



*Leading Minnesota's
campaign for healthy fatherhood.*

2 November 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Paul Masiarchin
(651) 222-7432 or info@mnfathers.org

Communities Commit to Building Father-friendly Services

Brainerd, Fergus Falls, and Grand Rapids Selected for Year-long Leadership Project

Saint Paul – Minnesota's statewide fatherhood advocacy organization has selected three communities as pilot sites to participate in the Greater Minnesota Fatherhood Leadership Circles throughout 2010. The communities of Brainerd, Fergus Falls, and Grand Rapids were selected due to their strong community-wide partnerships, their commitment to building healthy families, and their interest in strengthening the role that fathers can play in healthy child development.

In Grand Rapids the project is being led through the Itasca Area Early Childhood Coalition. In Brainerd the Crow Wing County Fatherhood Task Force is the primary organizer. The Fergus Falls Early Childhood Initiative is leading the charge in their community. Each community will receive coaching and training through the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network (MFFN) as a result of a grant from the Mardag Foundation with support from the Bush Foundation and McKnight Foundation.

According to Melissa Froehle, MFFN's policy and program director and the project's manager, "the Greater Minnesota Fatherhood Leadership Circles will change the way communities think about providing supports to dads. Rather than creating new programs that may be expensive to run and manage, we're asking local government agencies and nonprofits to explore innovative ways to involve fathers in existing program structures." Froehle continues, "during these lean economic times, it makes sense to think about fatherhood programming in a sustainable way – in a way that doesn't create new financial burdens on tight public budgets."

Fatherhood Leadership Circles are groups of local professionals committed to expanding father engagement in social services, education, health, and related fields. The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network will provide technical assistance, coaching, and training, over the course of 12 months, to guide each community group. Learn more www.mnfathers.org/leadershipcircles.html.

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. For professionals committed to understanding and promoting healthy fatherhood, MFFN is the state's premier center for training, research dissemination, and policy leadership. As a statewide membership network, MFFN aims to be the one-stop resource for Minnesotans to learn about involving fathers in the lives of children, families and communities. MFFN provides a professional base for training and mutual support. We believe that fathers – in addition to mothers – have an important role in the healthy development of children. MFFN seeks to increase the number and quality of father-friendly programs and policies without diminishing any of the important resources available for women and children. Learn more at www.mnfathers.org.



###