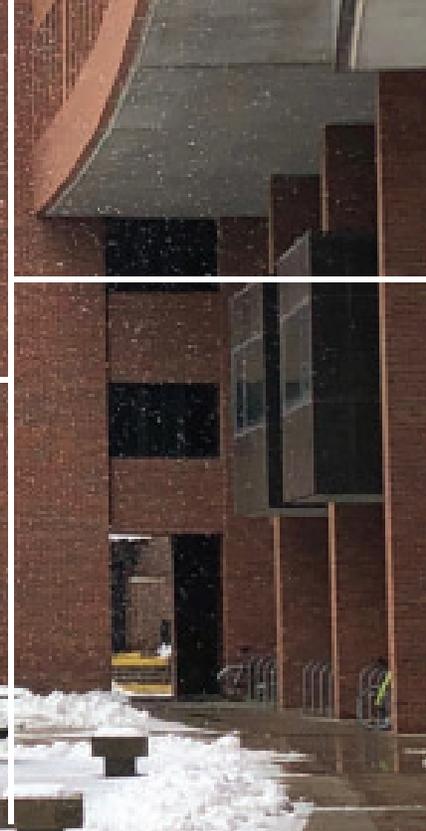


# MCTFR *update*

Minnesota Center for Twin and Family Research

Winter:Spring 2020



## NEWS

Exciting things at MCTFR  
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## Exciting Things are Happening at the Minnesota Center for Twin and Family Research!

**Twins and siblings** first started participating when they were children and teenagers, along with their parents, along with their parents. We're now moving into our **fourth decade** of research at the MCTFR. During this time, we've watched you get older, finish school, move out of your parents' homes, establish careers, and form your own families. Many of you are now married or partnered, and many of you now have children of your own. Our recent assessments ask about your relationships, adjustment, and physical health, and have included measures of the brain using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Our twin and adoption studies are famous worldwide—**thanks to you!**



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## MEET THE STAFF

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As you've developed and grown, so has the MCTFR. We're now starting to study the children of our twin participants—**the third generation!** As you know, there are many fascinating relationships within twin families, and especially for the children of twins—

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# Please Update Your Contact Information: <https://mctfr.psych.umn.edu>

Look for “Update your contact information” in the upper right hand corner of the homepage!

Contact Principal Recruiter Alison Ryan with any questions at 612-626-0245, or [mctfr@umn.edu](mailto:mctfr@umn.edu).



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## Exciting Things

when identical twins have children, their children are cousins, but are genetically as similar as half-siblings. We'll soon be starting a new study of **infants of twins**. That's right! We'll be looking at some of the earliest signs of babies' personalities (are they easygoing? curious? fussy?) and their development. By studying twins and their children, we will be able to even more comprehensively assess how genes and environments combine to influence not only adolescence and young adulthood but also early development. The MCTFR is one of the only places in the world it is possible to do a study like this. We're so excited to see how twins, who we first saw when they were children, interact with their **babies!**

We're also expanding our assessments to the **spouses and partners** of our twins and siblings. Twins and siblings have been telling us about themselves and their lives for years—now we are hearing from the important people in their lives! Spouses and partners have important perspectives that we want



to learn more about. Of course, we know that people have busy lives! We've made the spouse/partner questionnaires short and sweet, and easy to complete online. We can't wait to hear from you!

We haven't forgotten about the **parents** of our twins and siblings! Parents first visited the MCTFR with their children and teenagers many years ago now. Their children are now grown, and many parents are entering the next chapter of their lives. We want to know how this **first generation** of study participants is doing as they encounter new opportunities and challenges.

We'll soon be in touch about these studies and others. If you haven't already, please take a moment to **update your contact information** at <https://mctfr.psych.umn.edu>.

If you are a **twin who is pregnant or who recently had a baby**, let us know by contacting us at **1-800-IM-A-TWIN (1-800-462-8946)** or **612-626-0245**, or [mctfr@umn.edu](mailto:mctfr@umn.edu).

# Meet the Interviewers!

Whether in person or over the phone, all of our participants interact with one of our talented and gregarious interviewers! We sat down to talk with the interviewers to hear a little more from their perspective when it comes to interviewing participants for the MCTFR.

## What do you like best about being an interviewer?

**Tasha:** Listening to participants' stories! I never get bored asking the same questions because even though the questions are the same, participants' answers are different. After working at the MCTFR for nearly 18 years, sometimes I get to interview someone I interviewed long ago. I love hearing updates on their lives! I also love working with researchers to better understand and analyze the interview data, which is vital to producing high-quality research.

**Rhea:** It allows the unique opportunity to get to know a diverse group of individuals every day. I hear about participants' lives and stories and learn a little about the many complexities of being a twin! I also get to learn from some of the best twin/family researchers around and be a part of one of the most well reputed studies in the world!

**Michele:** It is an honor to talk to different people and hear about their life experiences—both happy and not so happy times in their lives.

**Borgne:** Being part of the behind-the-scenes process of data collection! It's exciting to see all of the labor that goes into conducting and publishing such important research. Though I am primarily an interviewer, I also help out with data management. I love how many opportunities there are to learn about the various steps in the data collection and analysis process!

**Jana:** In one interview, we ask, "What are some of your goals for the future?" It is my favorite question because some participants have made remarkable strides in their lives. I like that participants think about their past and future selves during the interviews and I hope they are able to stay positive and meet their future goals.

## What are some of the challenges of this position?

While rewarding, the interviewers also have unique challenges. Interviews are structured and must follow a specific protocol. This can lead to a delicate balancing act—respecting participants' time, getting high-quality information, and treating participants and their stories with sensitivity. Additionally, many of our participants have not been interviewed for more than ten years, so it can be hard for them to remember things that happened so long ago!

## What is the most important part about this job and why?

The interviewers agreed—interacting with participants is the most important part of their job! Their main priority is to listen to participants, whose responses to the many questions we ask are what make our research the highest quality possible.

from left to right:  
Tasha, Rhea, Michele, Borgne, Jana





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## Recent Research from the MCTFR

The MCTFR is constantly analyzing the data that we gather from you, and publishing new findings. Some of the topics covered in our recent publications have included:

- ADHD and Gender
- Romantic Relationships
- IQ, Religion and Politics
  - Genes
- Substance Use and the Brain/EEG
- Adoption and Adoptive Families
  - Eating Disorders

You can find publications on these topics (and more!) at our website:  
<https://mctfr.psych.umn.edu/research/researchtopics.html>