



Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families

www.opnff.net

April 2008  
Newsletter

## Connecting the Dots Between Research, Practice and Policy *by Calvin Williams, OPNFF President*

The power of networking and relationships has brought an exciting piece to OPNFF members and supporters. Dr. Randy Leite, of the Bowling Green State University for Child and Family Policy (ICFP), visited OPNFF at our last board meeting to explore relationship and possible partnership. The ICFP provides non-partisan child and family policy research, analysis and program evaluation support. OPNFF is thrilled to begin this relationship as public policy development and implementation remains a key focus in the effort to improve the lives of children and families through father-

hood.

It has been said that policy is always ten years behind research and practice is always ten years ahead of policy. Dr. Leite and ICFP have organized to bridge that gap and make more meaningful connections between research, practice and policy. Nothing beats good information delivered in a useable fashion, at just the right time to the right people to affect change or improvements. We tend to think that decision makers and leaders act on the best, most recent and relevant information or data when charting a course of action. The

truth is that often they don't – for a lot of different reasons, but clearly, they don't. Father and family serving professionals simply must do a better job of making sure that our leaders have immediate access to the facts, data and stories that represent the outcomes of our work.

OPNFF moving into a working relationship with ICFP will aid in meeting that mandate. We begin by joining ICFP in Columbus on April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Vern Riffe Center for the "Encouraging Father Involvement: Legislative and Policy Approaches". The event is from 8:30 to 10:0am and will feature: a

review and summation of key research findings on unmarried, non custodial fathers; policy, program options and strategies, then concludes by guiding participants to key sources of additional information. This event is aimed at legislators and legislative staff. What a great way to start!

Boldly looking forward, Dr. Leite and OPNFF leaders talked about aligning the work of our organizations to achieve dual strategic objectives. While "dreamstorming", we even conceived of a network of University-based Institutes similar to ICFP. Bringing information to power is a must. Only a well-informed legislature can deliver what the people expect and deserve.

## OPNFF Board of Directors Welcomes Two New Board Members

### Mark Robinson

Mark Robinson, husband and father of two, graduated from Syracuse University with a Masters degree in Social Work. He designed, developed, and implemented a successful fatherhood program while working in Syracuse, N.Y.,



before moving to Toledo four years ago.

Mark is currently providing School-Based Mental Health services at Lincoln Academy for Boys through Connecting Point. He is also the team captain of a local chapter of All Pro Dad which he has implemented at Lincoln. His passion for fathers shines through as he has recently established RESTORE Inc., a non-profit organization for *restoring fathers back to the head of the family through the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Mark also serves at Co-Director of the Northcoast Fatherhood

Collaborative in OPNFF's Northwest region.

### Eli Williams

Having had a career as a pop singer in his younger days, Eli Williams' love for music led him to broadcasting school in pursuit of a career in radio. After graduating at the top of his class in 1980, Williams was hired as staff announcer for WTOO FM in Bellefontaine, Ohio. Within months, music director was added to his job description. Eli next worked for WCOM FM in Urbana, Ohio (Dayton/Springfield) as morning announcer and



later, program director from 1983-1985.

When Williams rededicated his life to God in 1985, he resigned his midday announcer/

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## BGSU Institute for Child and Family Policy to host Policy Forum, “Encouraging Father Involvement: Legislative and Policy Approaches”

The Bowling Green State University Institute for Child and Family Policy (ICFP) represents the first program in Ohio aimed at providing explicit, non-partisan child and family policy research, analysis, and program evaluation support to social service and education agencies, courts, legislators, legislative staff, and state agency personnel. The Institute aims to strengthen connections between research, best practice models, and child and family policy in Ohio through non-partisan summaries of topical family and child program evaluation research, insightful policy analysis, and support for research on the impacts of educational and social policy on children and their families.



### ICFP Goals

- Disseminate non-partisan, research-based, policy analysis to promote the consideration of family, school, and community contexts and open communication among policy makers, service providers, and re-

- searchers.
- Serve as an information and research resource for state legislators, legislative staff, and others involved in legislative and policy formation processes.
- Facilitate, support, and implement programs and research designed to encourage child and family professionals in best practice.
- Evaluate community-based programs to inform policy, best practice, and effective resource allocation.
- Serve as a clearing house for community data profiles to inform policy and practice.
- Support effective approaches to link child and family research, practice, and policy.

### Agency Evaluation Support

Institute staff are available to provide evaluation support to government and community agencies interested in assessing the efficacy of their programs and services. Institute support will assist agencies in complying with mandated evaluation tasks, reporting program outcomes, and overall evaluation-based program planning and resource

decision-making. A range of on-site Institute support is available to agencies in Northwest Ohio.

### Policy Analysis and Research

The Institute serves as a resource to those seeking insightful policy analysis and recommendations and to organizations seeking to explore practice implications of policies and legislation. Institute services include analyzing the effects of policy and legislation on people and organizations, developing recommendations regarding policy alternatives, gathering facts about situations of interest to policymakers and organizations, and identifying key issues associated with policy and legislative decisions.

### Upcoming Event - “Encouraging Father Involvement: Legislative and Policy Approaches”

### Legislative and Policy Approaches”

Vern Riffe Center, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor, South B & C Conference Room, Columbus, Ohio, Thursday, April 17, 2008 from 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.; Co-sponsored by the Ohio Practitioners’ Network for Fathers and Families.

The focus of this legislative/policymaker briefing will be on providing demographic data relating to this population of fathers, examples of policy approaches in other states, information on practice and intervention approaches in Ohio, and a set of policy recommendations. We expect this briefing to be informative to those who work with children and families and also those responsible for making and interpreting policies that relate to fathers, children, and families. If you would like more information about the upcoming briefing or the Institute and its services, please visit our web site at <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/edhd/icfp>

or contact our staff, 419.372.7825 or [icfp@bgsu.edu](mailto:icfp@bgsu.edu)



ICFP Co-Directors Randy Leite and Laura Landry Meyer

## New Job Search Resource: Career Experts Help Ex-Offenders Address Record and Move Forward

Indianapolis, Ind.— Each year, state and federal prisons release more than 600,000 offenders back into society. National statistics indicate that within just three years of their release more than two-thirds of them will be arrested again and more than half will be back behind bars.

The ex-offenders most likely to stay out of prison and make a new lifestyle for themselves are the ones who quickly find steady employment after their release, according to Maurice Stevens and Michael Farr, co-authors of the newly released *Quick Job Search for Ex-Offenders*.

Too often, however, ex-offenders struggle to find employment because of the unique barriers they face in the job search. Everything from limited work experience and education to low self esteem and physical and mental problems make it increasingly more difficult for ex-offenders to prove their worth to an em-

ployer. Yet, the most significant hurdle of all is overcoming employers' unwillingness to hire someone with a criminal record.

"Truthfully, most employers will be reluctant to hire an ex-offender unless that person can convince them that he or she is worth the risk," say Stevens and Farr. "That's why the interview is an ex-offender's best chance to convince an employer that they have the skills needed to do the job, are eager to learn new skills, and are ready to become a dependable employee."

In the *Quick Job Search for Ex-Offenders*, Stevens and Farr outline how ex-offenders can address their criminal record in an interview, without being dishonest or intensifying an awkward conversation. Their tips include the following:

- Be honest about the past.

Ex-offenders should take responsibility for

their actions and keep their explanation in legal terms whenever possible. For example, say "I committed a felony four," instead of "I was convicted of domestic violence."

- Express remorse for the crime, but do not dwell on the past.

Concentrate on the positives, not the negatives.

- Discuss training or education received during incarceration.

Ex-offenders who have completed their GED, a construction apprenticeship program, or learned skills through a work release program should point out how these things have made them a better worker.

- Emphasize a desire to make a new start.

Share short- and long-term goals to show the employer an eagerness to move forward. Most importantly, ex-offenders should specify life changes they've made to become more reliable and dependable workers.

"It's essential to convince

the employer that your criminal record or personal situation will not interfere with your work life," say Stevens and Farr. "Convince the employer that you should be hired on the basis of your skills and your attitude, not your past."

*Quick Job Search for Ex-Offenders* is available from the publisher ([www.jist.com](http://www.jist.com) or 1.800.648.JIST). To speak with the authors, contact Natalie Ostrom at JIST



Maurice Stevens (right) with a program graduate

JIST, America's Career Publisher, is a division of EMC/Paradigm Publishing and is the leading publisher of job search, career, occupational information, life skills and character education books, workbooks, assessments, videos and software.

**Would you like to start a Job Readiness and Job Search Program for Ex-Offenders in your community? Contact us at [info@opnff.net](mailto:info@opnff.net) and we will help you get started. OPNFF can provide high quality professional training for your agency, community or region on programs for Re-entry fathers and a wide variety of other topics.**

[www.opnff.net](http://www.opnff.net)



**OPNFF**

Ohio Practitioners' Network  
for Fathers and Families

PO Box 94078, Cleveland, Ohio 44101  
[info@opnff.net](mailto:info@opnff.net)

**JOIN US! And be part of a growing network of over 500 fatherhood advocates & practitioners.**

**Membership in OPNFF is FREE: join online today**  
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program director position at WKSX Kiss FM to start a Sunday Christian music program on that same station. Since those early days, the broadcast ministry career of Williams has expanded and has spawned many other outreach ministries.

Since 1987 Reverend Williams creates, writes and hosts his popular weekly, two-hour broadcast heard on the 14 FM stations of the CDR Radio Network (a potential audience of over 4 million), Plus, 1600 WULM, local cable and worldwide via the Internet. The program features contemporary and traditional Gospel music with inspirational thoughts from the word of God.

In 1995, Eli and his wife Judy reorganized their ten - year old Lifeline Ministries by founding Urban Light Ministries, Incorporated. He serves as President/CEO. Judy is VP. Check out [www.urbanlight.org](http://www.urbanlight.org) for more information.

Williams is the founding pastor (2005) of Fountain of Life Christian Assembly. The Fountain is a center city church planted to serve some of Springfield's neediest residents.

Reverend Williams is currently a member of the Springfield/Clark County Chamber of Commerce Minority Business Council, Chair of Bridges Out of Poverty Steering Committee, and Co-chair of CultureFest Committee. Williams is Vice Chair of Rocking Horse Community Health Center. Eli is a life member of Optimist International where he has served in many offices, including two terms as club president, Ohio District Governor (1997-98), and International Ambassador (1998-99). He is an alumnus of the Springfield/Clark County Community Leadership Academy.

Eli and Judy have three sons and four grandchildren.

# ADVANCE FATHERHOOD OHIO! SUMMIT

**Friday May 30, 2008**

**9:30 am to 3:30 pm**

**FREE**

**KingsGate Marriott Hotel @ the University of Cincinnati**

Convening hundreds of public and private stakeholders, fathers, advocates and practitioners to learn about, discuss and set action steps for public policy affecting fathers and families

Sponsored by OPNFF, Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections, Ohio Office of Child Support, Ohio Commission on Fatherhood, and Ohio Justice & Policy Center

**Email us to register, [info@opnff.net](mailto:info@opnff.net)**