

Minnesota's 2009 Excellence in Fatherhood Award Winners



The following awards were presented on Monday, January 12, 2009, at the Minnesota Fatherhood Summit in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Over 100 fatherhood advocates attended the recognition ceremony.

The 2009 Excellence in Fatherhood Award for **Outstanding Individual Achievement** was presented to **Magistrate Steven J. Running**, 6th Judicial District, Duluth. This award was presented to Magistrate Running for his ongoing professional support of healthy fatherhood in the workplace and in the community through a number of avenues. For example, he has been active in professional and community education outreach efforts: training attorneys, child support staff, and fatherhood programs about issues of family law. He is often the first presenter contacted when anyone in the region is planning a Family Law Clinic during the evening hours. He is always gracious about giving freely of his time in order to promote activities that support fathers and families. Frequently, he has moderated informational sessions for professionals at conferences, including the Minnesota Fatherhood Summit – and he has moderated sessions for incarcerated fathers at the Moose Lake and Willow River Correctional Facilities. Some of the strongest praise comes from individuals who work closely with him through the expedited child support process. On his nomination form, it stated that Magistrate Running always conducts expedited court hearings in a “professional, respectful, and unbiased fashion. His knowledge is outstanding and he consistently provides all parties the chance to participate fully in the hearings. We have found his orders to be fair and equitable.” For fatherhood professionals throughout Carlton County and St. Louis County, there is high respect and admiration for this caring man.

Two Member of the Year Awards were presented in 2009. The first of the 2009 Excellence in Fatherhood Awards for **Member of the Year** was presented to **Nancy Norbie**, the Child Support Supervisor of Kandiyohi County, a good friend to many fatherhood professionals, a dedicated mother, and a loving grandmother. Ms. Norbie has been working, often in isolation, toward promoting an agency that sees fathers as individuals – not as numbers on a case file. In Greater Minnesota's small towns, she has come to be recognized as a voice for fathers – often speaking to the local media and to county commissioners about the importance of promoting healthy fatherhood. Since 1987 Nancy has worked for her local child support office, where she has been able to lead changes that have resonated statewide. But her work goes further than her own agency; Ms. Norbie was one of the first individuals to take time to visit fathers in the local jail to present information on child support and to distribute educational resource information. She has also been an educator for the local Parents Forever program. Additionally, she has been a key member of the Minn. Fathers & Families Network's board of directors: as a founding board member and as the committee chair of the conference planning committee for the past 6 years! In Willmar, Kandiyohi County, and across Minnesota, when you mention healthy fatherhood, Nancy's name rises to the top.

The second of the 2009 Excellence in Fatherhood Awards for **Member of the Year** was presented to **Jon Harper**, the Executive Director of Adventures in Fathering, a nonprofit organization serving fathers and families in the Northwest metro area. Mr. Harper has been involved in providing services to men for over 30 years. He has been a mentor for numerous young men in the community and in the field of professionals working with fathers. Jon dedicates countless hours to fathers' vocational development, supports men who are navigating the family law system, and is a regular volunteer for community projects in Minnesota and across the nation. As a founding member of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network board of directors and the board's immediate past president, Mr. Harper has been known for his strong spirit, his desire to explore all points of view, and the connections he makes on a personal level. He has been actively involved with the ManKind Project, has worked nationally and internationally on men's issues, and is most at home in the outdoors spending time with his sons and family. MFFN is proud to recognize Jon for his true leadership in connecting the work of positive fatherhood and healthy masculinity internationally, nationally, and locally.

The Excellence in Fatherhood Awards have been presented by the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network since January 2005. A list of past awardees is available at www.mnfathers.org/awards.html. The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network is leading Minnesota's campaign for healthy fatherhood. MFFN enhances healthy father-child relationships by promoting initiatives that inform public policy and further develop the field of fatherhood practitioners statewide. Learn more online at www.mnfathers.org.