Celebrating MC Women in Science – Wednesday Highlights  
(Left, Wednesday, February 14, 2018)

In recognition of International Women and Girls in Science Day (February 11th), The STEM Unit has chosen to celebrate the accomplishments of female scientists within the MC community by providing daily highlights of our female faculty, staff and students who are contributing to the field of science through their curiosity, research and hard work. We hope you will enjoy our examples of excellence in science as submitted by peers and colleagues.

Heidi Albrecht, a former MC student turned graduate student, started the Agar Art Club at MC. Members of this club use bacteria to produce works of art they enter in the annual contest sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology. In 2017, three of their five submissions were accepted as finalists in the competition, including Heidi’s project that she created to honor the great female scientist Rosalind Franklin.

It was Franklin’s x-ray image, Photo 51, which proved to be a key to understanding the double-helix structure of DNA. Franklin and Photo 51 were also the inspiration behind “Faculty 51,” an internal organization that promotes women in science by hosting guest speakers and science-related socials for MC’s rising female scientists.

Janine Askins, instructional lab coordinator, adeptly supports the Agar Art club as well as all of the microbiology courses on the Germantown campus. She routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty to support both the club and the biology department.

Natalie Stringer is the faculty advisor for the Agar Art Club and is a huge proponent of helping students find their passion for science. She is a member of the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) and has volunteered to support women in science by serving as a panel speaker for AWIS and Girls in Technology.

Sara Kalifa had aspirations of returning to Ethiopia to serve her county after she earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in Germany. However, when political instability thwarted her plans, she adjusted her goals, came to the States and earned her PhD in Neuroscience from Howard University, College of Medicine. As a neuroscientist, she studied neurological disorders and dementia. Future research endeavors include memory retention and attentiveness for college students.

Sara is a dedicated educator who strives to make the teaching and learning process both interactive and fun. She enthusiastically participates in workshops on collaborative and active learning and is continually trying out new teaching techniques. She regularly contributes to professional development workshops for faculty, sharing and shaping her experiences as a means of reaching as many students as possible. Appropriately, Sara was selected to receive one of the College’s Scholarship of Excellence in Teaching (SET) awards.
Jazmin Sampedro, an MC student currently enrolled in the Scientific Research course, worked out a protocol for viewing Sf9 cells with a fluorescent stain. Some of her cell images are shown below.

Lori M. Kelman, Professor of Biotechnology, was named Montgomery College’s 2017 Outstanding FT Faculty Member of the Year. She has served as the long-standing faculty advisor for the Biotechnology club, arranging guest lectures and informative events for MC’s up and coming scientists. Lori also just published “Do Archaea Need an Origin of Replication?” in Trends in Microbiology. The paper is available online and will appear in print soon.