



This month, we kick off a new series, "Meet the Board," by speaking with our newest OHCFR board member, Graduate Student Amy Kelly. Read on to hear Amy describe her role on the board, her involvement with families, awesome new research she's working on, and how she likes to spend her (admittedly limited) free time. Check back next month to learn more about the OHCFR board members working to promote and connect family science practitioners, academics, and students across Ohio!

**How long have you been working in family science or a family-related field?**

"I have been working with families in some professional capacity since 2012. Wow, how quickly the past five years have flown by! I got my start working with families in a child development center by providing care to children, constructing developmentally appropriate curriculum and building relationships with families. I definitely attribute my love for early childhood development and education to my experience in this early professional setting, as most of my time was spent working with newborns through preschool children and their families. Guiding children through their development, as well as working one-on-one with parents

to further facilitate their child's development and strengthen parenting skills, served as the building blocks for my passion family-focused career path."

**How long have you been on the OHCFR board? In what position(s) have you served?**

"My position on the OHCFR Board is as a graduate student representative. I have been on the board since January of 2017. I have been a member of NCFF since May of 2016 when I joined as an undergraduate student."

**What is your current position(s) working with or for families?**

"Through the lens of preventative practices, I have had the opportunity to explore both the practitioner and academic realms of family science. Currently, the majority of my time is spent working as a Graduate Assistant at Kent State University in the Human Development and Family Studies department. In this role, I have had the opportunity to work closely with two phenomenal faculty members, Dr. Dale Curry and Kathy Bergh. Here, I assist in the facilitation of undergraduate courses, serve as a graduate mentor to undergraduate HDFS students navigating their internships and professional development, and am involved in various family-focused research endeavors.

In addition to my time spent at KSU, I am also employed as a Domestic Violence Specialist at Safer Futures, the only domestic violence shelter in Portage County, OH. Here, I provide crisis intervention and support to families and individuals who are experiencing/escaping family violence. By providing education and guidance, we aim to empower individuals to make their own healthy decisions. Though the survivors that I work with are in the trenches of domestic violence and relationship dysfunction, through the lens of Family Life Education it is my goal that the education and support I provide will aid in the prevention of further damage. I aim to teach clients that the trauma they have experienced is not their fault or representative of their self-worth and provide education on what healthy relationships look like, so that they are empowered to create a better future for themselves post-shelter. Simultaneously working directly with families experiencing domestic violence while also gaining a deep understanding of the theoretical components of their trauma through academia has given me the unique opportunity to guide my professional development in both applied practice and empirical investigation."

**What got you into family work? What are your particular interests within family science?**

"My path to family science began five years ago with my undergraduate career. While the HDFS undergraduate program covered a wide breadth of family science content areas, my attention was most drawn to the Family Life Education concentration. I absolutely fell in love with the concept of prevention over intervention. Strategies aimed at preventing family dysfunction, rather than intervening after a crisis emerges, was the framework from which I wanted to extend my professional efforts. As a Family Life Educator, my research and professional efforts are focused on working directly with survivors of domestic violence and their families, especially mothers and their children. Specifically, I am interested in the development of mother-child relationships within these families, as well as mothers' reasons to stay or leave abusive relationships."

**What are some of your recent research projects on?**

"I am currently diving head first into my thesis! To put simply, I'm basically exploring the associations between interparental violence, the security of mother-child attachment, and parental relationship stability/dissolution. I'm a bit of a theory nerd, so I'm super excited to be taking a combined family systems and attachment theory approach in my research. Outside of my own line of research, I've had the opportunity to work with a handful of faculty at KSU on some really interesting family-focused endeavors. Most recently these projects include: involvement in the International Survey of Children's Wellbeing, investigation on the use of film pedagogy in professional development for child and youth care workers, and empirical efforts aimed at establishing credentialing criteria to further professionalize of the CFLE credential."

**What do you like to do outside of work and school?**

"Though my free time is definitely limited these days, when I do get a chance to take a step back from work and school I try to surround myself with family, friends and laughter. I have a four-year-old son, Gavin, who is the light of my world! He's my biggest cheerleader and the reason I work so hard every day. I would also consider myself a bit of a health nut. I'm always cooking up some healthy, delicious vegan meal and I absolutely love being outside soaking up the sunshine. Running, hiking and yoga- those are probably my go to activities! I'm also really into music. One of these days I want to learn how to play the guitar, but for now I just jam out at concerts whenever I can."