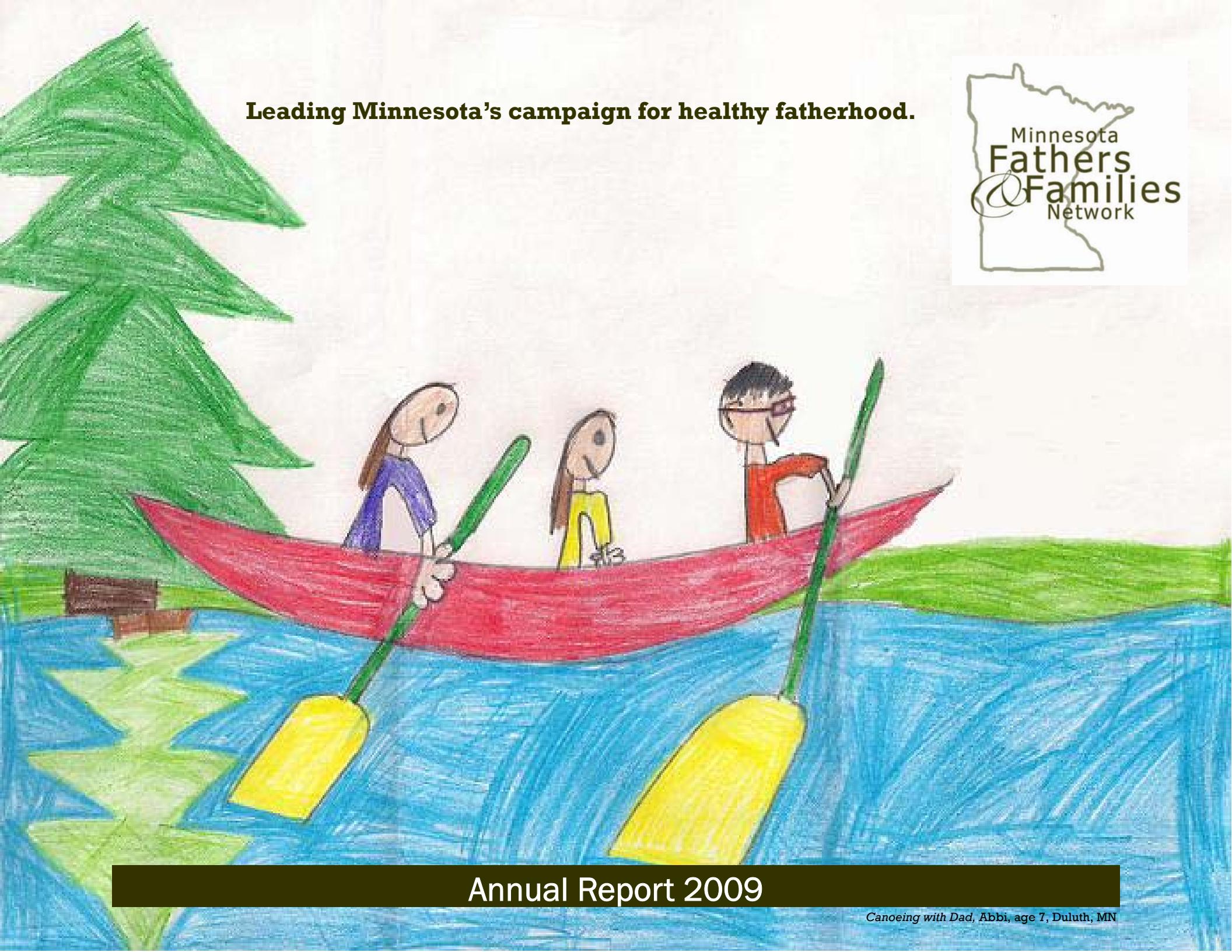


**Leading Minnesota's campaign for healthy fatherhood.**



**Annual Report 2009**

*Canoeing with Dad, Abbi, age 7, Duluth, MN*

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## A full family focus

At the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, we see our role as leading change in the way that fathers are included in public policies and programs across Minnesota.

We've always believed that fathers are an important asset and an under-utilized resource for Minnesota's children and families.

To better tap the benefits that fathers can offer our communities, we've been diligent about using language that demonstrates our ideals. For example, we talk about "strong child-father relationships", "healthy co-parenting", and "fathers as protective factors for abuse prevention".

In each of these examples, we are working to create a culture that nurtures men as fathers while respecting and enhancing the opportunities for women to be active, strong mothers.

It's through this balance that we promote the strengths of Minnesota's families — families that are forming and re-forming. Families that may be married couples, divorced parents,

single co-parenting parents, or any number of a wide array of diverse family structures.

It's through this lens that we've been building and enhancing our relationships with organizations that dedicate their services to women and children. For example, over many years we've co-hosted our fall workshops with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota and the Children's Trust Fund — two of Minnesota's premier organizations advocating for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We've strengthened our connections to the University of Minnesota's Center for Leadership Education in Maternal and Child Health — a national leader in education for current and future public health practitioners. We've looked for commonalities of mission with the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women — to promote safe environments for every family member to thrive. And we co-sponsored our 2010 conference with the state's Strong Foundations Coalition — a network of state agencies dedicated to promoting the health of Minnesota's infants.

These are only a few examples of our efforts to collaborate and build partnerships that take

fatherhood out of a narrow box of men's issues — and place it properly in the context of a full family focus. It's our belief that every Minnesotan will benefit when our public policies and programs recognize and tap fathers as a resource for families and children.

We're proud of our progress. We hope you'll join us for further advances in 2010 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Molly Crawford  
Board President

A. Paul Masiarchin  
Executive Director



My Dad and Me Hunting, Noah, age 11, Buhl, MN

### Advancing Systems and Programs

Through this broad umbrella of projects, *Advancing Systems and Programs*, MFFN is changing the way that non-profit organizations and government agencies interact with families and children.

MFFN is leading staff development trainings, presenting educational workshops, and convening work groups to expand father-friendly programming.

Through this work, family service professionals and educators are creating more father-friendly community programs.

In January 2009, MFFN sponsored a 2-day professional conference, the Minnesota Fatherhood Summit, including the Excellence in Fatherhood Awards, a public policy dinner speaker, and 15 other training sessions. The 6th annual event focused on the theme of Male Socialization and its impact on healthy fatherhood.

For the first time in June 2009, MFFN led a field trip to four innovative fatherhood programs. The tour, through some of the most diverse communities of South Minneapolis, gave participants a personal view of the program services, facilities, clients, and neighborhoods.

In the fall of 2009, MFFN sponsored 8 day-long training seminars, our 8th annual Fall Fatherhood Seminars, “We Can Parent Together: Tools for Engaging Fathers, Mothers, and Others in Co-parenting”. The sessions were offered in collaboration with Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Minnesota Prevention Resource Center, Minn. Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP), University of Minnesota Extension, Children’s Trust Fund, and the Minn. Initiative Foundations. With 377 total attendees, these were our most successful statewide workshops ever.

Throughout the year, MFFN staff and volunteers presented workshops or set-up exhibit tables at over 20 professional training events statewide. For example, staff presented workshops at the Minnesota Social Services Assoc. conference, the Family Law Institute, the Minnesota Institute of Public Health Program Sharing Conference, the Strong Foundations Conference, and various other venues.

MFFN staff facilitated strategic planning processes in two communities and convened a *Brain Trust* meeting to learn about the needs and expectations of practitioners across the state. Through these efforts, MFFN staff formalized plans for two new projects: the *Minnesota Fatherhood Leadership Circles* and the *Best Practices and Leadership Development Project*. These new projects were planned in 2009 and initiated in 2010.

MFFN participates on the steering committee for the Hennepin County Co-Parent Court, a problem-solving court model for paternity establishment that supports co-parenting to improve the social, emotional, and financial outcomes for children, families and communities.



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Staff participated on over one dozen statewide and community-based planning teams dedicated to changing the way that non-profit and government agencies interact with families and children.

In 2009, MFFN started work on the Mind the Gap project with the Minnesota Department of Corrections and Child Support Enforcement Division and various other partners. This unique partnership will address barriers that fathers leaving prison must overcome to become employed and consistent payors of child support, and to improve child support policies and collaborative practices to bridge that gap. MFFN is leading the steering committee for this project and conducting the evaluation.

Both Mind the Gap and the Co-Parent projects received funding in 2009 from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement through a section 1115 Demonstration Grant.

## Policy & Education

Through this program, MFFN educates fatherhood professionals and public policy makers about the importance of public policies and systems that engage fathers as assets for families, children, and communities.

Through this work, government agencies are changing policies and procedures to be more cognizant and supportive of the role that fathers play in nurturing families and children.

In 2009, MFFN monitored over 40 bills related to fatherhood in the State Legislature, timely disseminating information about the status of proposed legislation and translating technical bill language into terms our members can understand.

During 2009, MFFN staff published articles about recent policy changes, legislative updates, and court decisions affecting fathers and families. Electronic and print copies were disseminated broadly to policy makers and family professionals.

Throughout 2009, MFFN staff participated on statewide committees sponsored by government agencies about the development and implementation of policies in areas of family law, child welfare, child support, incarceration, early childhood development, and other areas. MFFN also reviewed the child welfare training curriculum on father engagement.

MFFN staff presented seven training sessions educating professionals in public policy and family law, covering a

breadth of issues affecting fathers who are divorced, never-married, incarcerated, gay, teens, or impacted in other ways by the family law system. MFFN hosted one day-long legislative year-in-review, co-sponsored by the McKnight Foundation. The 75 attendees included 2 state legislators and various government officials.

In 2009, MFFN started collaborating with the Second Chance Coalition to expand its ability to impact policies affecting incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, and with the Child Wellbeing Network to improve policies and practice in child welfare.



*Me and Daddy Having Fun, Erica, age 4, St. Paul, MN*

### Resource Development and Healthy Messages

Through this broad umbrella program, *Resource Development and Healthy Messages*, MFFN expands the voice for healthy fatherhood by generating print resources, maintaining a strong online presence, and building the cadre of professionals dedicated to supporting men in their roles as fathers.

Through this work, Minnesota's social service organizations, faith-based groups, educational institutions, and government agencies are learning about current research, effective practices, and positive ways to frame messages about healthy fatherhood.

In 2009, MFFN published 4 quarterly newsletters and developed 3 resource handouts on topics of healthy fatherhood. These resources were disseminated in print and electronic formats to members, e-list subscribers, and attendees of professional training sessions throughout the year.

MFFN staff emailed monthly training/research/policy updates to a database of over 2,000 professionals statewide.

MFFN printed and disseminated thousands of hard copies of free educational materials about healthy fatherhood.

MFFN staff wrote or edited articles for publication in professional journals/newsletters of various other organizations.

In January 2009, MFFN presented three Excellence in Fatherhood Awards to leaders across Minnesota. Winners included Outstanding Individual Achievement: Magistrate Steven J. Running, Duluth and two Members of the Year: Nancy Norbie, Kandiyohi County, Willmar and Jon Harper, Adventures in Fathering, Crystal.

MFFN staff helped create a collaborative web tool,

[www.wecanparenttogether.org](http://www.wecanparenttogether.org). The online site offers tips for parents and professionals interested in promoting healthy co-parenting behaviors.

MFFN maintained a comprehensive website at [www.mnfathers.org](http://www.mnfathers.org). The site continues to be a top-hit for internet searches on topics of fatherhood, male socialization, and related themes.

MFFN had 448 members during 2009, representing family services professionals, educators, fatherhood advocates, and others from across the state. Members receive quarterly newsletters, monthly email updates, voting rights, and other benefits.



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## Organizational Effectiveness

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network believes in leading by example. That's why we undertook the Charities Review Council's organizational self assessment in order to demonstrate transparency and accountability. We're proud to meet all 16 standards in areas of public disclosure, governance, financial activity, and fundraising.

## Your Feedback

MFFN works hard to evaluate our programs, gain feedback about our services, and improve the way we do business.

Please help us to meet your needs by sending us a message at any time to [info@mnfathers.org](mailto:info@mnfathers.org). We appreciate your comments about ways to better meet the needs of family-serving agencies across the state.

Here are a few comments from members in 2009:

"I walked away feeling very impressed and more connected. I am better able to make referrals."

"I just wanted to say what a helpful resource your update newsletter has been for me. Your links to research and descriptions of programs help me be better prepared for the parenting classes I teach. Thank you."

"I really appreciate the communication you had with [the lobbyist] in advance. I am sure that you had a lot of influence over his decision to not oppose the bill!"

"This was the best training that I've attended in years!"



Reading Dad!, Sheila, age 8, St. Paul, MN



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Radisson Plaza Hotel, Rochester  
Second Chance Coalition  
Shriners Hospital  
Strong Foundations Collaborative  
Southern Minn. Initiative Foundation  
Southwest Initiative Foundation  
University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development  
University of Minnesota, Center for Leadership Education in Maternal and Child Public Health  
University of Minnesota Extension  
West Central Initiative

## Leadership Level Members

*These members paid membership dues of at least \$50 per individual or \$200 per organization.*

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Michael Dierke  
DeeAnn Gieseke  
Michael Jerpbak  
Lowell Johnson  
Kootasca Community Action, Inc.  
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Women's Health Center



My Dad and Me, Kathryn, age 6, St. Paul, MN

## Individual Members and Donors

Our members and individual donors include family service professionals, fatherhood advocates, and other interested individuals. Many of our members seek to learn more about the promotion of healthy fatherhood while also supporting women and children. Some of our members ask to remain anonymous to maintain their professional neutrality in family matters. Members include conference attendees and payments received through March 2010. You can learn more about MFFN and become a member at [www.mnfathers.org](http://www.mnfathers.org) or call (651) 222-7432.

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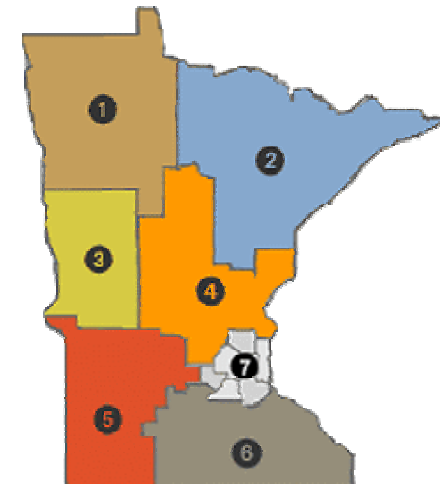
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| Molly Kramer, 4           | Brad Kramer, 5            | Lois Rengel, 4         | Jana Shogren, 4       | David Theisen, 7                | Lori Thom, 6                    |                     |  |
| Brad Kramer, 5            | Pat Krauth, 7             | Janice Renner, 1       | Louise Shogren, 1     | Lori Thom, 6                    | Shirley Thomas, 7               |                     |  |
| Pat Krauth, 7             | Deb Kreger, 7             | J.P. Rennquist, 2      | Samuel Simmons, 7     | Shirley Thomas, 7               | Joan Thompson, 3                |                     |  |
| Deb Kreger, 7             | Kimberly Kretschmer, WI   | Pat Rentz, 6           | Dwaine Simms, 7       | Joan Thompson, 3                | Brian Thorbjornsen, 2           |                     |  |
| Kimberly Kretschmer, WI   | Pamela Kroulik, 3         | Nancy Reuvers, 6       | Jill Simon, 7         | Brian Thorbjornsen, 2           | Susan Thorstad-Salmi, 2         |                     |  |
| Pamela Kroulik, 3         | Barbara Krovitz-Neren, 7  | Anna Furbo Rewitz, 7   | Jo Anne Simonson, 7   | Susan Thorstad-Salmi, 2         | Feron Thunder Hawk, 7           |                     |  |
| Barbara Krovitz-Neren, 7  | Bonnie Kuhlmann, 3        | Susan Rezac, 1         | Joy Sindelir, 7       | Feron Thunder Hawk, 7           | Neil Tift, AZ                   |                     |  |
| Bonnie Kuhlmann, 3        | Wayne Kuklinski, 7        | Johnny Rice, MD        | Shelley Skarie, 3     | Neil Tift, AZ                   | Angela Timmerman,               |                     |  |
| Wayne Kuklinski, 7        | Denise Kulig, 6           | Liz Richards, 7        | Cindy Skauge, 3       | Angela Timmerman,               |                                 |                     |  |
| Denise Kulig, 6           | Raymond LaCroix, 7        | Joann Riemer, 2        | Kay Slack, 7          |                                 |                                 |                     |  |
| Raymond LaCroix, 7        | Katie LaFleur, 6          | Brigid Riley, 7        | Sandi Slagter, 5      |                                 |                                 |                     |  |
| Katie LaFleur, 6          | Pamela Lanz, 7            | Steven Robak, 7        | Nissa Smith, 6        |                                 |                                 |                     |  |
| Pamela Lanz, 7            | Aaron LaPlante, 3         | Laura Roberts, 4       | Bernice Smoot, MD     |                                 |                                 |                     |  |
| Aaron LaPlante, 3         |                           |                        | Barb Sorum, 6         |                                 |                                 |                     |  |





My Family Matters, Gabriella, age 15, Carlton, MN

**Minnesota Fathers & Families Network**  
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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.