

Leading Minnesota's campaign for healthy fatherhood.



Annual Report 2008



Our Vision



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Dear friends,

Since 2003, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network has been building the field of fatherhood in Minnesota. We strengthen the vitality and connections of professionals working with fathers and families through training events, resource documents, networking activities, and public policy education.

2008 was an incredible year for MFFN. We hired our second full-time staff; hosted our fifth annual winter conference; trained over 2,200 professionals across Minnesota; and grew our membership to over 400 individuals.

But the numbers and statistics fall short of telling the full story.

Our biggest accomplishments in 2008 were the personal stories and "aha moments" when a child welfare worker saw fathers for the first time, when a teen clinic began asking why they see

so few teen fathers, when a policy maker questioned how legislation will impact nonresidential fathers, and when a judge asked whether a creative decision could improve a child's wellbeing while maintaining a strong relationship with both parents.

These are the mind-changing moments that make our work so valuable. These are the systems-changing moments that bring fathers to the forefront of family life. These are the stories that help us remember that fathers are vital assets for their children, their families, and their communities.

Together, we are building an environment that nurtures all of Minnesota's children. We hope you will join us in 2009 and beyond!

Sincerely,



Joe Kelly
Board President



A. Paul Masiarchin
Executive Director

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network ■ www.mnfathers.org



For professionals committed to understanding and promoting healthy fatherhood, we are the state's premier center for training, research dissemination, and policy leadership.

Contact us

(651) 222-7432 phone
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www.mnfathers.org



Minnesota Fatherhood Summit

Attendees at MFFN's fifth annual winter conference had opportunities to learn about healthy fatherhood from national and local speakers. One attendee commented, "The Summit was a 'breath of fresh air' to reinforce the importance of involving the father (in all its definitions). It reassures the ongoing need to encourage and keep those fathers involved for a healthier child!"

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Professional Development ■ Growing the Field

■ **Minnesota Fatherhood Summit:** MFFN hosted its fifth annual winter conference in St. Cloud in Jan. 2008. The two-day conference featured keynote presentations by Senator Tarryl Clark, Minnesota Senate; Dr. Glen Palm, St. Cloud State University; Jacquelyn Boggess, Center for Family Policy and Practice; and Bill Taverner, American Journal of Sexuality Education. Over 200 attendees participated in over a dozen sessions on healthy fatherhood. MFFN held its sixth conference in Jan. 2009.

■ **Fathers and Children's Mental Health:** Throughout the fall, MFFN collaborated with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, St. Cloud State University, Children's Trust Fund, and the Minn. Initiative Foundations to host its seventh annual Fall Fatherhood Seminar Series. Sessions covered topics of healthy socio-emotional development, fathers' impact on child development, the protective factors, male socialization, and resources for professionals working with fathers and families. The 5-hour training

sessions, with presentations in eight cities, were attended by nearly 350 non-profit employees, county workers, and fatherhood advocates.

■ **Conference Workshops and Exhibits:** Throughout 2008, MFFN presented workshops and/or displayed exhibit booths at twenty professional conferences including a national child support conference; Minn. Org. on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPP); Prevent Child Abuse Minn.; the Minn. association for prison and jail staff; the national Head Start association; the state's child support association; and others.

■ **Professional Development Training:** In 2008, MFFN staff led training sessions and focus groups to help specific agencies improve or expand services for fathers. Among these groups were a father-service collaborative, a Head Start agency, a network of housing providers, and a young parent support program.

2008 ■ Building the Field of Fatherhood Practitioners ■ 2008

Professional Development ■ Growing the Field

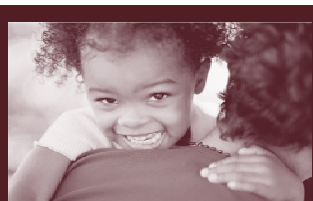
■ **Fathers to the Forefront:** With support from the McKnight Foundation, MFFN convened two meetings of professionals involved in disparate efforts to improve fatherhood services across Minnesota. The Fathers to the Forefront meetings have enabled the 100 participants to find ways to collaborate with services, improve referrals, and develop common visions about healthy fatherhood.

■ **Minnesota Excellence in Fatherhood Awards:** In January 2008, MFFN recognized five programs and individuals who are leading the advancement of fatherhood policy and practice. The Award Recipients were: Program of the Year: Parenting Time Program of Perspectives, Inc., St. Louis Park; Advocate of the Year: Tammy Swanson; Swanson, Drobnick & Torsey; Woodbury; Individual of the Year: Deb Wright, HOWA Family Center, Walker / Akeley; Policymaker of the Year: Wayland Campbell, Minn. Dept. of Human Services, St. Paul; Member of the Year: Rebecca Ahlstrand, Carlton County, Cloquet. In January 2009, MFFN presented three more Excellence in Fatherhood Awards.

MFFN works with fatherhood professionals and advocates in nearly all circumstances. Listed here are a few examples of MFFN's direct involvement with Minnesota's fathers:

■ **Minnesota Festival for Fathers & Families:** MFFN co-chaired the 18th annual celebration of fatherhood in North Minneapolis in 2008, working in collaboration with two-dozen sponsoring agencies. 1,100 attendees participated in the free events.

■ **Resource Referrals:** MFFN receives hundreds of email and telephone contacts annually from fathers and families seeking support. MFFN uses its online "Fathers' Services Directory" to identify appropriate referrals for men's services.



Training a new generation of fatherhood advocates

"It was exciting to be in a room where there was so much positive energy and honest, heartfelt caring for men as fathers and the important role they fill in the lives of children."

- Comment from an attendee at one of MFFN's 2008 training sessions



Young Minnesotans create images of healthy fatherhood

In January 2009, attendees of the Minnesota Fatherhood Summit selected winning entries of drawings created by young Minnesotans. The artwork, submitted for MFFN's first-ever Youth Art Contest, will be used in upcoming MFFN publications. All winning entries may be viewed online at www.mnfathers.org.

Resources & Outreach ■ Healthy Messages

■ **Newsletters:** MFFN mailed quarterly newsletters to 700 professionals and e-mailed copies to another 1,600 individuals across Minnesota. Newsletters focused on current research about father involvement, decisions at the Minn. Supreme Court and Minn. Legislature, winners of the Excellence in Fatherhood awards, and other topical information.

■ **InfoSheets:** Throughout 2008, MFFN published 3 educational handouts on the following topics: Lessons from Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives, Strategies for Child Protection Workers to Engage Fathers, and Details about Unmarried Father Involvement.

■ **Top 5 Legal Issues:** MFFN staff revised this 4-page document. It provides key information for professionals working with unmarried fathers. MFFN distributed over 2,000 copies statewide.

■ **The Daddy Book:** In late 2008, MFFN reprinted copies of The Daddy Book, a workbook for new fathers. The 80-page publication serves as a month-by-month guide to encourage father involvement in his infant's first year. Copies of The Daddy Book are available through MFFN.

■ **Website and Email Service:** MFFN's Internet portal, www.mnfathers.org, was accessed by over 35,000 unique visitors in 2008. MFFN sends monthly fatherhood news updates to 1,800 social service workers, educators, family service professionals, and fatherhood advocates. Mailings contain updates about professional training, recent research, and news affecting fathers and families in Minnesota.

■ **Fatherhood News Stories and Educational Articles:** In 2008, MFFN worked with other organizations and media outlets to publish articles about family law, healthy father involvement, and child welfare. The stories ran in professional publications and local newspapers with distribution across the state of Minnesota.

Systems Change ■ Policy and Education

■ **Public Policy Education:** In 2008, MFFN educated fatherhood professionals and public policy decision makers about the importance of healthy fatherhood for the benefit of families, children, and communities. MFFN hosted three educational sessions where policy makers updated family service professionals about changes in family policies. Staff published articles about recent policy changes, legislative updates, and court decisions affecting families.

■ **A Voice for Father-Friendly Policies:** MFFN staff participated on various statewide committees sponsored by the judiciary and government agencies. Among other topics, these committees addressed issues of joint physical custody, child welfare, child mortality, and co-parenting. Committee recommendations are being utilized by state courts, agencies, and legislative policy makers as they work to craft new policies and legislation.

■ **Public Policy Agenda:** In the fall of 2008, MFFN staff surveyed stakeholders and conducted focus groups as a means to inform the development of a Public Policy Agenda. The 2009 agenda is available online at www.mnfathers.org.

■ **Child Abuse Prevention:** In 2008, MFFN increased its focus on fathers as assets to prevent child maltreatment and to improve early child development. The nationally recognized Protective Factors are a key resource to inform this effort.

■ **Child Protection and Unmarried Fathers:** MFFN staff participated on a work group which aims to define the time-sensitive deadlines faced by unmarried fathers in relation to adoption, permanency planning, and paternity establishment. The group also plans to identify opportunities to improve accuracy of birth certificate data for fathers of children born to unmarried mothers.

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MFFN sessions lead to better services and new policies for never-married parents

In spring 2008, MFFN surveyed attendees of the 2007 Fall Fatherhood Seminar Series. Among respondents, 96% indicated that they are better equipped at serving never-married families; 75% said that they changed how they work with never-married parents; and 59% indicated that they have implemented or plan to implement a new policy, strategy or program based on what they learned.



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Financial Report

January 1—December 31, 2008

Revenues for Fiscal Year 2008

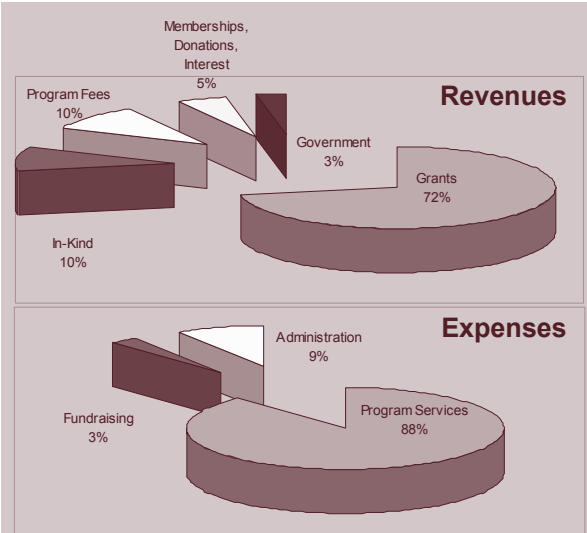
Grants	\$140,164
Program Fees	\$19,183
Government Revenue	\$5,000
Memberships / Donations	\$6,894
Interest	\$2,807
In-Kind Revenue	\$19,863
Total FY 08 Revenues	\$193,911

Expenses for Fiscal Year 2008

Program Services	\$154,327
Administration	\$14,842
Fundraising	\$4,308
In-Kind Expenses	\$19,863
Total Expenses FY 08	\$193,340

Net Income FY 08

\$571



2008 ■ Building the Field of Fatherhood Practitioners ■ 2008

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Support MFFN. Make a donation at www.mnfathers.org/donate.html. Thank you.

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A testimonial

"Beyond MFFN, no other organization in Minnesota bridges the agencies, service providers, practitioners, educators, legislators, health professionals, and the public. MFFN connects the common threads among all of us to better serve fathers and families, strengthen families, prepare for the future, and propel the fatherhood field."

- Comment from a State of Minnesota employee and fatherhood advocate



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The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network enhances healthy father-child relationships by promoting initiatives that inform public policy and further develop the field of fatherhood practitioners statewide.



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