



OPNFF

Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families

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Spring 2006

Now More Than Ever: Families and Communities Need Fathers Healthy, Present and Involved!

By Calvin L. Williams, President of the Board of Directors, OPNFF

The need for men - emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially healthy, to be present and involved in the lives of their children and families has grown ever more critical. The many negative indicators of child and family well being can all be traced to the absence of a committed and nurturing father. It cannot be ignored. We can no longer afford to miss the mark. Community family service providers, public policy professionals, public and private funding entities along with state government agencies and programs are responding to the crisis through the Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families.

My service with OPNFF began as a member of the Planning Committee over three years ago. I am filled with as much passion and purpose now as then to be an agent for positive change in Ohio communities through fatherhood development, advocacy and support. Serving as the current Chair of the OPNFF Board of

Directors is both honor and duty. As a son, father of a twelve-year old son, fatherhood practitioner, citizen of the state of Ohio and fellow human with you all, I owe the best leadership and effort possible to the cause of: *enhancing the outcomes of children, families and communities by providing training, support and strength to the professionalism of fatherhood practitioners*, the OPNFF mission.

The word in the mission statement that captures me at this time is strength. That is what our goals and objectives for 2006 are about: strength. In this election year, OPNFF is poised and determined to put the fatherhood agenda back into the conscience of state government policies and programs. To affect that, we are embarking on an ambitious drive to achieve hundreds of new members; members that will create the voice for our elected officials to hear the message that improving conditions, opportunities and supports for fathers is key to moving the needle on

child and family well being. To strengthen practitioners and increase awareness, in May OPNFF, in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse Ohio and the Center for Child and Family Advocacy, will offer "Fatherhood Programs and Child Abuse". In October, along with the Zanesville Fatherhood Resource Center, we will co-sponsor Steven Stosney presenting "Compassion Power; Love Without Hurt", a domestic violence prevention workshop.

Further, OPNFF will seek to broaden and extend its' reach by surveying all Ohio counties to understand how fathers are being served and supported. We remain committed to involving, including, learning from and serving with all of Ohio in this responsible fatherhood effort. Ohio is home to some of the nation's best thinking and practices around fatherhood development. OPNFF was created to harness this energy and expertise, connecting practitioners and strengthening their work.

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Our membership grows with our newest members...

- Cindy Antczak
- Yvonne Averitte
- Joe D Baker
- Carolyn Beck
- Carol Bostic
- Paul Bounds
- David E Boyer
- Christel Bright
- Vincent Buzzelle
- Joy Caldwell
- Marianne Carl
- Steve Carrel
- Justin D Chenault
- Sharyna Cloud
- Lorrie Considine
- Elin Cooke
- Dennis Cox
- Tracy Cox
- Juanita Davis
- Cindy Dooley
- Rosemary Driessen
- Taron East-Edwards
- Martine Biggers
- Elise Ellick
- Tim Eppich
- Bob Farmerie
- Donna Fliegel
- Lennie Green

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Legislative Alert : Responsible Fatherhood

In February Congress approved funding for Responsible Fatherhood programs. This funding is included as part of a section on Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood in welfare reform reauthoriza-

tion, and is contained in the massive Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (S. 1932). The Fatherhood funding is a modified version of legislation that has been in the works for a number of years. As written, this bill

will provide up to \$50 million a year over five years to "to States, territories, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and public and non-profit community entities, including religious organi-

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Calvin L. Williams,
2006 President, OPNFF

OPNFF is a membership organization representing the entire state of Ohio.

Our mission, *to enhance the outcomes for children, families and communities by providing training, support and strength to the professionalism of fatherhood practitioners*, is advanced by a unique collection of professionals from both the public and private sectors throughout Ohio that make up the leadership of the organization.

JOIN US, it's FREE:

www.@opnff.net

"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, Immediate Past President, OPNFF



Boot Camp for New Dads participants

Now More Than Ever

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Strength. Now more than ever, Ohio needs the strength of its' fathers; the strength of a father's tears, the strength of his imagination for his children's fu-

ture, the strength of his heart pounding for the life of his family and community. Let us not fail the children, wide-eyed and reaching like tulips straining towards the sun, their

hearts aimed at the strengths of the father. Together let's help fathers uncover and deliver the best of themselves to our children, indeed, to the future of Ohio.

MICHAEL MEADE: The Genius of Youth, The Wisdom of Elders

On October 12, 2005 OPNFF sponsored a workshop in Akron, Ohio with Michael Meade titled, "The Genius of Youth, The Wisdom of Elders: Violence and Apathy in Contemporary Life". One hundred and two people attended the training from a variety of environments including faith-based, colleges/universities, government, early childhood and youth programs, fatherhood programs, corrections, crisis shelters, volunteers, mental health, chemical dependency, and medical professionals.

Workshop evaluation responses indicated that it was a worthwhile and deeply meaningful day:

"Nourished my soul and pro-

vided insight into an excellent, powerful tool."

"Thoughtful, provocative - usefulness will only reveal itself over time."

"Insightful, applicable to life"

"New perspective on an old problem"

"Extremely helpful, enlightening, educational"

"The whole day was wonderful."

"This workshop was absolutely and immeasurably affirming and inspiring."

"Mr. Meade is a bottomless pit of knowledge and it's been life altering hearing about some of the lost traditions that we lack in our world."

"Storytelling and drumming is thoroughly engaging and the symbolize is riveting."

People also indicated training they would like OPNFF to sponsor in the future,

such as mentorship, fathers and sons, male roles in our society, sensitivity to women, sexual assault of women and children, spiritual relationship in the culture of poverty, how to serve and deal with the needs of family, unique things fathers provide and ways to provide them, etc.

Participants were awarded five continuing education units. After the workshop, over 45 people became new OPNFF Members (free) and joined us in our mission to enhance the outcomes of children, families and communities by providing trainings, support and strength to the professionalism of fatherhood practitioners.

Plight Deepens for Black Men, Studies Warn

By Erik Eckholm partially reprinted from the NY Times, 3/20/06

Baltimore—Black men in the US face a far more dire situation than is portrayed by common employment and education statistics, a flurry of new scholarly studies warn, and it has worsened in recent years even as an economic boom and a welfare overhaul have brought gains to black women and other groups. Focusing more closely than ever on the life patterns of young black men, the new

studies, by experts at Columbia, Princeton, Harvard and other institutions, show that the huge pool of poorly educated black men are becoming ever more disconnected from the mainstream society, and to a far greater degree than comparable white or Hispanic men. Especially in the country's inner cities, the studies show, finishing high school is the exception, legal work is scarcer than ever and

prison is almost routine, with incarceration rates climbing for blacks even as urban crime rates have declined. Although the problems afflicting poor black men have been known for decades, the new data paint a more extensive and sobering picture of the challenges they face. Many of the new studies go beyond the traditional approaches to looking at the plight of black men, especially when it comes to



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determining the scope of joblessness.

In response to the worsening situation for young black men, a growing number of programs are placing as much importance on teaching life skills—like parenting, conflict resolution and character building—as they are on teaching job skills.

Terrible schools, absent parents, racism, the decline in blue collar jobs and a subculture that glorifies swagger over work have all been cited as causes of the

deepening ruin of black youths. Joseph T Jones, director of the fatherhood and work skills center in Baltimore, puts the breakdown of families at the core. “Many of these men grew up fatherless, and they never had good role models,” said Mr. Jones.

Another factor, is related to an otherwise successful policy: the stricter enforcement of child support. Improved collection of money from absent fathers has been a pillar of welfare overhaul. But the system can leave young men feeling over-

whelmed with debt and deter them from seeking legal work, since a large share of any earnings can be seized. About half of all black men in their late 20s and 30s who did not go to college are non custodial fathers, according to Mr. Holzer of Georgetown. From the father’s viewpoint, support obligations “amount to a tax on earnings,” he said. The recent studies identified a range of government programs and experiments, especially education and training efforts like the Job Corp that had shown success.

Legislative Alert

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zations, for activities promoting responsible fatherhood”.

Funding can be used to provide:

- Activities that promote or sustain marriage—including counseling, mentoring, disseminating information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement for children, enhancing relationship skills, education regarding how to control aggressive behavior, disseminating information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse, marriage preparation programs, pre-marital counseling, marital

inventories, and skills-based marriage education. The funds may also be used for a variety of financial planning services including education, counseling and mentoring on household management, budgeting, banking, handling financial transactions, and home maintenance; they may also be used to provide divorce education and reduction programs, including mediation and counseling.

- Activities to promote responsible parenting—including, but not limited to, counseling, mentoring and mediation, disseminating information about good parenting practices, skills-based parenting educa-

tion, and encouraging child support payments.

- Activities to improve the economic status of fathers, which include, but are not limited to, work-first services, job search, job training, subsidized employment, job retention, job enhancement, encouraging education (including career enhancing education), dissemination of employment materials, coordination with existing employment services such as welfare-to-work programs, and referrals to local employment training initiatives.

Go to www.clasp.org and click on *Couples and Marriage Policy* for more de-

“Boot Camp for New Dads” Community Endeavors Foundation & Cleveland Area Maternity Hospitals Unite

Boot Camp for New Dads, a non-profit program offered at hospitals, clinics, schools and churches across the U.S. is now being delivered by the Community Endeavors Foundation and Greater Cleveland Area maternity hospitals. The program brings “rookie” father-to-be

together with “veteran” recent dads and their newborns, in an effort to orient and teach parenting skills prior to baby’s birth. Steve Killpack, of the Community Endeavors noted, “Typically, these hospitals are competitors for maternity and other services. In

this program, the hospitals have placed the focus where it belongs—on fathers, babies and communities rather than on the health providers. It has been inspiring to witness these hospital systems join together to provide such a valuable community service.”

WELCOME to our new members!

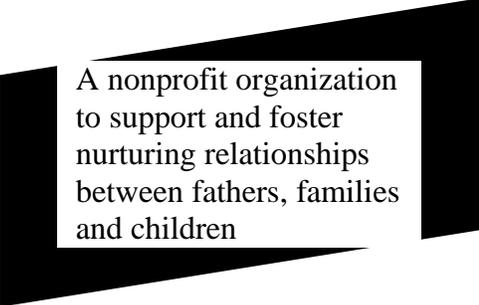
Tammie Greer
 Beverly Haas
 Michael Hargrove
 Cassandra Hilliarh
 Sandi Hoch
 Rod Hollingsworth
 Arnell Hurt
 Cathleen Jenkins
 Gregory Johnson
 Jeri Johnson
 George O Johnson Sr
 Crystal Jones
 Dan Kieffer
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 Bernard G Labbe
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A nonprofit organization
to support and foster
nurturing relationships
between fathers, families
and children

mailing labels

OPNFF Membership Application

As an OPNFF member, you will receive priority registration for training events, have opportunities to network with other practitioners and you will have representation in a statewide fatherhood network.

Name: (Print) _____
Organization: _____ Title: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

____ Individual Membership

____ Organizational Membership; agency vote plus four individual votes (list four names, including email addresses)

Type of agency/organization, please circle all that apply: government faith based non profit social service education

List any Fatherhood programs your agency/organization offers and the services provided: _____

What interest do you have in OPNFF involvement? Public Policy Public Relations Advocacy

Please list any other fatherhood initiatives you are involved with: _____

Please mail this form to: OPNFF, P.O. Box 94078, Cleveland, Ohio 44101 (216)502.4795