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Message from Johnny Rice, II

Best-selling author Bill Cosby once said, "Nothing I've ever done has given me more joys and rewards than being a father to my children."

I certainly agree with Mr. Cosby. As the father of two children, I can attest to the many rewards that fatherhood brings. However, I also know that fathering is not without its challenges.

That is why I am pleased to introduce the first edition of the Winning Fathers Newsletter.

The newsletter is a product of the Winning Fathers Project, that helps men take a second look at their roles as husbands, partners, and fathers. The project also helps men to define their responsibility to their children.

The Winning Fathers Project target previously incarcerated men. The project provides men with resources in three areas: Healthy Marriage, Responsible parenting, and Economic Stability.

Featured in the first edition of this quarterly newsletter is information about the Winning Fathers Projects in Montgomery, Talbot, and Prince George's Counties.

We hope you will read our newsletter and let us know what you think. We look forward to hearing from you with ideas on how we can make sure this newsletter will be helpful to you as you navigate the fatherhood experience.

Enjoy this first edition.

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Maryland's Winning Fathers Project Initiative



The Winning Father's Project is a federal demonstration initiative located in Montgomery, Prince George's and Talbot counties. This initiative provides services to fathers, who are within six months of release from incarceration, and their spouses or partners. This project affords a comprehensive array of services to fathers and their families including healthy marriage/relationship education and counseling, parenting skills, and job training.

The Winning Fathers Program focus is on family and economic stability. The program collaborated with the Pre-Release Center to identify participants for the program and incorporate the program into the new residents' orientation.

Eligible participants receive services to address domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, and anger management. Individualized service plans include employment readiness, job training, job search and placement assistance, as well as, child support enforcement and contributing to family financial stability. The mandatory 6-week Healthy Relationship and Parenting Curriculum is taught with spouses, partners and parenting partners.

The Montgomery County collaboration between the Pre-Release Center and Child Welfare Services was recognized as a "Best Practice Model" at the 2009 National Conference on Fatherhood.

The project recently received a \$491,000 federal continuation grant to provide services for another grant period.

NUMBERS SERVED: since the project's inception, the following individuals have been served.

Winning Fathers Number of Participants Served Since Implementation (2006)

Activity Area	Number of Participants Served
Healthy Relationships	174
Responsible Parenting	129
Economic Stability	91



Fathers Making Progress

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- Several fathers who completed the Winning Fathers project and were released from the Pre-Release Center (PRC) are continuing to be actively involved with the project serving as guides and coaches.
- The project graduated nine participants from the parenting project component that concluded in January 2010.
- The project has been collaborating with Montgomery Works to develop job preparedness/employment workshops at the PRC for fathers and their families.
- Winning Fathers project is also working with Family Youth Foundation (counseling services) to provide workshops for father's entitled Angels with Wings. These workshops focus on the impact on the family when a father is separated from his family.
- The project continues discussion and planning with PRC staff in preparation for increasing our area of focus on participant economic stability. Winning Fathers will sponsor and provide workshops related to job readiness, employment, and financial education as it relates to fathers, family, employment, and their impact on the family..



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

- Adam's House is part of the Prince George's County Health Department. It provides medical assessment, treatment, job training, parenting classes, and other support to fathers. Adams House has proven that men can be real men again; that men do play various roles in their families; and that couples can overcome their relationship challenges to become a stronger family. Another proven fact, men who lack skills or need to acquire new skills, can find work with the appropriate training.
- Adam's House utilized the Winning Fathers Grant to serve families of fathers who were formerly incarcerated. The three major goals of this program are to encourage responsible parenting, prepare participants for employment, and build healthy relationships. Participants in the program are screened for the presence of domestic violence and the potential need for additional services and interventions.
- Adams House successes speak for it and are a testament to the willingness of their participants to create strong bonds with their children.

Successes of Adams House include:

1. Counseled approximately 45 couples about their intentions to either divorce or separate; and today 30 of the couples, who came to us thinking about how best to end their relationship, has resolved their issues and are very happy in their relationship.
2. The program conducted Responsible Parenting class for about 42 couples. The Department of Social Services, Child Protective Service Division often refers couples to the program for parenting skills after removing their children from their home. After providing services to these parents, 40 of these couples have been reunited with their children with parenting skills to support their children's needs. Two parents who only have supervised visits with their children now enjoy unsupervised visits with their children.
3. Thirty-three adults who came to Adams House without any jobs or sufficient skills to acquire a job were retrained and were successfully placed in employment. Twenty-seven participants secured jobs that pay well enough to take care of their children.

- This tri-county demonstration project includes Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties with inmates returning from the Talbot County Detention Center and the Eastern Pre-Release Unit.
- The Workforce Development Board sponsored an Ex-Offenders Workshop held at Department of Social Services with speakers from Parole & Probation, One-Stop Career Center, Non-Custodial Fathers Employment program, Talbot County Addictions program, Mid-Shore Mental Health Services, and the

Winning Fathers program to address barriers and issues affecting ex-offenders.

- The One Stop Career Mobile Unit is now a part of the Winning Fathers Economic Stability Module and it visits the Talbot County Detention Center and the Eastern Pre-Release Center. The Mobile Bus offers inmates an opportunity to register with the Workforce Exchange that provides resume development, interest inventories, employment applications, and assistance with GED completion.

Antonio and Deandra A SUCCESS STORY



Antonio and Deandra had a difficult time communicating due to Antonio's incarceration. Antonio was not working and unable to assist with his young son. Antonio struggled with not being able to help financially and reflecting on his past that lead to incarceration. However Antonio was ready to make a change and the Winning Fathers Project, was there to help.

Antonio initially enrolled in the 6-week Father Parenting Workshops. The workshop covered topics like

What is a Man? Remember my past and the Role of the Father. Antonio acknowledged that he was ready to begin working on his relationship with Deandra and he enrolled in the Healthy Relationship Workshop that was a 4-week; 2- hour per session couples workshop.

Despite Antonio being ready to begin working on his relationship he needed to convince his partner, Deandra that the Healthy Relationship Workshops would benefit their relationship.

Once Deandra was willing to try the workshops, they were faced with an immediate challenge. When the first class arrived, they were unable to find a sitter. Therefore, they brought their infant son to class. Both Antonio and Deandra openly shared their thoughts and feelings about their situation; by the end of the workshops, they both agreed that the Healthy Relationship Workshop would really help them to better understand each other and learn tools to use to communicate more effectively.

Antonio and Deandra volunteered to participate in a conference attended by over 50 providers. They participated on a panel of young couples and shared their experiences participating in the Winning Fathers Projects.

Antonio realized the importance of his family. He agreed to stop working two jobs so he could watch his son while Deandra attends school and works. He works at night and attends school on weekends. He credits the Winning Fathers Project for providing him with the skills to lead his family in the right direction.

Antonio and Deandra continue to be committed to each other. Their next challenge is to find affordable housing.



The History of Father's Day

Mrs. Sonora B. Dodd, of Spokane Washington, first proposed the idea of a father's day in 1909. Mrs. Dodd wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart. William Smart, a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife (Mrs. Dodd's mother) died in childbirth. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington state. It was after Mrs. Dodd became an adult that she realized the strength and selflessness her father had shown in raising his children as a single parent.



Sonora wanted her father to know how special he was to her. Her father made all the parental sacrifices and was, in the eyes of his daughter, a courageous, selfless, and loving man. Sonora's father was born in June, so she chose to hold the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane, Washington on June 19, 1910.

In 1926, a National Father's Day Committee was formed in New York City. Father's Day was recognized by a Joint Resolution of Congress in 1956. In 1972, President Richard Nixon established a permanent national observance of Father's Day to be held on the third Sunday of June. Therefore, Father's Day was born in memory and gratitude by a daughter who thought that her father and all good fathers should be honored with a special day just as we honor our mothers on Mother's Day.

At about the same time in various towns and cities across American other people were beginning to celebrate a day for fathers. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national Father's Day. Finally in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day.

Father's Day has become a day to not only honor your father, but all men who act as a father figure. Stepfathers, uncles, grandfathers, and adult male friends are all honored on Father's Day.



Fathers Matter: Facts, Figures and Opinions

Incarceration

The Department of Justice has estimated that over 7.3 million children under age 18 have a parent who is in prison, jail, on probation, or on parole. Given these numbers, it is important to understand how children and their caregivers are affected by the criminal activity of a parent and their subsequent arrest, incarceration, and release. Additionally, it is important to know which services and assistance might be available to those under criminal justice supervision to help them be better parents and to return successfully to the community.



Effective Parenting

Involved fathers provide practical support in raising children and serve as models for their development. Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior compared to children who have uninvolved fathers. Committed and responsible fathering during infancy and early childhood contributes emotional security, curiosity, and math and verbal skills.



Positive Influence

Children who live with their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely not to be poor, less likely to use drugs, less likely to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, less likely to be victims of child abuse, and less likely to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live without their married, biological (or adoptive) parents. These differences are observed even after controlling for socioeconomic variables such as race and income.

Dispelling the Myth

It is very important for anybody working with fathers, especially Child Protective Service (CPS) caseworkers, to dispel one common stereotype: the image of low-income urban fathers as disengaged and uninvolved with their children. As Dr. Michael Lamb has stated, "Our research really bashes the stereotype of the low-income father. These fathers care about their kids, but may not show their love in conventional ways and sometimes a lack of a job, poor communication with the mom, or even their own childhood experiences can prevent them from getting involved." Too often, professionals may assume that a low-income, urban dad who does not live with his children is uninvolved or even unconcerned about his children. This can push a father away from his family, the exact opposite of what a CPS caseworker wants to see happen.

The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, U.S. Children's Bureau, Jeffrey Rosenberg, Bradford W. Wilcox

(Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)



Project Partners

Campaign For Our Children, Inc.



Campaign for Our Children (CFOC) provides media and public relations consulting, for the project. CFOC's mission is to develop research-based prevention messages and educational media campaigns that encourage healthy, responsible decisions among adolescents, promote a more informed support system for parents and youth, and raise public awareness about adolescent preventative health issues.

www.cfoc.org



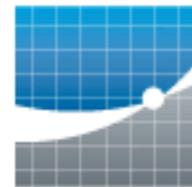
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) provides technical assistance to local services providers for the Winning Fathers Project. MNADV has been working since 1980 to eliminate domestic violence in Maryland through education, training, and advocacy. As Maryland's state coalition, the Network works together with local domestic violence programs as well as criminal justice and law enforcement personnel, legal advocates, health care and social service providers, clergy, educators, businesses, community groups, and concerned individuals to promote a coordinated community response to end domestic violence.

<http://www.mnadv.org/>



Institute for Interactive Instruction provides technical assistance, unites multidisciplinary programs with diverse programmatic components, and moves Maryland's fatherhood and marriage services in a focused and strategic way. The Institute is a non-partisan, 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization, which operates in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area providing services across Maryland and nationally. As a small organization, founded by women, we are dedicated to advocating for all disadvantaged families with the hope of moving them higher on the nation's agenda.

www.iiiinc.org



Optimal Solutions Group, LLC evaluates the effectiveness of the Winning Fathers Project (WFDP). Optimal developed a pre- and post-survey design to measure the effectiveness of the WFDP. The evaluation design gauges the change in fathers' communication skills, conflict resolution skills, relationship satisfaction, and negative interactions after they complete the WFDP program: a positive change indicates effectiveness. The pre-surveys reflect participating fathers' personal attitudes towards their relationships and parenting roles before they began the WFDP program. The post-surveys portray any changes to the fathers' attitudes and behavior after they have completed the WFDP program. During the period between answering the pre- and post-surveys, fathers and partners are assumed to have had opportunities to embrace the skills learned during the WFDP program. For additional information go to:

www.optimalsolutionsgroup.com/