

## Honor and Recognize Fathers through the organization of ForeverDads

1. Each father referred to our organization at the initial phone call, an appointment is scheduled at his convenience, not necessarily operational hours (beyond the 8-5 mindset)
2. At the initial interview and each subsequent meeting, each father is offered a bottle of water and a seat of honor in our office (a big comfy chair)
3. At each of our All Pro Dad Breakfast programs the father model is provided the opportunity to introduce his child/ren or they introduce him
4. At the Watch D.O.G.S program, the Top Dog of the Day has his photo with his child/ren posted on a bulletin board recognizing his day of service
5. At the conclusion of our foundation program, NFL – Nurturing Fathers for Life, a 13 session program, we host a Graduation and Alumni Reunion Celebration. Not only do we esteem those who just completed the program, but invite alumni to return and share in the celebration. Each father receives a certificated signed by the facilitator, executive director and president of the board, plus a ball cap with the ForeverDads logo. Then a family meal is provided in their honor including a graduation cake with ice cream.
6. At the conclusion of our programming year which coincides with the Father's Day season, we host a county-wide All Star Dads Day where father models and their families converge on our local YMCA facility for what would appear as a company picnic. Father's and their families attend this event for free, which includes swimming, egg and/or water balloon toss, sack races, corn hole competition, Hot Shot basketball tournaments, Bounce House for those under 8 and Maze/Slide for the older children, a cookout picnic with all the trimmings, door prizes and finish it off with ice cream sundaes. All of this as a collaborative partnership with community businesses underwriting the cost. Civic clubs, businesses, program graduates and local fatherhood supporters provide staffing for the event.
7. At each of our board meetings, we invite a father or program volunteer to share why they serve our organization – we call this the “magic of the moments”. During this time, individual fathers are honored and recognized for their simplistic involvement – spending time with their child/ren.
8. Veteran fathers who return to share their new birthing experience after they have participated in Boot Camp for New Dads are given a place of honor among rookie dads while they share their story of living through their pregnancy and birth. Each veteran father at the conclusion of the Boot Camp for New Dads is given a camouflage diaper bag that we know will clearly say, this is mine.
9. ForeverDads seeks out fathers who have completed different programs through our organization or volunteered at special celebration activities to attend state-led events as a position of honor and a voice of “real dads.”
10. Fathers who successfully work through our organization as program participants or volunteers are given the honor, recognition and support to a job slots/employment opportunity if this is a condition of need for them.

The greatest way I have discovered that you can honor a father is to allow him to discover who he was purposed to be – a healthy father, protector and provider for his family. That gives him dignity.

Burl Lemon, Executive Director, ForeverDads

