



# MONTGOMERY COLLEGE RISING PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION

# SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER



## Spring 2024 semester ends on a high note for MCRPA members

When MCRPA finished the Fall 2023 semester, we thought it was one of our best, with all the events, our members receiving awards, and attending conferences. However, Spring 2024 ends on an even higher note than we expected.

Our semester began on Wednesday, January 31, with our Chats with the Chief featuring Mr. Steve Greenfield, Interim Vice President/Provost of Applied Technologies, Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education, and Workforce Development and Continuing Education. Mr. Greenfield spoke about his career, starting in public schools and working with various programs targeting minority and underserved populations, eventually leading him to Montgomery College.

In February, members gathered to enjoy sweets and make origami to celebrate Valentine's Day. Cutout hearts were provided for attendees to write heartwarming messages to their family and friends. Our members also enjoyed free chair massages from MC Wellness.

On February 27, in partnership with the ignITE Hub and Student Life, we welcomed our student guest Nardos W. Hailemariam for an inspiring and practical one-hour workshop. The event was designed for MCRPA members and students eager to maximize their positions for future career success using a few tried-and-true techniques.

Nardos is a rising talent in the realm of technology, distinguished by her profound dedication to service and a fervent commitment to lifelong learning. Majoring in Computer Science, she exemplifies the essence of leadership and collaboration, serving as the Vice President of both the Student Government Association at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus and the Computer Science club.

Nardos's leadership style is deeply rooted in teamwork and cooperation, and she contributes significantly to her community at MC. As she prepares for her transfer to a four-year institution, Nardos's passion for technology and remarkable ability to unite and motivate her peers

firmly establish her as an inspiring figure in her academic and professional circles.

Many of our members participated in the Staff Enrichment Day event on the Rockville Campus in March. Our biggest surprise was member Carroll Rollman receiving the Staff Distinguished Service Award. This cash award, established from an endowment fund left by Ms. Peggy Beebe, former special assistant for staff concerns, is presented yearly to a deserving staff employee chosen by their peers.

Following the SED event, we held our Spring Open House. This event allowed current members and MC employees to attend and ask questions about the association. Some of our leadership team and committee members were also present to discuss spring events and answer questions about our committees.

On April 16, we hosted a special Chats with the Chief event featuring Ms. Dorothy Umans, Dean of Community Education and Extended Learning for Workforce Development and Continuing Education. Ms. Umans brings over four decades of leadership experience in both credit and non-credit undergraduate, graduate, and professional school program development, as well as admissions and student support services. Her extensive career includes significant roles at Montgomery College, where she has contributed to strategic program development, innovative marketing strategies, and the enhancement of student and staff development initiatives.

Ms. Umans work has consistently focused on creating synergies within educational institutions, fostering community engagement, and implementing effective policies and procedures to enhance the educational experience. Her dedication to education and community service is evident through her involvement in various committees, presentations at educational conferences, and contributions to enriching student and faculty development programs.

The end of April marked the beginning of our



annual Five Weeks of Fun events. The first event, held on April 29, was our Virtual Poetry Open Mic, giving everyone the opportunity to present poems they had written or those by famous poets.

Our second event was the thrilling Monster Mini Golf, where some of our members enjoyed a lively game of mini golf along with other activities available in the arcade and virtual reality experiences. Then, for our third event, members gathered for a delightful social hour at Mi Rancho in Silver Spring. Everyone enjoyed delicious food and caught up with each other in a fun atmosphere.

On May 15, the College held its spring semester Closing Meeting, where some of our members were present to accept their awards. Hoa Nguyen was honored with the Equity Award for her outstanding work. Paul Miller was bestowed with the Staff of the Year Award, marking the third consecutive MCRPA leader to receive this award. Yanira Rodriguez-David was recognized with the Excellence in Performance Award, and

Elysse Meredith received the Excellence in Innovation Award. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all of them for their remarkable achievements.

As always, we close out the five weeks of fun with our annual retreat.

### **Reflecting on the 9th Annual MCRPA Retreat: A Day of Gratitude and Connection with Dr. Christine Crefton, MCRPA President (2022-20226)**

The 9th Annual MCRPA Retreat, held on May 23, 2024, was an inspiring day centered around the theme "Nurturing Self to Strengthen Connections." Hosted at the Mannakee Building, this event offered participants a rich program filled with self-care, learning, and meaningful interaction opportunities. Visit our picture Padlet for the memories.

The day began with a warm welcome from Dr. Jermaine F. Williams, who emphasized the importance of self-care in fostering a supportive

and productive work environment. Following breakfast, sponsored by MC Wellness, and a meet-and-greet session, the MCRPA Leadership Team set the tone with opening remarks, special award presentations, and highlighting the retreat's focus on personal well-being and professional growth.

One of the day's key highlights was the keynote address by Megan Cooperman, who inspired attendees with insights into balancing self-care practices and being brave to stand up for your needs. Her session was followed by a series of engaging sessions, each offering a unique approach to self-care and professional development. Participants could choose from:

- Embracing Reflection with Dr. Ja'Bette Lozupone, where attendees explored the benefits of journaling and personal reflection.
- Weaving Wellness with Wyckham Avery, a creative session that combined mindfulness with the art of weaving.
- Compassion in Action with Carla Ammerman, focusing on building empathy and kindness in the workplace.

The mid-morning break featured a relaxing sound therapy session with Stacey Johnson, providing a peaceful interlude before lunch. Our lunch was sponsored by the office of Dr. Eric Benjamin, Interim Vice President/Provost of the Collegewide ABEES Unit and the Rockville Campus, we thank him for being such an avid supporter of building our sense of belonging at MC.

During lunch, attendees contributed to the Celebration Wall, a collaborative space to share achievements and recognition. We also shared yet another moment of gratitude with a sparkling cider toast to the association and all the members who share their talents to make it meaningful and fulfilling to be a part of MCRPA. Afternoon breakout sessions offered further opportunities for growth and self-care, including:

- The Art of Positive Self Talk with Dr. Tracey Smith-Bryant, highlighting the power of affirmations and positive thinking.
- Harmonizing Within with Michele Knight, an exploration of the connection between music and personal growth.
- Rooted in Care with Anna Donohoe, an out-



door activity where participants potted succulents, symbolizing the nurturing of personal growth.

The day concluded with a session on appreciation languages by Kimberly Bloch Rincan, where participants learned about expressing and receiving appreciation in ways that resonate with others. A group movement activity led by member LaTonya Pinkard brought everyone together for a final celebration of community and some fun dancing. We ended with a drawing from our "Cheers for Peers" cards that members handed in throughout the day, showcasing the behaviors of those who went above and beyond to make the day even more special.

Throughout the retreat, attendees were encouraged to speak from their own experiences, practice empathy, and let go of judgment. The retreat was not only a chance to learn and grow but also to connect deeply with colleagues, fostering a supportive and inclusive community at Montgomery College. The retreat underscored the importance of taking time for self-care and connection in our professional lives. As we move forward, let us carry the lessons and experiences from this day, continuing to nurture ourselves and our community with compassion and gratitude.

Thank you to all who made this retreat possible,

from our sponsors, college leadership, speakers and facilitators, and the dedicated planning committee. Your efforts have created a memorable and impactful day that will resonate with us throughout the year. Here's to continuing the journey of growth, connection, gratitude, celebration, and professional development together. I couldn't be prouder to lead this association and its amazing opportunities and people.

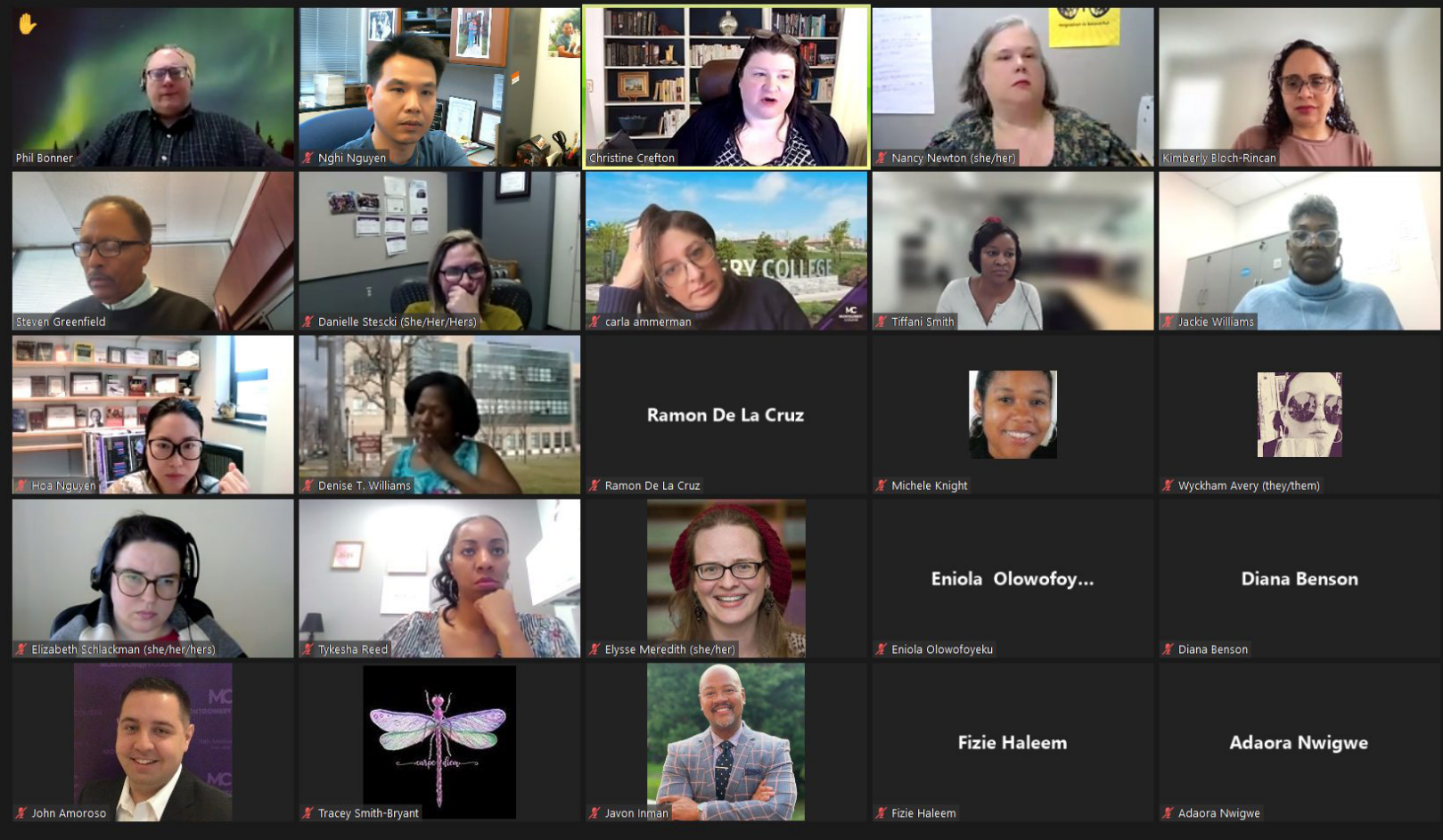
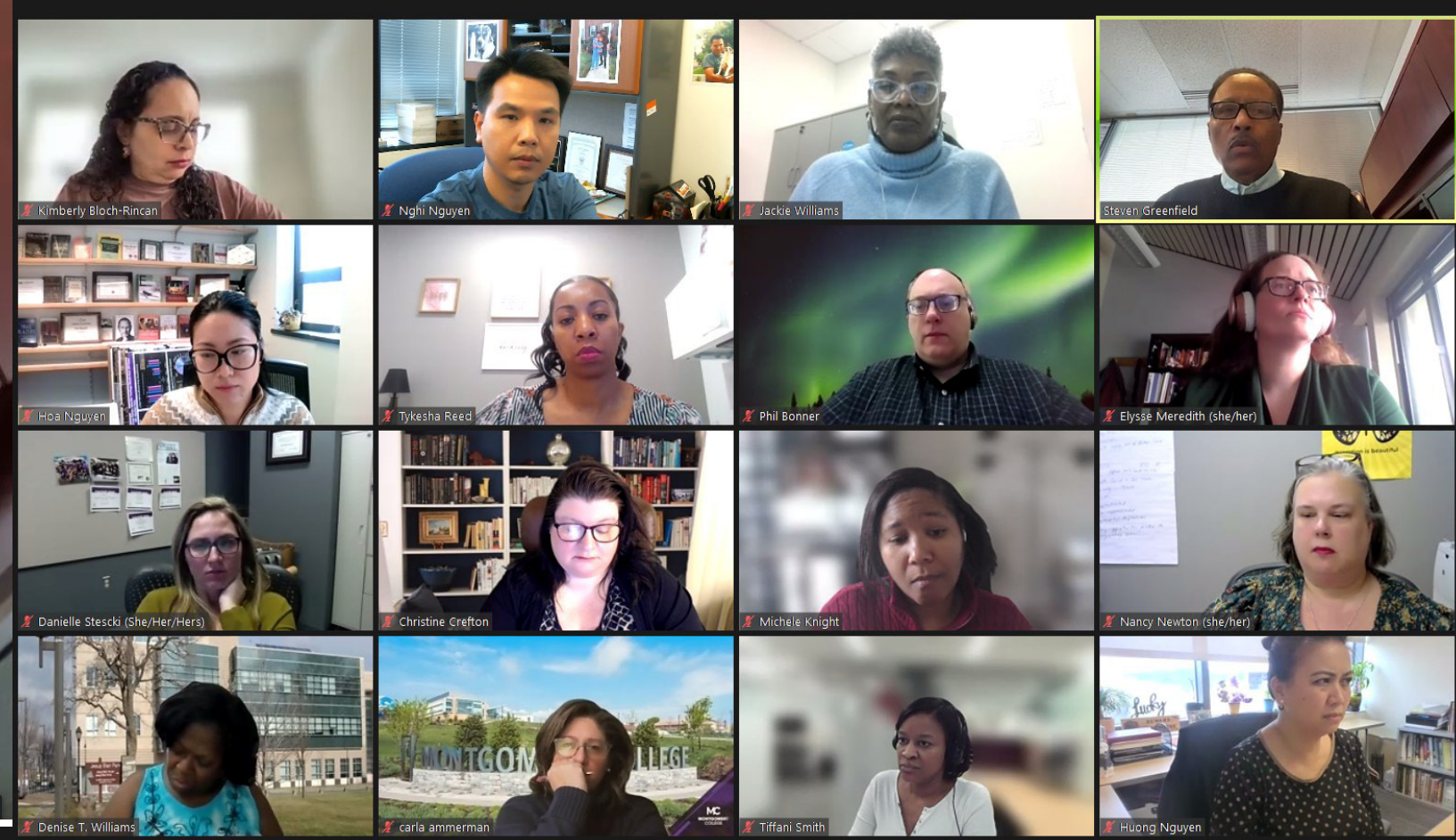
### **An Adventure in Mexico**

In the second week of June, several of our members packed their bags and headed south for a week of fun in the sun at the all-inclusive Barceló Maya Caribe in Cancun, Mexico. This trip marked the association's second group travel adventure following last year's Bermuda cruise from Baltimore.

The experience was nothing short of amazing, with delicious food, lively entertainment, and lots of activities available at our stunning hotel, which overlooked the beautiful crystal-clear blue waters of the Caribbean Sea.

We hope you all enjoy your summer. Please flip the pages to view some photos from this past spring semester. We look forward to seeing all of you in the fall as we welcome some of our new leadership members on board.





Chats with the Chief featuring Mr. Steve Greenfield

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Valentine's Day: Sweets and Origami



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*Valentine's Day: Sweets and Origami*



*Pop-Up Event: 2024 DC Travel Show*

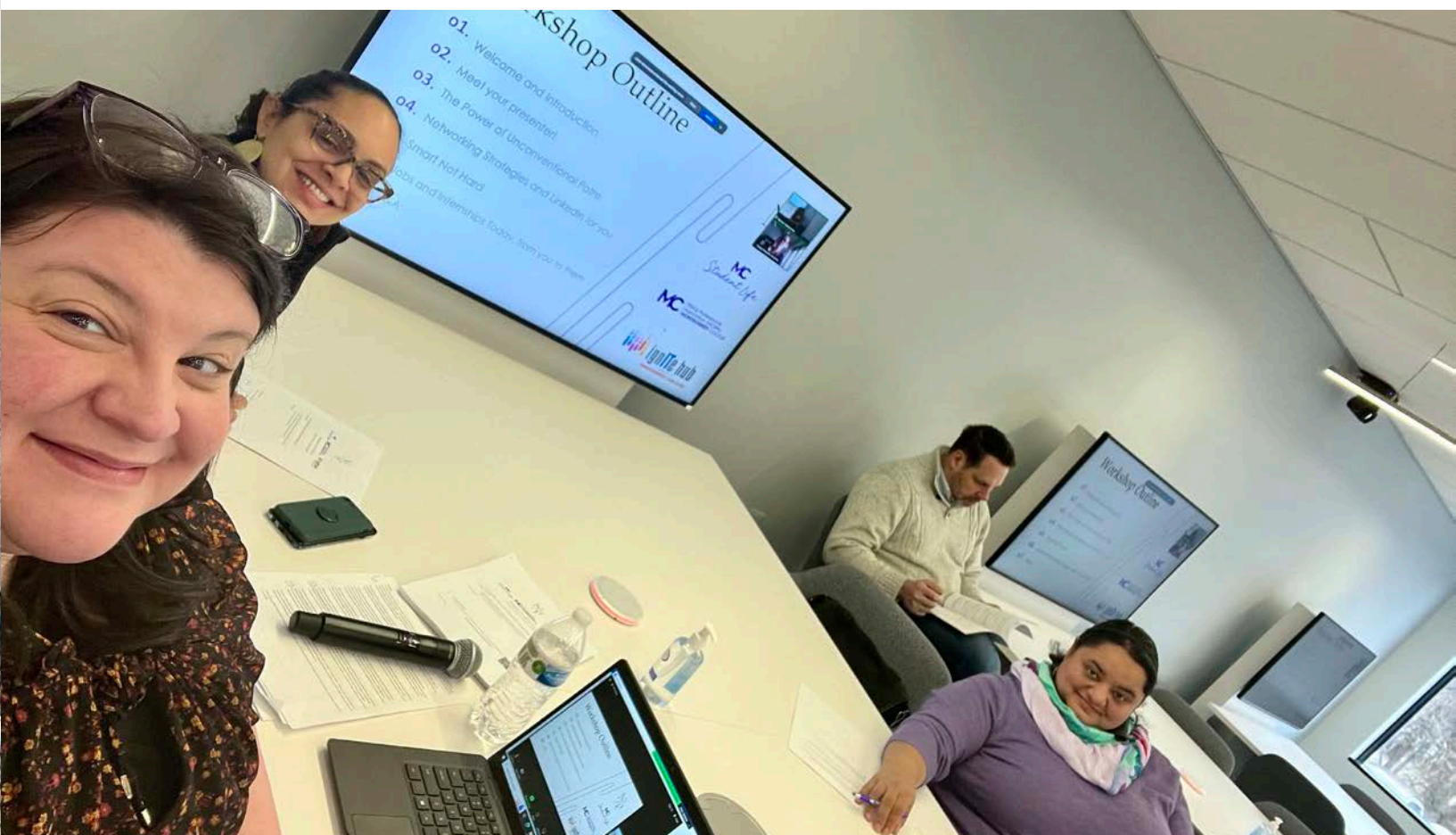


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**Lunch and Learn: Navigating Your Path: Maximizing Where You Are to Target Where You Want to Be**

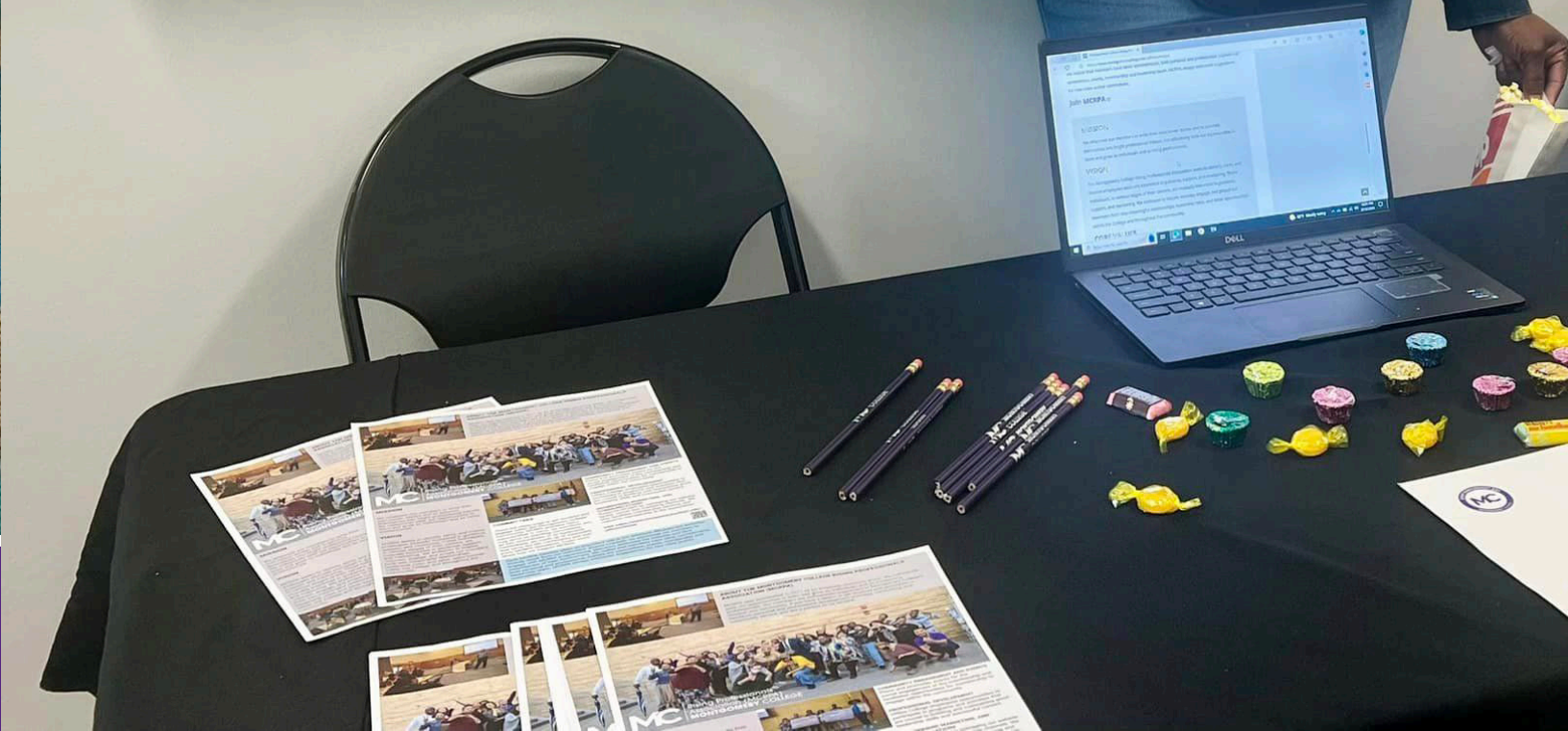
**Lunch and Learn: Navigating Your Path: Maximizing Where You Are to Target Where You Want to Be**



*Staff Enrichment Day*



***Lunch and Learn: Navigating Your Path: Maximizing Where You Are to Target Where You Want to Be***



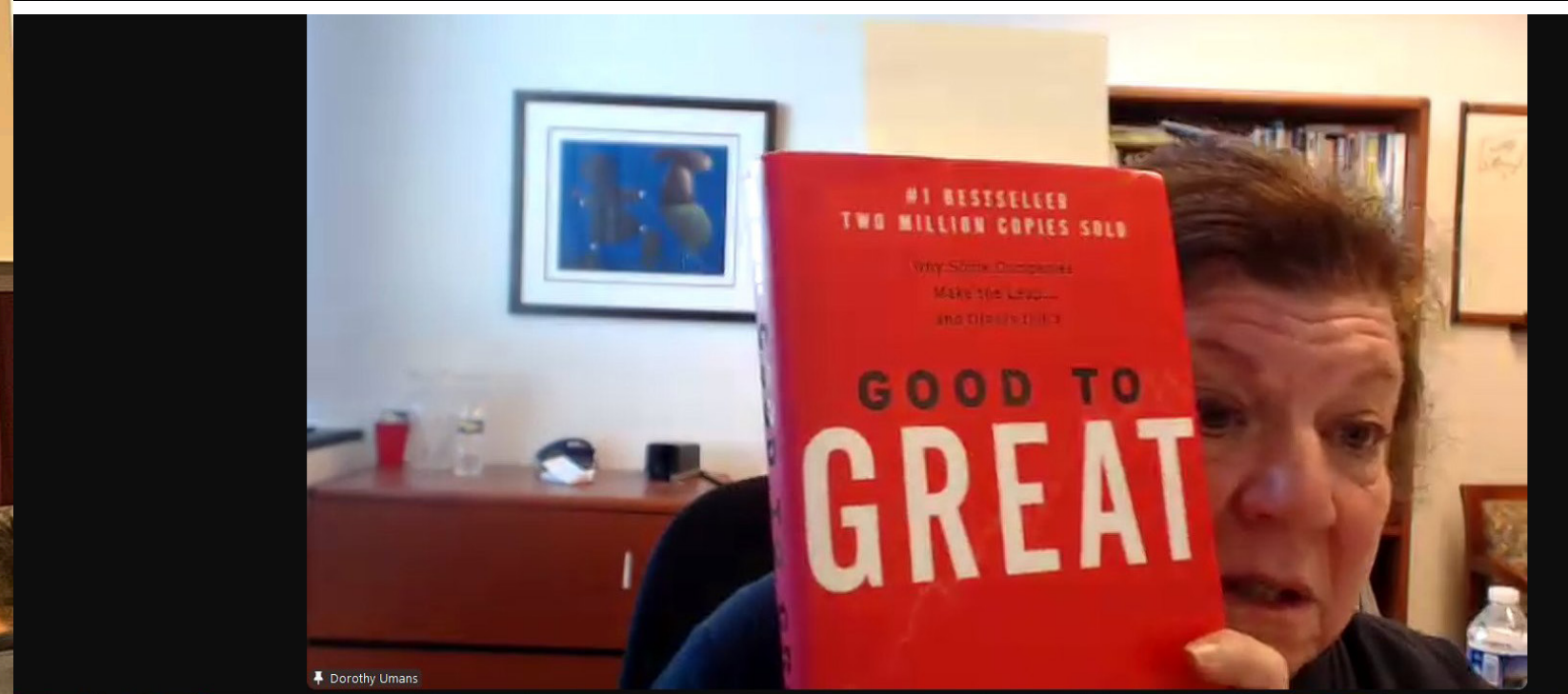
Staff Enrichment Day



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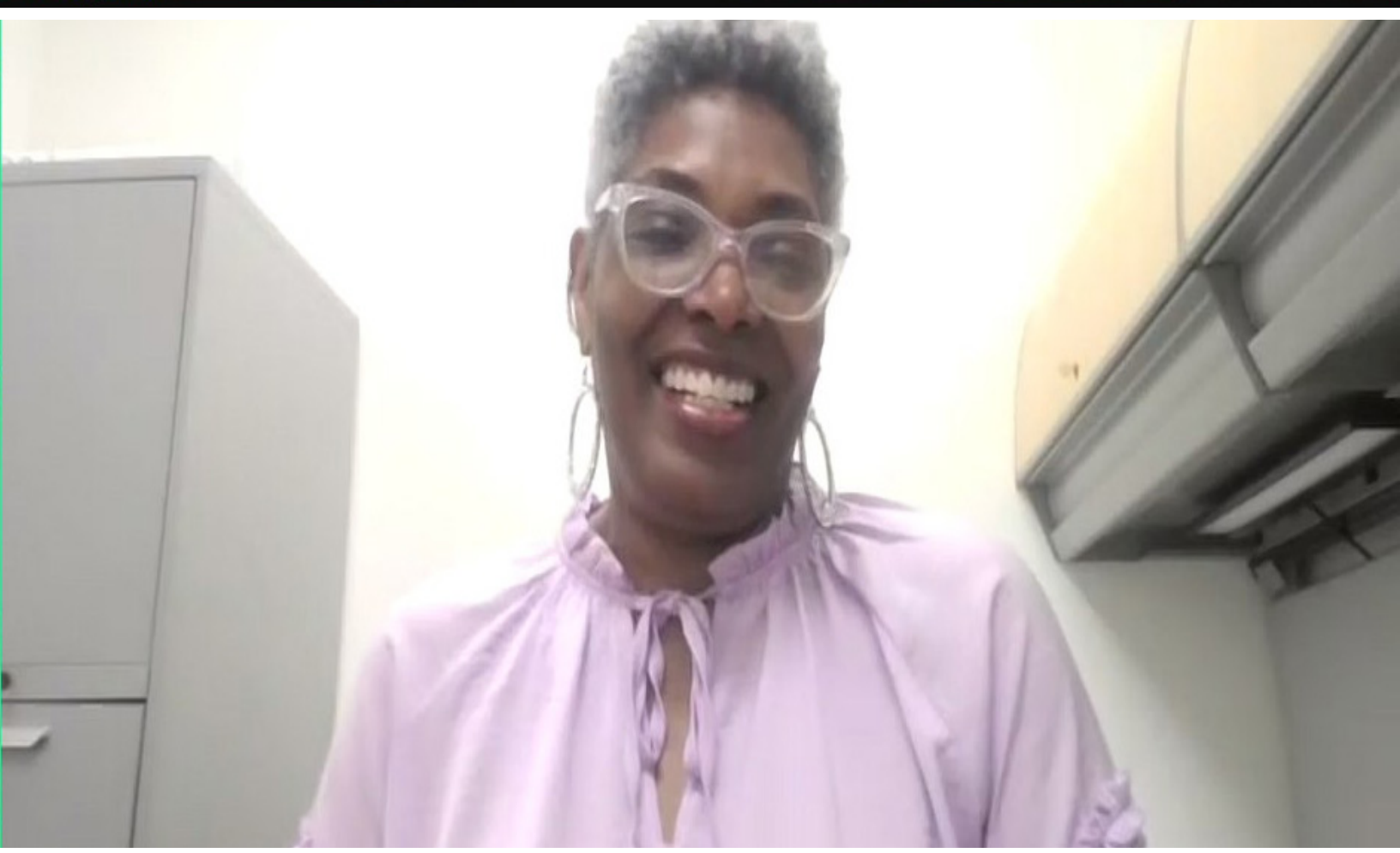
# Staff Enrichment Day



Chats with the Chief featuring Ms. Dorothy Umans



Dorothy Umans



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# Five Weeks of Fun: Poetry Open Mic



Tracey Little



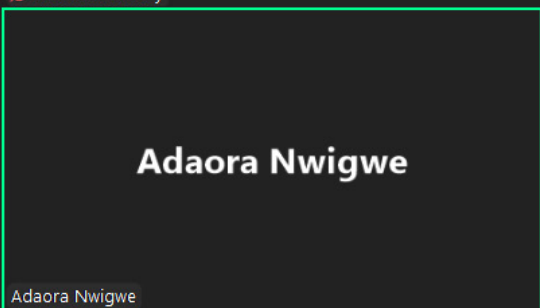
Chantelle Mckoy



Deshia Jamison



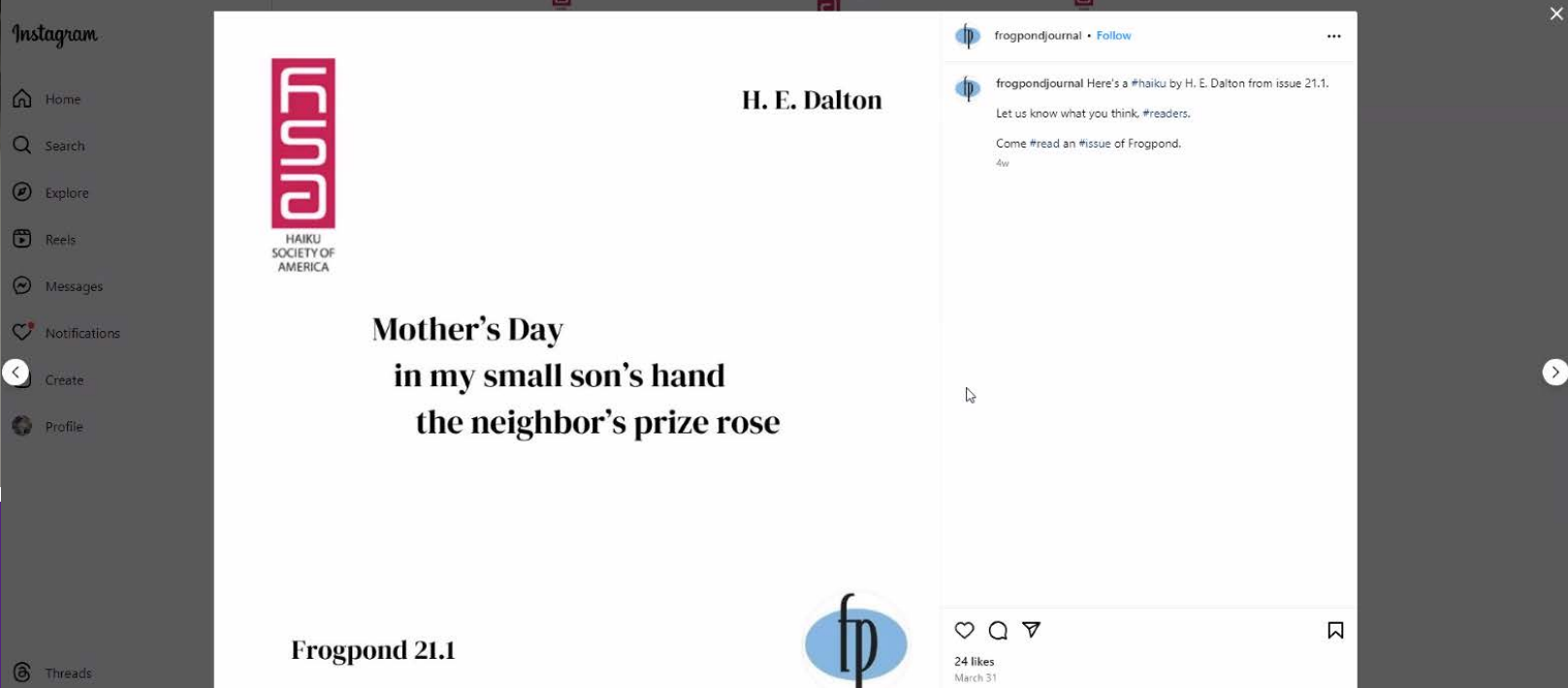
Thanh King



Adaora Nwigwe

Peter Akerele

Christine Crefton



## MCRPA Poem: ChatGPT...RPA

In the heart of Montgomery College's halls,  
Where ambition blooms and adventure calls,  
Gathers a band, the Rising Professionals,  
Whose dreams weave through each corridor and stall.

Tonight, a stage set under gleaming lights,  
Voices rise, emotions spin in free flight.  
Our poetry open mic, a heartfelt show,  
Where verses flow, and inner worlds alight.

Thanks to Nghi, whose spirit shines so bright,  
Guiding us through each line, each rhyme just right.  
Gratitude to all who've joined this affair,  
In the bond of words, we find our delight.

Here's to friendship, a treasure pure and rare,  
In each stanza, a memory we share.  
Cheers to the moments, the laughter, the tears,  
In this gathering, we're beyond compare.

## MCRPA Poem: The State of Mind

The lovely warm weather and the sun shining. Which  
also has me thinking about lovely blue seas.  
As I reflect, I am grateful for both the challenges I have  
faced and the blessings I have received.

Lunch.

This weather and how I can plan my schedule for the  
next couple of weeks.

I am thinking about doing more to get more clients for  
my Resume Writing business.

Being relaxed with an enjoyable event that is about to  
start.

Changing career and doing something different.

Feel tired right now and need to listen to something to  
stimulate my mind.

I'm feeling a bit tired yet filled with happiness after  
spending time with my nieces and nephews this week-  
end.

Watching them grow and change between visits is a  
profound experience that fills me with awe and grati-  
tude.

I am happy that the weather is hot like a baking oven.

Five Weeks of Fun: Monster Mini Golf



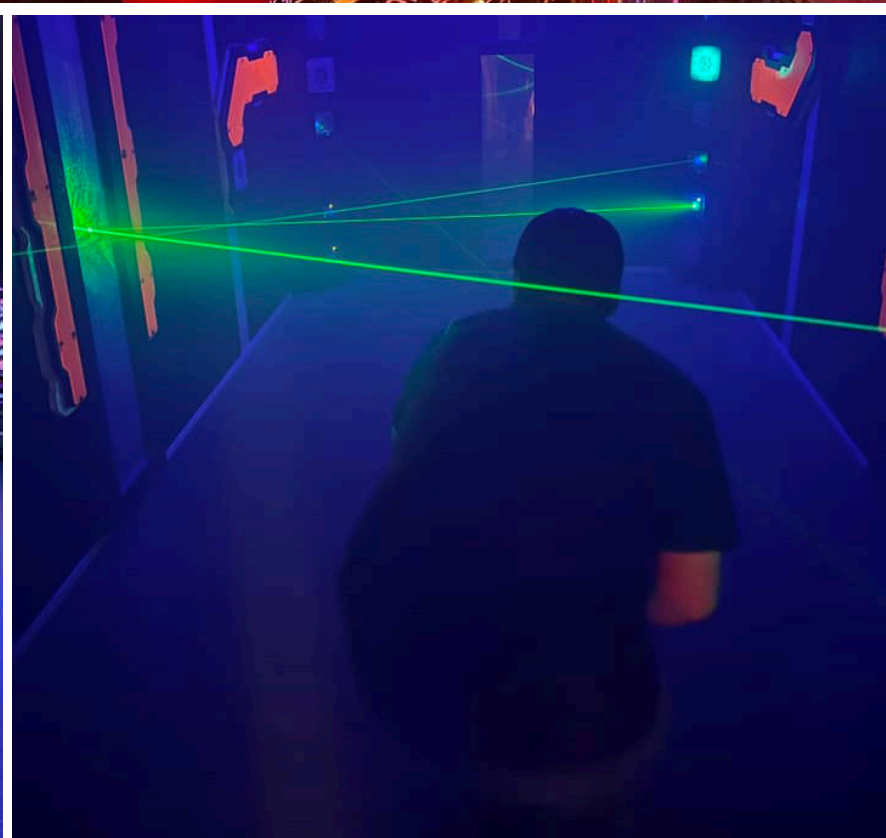
Five Weeks of Fun: Monster Mini Golf



Five Weeks of Fun: Monster Mini Golf



Five Weeks of Fun: Monster Mini Golf



*Five Weeks of Fun: Mi Rancho*



*Equity Awards*







College-wide Closing Meeting Spring 2024



9th Annual MCRPA Retreat



9th Annual MCRPA Retreat

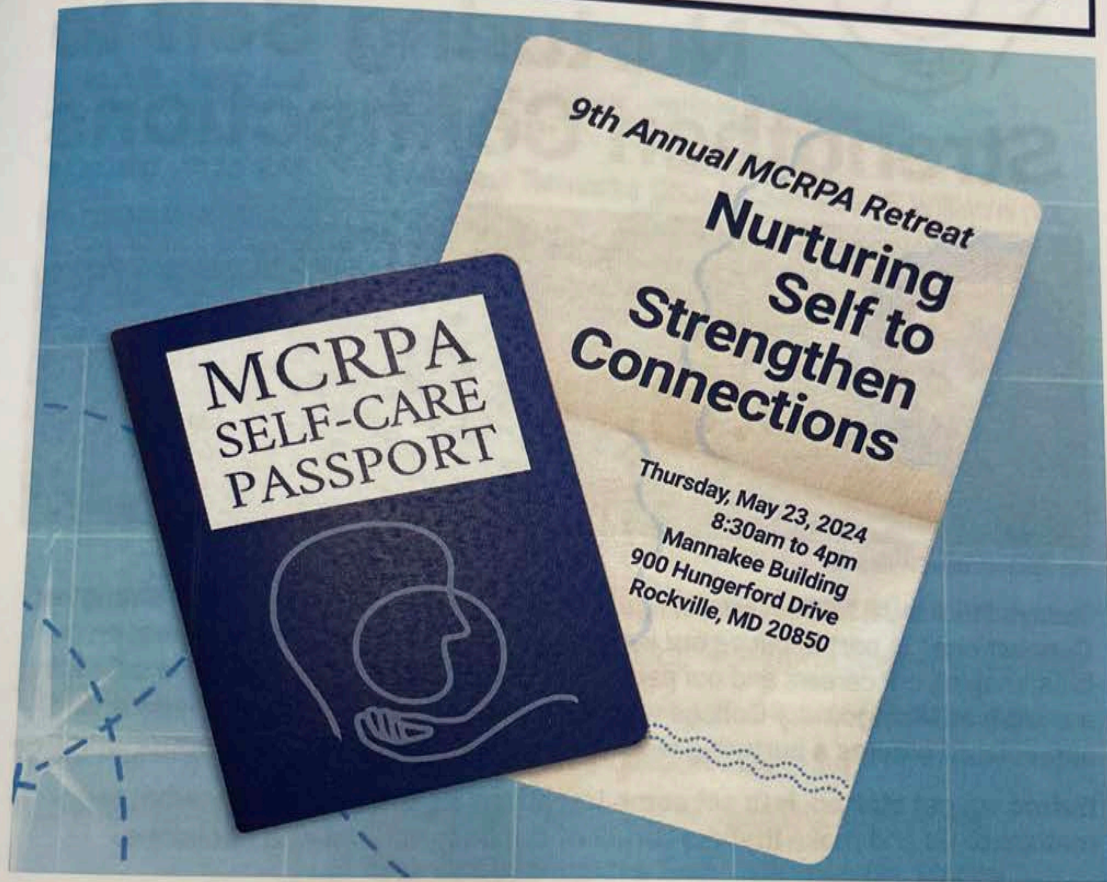
9th Annual MCRPA Retreat



9th Annual MCRPA Retreat

9th Annual MCRPA Retreat

HELLO  
my name is \_\_\_\_\_



**Your Passport to Community, Collaboration, and Celebration!**

Let's benefit from our strong connections at the 9th annual MCRPA retreat **Nurturing Self to Strengthen Connections!** This retreat passport is the key to unlock an entire day of self-care destinations. Each session that you registered for has a unique stamp area on the passport that will symbolize a completed milestone in the self-care journey. We encourage retreat participants to explore more, learn more, interact more and connect. Take notes, make contacts, and keep today's retreat passport as a memento of the journey undertaken and the experiences savored.

**MC** | Rising Professionals Association (MCRPA)  
**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**

9th Annual MCRPA Retreat  
Nurturing Self to Strengthen Connections

**COMMUNITY  
COLLABORATION  
CELEBRATION**

**MC** | Rising Professionals Association (MCRPA)  
**MONTGOMERY COLLEGE**

ACHIEVEMENT | INITIATIVE | PROFESSIONALISM | SERVICE | GROWTH | CONTINUITY





9th Annual MCRPA Retreat

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Membership Team (2023-2024):  
Jefferson, President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Secretary  
Professional Development Chair  
Professional Development Vice Chair  
Community Engagement and Events Chair  
Community Engagement and Events Vice Chair  
Membership, Marketing, & Communications, Chair  
Membership, Marketing, & Communications, Vice Chair  
Membership, Marketing, & Communications, Special Liaison

Membership Team (2024-2025):  
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Vice President  
Secretary  
Secretary  
Professional Development Chair  
Professional Development Vice Chair  
Community Engagement and Events Chair  
Community Engagement and Events Vice Chair  
Membership, Marketing, & Communications, Chair  
Membership, Marketing, & Communications, Vice Chair



9th Annual MCRPA Retreat

9th Annual MCRPA Retreat



Cancun, Mexico... Second MCRPA Group Travel



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**See You in Fall 2024!**