



Network Notes

February 2005

Male socialization gaining increased national attention

The topic of male socialization, the process whereby boys learn to be men, is gaining increased national attention ever since the announcement that First Lady Laura Bush will lead a new outreach effort to focus on helping young men achieve a successful future. Throughout February, Mrs. Bush has spoken on the vulnerability of boys and the need for more supports on their behalf.

The topic of male socialization has been largely ignored in recent years. However, there is now a growing realization that society must raise healthy boys not only for the benefit of men, but also for the benefit of girls and women. It was with this thought in mind that the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network began planning a roundtable meeting to encourage professionals in higher education to talk about their roles in promoting healthy male socialization. The roundtable, scheduled for February 25, 2005 at St. John's University, coincides with the upswing of interest in healthy male socialization.

According to Mrs. Bush, "the statistics on boys are particularly alarming. Boys begin to fall behind girls in elementary school, in fact, nearly 70 percent of students in special education classes are boys. In high school, the boys fall even further behind and more girls go on to college than boys." She continues, "today, women earn an average of 57 percent of all bachelors degrees and 58 percent of all masters degrees in the United States. Boys are more likely than girls to commit crimes and to be a victim of violent crime."¹

The difficulties of growing up male are many. At a youth event in Detroit, the First Lady explained "our children are living in an increasingly complex world, and boys especially are having a tough time growing up. Boys are more likely than girls to be arrested for crimes. The Department of Justice estimates that more than 90 percent of gang members

in large cities are boys. They are also more than four times likely than girls to carry a weapon to school. And by age 18, boys are 17 times more likely than girls to be in jail."²

The process of male socialization is promoted by our society through "the boy code" whereby boys learn to value independence and violence while learning to devalue intimacy and emotional expression. However, according to Mrs. Bush and other researchers, parents and adult role models can be strong advocates for healthy male socialization.

As the First Lady explained, "many young people today are growing up with a single parent in a single parent home. And too many boys are growing up without fathers. Coaches and male teachers make great, great role models for boys. We must encourage more men and more minorities to become teachers."¹

She also explained, "researchers are studying how boys differ from girls in their ability to cope with life changes. We have more to learn. But we know that positive experiences within their families, their schools and their communities can determine whether boys will live a life of peril or a life of promise."²

¹ Remarks by the First Lady on Helping America's Youth Initiative Community College National Legislative Summit, Feb. 15, 2005.

² Remarks by the First Lady at Helping America's Youth Event, Feb. 10, 2005.

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.

Paul Masiarchin, State Coordinator
1700 Second Street, Northeast
Minneapolis, MN 55413
Phone: 612-787-4091
Fax: 612-787-4002
pmasiarchin@mnfathers.org
www.mnfathers.org

Visit us online at
www.mnfathers.org.

Learn about MFFN's efforts to
promote healthy male socialization—
the Roundtable on Male Socialization
for Professionals in Research and
Higher Education held at St. John's
University. Details are linked on our
homepage, www.mnfathers.org.

MFFN seeks intern

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network seeks a part-time volunteer intern to assist with the management of the Network. This is an unpaid part-time position located in Northeast Minneapolis. This is a perfect position for a college student seeking to fulfill community service hours or for a parent seeking to learn more about father involvement in the lives of children. Part of the work may be completed outside of the MFFN office.

Responsibilities: The intern will assist with development of marketing materials, writing of articles for monthly newsletters, management of a comprehensive database, development of workshops and conferences, and/or other tasks depending on his/her interests and abilities.

Qualifications: College coursework in social services, education and/or fathering preferred; strong written and oral communication skills; ability to work independently with little supervision; knowledge of Microsoft Word, Access, and Publisher programs preferred.

Apply: Please submit a brief letter of interest, resume, and references to MFFN. (Mail and email addresses are listed on page one.) Direct questions to Paul Masiarchin at (612) 787-4091.

Parent-teen relationships and interactions: far more positive than not

Results from a nationally representative survey of U.S. teens indicates that most teens say they admire their parents and enjoy spending time with them. The brief also includes a roundup of findings from rigorous U.S. studies showing the link between positive parent-child interactions and a wide range of positive outcomes for teens, as well as similar findings about positive parent-teen relationships in other industrialized countries. A brief is available from Child Trends. www.childtrends.org/Files/Parent_TeenRB.pdf, Dec. 2004

Building programs that recognize families' role in reentry

This paper, from the Vera Institute of Justice, looks at Project Greenlight and other innovations across the nation to explore how family involvement in re-entry may lead to more successful transitions from prison and better recidivism results. The report finds anecdotal evidence that suggests that families can be a powerful force for positive change for ex-offenders. However, families need significant support in order to fill that role. www.vera.org/publication_pdf/249_476.pdf, September 2004

Working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence

This web site is a comprehensive tool kit designed to help professionals who work with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence. It provides readings, case studies, handouts, exercises, and other resources as well as community-building tools. <http://toolkit.endabuse.org/Home>



Calendar for fatherhood professionals

Fri., Feb. 25, 2005, 8:00 am—4:30 pm, Roundtable Meeting for Professionals in Higher Education

"What's the role for colleges and universities in healthy male socialization?" Hosted by MFFN and a group of Minnesota-based universities with support from the Otto Bremer Foundation. Location: St. John's Univ., Collegeville, MN.

Friday – Sunday, February 25-27, 2005 Conference on the College Male

Keynote presenters will include Michael Kimmel, Harry Brod, Robert Jensen and Will Fellows.

Location: Saint John's University, Collegeville
Sponsored by the Center for Men's Leadership at St. John's University. For details, visit www.csbsju.edu/menscenter/conference.

Monday, March 14, 2004

MFFN Quarterly Board Meeting

St. Cloud location. For details, please contact Paul Masiarchin at info@mnfathers.org or call (612) 787-4091.

Tues. - Friday, March 15-18, 2005

Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA) 112th Annual Conference

The conference offers tracks for human service professionals, including two fatherhood workshops on Thursday morning, March 17th.

Location: Sheraton Hotel, Bloomington, MN.
Details: www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org.

Mon—Tues, April 11 - 12, 2005

15th Minn. Conference on Adolescent Females "Girls Becoming Women: Igniting the Power Within"

Location: Four Points Sheraton, Saint Paul.
For social workers, teachers, health care providers, youth workers, and other professionals who care about the future of adolescent girls. Details: www.mngirls.org.

Thur—Fri, May 5-6, 2005

14th MOAPPP Conference, "The Lives of Our Teens: A Look from the Inside Out"

Location: Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center.
Minnesota's key conference for professionals working in areas of teen pregnancy, prevention and parenting.
Details: www.moappp.org.

2005 Excellence in Fatherhood awards

The Excellence in Fatherhood Awards were developed to honor individuals, agencies, programs and other institutions that are making outstanding contributions to fatherhood policy and practice in Minnesota. The first annual awards were presented on January 20, 2005, at the MFFN annual conference in St. Cloud. Award recipients, nominated by members of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, received engraved marble pillars in honor of their contributions to the fatherhood field in Minnesota. The five honorees are listed below.

Visionary: Mary L. Anderson

Mary Anderson was the visionary and driving force in developing a collaboration of fatherhood programs in Minnesota. As a long term state administrator for the Child Support Program she has promoted the importance of fathers in the lives of their children for many years. Despite the fact that the child support system was not originally designed to meet needs of the non-custodial parent, Mary created an initiative to promote the importance of fathers in human service programs. She supported and highlighted fatherhood programs during a time when others questioned the appropriateness of the connection between them and the Child Support Program. Mary's efforts helped initiate a positive change in the attitude of the child support community. By bringing together a number of agencies which serve fathers, Mary essentially laid the foundation for MFFN. She is an outstanding leader and a true champion of collaboration in supporting fathers and families.

Individual of the Year: John Turnipseed

John Turnipseed, Director of Urban Ventures Center for Fathering in Minneapolis, is a change agent. Mr. Turnipseed's goal has been to instill a conscience back into the Minneapolis neighborhood where he grew up. John is a product of the streets and the penal system that has turned his "product knowledge" into tools which help dads become effective fathers. Through parenting classes, Urban Ventures annually teaches 350 fathers about what it means to be an involved, responsible parent. John has also involved women in the Center through "Women's Empowerment", which focuses on serving the partners and children of the 350 men. Through his work and through his collaboration with the Harriet Tubman Center, Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, John has become a role model for the community and a trusted advisor to local and state officials.

Agency of the Year: Minnesota Humanities Commission, Family Literacy Initiatives

The Minnesota Humanities Commission, under the leadership of Tom Fitzpatrick and Kathleen Moriarty, supports fathers through Family Literacy Initiatives and Reading with Dad Initiatives. These efforts include "Dads and Kids" book clubs and the FRED Program (Fathers Reading Every Day), which provide parent education about the importance of early literacy, books for families, and encouragement to read to young children on a daily basis. MHC also publishes the popular Reading with Dad booklist, distributed to thousands of parents and programs in Minnesota and across the country. MHC, through the Reading with Dad Initiative, is a great example of a carefully designed effort to increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of their

young children. MHC provides leadership in the state by raising awareness about the importance of fathers in children's literacy development and later success in school.

Advocate of the Year: Louis Hohlfeld

The McKnight Foundation has a history of supporting children and families and is involved in numerous efforts to improve family life in Minnesota. The specific attention to the role of fatherhood is noteworthy in their larger efforts to support families. Louis Hohlfeld, Senior Program Officer at the McKnight Foundation, generated financial support to build a fatherhood coalition in Minnesota and identified the fatherhood field as a strategic long-term investment in Minnesota children and families. The results of these efforts have helped to successfully launch MFFN as an organization that supports fatherhood practitioners and represents diverse stakeholders from around the state. Louis has also offered to MFFN sound advice, emotional support, and guidance through his knowledge and understanding of the importance of fathers in children's lives. His commitment to the fatherhood field in Minnesota has provided a solid base of support for fatherhood practitioners.

Member of the Year: Glen Palm

During MFFN's development, the Network was fortunate to count on the steady leadership and quiet guidance of an ardent fatherhood advocate. Dr. Palm served as the chair of the MFFN Organizing Committee and served as the president of the Board of Directors in 2003-2004. Glen is a Professor in Child and Family Studies at St. Cloud State University. He also is a parent educator for The Dad's Project, an initiative of the St. Cloud Early Childhood Family Education program. As a researcher/practitioner Dr. Palm has studied fathers and parent education over the last 20 years and has published several articles and book chapters on working with fathers. He has recently co-authored *Fathers and Early Childhood Programs* (2004) with Jay Fagan. Fatherhood practitioners and advocates across the state recognize Glen's valuable contributions toward advancing Minnesota's fatherhood field.

Help spread the word about services for fathers!

Create a weblink to www.mnfathers.org.

Or, link directly to our list of 100 Minnesota programs that serve men and fathers:

www.mnfathers.org/search/ServProvSearch.php

ADD A LINK TO MNFATHERS.ORG

MFFN Board of Directors



The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network 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**

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

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

Gar Kellom, St. John's University, **Collegeville**

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**

Dwaine Simms, African American Men Project, **Minneapolis**

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

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

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

Laura Turner, Employment / Fatherhood Advocate, **St. Paul**

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

Francis Wind, Head Start Program, **Leech Lake Reservation**

MFFN hosts successful winter conference

For the second year in a row, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network hosted a statewide winter conference in St. Cloud. This year, the event was expanded to 1 ½ days with a total of 225 individuals attending from across Minnesota. Over half of all attendees were from greater Minnesota.

The conference theme, “Strengthening Fathers; Strengthening Families” was selected to reflect the belief that positive father involvement leads to healthy families and communities. Conference presenters – representing liberal, moderate, and conservative organizations – demonstrated a common understanding of the importance of creating strong and positive relationships between fathers and their children.

On Wednesday, January 19, 2005, approximately 125 individuals attended three afternoon pre-conference workshops. These 3-hour sessions were designed to provide in-depth training on specific topics related to father involvement: working with low-income families; advocating and working for fathers of infants/young children; and addressing the legal needs of unmarried fathers. In the evening, MFFN hosted a networking reception with a dessert buffet. At that time, Dr. Mitch Pearlstein from the Center of the American Experiment presented a brief talk about the history of the fatherhood movement from the 1960s thru the present with references to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, comedian Bill Cosby, Vice President Al Gore, H.H.S. Assistant Secretary Wade Horn, and numerous others.

Thursday, January 20th, was the main day of the conference with a morning keynote by Dwaine Simms of the Minneapolis-based African American Men Project. Mr Simms discussed the Right Turn Project, a holistic effort to address the multiple needs of African American men in the City of Minneapolis. The conference’s closing keynote was presented by Dr. Marti Erickson from the University of Minnesota’s Children, Youth and Family Consortium. Dr. Erickson touched on the role of women in the fatherhood movement—including the role of women as gatekeepers to their children and the need for men in families to support (and to be supported by) women. During our luncheon session, five Excellence in Fatherhood Awards were presented to fatherhood advocates from across Minnesota (see page 3). Ten 90-minute breakout sessions (five in the morning and five after lunch) allowed participants an opportunity to attend workshops based on their interests.

The overall conference evaluations provided positive feedback about the event’s topics, presenters, and overall organization. Attendees reported overwhelmingly positive remarks about the keynote and workshop presenters. A large number of suggestions were offered about topics that could be added as workshop themes next year. Also, numerous comments asked for more networking time and/or a longer conference. The evaluations demonstrate a strong interest in continuing MFFN Fatherhood Summits as an annual event. For a full description of the conference workshops, presenters, handouts and evaluation, please visit www.mnfathers.org/summit.html.

A voice for fatherhood

MFFN seeks to provide a voice for Minnesota’s fatherhood and family services organizations. 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).

Donate to MFFN

Help us to meet the needs of fatherhood advocates and practitioners across Minnesota. Your gift in any amount is appreciated. Please contact MFFN (see page one) or print and mail the online form, available at www.mnfathers.org/documents/DonationsForm.pdf.

Subscribe now

“Network Notes” is published quarterly and mailed to MFFN members each February, May, August, and November. Learn more about becoming a member at www.mnfathers.org/members.html or contact MFFN (see page 1).

Support for MFFN is provided in part by:
The McKnight Foundation,
the Otto Bremer Foundation,
& MFFN members.