



WILLIAM JAMES  
COLLEGE

Center for  
Multicultural & Global  
Mental Health

## CMGMH Connection Spring 2020

### *Mental Health Awareness Month*

During the month of May, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health join the nationwide

movement to raise awareness about mental health, fight stigma, educate the public, and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

Mental Health Month was established in 1949 to promote mental health and wellness, and celebrate recovery from mental illness. The ***2020 NAMI's "You are Not Alone" Campaign*** features the lived experience of people affected by mental illness. The campaign is designed to build social connections and increase awareness of digital tools that make connections possible during a climate of physical distancing. In these uncertain times, NAMI is reminding everyone that, now more than ever, it is critical for the mental health community to come together and show the world that no one should ever feel alone.



YOU ARE  
**NOT**  
ALONE

Now more than ever, we need to find ways to stay connected with our community. No one should feel alone or without the information, support and help they need.

## Resources on Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health America (MHA) provides practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency regardless of the situations they are dealing with. These tools – even those that may need to be adapted for the short term because of COVID-19 and social distancing – will be more useful than ever. To learn more, visit [MHA's 2020 Tools 2 Thrive](#) website.



*National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week* (May 3-9) & *National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day* (May 9) seek to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and show that positive mental

health is essential to a child's healthy development. This year, the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health is commemorating by ***Bringing Children's Mental Health Into Focus***. To learn more, visit [www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek](http://www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek). You can also download a copy of the [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Activity Workbook: Just for Kids](#).

SAMHSA's ***National Prevention Week*** (May 10-16) is an annual health observance dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and action around, mental health and/or substance use disorders. Each year, National Prevention Week includes daily themes to focus on major substance use and mental health topics. [Click here to learn more about the 2020 daily themes](#).

SAMHSA, in conjunction with the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging and the Administration for Community Living, designated May 20th as ***National Older Adults Mental Health Awareness Day*** to promote greater awareness of mental health and aging specifically related to the prevention, treatment, and recovery support options for older adults with mental or substance use disorders. To learn more, visit [Mental Health America](#) and [Alliance for Aging Research](#).



# Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM), celebrating the achievements and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. According to the [Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies \(APAICS\)](#), in June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage week.



The following month, Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Spark Matsunaga from Hawaii introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed and on October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed a bill passed by Congress to extend the week-long celebration to a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

## Resources for Fighting Xenophobia During COVID-19

- ◆ Asian Americans Advancing Justice: [Standagainsthatred.org](http://Standagainsthatred.org)
- ◆ OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates: [Hate Incident Reporting Form](#)
- ◆ Teaching Tolerance: [How to Respond to Coronavirus Racism](#)
- ◆ Urban Institute: [Confronting Racism and Supporting Asian American Communities in the Wake of COVID-19](#)
- ◆ Huffington Post: [Asian People Are Being Targeted By Racist Attacks. Here's How You Can Be An Ally](#)



# *William James College Celebrated Lunar New Year & New Concentration in Asian Mental Health*

The Lunar New Year officially arrived on Saturday, January 25, 2020, marking the beginning of the Year of the Rat in the Chinese zodiac cycle. The annual festival, which is celebrated by millions of people around the world, is an important time for Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese communities. William James College held a multicultural celebration on Wednesday, January 29th to mark the occasion.



The celebration featured Lion Dancers from the [Boston Chinese Freemasons Athletic Club](#), a keynote speech about traditions surrounding the Lunar New Year by Renne Lu, Director of the [Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association](#), a live calligraphy performance by artist [Quanzhou \(Jack\) Zhao](#), and speeches by William James College community members, including President Nick Covino, faculty member Dr. Catherine Vuky, and students Lan Ho, Ellen Yang and Thanh Phan.

The event also served as an opportunity to announce the launch of the College's newest academic [Concentration in Asian Mental Health](#), which is directed by Dr. Vuky. Asians are the fastest growing racial minority group in the United States but, as with other minority groups, the number of behavioral health providers who are trained to deliver culturally responsive services to this population hasn't kept pace.

Vuky and other speakers noted that, as our society becomes increasingly diverse, there is a growing need to recruit and train mental health professionals who possess the knowledge and required skills to meet the mental health needs of culturally diverse individuals, families and communities. *(Continued on next page)*

## Lunar New Year Celebration (cont.)

“We know that there are far too few mental health professionals to be able to meet the needs of any community,” said President Covino. “Even in Massachusetts, which is one of the best staffed states for mental health care, more than half of the time you can’t find it. It becomes more complicated if you are looking for someone who looks like you, understands your background, has a sense of culture, and is able to meet you with great understanding – 9 times out of 10 you won’t find that, because mental health care is 90% non-Latino Caucasian.”

In her opening remarks, Dr. Vuky stated, “I came to William James College in 2014, teaching one course in the theory of child and family systems.” She shared that she’d worked in a community health center for 20 years where 98% of the client population spoke Chinese only. When she shared cases in class, she received feedback from students who were grateful for access to the topic because, at the time, there were no courses offered on the topic at the College.



Students who spoke during the Lunar New Year celebration said that the new concentration had special meaning for them. Ellen Yang, a second year student in the Clinical Psychology Program remarked,

*“I grew up in an area where people rarely looked like me... basically, I was never in the in-group, but at the same time I didn’t feel Asian enough to feel like I was part of that community. I spent a long time in that limbo... To me, this program means that a significant part of me, of my identity, was seen, and accepted and even celebrated. It means that soon people that look like me can Google ‘William James College’ and see ‘Asian Mental Health,’ which is important. For me, the program means recognition, support, and belonging.”*

The William James College concentration in Asian Mental Health is the first clinical doctoral program in the nation with a specific emphasis on treating Asian individuals, families, and communities. [\[Read More Here\]](#)



# *Habits of Positivity:* Transform Your Thinking and Change Your World

On February 26, 2020, in celebration of Black History Month, a group of William James College students, faculty, staff and community members attended Dr. Oneeka Williams's dynamic and motivating presentation on her [5 Habits of Positivity](#). Dr. Williams, who was hosted by the [Black Mental Health Graduate Academy](#), chronicled how her personal transformative journey has informed a set of principles designed to embed an empowered and positive approach to life.

She spoke about her commitment to addressing the issue of underrepresentation of women in STEM careers and the lack of diversity in children's books by creating a book series featuring an African American/Black girl superhero surgeon whose Habits of Positivity form her superpowers and who encourages children to live a life without limits. Dr. Williams is keenly aware that children model what they see and thus has expanded her focus to train adults to internalize these habits that will transform not only their lives but the lives of their children.

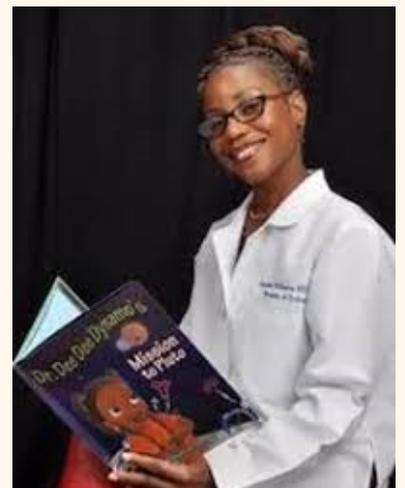


*Dr. Oneeka Williams (5th from left) with WJC's Black Mental Health Graduate Academy Scholars*

## *Dr. Dee Dee Dynamo Storytime on the Island of Positivity*

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Oneeka Williams hosted a Virtual Storytelling segment for children, caregivers and families from all over the country.

Dr. Williams is the author of the children's book series, [Dr. Dee Dee Dynamo](#). She is committed to inspiring all children, and especially girls, towards a greater interest in science, a positive attitude, and the pursuit of excellence in all their endeavors. To learn more about her work, please visit [www.droneeka.com](http://www.droneeka.com).



# Kenya Immersion Program



The Kenya Immersion Program explores the role of global mental health in addressing the humanitarian needs of individuals, families and organizations in Kenya. The immersion experience is designed to offer students an opportunity to understand the complexities of global mental health and development work. With support from William James College, Women First International Fund, Children's Safe Drinking Water Project, the Always Keeping Girls in School Program, and Fairmont/Accor Hotels, the project involves work with schools, women's groups, and local governments. It strives to promote the empowerment of women and young girls, increase access to safe drinking water, and improve overall health outcomes. The December 2019 immersion program was devoted to working with about 15,000 people from indigenous communities in Narok County, in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya.

## Post-Immersion Appreciative Inquiry

On March 4, 2020, a post-immersion Appreciative Inquiry (AI) group discussion was held at the College with students who took part in international service learning programs in Ecuador, Haiti and Kenya. The purpose of the gathering was to support the ongoing integration of learning from the



students' various immersion experiences. Since their immersion experiences were very different, as are the cultures in which the groups were immersed, the post-immersion AI discussion was also designed to help the groups to benefit from each other's experiences in other countries. This allowed each group to share their experiences in a structured way, and for students from other groups to offer reflections on those experiences. The AI group discussion was facilitated by Dr. Jodie Kliman.

# The Legacy of Dr. Cynthia Lucero: Annual Memorial 5K Walk/Run

Dr. Cynthia Lucero was a much-loved, community-oriented William James College graduate from Ecuador who completed her doctoral degree days before the start of the 2002 Boston Marathon, during which she collapsed and later died. In remembrance of Dr. Lucero, William James College (WJC) organizes an annual 5K Walk/Run. This



year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the walk was canceled. However, using a social media platform the community came together to honor her memory and legacy.



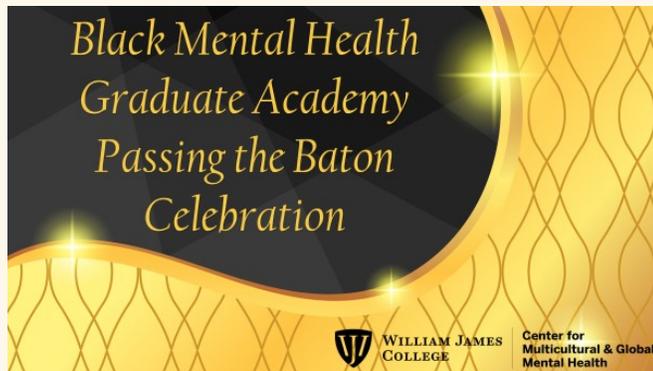
Dr. Mari Bannasar, Director of the Latino Mental Health Program, wrote, *“While we cannot be together in the traditional sense for the Annual Dr. Cynthia Lucero 5K Walk/Run, we can still come together to make a difference!”* She added, *“I challenge you to go for a run, a walk, or engage in any at-home exercise to celebrate the life of William James College alumna Dr. Cynthia Lucero.”*

On April 5th, the WJC community shared photos on social media using #LuceroLegacy and tag @WilliamJamesEdu on Facebook and Twitter, and @WilliamJamesCollege on Instagram. Many thanks to Dr. Jason Kaplan, School Psychology faculty, for the inspiration!

The 5K is one of many programs at the College that honors the Lucero legacy: The [Dr. Cynthia Lucero Center for Latino Mental Health](#), is named for her, as is the Dr. Cynthia Lucero Scholarship program, which is awarded to a student who exhibits a strong dedication and commitment to the delivery of human services to the Latino community. WJC has also developed and maintained a strong relationship with mental health service providers in Lucero’s hometown, Guayaquil, Ecuador. WJC students have the opportunity to participate in a [Service Learning & Cultural Immersion Program](#) in Guayaquil and, last year, the College [entered into a formal partnership](#) with *La Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil*, which will continue to host future immersion programs during the summer.

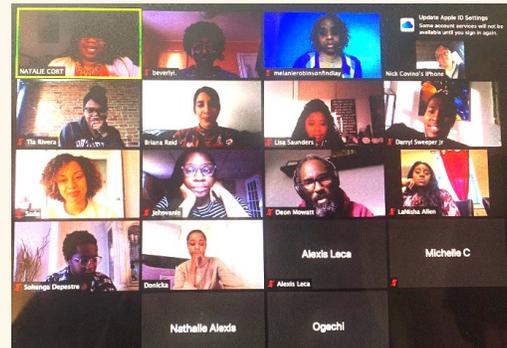


# Black Mental Health Graduate Academy “Passing the Baton Celebration”



Prior to the unprecedented global health crisis with COVID-19, the *Black Mental Health Graduate Academy Scholar Induction & Recognition Dinner* was scheduled for the evening of April 16, 2020. Given the current state of emergency and safety concerns, the celebration was canceled.

However, the Academy decided to meet via Zoom for a gathering titled “*Passing the Baton*” where attendees shared their hard-earned wisdom, empowering praise and professional advice about ways to succeed at William James College (WJC) and in the psychology and mental health fields. To survive in times of tragedy, it is necessary for us to interpersonally connect and celebrate inspiring accomplishments. Academy Scholars are fortunate to be able to easily access their strong connections with each other to feel less alone, less anxious, and more hopeful about the future.



William James College’s [Black Mental Health Graduate Academy](#), led by [Dr. Natalie A. Cort](#), is a mentorship and leadership pipeline program, which provides critical mentorship, career orientation and professional enrichment, and represents WJC’s commitment to reducing racial/ethnic disparities by diversifying



the mental health workforce. Since its inauguration in 2016, the Academy has had a total of 40 Scholars. The majority (60%) of the Academy’s Scholars are from immigrant families from the Caribbean (e.g., Haiti) and Africa (e.g., Nigeria). Our Scholars are committed to social justice advocacy and demonstrate a record of exceptional accomplishments.

# Awards & Accomplishments

**Adetutu Ajibose**, a fourth-year Clinical Psychology student at William James, was featured for her work as founder of the Towards the Light Foundation (TTLF). She has very ambitious goals with launching this program, which seeks to redefine mental health awareness in Nigeria.

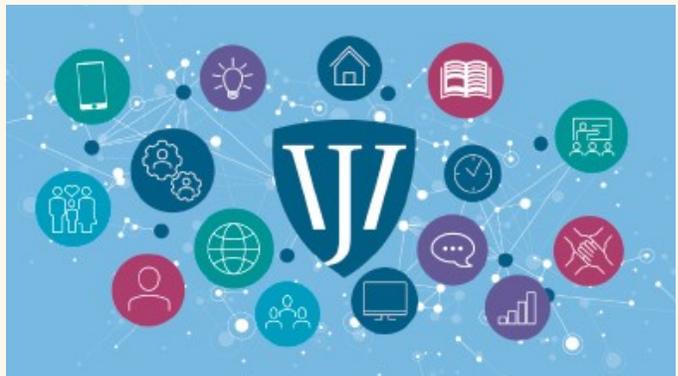


**Michelle Codner** was among the 2020 winners of the Sonya Kurzweil Grant Award. This award, which includes a \$5,000 grant, is given to two students whose doctoral projects offer the most promise in contributing to the field of child and family clinical psychology. Michelle received this award for her study titled, *Recollections of Childhood Parentification, Current Caretaking Roles, and Acculturation in Jamaican-American Adults*.

## William James College Resource Hub

William James College (WJC) has compiled a Resource Hub, which offers a collection of materials created by WJC community members, or gathered from reputable sources and curated by WJC faculty and staff for the benefit of the community.

The [Resource Hub](#) is designed to provide training tools for mental health professionals, resources on telemental health and culturally responsive care, psychoeducational materials for teachers and other school personnel, programs for K-12 schools, parenting tools and resources for caregivers seeking ways to engage children in educational play at home, mental health resources for those who need support, and services for youth and families from historically marginalized and underserved communities.



# Mental Health in the News



## Stressed, isolated: Migrants face increased mental health risks amid coronavirus crisis

- The mental health of domestic workers in cities such as Hong Kong and Macau may worsen during the new coronavirus epidemic, journal says
- Researchers call for equal access to health services, as migrant workers report increased levels of stress and anxiety amid the crisis

## The coronavirus and the long history of using diseases to justify xenophobia

Dirty looks, deserted restaurants, bullied children – this is the reality for many Asian Americans after the outbreak of the coronavirus six weeks ago.

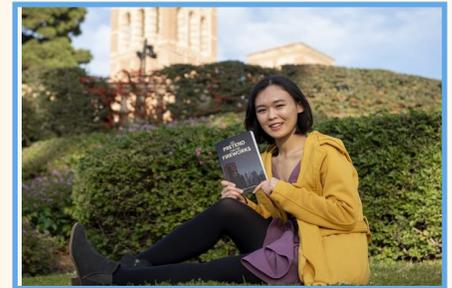


## When an Asian-American student coughs in class, cue fear and xenophobia

Since late January when the World Health Organization declared a global health emergency over the coronavirus outbreak that originated in Wuhan, China, members of Chinese communities in the U.S. and elsewhere have reported feeling more pressure and bias toward them.

## UCLA student authors book covering themes of mental health and identity

The third-year English student published her young adult dystopian novel about mental health – and its intersections of identity and ethnicity – in December. Kernal said the combination of wanting to be politically active and create more representation for Asian American women in writing drove her novel. Her own history with mental health set the scene for the major themes of the novel, Kernal said. Setting her story as fiction gave her the liberty to expand and include other experiences apart from her own, as Kernal said she wants to destigmatize discussing and living with mental illness.



## Isolated and sequestered in their homes, Chinese citizens report anxiety and depression while on lockdown amid the coronavirus outbreak

As China's healthcare system strains to battle the coronavirus epidemic, the country may have yet another health crisis on its hands: deteriorating mental health.

## Why Don't More Asian Americans Seek Mental Health Services?

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA/PI) community is the fastest growing racial group in the United States, but the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that AA/PIs had the lowest rates of mental health utilization compared to every racial group. One study found that only 28% of Asian Americans sought mental health services compared to 54% of the general population.



# Holidays & Observances

## May 2020

- ◆ May 1-31: [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)
- ◆ May 1-31: [National Haitian Heritage Month](#)
- ◆ May 1-31: [National Mental Health Month](#)
- ◆ May 5: [Cinco de Mayo](#)
- ◆ May 3-9: [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week](#)
- ◆ May 13: [Mother's Day](#)
- ◆ May 21: [World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development](#)
- ◆ Apr. 23 - May 23: [Ramadan](#)
- ◆ May 25: [Memorial Day](#)
- ◆ May 31: [World No-Tobacco Day](#)

## Webinars, Conferences & Workshops

- ◆ May 7, 2020: [Human Trafficking & the COVID-19 Crisis](#) [Virtual Event]
- ◆ May 14, 2020: [Quarantined Conversations: An On-line Exploration of Race and Rage](#), The Eikenberg Academy for Social Justice [Virtual Event]
- ◆ July 8-10, 2020: [Think:Kids - Tier 2 Collaborative Problem Solving® Training](#), Partners Healthcare Administrative Campus, Somerville, MA
- ◆ September 11, 2020: [1st Annual Autism Friendly Conference](#), Boston Medical Center, Boston, MA
- ◆ October 2-3, 2020: [EDS Conference - Educating Diverse Students](#), Boston University, Boston, MA
- ◆ October 17, 2020: [Best Practices in Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health Care & Workforce Development to Improve Outcomes for Children, Adolescents, and Families in Underserved Communities](#), William James College, Newton, MA
- ◆ October 23-24, 2020: [Diversity Challenge Conference](#), Boston College, Boston, MA [Virtual Event]
- ◆ October 29-31, 2020: [2020 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health](#), Marriott Waterfront Baltimore, Baltimore, MD
- ◆ November 12-14, 2020: [31st Annual Conference of the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health](#), Chicago, IL
- ◆ November 17-20, 2020: [Caribbean Resilience: Psychology's Response to Historical and Contemporary Disasters](#), Saint Croix, US Virgin Islands

**Note: These events are subject to cancellations or postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please check the event organizers' websites for more updates.**