



Newsletter, March 2019

UTD Service Learning Classes Help Connect Students to the Community



In 2017, The University of Texas at Dallas received a 3-year, \$1 million grant from The University of Texas System for "Engagement through Collaboration, Mentorship, and Service Learning." This initiative is designed to encourage students' sense of belonging, one of three pillars that the UT System identified as critical for student success. CCF Advisory Council member and UTD professor [Dr. Joanna Gentsch](#) designed and expanded the community-based service learning program across the campus, which includes the Center for Children and Families' [Play With Me program](#) as a host site. UTD students in the

course attend one session of Play With Me per week and an in-person class session at UTD taught by Play With Me program manager, [Adriana Baird](#), and CCF Director, [Dr. Margaret T. Owen](#). "Many of the families we encounter at Play With Me are learning to navigate the system and we are here to be an advocate for them and their children," Adriana explained to the students in one of the recent class sessions. Dr. Gentsch explained that the weekly small-group classes have been a success, with many students saying the experiences were meaningful and gave them a greater sense of purpose. [Read more...](#)

CCF Director featured on KERA's All Things Considered

Dr. Margaret T. Owen's longitudinal research, the [Dallas Project on Education Pathways](#), has been described as one of the most comprehensive studies into childhood development and school readiness in the nation. Dr. Owen recently spoke with Justin Martin from KERA News' All Things Considered about the study. [Read more...](#)



**Dallas Project on
Education Pathways**

Save the Date for Comets Giving Day

The 3rd annual UT Dallas Giving Day will be held on **Tuesday, April 2, 2019**. On this day, we encourage all alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, and friends of CCF to visit [this page](#) and make an online donation to support the Center for Children and Families at UT Dallas.



Other ways to support CCF on Comets Giving Day include:

- Wear your CCF t-shirt and tell others about our impact
- Use your CCF pen and write a note of thanks to [our supporters](#)
- [Sign up](#) to volunteer with us
- Tag CCF on your Twitter feed ([@CcfUtd](#)) or Facebook page ([centerforchildrenandfamilies](#))
- Vote for our door to win a cash prize in the door decorating contest (link to be emailed)

Your support will help promote positive parenting practices and healthy child development for at-risk families in Dallas!



From the Director

Spring is finally here and that means a quieter campus during Spring Break this week but also time to focus in on the last months of this semester. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the new dean for the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences next month. Meanwhile, CCF has started strategic planning processes and we're excited about where it will lead us in shaping our role to solve real-world challenges and bring science-based solutions to families and communities. Comets Giving Day will be a fun way to kick off the second half of this semester and we hope you will show your support in one of the ways listed

above.

[- Margaret T. Owen, PhD, Robinson Family Professor, Director, Center for Children and Families, Interim Dean, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences](#)

STAY CONNECTED:

