



Montgomery County  
*Commission for Women*

# Annual Report

July 2015-June 2016

**Advancing Women's Rights in Montgomery County Since 1972**

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**Montgomery County Commission for Women**  
**21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 330**  
**Rockville, Maryland 20850**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw)

**July 2015– June 2016**

**Officers**

Lorna Forde  
First Vice President

Debra Bright Harris  
PRESIDENT

Angela Whitehead Quigley  
Second Vice President

Nicole Drew  
Daphnee Cherubin  
Natalia Farrar  
Beatrice Lauman

Giulia McPherson  
Barbara Mintz  
Farah Nageer-Kanthor  
Safia Qadri

Britt Hogue  
Katie Smith  
Karmen Rouland

**CFW Team**

Jodi Finkelstein  
Executive Director

Merci Wolff  
WLB Consultant

Lauren Fairbanks  
Intern

Kendra Grimmett  
Intern



# Montgomery County *Commission for Women*

## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2016

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## **President's Message**

**Debra Bright Harris, Ed.D.**

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women for the last two years. During my tenure, I had several goals. First, I wanted to ensure the Commission maintained a strong county presence despite the ongoing changes to our budget and staffing. Second, I wanted women in the County to know that we are, and will continue to be a valued resource.

Achieving these goals would not have been possible without the vision, passion and tenacity of the 15 commissioners whose time and talents proved exemplary. The programs and highlights outlined in this year's annual report underscore the importance of the Commission and the dedication shown by the Commissioners. Indeed, much has been accomplished over the last two years, but some of the initiatives about which I am proudest are the establishment of the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Force and the creation of our MC-CFW STEM Endowed Scholarship through the Montgomery College Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of the Commission's many supporters, we are helping to remove the financial barriers students face as they pursue their higher education and career goals. It is my hope that the creation of this scholarship is only the beginning of a longstanding and fruitful partnership between the Commission and Montgomery College. Additionally, I am equally proud of the work we have done to empower teen girls in our community through our Emerging Leaders program.

The successful implementation of these new initiatives and our many other programs would not have been possible without the hard work of the Commission's staff, interns, and volunteers. Commissioners are able to thrive because of the extraordinary assistance received.

On behalf of the Commission, I would also like to thank the County Executive and County Council for their continued support. This county's commitment to equity, inclusion, and openness has allowed the Commission to assist women since 1972.

I am eager to see what the Commission accomplishes in the years to come; there is certainly more work to do. Women still do not earn the same as men. The voices of rape victims within the criminal justice system still go unheard. And, women are still underrepresented in numerous workplaces and boards.

I am confident that the Commission, and its Commissioners will boldly rise to any challenges presented in the future. We are women and we continue to be strong.

Debra Bright Harris, Ed.D.



## Executive Director's Report

### Jodi Finkelstein, MSW

In 1972, the Montgomery County Council passed a law establishing the Montgomery County Commission for Women. That law charges the Commission with the responsibility of advising the County Executive, the County Council, the public, and the agencies of the county, state and federal governments on the issues of concern to women.

The law provides that there will be 15 commissioners, county **residents** who are each appointed to three-year terms and serve without compensation. Nine of the commissioners must be endorsed by organizations concerned with women's issues and six must serve independently. The Commission meets in full once per month, and commissioners meet in committees in the interim to work on its projects and initiatives. On the average, it is estimated that commissioners contribute about four hours each week working on behalf of Montgomery County's women and girls.

The Commission was created to advance women's equal and full participation in the benefits, responsibilities and opportunities of society. In achieving its mission, the Commission examines laws, policies, practices and procedures, identifies disparities that impact women and advocates remedies for those disparities. Over its 40-year history, the Commission has undertaken successful and effective initiatives on issues such as educational equity, family equity in the courts, sexual harassment in the workplace, pay equity, workplace flexibility, violence in relationships including teens, immigrant women, domestic workers' rights, single mothers and poverty and much more.

The pages that follow highlight the work of the Commission in FY 16. It was filled with a great deal of advocacy and outreach on behalf of girls and women in Montgomery County.

# Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee

**Chair:** Karmen Rouland

**Members:** Natalia Farrar, Guilia McPherson, Katie Smith

For FY 16, the Commission for Women continued its advocacy efforts and once again focused on the following **topics**:

**1. Economic Empowerment for Women and Families**

Paid leave, workplace flexibility, health care, retirement and other benefits, minimum wage, child care

**2. Health and Safety for Women and Girls**

Domestic Violence, human trafficking, women's health disparities, wellness, risks facing teens

**3. Unique Challenges Facing Women**

Senior women, immigrant women, single mothers, young women and girls

**4. Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

Educational, vocational and cultural challenges

**5. Fairness in Family Law**

Legislative issues, access to information, representation and services

Each goal was used to establish how the CFW could support a better future for all women and girls living in Montgomery County. The 2016 advocacy platform served as a guide for legislation the CFW supported in the Maryland State Legislature, and in the first session of the 115th Congress. Each piece of legislation supported or opposed is intended to serve as a plank in the platform of the CFW's ongoing efforts on behalf of Montgomery County's women and their families.

While the opinions expressed in the positions the CFW declared are not necessarily those of the County Executive or the County Council, issues ranging from paid leave and economic health for families to public safety and immigration reform reflect the CFW's advocacy for better policies for Montgomery County's women and girls.



Commissioners Karmen Rouland and Nicole Drew in Annapolis.

## Commission for Women 2016 State Legislative Agenda



Commissioner Britt Hogue at the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act Hearing

### **SB472/HB 580: Maryland Healthy Working Families Act**

Requiring employers with more than nine employees to provide employees with earned sick and safe leave that is paid at the same rate as the employee normally earns; requiring employers with nine or fewer employees to provide an employee with unpaid earned sick and safe leave; providing for the manner in which earned sick and safe leave is accrued by the employee and treated by the employer; requiring an employer to allow an employee to use earned sick and safe leave for specified purposes; etc.

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: Did not pass**



Commissioner Karmen Rouland testifying before the House Judiciary Committee in favor of SB 593/HB 646

### **SB 593/HB 646 Family Law-Child Conceived Without Consent, Termination of Parental Rights**

Current law gives rapists who cause a child to be conceived the same rights as other biological parents. Additionally, if a rapist-parent cannot be located, current law requires that the victim's name be published in the newspaper. We continue to support legislation to limit the parental rights of rapists when the child was conceived through rape and to increase protections for rape survivors who have a child conceived through rape.

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: Did not pass**

### **SB278/HB155: Criminal Law--Stalking**

Prohibiting a person from engaging in a malicious course of conduct where the person intends to cause or knows or reasonably should have known that the conduct would cause serious emotional distress to another.

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: LAW**

### **SB 943: Domestic Violence Gun Transfer Bill**

Providing an exception for a specified person from the prohibition against carrying or transporting a specified firearm under specified circumstances; requiring a court to inform a person convicted of a specified offense that the person is prohibited from possessing a firearm; requiring the court to advise the person that specified proof must be provided to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services that specified firearms in the person's possession have been transferred from the person's possession; etc.

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: Did not pass**

### **HB 740: Labor and Employment-Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program—Establishment**

Establishment of a task force to study Family and Medical Leave Insurance

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: Enacted**

### **SB 481: Labor and Employment—Equal Pay for Equal Work**

Altering a specified provision of law concerning equal pay for equal work to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or gender identity; prohibiting an employer from discriminating between employees by providing less favorable employment opportunities based on sex or gender identity; providing that specified provisions of the Act do not preclude an employee from demonstrating that an employer's reliance on a specified exception is a pretext for discrimination on the basis of sex or gender identity; etc.

**CFW Stance: Support**

**Status: LAW**

## Commission for Women 2016 State Legislative Agenda Additional Statewide Advocacy Initiatives and Projects



Left to Right: Commissioner Daphnee Cherubin, President Bright Harris, Commissioner Nicole Drew



2016 Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women's 2016 Conference  
Annapolis



Commissioners Nicole Drew (far left), Heather Reichardt (nearest the door) and President Debra Bright Harris (center, along the wall) with members of the Maryland State Commission for Women.



Prince George's County Commission for Women WE3 Conference



## Commission for Women 2016 County Legislative Agenda

### Bill 39-15 Offenses—Prohibition of Prostitution--Prohibited



(Left to Right) Commissioners Angela Whitehead Quigley, President Debra Bright Harris, and Daphnee Cherubin



President Debra Bright Harris testifying before the Montgomery county Council

The Montgomery County Commission for Women was well represented at the October 20, 2015 hearing of Bill 39-15, Offenses—Purchase of Prostitution Prohibited. The bill which was sponsored by Councilmember Tom Hucker, was signed into law. Though prostitution is already illegal in Maryland and Montgomery County, this bill enhanced the discretion of officers to give either criminal or civil citations to sex purchasers. The citation creates both financial and social deterrents to the solicitation of prostitution. Similar policies have produced positive outcomes in other jurisdictions. For example, San Francisco and Cook County, Illinois, have implemented similar measures. Such a decline in demand would force many sex traffickers out of Montgomery County, improving the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens.

# Montgomery County Commission for Women 2016 Women's Legislative Briefing

**Chairs:** Lorna Forde and Katie Smith

**Committee Members:** Angela Whitehead Quigley, Heather Reichardt, Giulia McPherson and Debra Bright Harris

The 36<sup>th</sup> annual Women's Legislative Briefing was held on Sunday, January 31, 2016 at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. The purpose of these Briefings is to inform Marylanders about state and federal legislative proposals of specific concern to women and families, and to build a strong advocacy for these important issues. This year, 700 people attended. The Montgomery County Commission for Women, with the assistance of sixty-five women's and community organizations, planned the program. Thirty-eight of these organizations presented colorful and informative exhibits lining the hallways leading to the main conference auditorium. The Briefing was made possible by the funding and support from Kaiser Permanente, AARP, Sandy Spring Bank, and many others.

A pre-conference President's Networking Session provided the leaders of community organizations an opportunity to meet with one another, discuss the importance of collaboration among women's organizations, and the use of social media to educate and mobilize women regarding key issues. It also provided a means for these groups to identify potential partners in the community addressing the same issues or implementing similar projects.



The opening panel consisted of Congresspersons Sarbanes, Edwards, Delaney, and Van Hollen. The panel was moderated by Debbie Feinstein, Senior State's Attorney, Chief, Special Victims Unit, Montgomery County, Maryland.

# Montgomery County Commission for Women 2016 Women's Legislative Briefing



Greetings from County Executive Ike Leggett



Greetings from Senator Ben Cardin



2016 Women's Legislative Briefing Attendees

## Montgomery County Commission for Women 2016 Women's Legislative Briefing

The plenary session was followed by nine breakout sessions, including a special track for Emerging Leaders. Topics included: Health and Safety for Women, Emerging Populations—How to Address the Needs of Unique Populations, Caring for the Caregiver—Health Care and Senior Women, Advocacy—Lessons Learned by Top Advocacy Campaigns in Maryland, Economic Justice and Opportunity, Women in STEM, Women in Leadership, and the documentary screening of *A Path Appears*.



Perry Barber, Professional Umpire and Sally Botsai, Retired, Department of Defense. Women in Leadership Panelists



Women in STEM panelists: Delegate Aruna Miller, Dr. Nawal Benmouna, Dr. Homayara, Pamela Conrad, and Chris Richardson. Moderated by Angela Graham, CEO Quality Biologics

## Montgomery County Commission for Women 2016 Women's Legislative Briefing



From Left: Judith Vaughn-Prather, Executive Director, Maryland Commission for Women, Lorna Forde, Co-Chair, 2016 Women's Legislative Briefing, Debra Bright Harris, President, Montgomery County Commission for Women, Catherine Leggett, First Lady, Montgomery County, Mythili (Lee) Bachu., Chair, Maryland Commission for Women, A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair, Maryland Commission for Women and Jodi Finkelstein, Executive Director, Montgomery County Commission for Women.



Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Emerging Leaders Track, Giulia McPherson speaks with members of the Emerging Leaders Track.



# Montgomery County, MD HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

In 2014, County Executive Ike Leggett created the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to increase understanding of the issue in Montgomery County and to develop inter-agency coordination of strategies for response and prevention. Overarching goals include:

1. Increasing the identification and prosecution of all parties supporting the organized crime of human trafficking to include traffickers, suppliers, transporters, advertisers and demand elements;
2. Elimination of human trafficking, and
3. Improving identification of and services for human trafficking victims

The task force is chaired by Bobbe Mintz, Montgomery County Commission for Women, and is divided into three committees: legislative, victim services, and education and outreach.

**Legislative Committee:** The legislative chair is Andrea Nunez, Legislative Aide for Councilperson Tom Hucker. The legislative committee is responsible for researching best practices within the criminal justice system to combat human trafficking. During this fiscal year, the committee passes County bill 39-15, a law to deter human trafficking in the county. Bill 39-15 makes purchasing prostitution a violation of county law. Although selling or buying prostitution violates the current State Criminal Law prohibiting solicitation of prostitution, Bill 39-15 adds an alternative law enforcement mechanism for the police to combat human trafficking in the County. A civil citation is prosecuted by the County Attorney's Office and could result in a maximum fine of \$500 for a first violation and \$750 for subsequent violations. A criminal citation would be prosecuted by the State's Attorney and could result in both a fine up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail. The bill is enforceable only against the customer. The bill was signed into law on November 25, 2015.

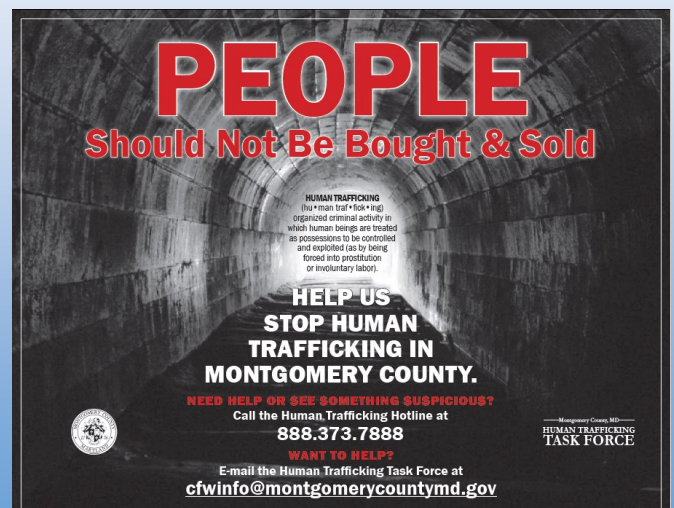
**Victim Services Committee:** This committee coordinates services for victims in the county. The victim services committee is co-chaired by: Nadja Soares Pereira Cabello, L.C.S.W.-C., Manager, Trauma Services: Abused Persons Program and Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program and Amanda Parsad, LCSW Anti-Human Trafficking Program Coordinator, Ayuda, Inc. A mapping of gaps of services was completed during the fiscal year.

**Education and Outreach Committee:** The committee is responsible for educating the community about human trafficking. The chair is Wendy Stickle, Director of Undergraduate Programs, University of Maryland, Shady Grove. A flyer about trafficking and a speakers bureau was also created.

Left: Chair, Bobbe Mintz speaks with students at a human trafficking resource table.



Right: Human Trafficking flyer



# Montgomery County Commission for Women Programming Committee

**Chair: Daphnee Cherubin**

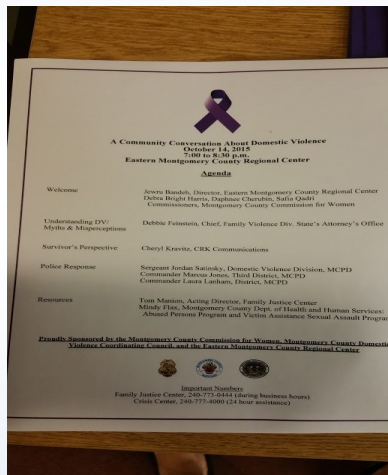
**Members: Farah Nageer-Kanthor, Safia Qadri, Angela Whitehead Quigley, Natalia Farrar**

One of the top Commission's priorities for FY16 was to provide programs and seminars that filled gaps in services to women and families. Due to staff changes, programming for the Commission was dormant for a little over a year. It was important to educate the community about the Commission's programs and its readiness to serve those with specific educational needs. Considerable time and effort was spent on learning about gaps in services and providing needed programming. The Commission appreciates the partnerships that were formed and enhanced in FY 16 and would like to thank the following organizations: Holiday Park Senior Center, the Montgomery County Bar Association, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, the Montgomery County Police Department, all of the county's Regional Service Center Directors, and the various individuals who volunteered their time.

The pictures below provide a sampling of the programming organized during FY 16. The following page provides a snapshot of all the programs provided.



Self-Defense Classes



Domestic Violence 101



Understanding Separation and Divorce in MD



Easy Home Fixes with the Home Depot



Finding Your Own Brand with  
Scott Fazekas



Free Online Learning Opportunities

# Montgomery County Commission for Women Programming Committee

## Programs at a Glance

Program	Date	Presenter	Number of People
Divorce and Custody Seminar	8.11.15	Sharon Johnson	8
Ladies Night Out	8.21.16	MoCo Fire and Rescue	40
Easy Home Fixes	8.31.15	Home Depot Staff	110
Safe Online Dating	9.24.15	Holiday Park Senior Center	5
E-Learning Seminar	10.1.15	Holiday Park Senior Center	25
Divorce and Custody Seminar	10.1.15	Chandra Walker Halloway	2
Divorce and Custody Seminar	10.19.15	Nelson Garcia	4
Domestic Violence Educational Seminars	8.21.15 10.14.15 10.21.15	Numerous	40
Caring for the Care Giver	11.2.15	Holiday Park Senior Center	5
Focus Group with female inmates at Boyds	12.2.15	Various Commissioners	20
2016 Women's Legislative Briefing	1.31.16	Numerous	700+
Self Defense Class	2.15.16	Holly and Anthony Solano	5
America's First Ladies	3.12.16	Andy Och	64
Self Defense Class	3.31.2016	Holly and Anthony Solano	10
Self Defense Class	4.6.16	Holly and Anthony Solano	9
Sexual Health for Women Over 40	4.11.16	Dr. Tobie Beckerman	4
Financial Independence	4.12.16	Jamie Lapin	15
East County Listening Tour	4.20.16	Various Commissioners	20
Finding Your Personal Brand	4.25.16	Scott Fazekas	12
Self Defense Class	5.5.2016	Holly and Anthony Solano	9
BCC Listening Tour	5.5.16	Various Commissioners	10
Financial Independence	5.24.16	Jamie Lapin	13
Mid-County Listening tour	6.21.2016	Various Commissioners	15
Self Defense Class	6.28.16	Holly and Anthony Solano	14
<b>Total Number of Events:</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Total Audience:</b>	<b>1,149</b>



## Montgomery County Commission for Women Counseling Services

The Commission's June 11, 2015 meeting was dedicated to a comprehensive review and discussion of our counseling services, seminars, and how the Commission should move forward. Jodi Finkelstein, the new executive director of the Commission, provided the Commissioners with a chart detailing current counseling services provided by the county and non-profit entities. The chart clearly shows that there are a plethora of counseling services currently available that meet the needs of Montgomery County residents. Many of these services are free or on a sliding scale, are accessible by public transportation and have no waiting lists. Moreover, many of the services listed are available in a multitude of languages.

After a lengthy and heartfelt discussion, the commissioners unanimously voted to discontinue counseling services. The Commission believes that our limited funding can best be used to leverage access to existing counseling services that are currently available to County residents and to support and expand the current work of the Commission in the areas of human trafficking, female prisoner re-entry into the community, and other areas where there are gaps in service.

The Commission understands that terminating counseling services is a shift from our past. The Commission also understands, however, that we must be willing to change and adapt to better serve our community where there are demonstrated needs. We did not come to this decision without significant input and outreach to the community. Ms. Finkelstein conducted meetings with over 40 individuals from around the county. Nearly all stated that they would like for the Commission to continue providing low cost seminars on divorce, separation and custody, financial planning and other topics as needed. This will allow the Commission to directly connect the women served at these seminars to existing services that already exist through non-profits and in County departments.

## Montgomery County Commission for Women Re-Entry Program

Though we no longer provide counseling, we are pleased to partner with the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to provide specialized services to women who are re-entering the community after serving prison time.

Women leaving prison face a multitude of challenges, including: finding and sustaining employment, family reunification, sustaining healthy relationships, and improving self-esteem.

Our women's support group aims to be a *safe* environment for women to gather and feel supported as they navigate the hurdles faced after being incarcerated. Topics covered by the group include:

- Mending Relationships
- Motivation: Staying on Track
- Self-Esteem and Personal Power
- How to Reach my Goals
- Job Readiness
- Communication and Assertiveness

On May 17, 2016, Ms. Amy Meldau, LCSW was hired to coordinate the Program.

# Montgomery County Commission for Women Listening Tour

## Purpose:

Near the end of FY 2016 the Montgomery County Commission for Women embarked on a county wide listening tour. The purpose of the tour was to:

- Identify key issues facing women
- Understand what women in specific communities perceive as important and critical
- Build trust with constituents
- Build relationships with individuals and community groups
- Use listening tour conversations to shape and influence the CFW legislative advocacy work

## What the project was NOT:

- Statistically-significant quantitative analysis (No demographic data was gathered other than gender, city, county and zip)

## Stops:

- April 20, 2016: Burtonsville, East County Regional Services Center
- May 3, 2016 Bethesda/Chevy Chase, Bethesda/Chevy Chase Regional Services Center
- June 21, 2016, Silver Spring, Mid-County Community Recreation Center

**Outcome:** The outcomes from the tour will be shared in the FY 2017 report, as additional stops occurred after July 1, 2016.



Commissioners Karmen Rouland and Safia Qadri listen to participants at the East County listening tour



Participants of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase listening tour

# Montgomery County Commission for Women STEM Scholarship Committee

**Committee Chair:** Beatrice Lauman

**Members:** Daphnee Cherubin, Debra Bright Harris, Farah Nageer-Kanthor, Safia Qadri, Katie Smith

In FY15, the CFW established the *Commission for Women STEM Endowed Scholarship Fund* through the Montgomery College Foundation. The scholarship funds are awarded to students in need who are majoring in the STEM disciplines—(science, technology, engineering, and math) with the goal of helping to increase the pipeline of individuals entering these high demand fields. The Foundation is responsible for all of the administrative functions including identifying qualifying students and awarding the funds. The CFW raises funds through private donations to support the scholarship.

Ms. Jana Catuche, a second year student at Montgomery College, was the first student awarded a scholarship through the Commission's fund.

Commission for Women STEM Scholarship  
% Financial Aid Scholarship Office  
Montgomery College  
900 Hungerford Drive, Suite 200  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Commission for Women STEM,

My name is Jana Catuche. I am a second year full time student at Montgomery College Rockville campus. I am very grateful for this generous scholarship donation and I understand this gift comes with great responsibility for myself. I intend to study and work my hardest this fall semester of 2015 in gratitude for this scholarship.

I am a citizen of the United States but come from a minority, middle class family previously immigrated from Bogota, Colombia in South America. I am the second of three siblings and was born in Shady Grove. I grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland and have lived there ever since. I went to a private school for 9 years - from elementary to middle school - and then switched to public school due to economical situations. I started and remained at Albert Einstein High School all four years attending honors and AP courses to strengthen my learning abilities for college. I was also a student athlete on the girls soccer team and swim team all four years. My experience in high school has helped me understand more of what college had to bring, but it did not fully prepare my expectations.

While I am in Montgomery College, my current major is mechanical engineering as you very well may know. I recently gained an interest in cars learning from my father and a cousin. I understood the time and effort I would have to put into learning this major but it is what I want to do. This opening semester so far has been hectic for me figuring out my path for spring semester as well as the following year. I am currently on the women's soccer team and to be eligible to play I have to be a full time student. Due to all general education courses finished last year I am limited to my course selection for the next year, especially without a strong foundation in math of course. As to struggle and stress less, I am attending courses that are at different and strange hours for me but will maintain my eligibility and full time status at Montgomery College. Other than the stress of classes and majors, I am enjoying my time making new friends, connecting with old friends, and playing soccer with the women's team.

My future goals are to receive an associate's degree at Montgomery College for mechanical engineering. I want to attend the University of Maryland College Park and achieve a

bachelor's degree. I have yet to think about where to attend to obtain a master's degree in mechanical engineering but that is further in my years to think about. I plan to work hard to study in school so I can attend the hands on portion of my life in the future. I would love to work with cars: in mechanics or whatever opportunities are available in the world.

Again, thank you very much for your truly generous gift; it helps me pay for this semester and I will not let it go to waste failing my classes. I plan to succeed. As to your reference of President Dr. DeRionne Pollard, I completely agree with what she says. It is a blessing to receive money to pay for college; it strengthens me as a student and as a person to do better, to push myself to go beyond my limits, and to succeed in what I want to do.

Sincerely,



Jana Catuche