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EDUCATION PROFILE

Ms. Robinson's Neighborhood: A Network of Support for Women

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

When Frances Robinson, a licensed master social worker, came to Kingsborough Community College (KCC) in December 2009 as the Women's Counseling Center's program director, her supervisor told her that the Center was not a "hangout." Robinson gave the directive some thought and talked to her supervisor about her vision for the Center and the need for students to have a place to unwind, talk to other women, and bond.

As it turns out, Robinson's vision was on point. The KCC Women's Counseling Center has evolved over the years into a place where women are welcomed to spend time to unwind, have a cup of tea, lunch, network, and feel comfortable seeking out free and confidential counseling services. Currently, due to COVID-19 regulations, meetings don't occur in person, but Robinson continues to receive

new cases, counsel students over the phone or via Zoom, and implement monthly programs. The Center's services are also open to faculty and staff.

Robinson credits her own experiences as a mother and her experiences working with pregnant teens, families, and women at agencies and organizations across the city as influencing her love for the work that she does. The Women's Center is a neighborhood within the college community where women gather, socialize, network, and support each other toward meeting their academic and personal goals. The Center sponsors programming on topics such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, and health & wellness. There is even a private area in the Center for new mothers to pump breast milk and a refrigerator to store it.

As the director, and with the assistance of a



From left, Frances Robinson, LMSW, Program Director of the Women's Center at Kingsborough Community College (KCC), with KCC President Dr. Claudia Schrader.

part-time employee, Ms. Robinson is responsible for all the Center's operations and providing counseling services to students. Still, she credits its programming to the support she receives from faculty and staff who refer students

and often partner with her in implementing programs. Over the years, Robinson has hosted many unique programs to bring women together, such as the crocheting workshop, jewelry-making workshop, Women's History Month events,

and a mentoring program. In pre-pandemic times, a peek inside the Center would reveal women of all backgrounds gathered together talking, nurturing, and supporting each other as they work toward their common goal of obtaining their college degrees.

Kingsborough is known for its high-touch approach to working with students. Under the leadership of Ms. Robinson, the Women's Center, with its welcoming space, replete with services to meet students' needs, is clearly one of its best examples of this.

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), a 72-acre academic oasis in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn that offers students over 50 academic programs, 100% online degrees and affordable two-year degrees for their future. For more information about Kingsborough, visit the website at www.Kingsborough.edu.

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