

Alumni Spotlight: Brenna Merrill

HDFS Undergraduate Committee

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career path. These experiences not only helped her identify her passions but also equipped her with practical skills and knowledge essential for her professional journey. To students considering majoring in HDFS, Brenna advises, "HDFS offers an in-depth understanding of the family unit and human development, which are applicable to any career path. Embrace the unique opportunities this degree offers, and you'll find yourself well-prepared for a fulfilling career that makes a positive impact." Brenna's story exemplifies the transformative power of HDFS education in shaping meaningful careers and creating lasting change in communities worldwide.

Brenna Merrill is an HDFS graduate making a difference in global humanitarian efforts as a Data Analyst for the Humanitarian Division of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Her role involves training volunteers and employees worldwide on the Church Humanitarian System and expanding JustServe through empirical research and trainings. Brenna attributes her success in this impactful career to her HDFS coursework, which instilled in her a deep understanding of family relationships, healthy human development, and the critical role they play in effective humanitarian projects. Reflecting on her journey, Brenna emphasizes, "My HDFS coursework prepared me to analyze data, understand key aspects of humanitarian projects, and find solutions that benefit individuals, families, and societies at large."

Brenna's journey into HDFS was fueled by a desire to help families across diverse cultures and contexts. Her passion for making a difference led her to initiate a parenting education program in Guatemala for her Master's capstone project, showcasing her commitment to applying academic knowledge to real-world challenges. Throughout her studies, Brenna discovered the universal and nuanced aspects of the family unit worldwide. She reflects, "HDFS provided me with valuable hands-on experiences, including internships and research projects, which equipped me with the skills necessary for a fulfilling career."

As she navigated her undergraduate and graduate studies, Brenna's practicum experiences at the Starfish Center and as a graduate researcher for the Utah Women and Leadership Project provided invaluable insights into her