

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network

Our mission, as a statewide network, is to initiate, promote and support effective programs and to educate on public policy to enhance the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of children, families and the community.

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Visit us online at
www.mnfathers.org.

A RESOURCE FOR PROGRAMS
THAT ARE HELPING DADS
TO HELP THEMSELVES, THEIR KIDS
AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Network Notes

February 2004

Minnesota Fatherhood Conference Attracts 200

Nearly 200 professionals from across Minnesota gathered on January 16 in St. Cloud to attend the first statewide event of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network. The full-day Fatherhood Summit provided a high-energy venue for networking and discussion among front-line family services workers, fatherhood program managers, state and county agency staff, a variety of non-profit human services professionals, state legislators, college students, and others.

Conference evaluations indicate a strong interest in more statewide events and training sessions to network, to discuss best practices in fatherhood programming, and to learn about family-related public policy in Minnesota. One attendee commented on the “energy and passion for empowering fathers” while another commented that the conference provided a “wealth of information on a long overdue movement!”

*“Energy and passion for
empowering fathers”*

Keynote speakers included Representative Matt Entenza, minority leader of the Minnesota House of Representatives; Neil Tift, Director of Professional Advancement at the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF); and Joe Kelly, President of Dads and Daughters. Workshop topics included teen parenting issues, multicultural perspectives on fathering, funding strategies for family services programs, human relationship development, public policy advocacy efforts, legal issues surrounding family law, and much more.

The Summit was supported by contributions from the McKnight Foundation, NPNFF, Northland Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Minnesota Family Relations Council, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Southside Community Health Services, Dads and Daughters, and MFFN members. ❖

Minnesota Family Assistance Guidebook

A guide to public programs providing assistance to Minnesota families is available online at www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/famasst.pdf. The publication, released January 2004, describes the federal and state programs that provide assistance to Minnesota families in the form of income, health care, food purchasing and housing. Programs covered in the guide are General Assistance, Minn. Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minn. Supplementary Aid, Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance Medical Care, Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, Child Care, Food Stamps, and Group Residential Housing. ❖

Deployed Fathers and Families Guide and Brochure

The National Fatherhood Initiative is distributing FREE copies of the “Deployed Fathers and Families Guide for Enlisted Personnel” and a brochure entitled “10 Ways to Stay Involved with Your Children During Deployment!” The 48 page guide offers practical pre-deployment tips and exercises to help military dads and their families handle the financial, medical, legal, and personal aspects of military deployment. The guide provides military dads with many of the most critical tools they need to stay connected at home while taking care of business overseas. Individuals may request one free copy and non-military organizations may request 100 free guides. Please visit www.fatherhood.org to place your order. ❖

MFFN Board of Directors

MFFN is committed to hearing the voices of fatherhood practitioners from throughout Minnesota. MFFN Board Members represent every region of the state.

Rebecca Ahlstrand, Carlton County Child Support, **Carlton**

Jayne Anderson, Nicollet County Social Services, **St. Peter**

Paula Baker, Bemidji Area Schools, **Bemidji**

Joe Bandel, Aitkin County Health & Human Services, **Aitkin**

Jon Harper, Adventures in Fathering, **Crystal**

R. Clarence Jones, Southside Community Health Services, **Minneapolis**

Jay Kieft, Southwest Minnesota Foundation, **Hutchinson**

Nathan Knutson, Minn. Department of Corrections, **Moose Lake**

Matt Majeski, Olmsted County Community Services, **Rochester**

Nancy Norbie, Kandiyohi County Family Services, **Willmar**

Glen Palm, St. Cloud State University, **St. Cloud**

Velura Peterson, Social Services, **Virginia**

Darlene Reiter, Fathers' Resource Center, **Fergus Falls**

Pat Sharbonda, Crow-Wing County Family Services Collaborative, **Brainerd**

Jack Sharp, **St. Cloud**

Enrique Soto, ConAgra Foods, **St. James**

Jim Thunder Hawk, Upper Midwest American Indian Center, **Minneapolis**

John Titcomb, Otter Tail - Wadena CAC Head Start, **New York Mills**

Glenn Tobey, Carlton Co. Children & Family Service Collaborative, **Cloquet**

Laura Turner, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development, **St. Paul**

Tina Welsh, Women's Health Center, **Duluth**

Minnesota Review: Duluth Organization Promotes Positive Messages about Girls and Boys

Dads and Daughters, a national nonprofit based in Duluth, inspires fathers to actively and deeply engage in the lives of their daughters and galvanizes fathers and others to transform the pervasive cultural messages that devalue girls and women. Dads and Daughters seeks your help to educate some people who are making a lot of money selling the idea that harming boys is what girl power is all about.

David and Goliath (www.davidandgoliathtees.com) sells T-shirts with the message "Boys are stupid. Throw rocks at them!" as well as other equally harmful slogans. The shirts are sold in stores and on the David and Goliath website.

Dads and Daughters asks you to, "tell Todd, the self-proclaimed Creative Genius behind these messages, that demeaning boys does not help girls. Tell him that you will not spend your money to promote violence and that you will encourage organizations serving kids to take a stand against it as well.

"Forward the link to your local PTA, your children's school, your church, the YMCA, the YWCA, and Boy Scout and Girl Scout councils in your area. Ask them to lend their voices to this issue.

"This action targets David and Goliath, the manufacturer and distributor of the T-shirts. If you know a store that carries the shirts, please send a letter to the store manager demanding they pull the product."

For further information about this action and the work of Dads and Daughters, contact John Ball, Program Manager at (218) 722-3942 x34 or john@dadsanddaughters.org. Also, visit www.dadsanddaughters.org to learn more about other action being promoted by Dads and Daughters. ❖

A Voice for the Fatherhood Field

MFFN seeks to provide a voice for fatherhood and family services organizations across Minnesota. If you have a "best practice" or information to share with other human services practitioners and fatherhood advocates, please send your idea to MFFN (see page one for contact information).

Men's Reproductive Health Needs Gain Attention

Men, like women, have sexual and reproductive health care needs—but how well are these needs being met? The September/October 2003 issue of Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health offers research and opinion on how to bring men into the U.S. sexual and reproductive health care system. All current and archived articles from Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health can be downloaded from The Alan Guttmacher Institute's Web site, www.guttmacher.org. ❖

Video on Fatherhood Involvement Now Available

To be a Father, a new video to encourage fatherhood involvement is now available from the "I Am Your Child Foundation!" Order by calling 1-888-447-3400. Research shows that fathers can have an enormous impact on children – from how well they succeed in school, to how they get along with their friends. This generation of dads is responding to the challenge, by taking a more active role in everything from changing diapers to helping with homework. And it's paying off, as you'll hear from men who talk about the rewards of being close to their kids. Hosted by Ray Romano, this video includes information about the important role fathers can play in the lives of their young children. The original Spanish version, hosted by Antonio Banderas, will be available soon. ❖