about military families throughout their communities. Serving as catalysts for change, MFRI and the Center for Families are impacting Indiana families throughout the state.
Highlighting Achievements

Infant-Toddler Specialists of Indiana Improves Care for Babies
For the past five years, center theme leader Jim Elicker has collaborated with colleagues at Indiana University to bring new professional development resources to professionals working with intervention programs for children from birth to three years of age throughout Indiana. New opportunities for these professionals include an annual 2-day intensive training institute available for graduate or continuing education credit, annual online courses for graduate credit focused on recommended competencies, a resource-rich web site, and a proposed statewide infant-toddler competency-based professional credential.

Operation Diploma Reaches Out to Academic Communities
Funded through a $5.8 million gift from Lilly Endowment Inc., Operation Diploma assists higher education institutions throughout the state of Indiana as they help student service members and veterans transition from military service to both traditional and non-traditional classrooms.

The Military Family Research Institute is administering the program, which in its first year awarded more than $270,000 in grants to higher-education institutions and more than $24,000 in grants to student veterans’ organizations (SVOs) on campuses. Operation Diploma also provides training, outreach, research and support services for institutions and SVOs.

“Operation Diploma is designed to address major needs military members may have, such as academic, financial, physical and emotional challenges,” says center and institute director Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth. “Our goal is to help military members feel that they are understood and supported by staff members, professors and other students and, ultimately, to increase their chances of completing their education. We aim to transform the higher education landscape in our state.”
The Indiana National Guard has created a strong and vibrant partnership with the Military Family Research Institute on behalf of military families in our state. MFRI has worked with several National Guard leaders to create and support programs to strengthen family support. MFRI brings an added expertise to the table, bolstered by research that informs National Guard policies, programs, and practices.

“National Guard officials are grateful for Purdue University’s support,” says Major Cathy Van Bree of the Indiana National Guard. “The work that they support with our families touches everyone from young children to retired veterans.”

MFRI outreach and research staff have been particularly active in helping to address the needs of National Guard families who are working to reconnect after lengthy deployments. Almost 200 children and their families have attended Passport Toward Success, a workshop aimed at helping families successfully navigate the challenges associated with a military member’s return from deployment. National Guard family readiness groups benefitted from the competitive grants issued by MFRI.

“One of the things that we are most grateful for is MFRI’s willingness to help whenever asked, to support whenever asked, and to engage whenever asked,” says Van Bree. “This is all done with an eye toward developing the best possible outcomes for service members and their families.”

Mobilizing Civilian Communities
Local communities are rich with a desire to assist and attend to the needs of veterans and military families. MFRI has helped to create and provide assistance to nine regional community groups around Indiana. These regional centers were chosen based on geographic region, local concentration of military service members, and support systems available. These community networks have grown from 78 participants to a current total of over 500. In each location, network members have developed priorities for making their community a more supportive place for military families, which they are now working to implement, MFRI is helping by bringing partners together and providing a competitive small grants program to help communities make progress.

MAJOR CATHY VAN BREE • INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD
Looking to the Future: Continued Growth

Construction has begun on the $11.5 million Bill and Sally Hanley Hall, which will foster research on families, and the development of children, adolescents, and adults. Hanley Hall, which will be completed in 2011, will house the Military Family Research Institute, part of the Department of Child Development and Family Studies, and the Center on Aging and the Life Course. Connected to Fowler House via a second-story enclosed bridge, Hanley Hall will bring the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute together under one roof.

“This facility will integrate learning, discovery and engagement focused on families and children,” said Dennis Savaiano, former dean of the College of Consumer and Family Sciences. “Future growth in this area will help position Purdue University as a leader in this field.”

The college also defined its future growth with three strategic goals:

1. To conduct internationally recognized research that improves the quality of lives of families and consumers and increases the productivity and efficiencies of the industries served;
2. To provide rigorous and relevant undergraduate and graduate education that develops the knowledge and skills of the next generation of leaders in consumer and family sciences; and
3. To engage those outside the University—families, consumers, policymakers, business/industry, community organizations, educators, and service providers—with knowledge and information to improve the quality of life within the home, at work, and in our communities.

Supported by the efforts of the Center for Families, the Military Family Research Institute and Purdue faculty and staff, the successful implementation of this plan will position the Purdue as an international leader in the study of families, children, youth, and adults. The transition to the new College of Health and Human Sciences will bring even more exciting opportunities for collaboration in discovery, learning, and engagement.

‘The center speaks to my heart’

“I grew up on a 70-acre farm in Wayne County, Indiana, where we cooked on a wood stove and I wore dresses made from feed sack muslin. We were taught family values: working together to can and freeze our food, eating all meals together, taking something to share when we visited relatives. I learned so much growing up poor and on a farm.

“I believe family is at the core of society, and research at the Center for Families is very important. I choose to contribute time and money to the center because it speaks to my heart.”

– DEBBIE COOK • RETIRED FINANCIAL PLANNER
CENTER FOR FAMILIES ADVOCATE
As I look back over my time as a student and a faculty member, I recognize many occasions when professors and others stretched out a hand to invite me to consider a new idea, give me access to a new opportunity, or encourage me to reach for more ambitious goals. They did not have to do these things; they had fulfilled their obligations in the lecture hall and their labs and offices. They did these things because they believed in an idea. They believed that their investment in a young woman from a small town who was the first in her family to go to college would yield some greater good in the future. Their actions were acts of faith—faith that their actions would make a difference.

In the same way, the individuals and families who have invested in the Center for Families have engaged in acts of faith. Deans Don Felker, Ann Hancook, and Jon Story, Development Officer Cheryl Altinkemer, Founding Donor Lorene Burkhart and Founding Director Susan Kontos all believed passionately that Purdue University could exert greater influence on our state and our nation to make sure that families—our most universal and fundamental social institution—would receive the support they need to do their very important work. Their gifts of time, talent and treasure set the center on its path to the future. Since then, many more individuals—leaders, advocates, and donors, as well as faculty, staff and students—have made similar investments.

Our job every day is to ensure that investments in the center continue to reap outstanding returns. Today, these returns include over $25 million in funding for projects that benefit families in the state, the nation, and around the world. They include numerous students and faculty members who have been able to generate new knowledge about families with fellowship support from Center for Families. They include a state legislature that is better educated about the implications of their work for families. And they include a worldwide network of researchers and business leaders who better understand the scientific evidence behind the policies, practices and programs they are implementing to support the millions of workers and families for whom they are responsible.

As we transition to a new college, the Center for Families becomes even more important as both the keeper of a legacy and a vanguard for the future of discovery, learning, and engagement about families. We can look forward to a future full of continuing returns from the investments made in the past. I hope that you will help us to also have a future full of returns from investments made today.

BY SHELLEY MACDERMID WADSWORTH • DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR FAMILIES AND MILITARY FAMILY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

First Lady Michelle Obama, right, who has identified military families as one of her top priorities, greets MFRI Director Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth during a meeting at the White House’s Eisenhower Executive Office Building.
**Our Family-Centered Mission**

Committed to strengthening the capacity of families to provide a nurturing environment for their members, the Center for Families:

- Serves as a catalyst for initiating and integrating outreach, teaching and research activities that support families;
- Seeks to increase and enhance collaboration among academic disciplines, professionals, policymakers, corporations and community organizations regarding the vital roles of children and families in society;
- Focuses on Indiana families, while maintaining a strong interest in national trends and perspectives.

**Marking Our Milestones**

Some highlights of the Center for Families and its Military Family Research Institute activities over the years:

**1993**
- Center for Families received initial funding
- Inaugural funding from 1957 alumnus Lorene McCormick Burkhart

**1994**
- Susan Kontos, who joined Purdue faculty in 1985, named founding director
- First project funded – It’s My Child Too – a program for noncustodial fathers
- First McAllister Fellowship funded

**1995**
- First grant received: $100,000 to evaluate First Steps Program
- Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth named director
- First national grant received, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and Head Start collaboration, placing marriage and family therapists in childcare settings
- Director invited to participate in Vice President’s Family Re-union V: Family and Work conference
- Launched the study *Reconceptualizing Managerial Careers in Organizations*, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, with Mary Dean Lee of McGill University.

**1997**
- More than $300,000 in grants awarded to projects affiliated with the center
- Hosted the first annual Family Impact Seminar
- Released *Child Care: It’s Good Business* toolkit for employers and community planners

**1998**
- 25th project launched: The CARe (Communities Against Rape) statewide reporting system;
- Grant funds awarded to Center for Families projects now exceed $1,000,000
- First Hancock Fellowship awarded
- Child Care Financing Initiative statewide evaluation launched

**1999**
- Published *Status of Indiana Families Today: Living Poor in Indiana*

**2000**
- Military Family Research Institute is created
- Launched the annual Rosabeth Moss Kanter Award for Excellence in Work-Family Research in partnership with the Boston College Center for Work and Family
- Launched the *Nurturing Families* study with Marcie Pitt-Catsouphes of Boston College, with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.
2001
• First Van Scoyoc Fellowship awarded
• Collaborated with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to organize a national work-family research conference “Persons, Processes and Places: Research on Families, Workplaces and Communities.”
• 50th project launched: Community variations in child care for working poor families: Contributions to child development and parental employment outcomes.

2002
• First Kontos Fellowship awarded
• Launched A Labor-Management-Research Partnership: Expanding Options for the Time and Timing of Work in a Continuous-Operations Environment, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, with Robert Perrucci, Purdue Department of Sociology.

2003
• Selected to collaborate with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to offer the national research conference Workplace Strategies and Interventions for Improving Health and Well-Being.

2004
• Celebration of the center’s 10th anniversary

2005
• Grant received from the Nina Mason Pulliam Trust to bring the ACT program to Indiana
• Evaluation of the Early Child Care Quality Initiative launched, with funding from the Welborn Foundation

2006
• Partnership launched with the Alliance of Work-Life Progress to sponsor the Kanter Award, in collaboration with the Boston College Center for Work and Family
• Indiana Infant-Toddler Specialist network launched

2007
• $8.9 million grant received from Lilly Endowment Inc. to expand the mission of the Military Family Research Institute
• 10th annual Family Impact Seminar held

2008
• First National Research Symposium on Military Families held, organized by MFRI
• Operation Purple Camp for children with a parent in the Reserves held on the Purdue campus the first Operation Purple Camp to be hosted in Indiana, and the only camp held on a university campus
• MFRI brought the Our Heroes’ Tree program to Indiana to honor the service and sacrifice of military service members and veterans
• Partnered with Sesame Workshop to evaluate a series of multimedia tools designed to help military children cope with a parent’s multiple deployments or the return of a parent from combat with a wound or injury
• Center director appointed to Institute of Medicine committee on the readjustment needs of returning veterans and their families

2009
• MFRI launched Passport Toward Success program in partnership with the Indiana National Guard
• Operation Diploma created as an initiative of the Military Family Research Institute through a $5.8 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.
• MacDermid Wadsworth invited to White House meeting and presidential signing of National Defense Authorization Act, with provisions expanding Family and Medical Leave Act

2010
• Celebration of the Center for Families 15th anniversary and the Military Family Research Institute 10th anniversary
• Inaugural methodological symposium held—Research with Dyads and Families: Challenges and Solutions in Working With Interdependent Data—in the Families and Health Symposium series

All of these milestones were achieved through the labor of Purdue faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Purdue faculty and staff who have served as project leaders include: Susan Kontos, Douglas Powell, Jim Elicker, Melissa Franks, Dee Love, Volker Thomas, Robert Perrucci, Janie Long, Betty Krejci, Joan Jurich, Karen Diamond, Gail Ulmer, Aadron Rausch, Pamela Choice, Gail Melkon, Laura Hess, Janet Gordon, Holly Schrank, Howard Weiss, Stephen Green, Bonnie Blankenship, Shawn Whiteman, German Posada, Sarah Mustillo and Cleve Shields.
Behind the achievements of the Center for Families stand many supporters who further our work through their generous and deeply appreciated contributions.

Thanks to Our Advocates and Donors

The Center for Families and its Military Family Research Institute extend tremendous gratitude to those whose belief in our work prompted generous contributions to further our pursuits.

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While the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute have achieved important milestones, much work remains to learn, understand and communicate about families. Support from others who believe in the power and potential of families will help the center and institute realize key goals.

Join Us in Our Work for Families

Now that you’ve sampled the breadth and depth of the work of the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute, we hope you have a greater understanding of our role and focus. And we hope that you will want to know more and support us in our work.

We are building a network of friends and would like to welcome you. You may want to hear from us through regular e-mail updates on our work, participate in one of our events, or sign on as a supporting advocate. Please let us of know of your interests so that we may expand our network of those interested in supporting the growth, development and celebration of families.