



OPNFF

Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families

OPNFF

2nd Edition, October 2005

2005 OPNFF Officers

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Steve Killpack, Cleve, Sec/Treas

Fatherhood: A Moving Concept by Muqit Sabur

When considering the idea of fatherhood, seldom does the discussion come to a unified conclusion. The "good father" concept is even more elusive - usually revolving around some level of performance: absent/present; dead-beat/dead-broke; responsible/reckless.

As an organization, OPNFF has undertaken the task of facilitating a clearer representation of the *idea* of fatherhood. This is being done in a variety of ways, with the end result to elicit a more unified rendering of the *idea*. Once accomplished, the unified idea will be reflected in practice and in the impact fathers have on the positive development of their children.

In this issue of our newsletter you will find examples of how various practitioners

are fulfilling the task. These examples not only reflect the work of professionals concerned about fathers, children and families, but the impact that their work has on individual human beings.

Captured in the experiences of fathers and families participating in a fishing derby are moments that reunited a father with his child and estranged wife. Images of three generations of males, grandfather, father and son, enjoying each other while being feted at a Father's Day function. And, of course, the pride of the fathers nominated by their own families to be recognized as "Father of The Year."

These activities, coordinated by OPNFF members, included families of every

description, category and status and were based upon the "father" in their lives.

Much research is currently being done around the value to children of living in a two-parent household. This, as far as OPNFF is concerned, is the ideal. But, we also recognize that a good number of children are not living in such arrangements, for whatever reason, and they cannot be abandoned.

In fact, these children should be our first priority, as research shows that they are more likely to be a substantial drain on our collective resources as they mature. Providing dedicated support and education to those parents, especially fathers, seeking to form their notion of family is inclusively generative as we

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Our membership grows with Our newest members...

Larry G. Boal, Coshocton
James A. Brown, Columbus
Marjorie Butler, Wooster
Steve Champagne, Coshocton
Teri L. Cody-Hannah, N. Field
Leonard Cofer, Columbus
Paula Drees, Hamilton
John Fecteau, Columbus
Amy Flynn, Coshocton
Catherine Hay, Big Prairie
Tonya Lock, Coshocton
Greg Sanders, Warrensville Heights
Ginny Lamneck, Orient
Gwendolyn Ritz, Coshocton
Marcia Schmitt, Coshocton
Angie Speicher, Coshocton
Susan Ware, Columbus
Deborah Watkins, Wooster
Galen(Tim) Williams, Columbus

Michael Meade, Wednesday, October 12th at St. Joseph's Family Center, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm, 601 West Exchange Street Akron, Ohio

The Genius of Youth, The Wisdom of Elders Violence and Apathy in Contemporary Life Workshop

Share a day with world renowned author, mythologist & storyteller Michael Meade.

You are invited to a workshop of myth and story, of poetry and discussion that addresses the dilemma in modern

culture that leaves both youth and elders increasingly at risk and lost in the margins of life.

Traditionally, the wisdom of elders tends to recognize and value the genius trying to surface in youth. Currently, the importance of both youth and elders goes

unrecognized or undervalued. The absence of understanding elders and lack of meaningful guidance contributes directly to the increase of violence and apathy amongst youth.

Seen this way, youth are not simply the problem as much

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Fatherhood: A Moving Concept

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look forward to the future of our society.

Also in this issue is information regarding an upcoming workshop with Michael Meade, a world-renowned

story-teller and mythologist. The workshop, *The Genius of Youth, The Wisdom of Elders*, is one of the “**don’t miss**” events of the year, especially for practitioners. It also adds another dimension to how we can look at

fatherhood. As *fatherhood* is a socially defined concept, we are hopeful that such focus and support will allow us to arrive at that unified idea of what (or who) is a father.



An interactive father and son in Zanesville

“Providing dedicated support and education to those parents, especially fathers, seeking to form their notion of family is inclusively generative as we look forward to the future of our society.”
Muqit Sabur,
President, OPNFF



SAFE!

“Fathers of the Year” in Cincinnati By Calvin Williams

The Cincinnati-based SUMA Fatherhood Project, led by OPNFF Board Vice President Calvin Williams, used the OPNFF Regional Father’s Day grant to support the 2005 Celebration of Fatherhood: Father of the Year Awards Banquet.

The event was designed to raise the community’s awareness of the impact fathers have in the lives of their children and to rally support for their efforts to capitalize on assets and overcome obstacles to being the best fathers they can be. Nominations were accepted for three categories of fathers: SUMA and Community Father of the Year, and the Father Friendly Business/Organization of the Year.

Awareness was created by the distribution of the Father of the Year nomination forms, which were sent to businesses, social service

agencies, daycare centers and others. The Cincinnati Herald, the leading local African American newspaper, served as the media sponsor for the event, running the nomination form in the paper as well as stories about the event and its purposes. Over 125 people were in attendance the evening of the celebration.

The city’s most popular news anchorperson from the local ABC affiliate, Mr. Clyde Gray, served as the keynote speaker. Mr. Gray is an ardent supporter of fathers and the issues concerning their ability to be great parents. In presenting each finalist, the master of ceremonies read from the father’s nomination forms the qualities, characteristics and attributes that made them Father of the Year in the eyes of the person nominating them. Particularly inspiring was the descriptions of finalists from the SUMA and Community categories.

One way to dispel negative myths and stereotypes about men as fathers was to highlight and honor “regular” men, not just community or business leaders, athletes or entertainers.

The evening concluded with the presentation of either “Father to Daughter: Life Lessons on Raising a Girl” or “Father to Son: Life Lessons on Raising a Boy”, both by Harry H. Harrison, Jr., to every person in attendance. Each book contains 372 pages of wisdom, wit and inspiration for parents. Inside the front cover of each book was a sticker identifying the book as a gift from the Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families and the SUMA Fatherhood Project.

Are You A Spectator Father or Interactive Family?

By James McDonald

June 18, 2005 was “All Star Dad’s Day” in Zanesville, Ohio thanks to a \$1,653 grant from the Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families.

Over one hundred dads and

their children came to the Muskingum Family Y to do something fathers and their kids seldom do together. Play together.

Oh, lots of dads watch their kids play and some kids

watch their dads play – things like basketball, football, soccer, play station, music, etc. But this day was awesome because it was interactive. It begs the question” Are you a spectator family or an interactive

Are You A Spectator Father or Interactive Family?

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family?

Spectator families watch one of the family members play and then comment on their performance (easy to do when you're not in the game). In interactive families everyone is on the team and everyone wins or loses. That shared experience equalizes the emotions (you laugh and/or cry together) and the support.

Funds from the OPNFF Grant allowed us to offer ten interactive options for fathers and their children, including swimming, cooking, interviewing live on the

radio, dancing, making ice cream sundaes, sack racing with three legs, etc. This interaction was the highlight of our local Sunday news (too often bad news).

The featured front-page story of the Times Recorder Newspaper had two grand pictures of fathers and kids playing together. The newspaper published excerpts of the stories and they were refreshing.

Fathers play a unique and irreplaceable part in the lives of their children. Interaction is important in play, work, meals, worship, communication, and educa-

tion. If I am a spectator of my child's education, when he gets an "F" he failed and I'm disappointed and he'll know it. If I am interactive in his education, when he gets an "F" we failed. It's easier to come down hard using the phrase 'you failed' than it is saying 'we failed'. With the latter, my response is tempered and the responsibility is shared. That's what All Star Dads Day taught us.

If you would like more information about the All Star Dads event then please contact James McDonald of Muskinghum County @ jmcDonald@dadscount.net



Michael Meade has studied myth, anthropology, history of religion, and cross-cultural rituals for over 35 years. His hypnotic and fiery storytelling, street savvy perceptiveness, and spellbinding interpretations of ancient myths and symbols are highly relevant to current culture.

www.mosaicvoices.com

The Genius of Youth, The Wisdom of Elders

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as the locus of serious issues troubling the culture at large. Although, it takes a whole village to raise a child; it takes the troubles of youth to raise a whole village.

Traditionally, stories are a way of evoking symbolic language and touching

threads of genius that can recast the meanings of our daily experiences. Through old tales and fresh insights we will pull at the threads of meaning in both personal lives and cultural events. The Ohio Practitioners'



Mosaic

voices of youth | voices of community

Network for Fathers and Families is proud to sponsor Michael Meade. Join OPNFF now to stay informed about future OPNFF events

"Love and Time: The Greatest Gifts"

The Corrections Medical Center and the Ross Correctional Institution both sponsored father's day events for the incarcerated father and the children left behind.

A grant from the OPNFF made the events possible by allowing the institutions to create a "family friendly"

picnic-atmosphere for children. The events included games, face painting, basketball, karaoke and "free time" to hang out as a family. Children were permitted to have pictures taken with their Dads to take home with them.

Incarceration is painful to

the family and one day of interaction cannot change the past, but it can begin a new future for both the incarcerated parent and the child. As one child put it: "You can't never take away the fact that this is my dad and I know that he loves me." Love and time are truly the greatest gifts of all.



Dad and son at the Corrections Med. Ctr. Coloring and reading

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A nonprofit organization
to support and foster
nurturing relationships
between fathers and
children

mailing labels

Let's Go Fishing! By Pat Pack, OPNFF

Child Focus, Inc. Early Childhood Division held a very successful event that a total of 395 people attended. The focus was for fathers and male role models to spend a non-stressful day in the outdoors with their children, mothers of their children and other family members.

This event had many sponsors from the community and through a grant from The Star Fish Foundation we were able to purchase 59 fishing licenses for fathers who could not afford them so they could continue to have a cost free activity that they could do with their children throughout the summer. The local Bass Anglers Club provided fishing equipment for those who needed it. Bait, door prizes and lunch were also provided from many sources.

Experienced fishing fathers helped those inexperienced; excitement surrounded the lake as the fish were caught and smiles were abundant as the children carried their prize catch to the weigh in station. Some wonderful things happened that day that carried on. One participant commented, "this was the first time he has been able to spend time with our child without fighting. He's never been involved before but not only did we have a wonderful day but we went twice during the summer together and his dad and him went several times".

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME . . . T-BALL THAT IS~

On Saturday, June 25 The Lima/Allen Council on Community Affairs sponsored a Father-Child T-Ball event at Faurot Park. This event was part of the agency's focus on father involvement and provided an opportunity for Head Start children to learn basic t-ball skills and practice them with their dads, grandpas, and other positive male role models. All of the participants received books, hats and t-shirts and enjoyed a lunch together.

This event was sponsored by LACCA's Kids In Need of Dads (K.I.N.D.) Program, 419-227-9953 ext.148, and the Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families.



Above: Brett Roehm from the Department of Recreation teaches basic catching and throwing skills. Right: Darius and Larry McDonald enjoyed the day together.