

Network Notes

February 2006



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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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 you would like to share,
please contact MFFN.

"Network Notes" is published in
February, May, August, and November.

Men's Line goes statewide with counseling hotline

The Crisis Connection's "Men's Line" has long been accessible to men living in the Twin Cities metro area, or by long-distance for others. Now, Crisis Connection has expanded the 24-hour counseling line toll-free across Minnesota, for men and others who want to talk with someone about issues of abuse and violence.

The Men's Line

612-379-6367

Twin Cities local calls

1-866-379-6367

Toll-free calls across Minnesota

In fall 2005, the Men's Line was expanded to its current statewide service area. The Men's Line is immediately accessible 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. The confidential counseling service, delivered by skilled counselors, is provided free of charge. The Crisis Connection believes that "it is imperative that men have a place that they can call for free, non-judgmental, compassionate, confidential help."

The telephone "hotline" was designed to give men and boys a resource to break isolation and address issues of stress, anger, and depression. Men and boys frequently do not reach out for help and assistance through "traditional" means such as mental health services, spiritual guidance, and other support groups. Many of the calls deal with relationship problems, chemical abuse, joblessness, criminal violations, sexuality issues, and suicide.

According to
Crisis
Connection,
the Men's
Line may be
"the first and

only resource of its kind in the United States." Initiated in 1997, the Men's Line is a collaboration between nearly a dozen Twin Cities agencies.

In 2004, the telephone service answered 1,625 calls; since 2000 the monthly call volume has increased by 72%. In 2004, 83% of callers requested counseling and referrals; 65% called for referrals only.

Crisis Connection is a non-profit mental health telephone counseling service. They are dedicated to helping people with personal and family problems and crises, through telephone counseling, but also through professional training and community education services.

In addition to the Men's Line, Crisis Connection offers a Crisis Hotline, a Teen Education Program, a WorkLine for individuals moving from welfare to work, a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and an After Hours Counseling Program. In 2005, Crisis Connection received over 90,000 calls to its various telephone counseling lines.

Details: In order to receive copies, by mail, of the Men's Line wallet cards, promotional brochures, magnets, and posters, please leave a voicemail message on the Crisis Connection business line at (612) 379-6388. More information about Crisis Connection is available online at www.crisis.org.

MFFN makes plans for '06

On December 12, 2005, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network held its Annual Meeting at the Sabathani Center in Minneapolis. The main order of business was to finalize the election of new board members. A total of five new members and five incumbent members were elected to serve a three year term, 2006-2008. See page four for a complete list of board names and organizational affiliations. Pat Sharbonda, outgoing president, presented a Year-In-Review, highlighting MFFN's accomplishments in 2005.

Members also approved the organization's 2006 budget. MFFN is particularly grateful to the following foundations, which will fund a large portion of the organization's activities in 2006: the **Bush Foundation**, the **Grotto Foundation**, the **Initiative Foundation**, and the **McKnight Foundation**. Additional funding has been acquired from International Dairy Queen, Northland Foundation, Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Southwest Minnesota Foundation, fee-based projects, and MFFN members.



Fatherhood Summit focuses on “valuing fathers in families”

MFFN’s 3rd annual winter conference, the “Minn. Fatherhood & Family Services Summit” featured 3 keynote presentations, 15 workshop sessions, networking and exhibit booths on January 23-24, 2006 in St. Cloud. With more than 200 attendees, the conference proved that Minnesota’s educators, social service employees, government workers and family service professionals are gaining interest in the important intersection between healthy fathers and healthy children.



One attendee commented on the “wonderful diversity of presenters; all with great knowledge of their topic.” Presenters addressed

issues such as “transitions from corrections”, “preventing too-early fatherhood”, “Latino fathers”, “protecting children from online hazards”, “American Indian fatherhood”, “bullying in schools”, “religion and fatherhood”, and more.

On Monday afternoon, 3-hour training sessions included the topics of “methamphetamine use in families”, “the ethics of fatherhood programming”, and “fathers and mothers in Minnesota’s child protection system”. These concurrent sessions allowed attendees an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of one father-related theme.

On Monday evening, **Senator Linda Berglin** (DFL, Minneapolis) discussed challenges and successes of the 2005 legislative session including funding for child care and health care, child support changes, new fees for state services, and incremental progress toward supporting fathers. Berglin also discussed possible themes for the 2006 legislative session such as provisions to make health care accessible to all Minnesotans and to increase support for low-income individuals and families.

On Tuesday morning, **Samuel Simmons** and **Dr. Glen Palm** spoke impromptu about their experiences working with men who have struggled with domestic violence and incarceration, respectively. Dr. Palm shared strategies he uses to help men in the St. Cloud prison to stay connected to their children. **Dr. Oliver Williams** wrapped up the morning session with an introduction to the topic of “fathering after violence”, including his work at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community.

On Tuesday afternoon, **Dr. Ronald May** discussed the emerging psychology of men including obstacles and opportunities for father involvement. Attendees commented on the value of his focus on healing and his “back to basics” approach. Dr. May addressed the challenges of male development including the strain of the gender role and the double standard of masculinity that our society promotes. He also addressed “father hunger”, our collective yearning for an ideal father that can shape our individual actions throughout life.

Also on Tuesday, MFFN presented the “Excellence in Fatherhood” awards (see p. 3). Conference details are available online at www.mnfathers.org.

Join an e-group for online networking

MIDWEST E-LIST FOR FATHERHOOD PROFESSIONALS:

The Region V Office of the Administration for Children and Families maintains this interactive list. Join the Listserv by e-mailing: join-fatherhood@lyris.acf.hhs.gov. By becoming a participant, you will obtain current information, receive invitations to Collaboration Network Conference Calls, be able to provide your input on areas of interest, and ask for assistance from peers. Listserv participants share a commitment to fatherhood and male involvement efforts for the sake of children and families. Participants include professionals working in Head Start, Child Welfare, Runaway and Homeless Youth Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs, state agencies, and community-based organizations.

E-MONTHLY ON WORKING WITH RURAL FATHERS:

RuralFathers.com is dedicated to help professionals work with fathers and young children living in rural America through staff training, father-child development activities, father-child group activities, male involvement meetings, an e-monthly, and multi media links. RuralFathers.com, based in Rapid City, S. Dakota, was developed by an Early Head Start Male Involvement Project Coordinator to help service agencies and early childhood educators—including Head Start and Early Head Start—develop a new program or enhance an existing responsible fatherhood program.

MINNESOTA E-LIST FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH TRANSITIONS FROM CORRECTIONS:

This e-list is maintained by Tim Lanz, Institutional Reentry Coordinator for the Minn. Department of Corrections. Tim sends out regular emails about state and national trainings, events, and reports on the topic of transitioning from corrections. To join the list, send an email to timothy.j.lanz@state.mn.us.

MINNESOTA E-MONTHLY ON ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY, PREVENTION AND PARENTING:

MOAPPP sends a monthly update about training events, national news, and public policy related to adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting. Through its e-monthly, MOAPPP provides a vehicle to learn about what others are doing statewide. If you are a provider interested in publicizing your program, successes or ideas, send MOAPPP information on what’s happening in your community. Sign up at: www.moappp.org/about_us/subscribe_emonthly.html.

NATIONAL E-LIST FOR DADS:

Subscribe to the National Fatherhood Initiative’s “Dad Email” to receive periodic tips, news, and activities for fathers who want to be more involved with their children. Sign up at www.fatherhood.org (the sign-up box is located at the bottom of the green toolbar on the right side). NFI’s mission is to improve the well being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers.

MFFN presents the 2006 Minnesota Excellence in Fatherhood awards

The Excellence in Fatherhood Awards honor individuals, programs and institutions that make outstanding contributions to fatherhood policy and practice in Minnesota. The second annual awards were presented by MFFN on January 24, 2006, at the Fatherhood Summit in St. Cloud. Awardees received engraved marble pillars and a father-focused children's book from the Minn. Humanities Commission's "Reading with Dad Booklist".

Program of the Year: Universal Contact Program, Brown County Public Health

Terri Helland, a public health nurse in this south central Minnesota county, accepted the award for the Universal Contact Program. Through this program, families with newborn babies in Brown County receive a free home visit from a public health nurse. The nurse performs health assessments and provides information and resources to empower parents to make sure that every child has the assets and protective factors necessary to ensure healthy development and a positive future. Since 2001, the Brown County program has tracked the involvement of fathers at home visits. According to **Judy Mathiowetz**, a Brown County Public Health supervisor, the Universal Contact Program has been able to increase father-involvement five-fold (from 7% involvement in 2001 to nearly 40% in 2004)! The program encourages fathers to be involved by scheduling visits at a time convenient for both parents; the nurse stresses the importance of the father's involvement with the infant; parents learn about research that shows why father-involvement is critical for emotional security and healthy child development.

Individual of the Year: Jan Hayne, Dads Make a Difference

Jan Hayne, Program Director for Dads Make a Difference, has dedicated the past ten years to this paternity education program for male and female high school teens. During this time, DMAD has trained over 2,000 students through a four-lesson curriculum that focuses on the roles of fathers in families, the full responsibilities of parenting, and the decision-making processes that lead to responsible choices in order to avoid too-early parenthood. According to **Molly Oberweiser**, DMAD Community Program Specialist, "Jan's efforts over the past few years...have been nothing short of amazing. Jan not only believes in teens' ability to step into leadership when offered the opportunity, Jan works every day to create an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement, excellence and opportunity for each teen..." Jan takes a leadership role across the state through Minn. Fathers & Families Network, Hennepin County Teen Parent Connection, St. Paul / Ramsey County Teen Parenting / Sexual Violence group, and Sexuality and Family Life Educators. Jan is a consistent advocate for fathers and their children and families.

Father of the Year: J. Neil Tift

Neil Tift is a husband, father of three, grandfather of five and foster father of many. These roles are Neil's top priority. In addition, Neil is a licensed family mediator, author and pioneer in creating, developing and implementing fatherhood programs throughout the nation. Through the National Practitioners

Network for Fathers & Families, Neil works as a trainer and consultant to support the development of fatherhood programs for local, state, and national organizations. Additionally, Neil is a co-director of the new Dad's and Families Center in Stillwater. Over the past year, despite concerns of family health and professional finances, Neil has continued to provide a positive and supportive embrace to his family and to the broader field of fatherhood in Minnesota. Neil always sees the "big picture" and is a strong advocate for better fatherhood programming; he promotes effective program collaborations; and he finds and nurtures new allies who support the field of fatherhood. Through Neil's guidance and support, Minnesota is better equipped to meet the needs of men, women and children.

Coalition of the Year: Watonwan County Early Childhood Initiative Coalition

The Watonwan County Early Childhood Initiative Coalition creates awareness and opportunities for early learning of children and their families. The south-central Minnesota coalition increases father-child involvement; educates fathers about child development; increases the number of father-friendly institutions; and educates communities about the importance of fathers. According to coalition coordinator **Sue Harris**, the coalition's program, "Guys, Kids and Saints / Wolverines / Blackhawks" enables fathers and young children to spend time together at high school sports games and to interact with the athletes. The coalition sponsored a Wise Guys curriculum for students and men focusing on pregnancy prevention and responsibilities of fathering. Through the coalition, students participated in Dads Make a Difference. According to **Anni O'Neill** of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), the coalition was selected and sponsored by SMIF (as part of the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative) based, in part, on broad support from diverse populations and various sectors of the community including elected officials, educators, community-based organizations, the media and corporations.

The 2006 Excellence in Fatherhood recipients:

Across Minnesota, fathers are uplifted by strong programs, caring individuals, and insightful advocates.

Member of the Year: R. Clarence Jones

Clarence Jones, Community Outreach Director for Southside Community Health Services in South Minneapolis, has been involved in working with low-income, non-custodial fathers and families, young adolescent males on male responsibility issues and community projects associated with youth development for more than twenty-five years. Since the inception of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, Clarence has been a vital supporter and has become one of the faces that Minnesotans associate with the Network. Clarence has traveled around the state for the last four years to a total of 17 different cities to represent the Network at MFFN's Fall Seminar Series. Clarence was an original Planning Council Member and has been on the Board of Directors since 2003. Currently, Clarence is beginning his first term as MFFN President. Clarence has been active on several community boards including the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP), the Saint Paul Foundation's Pan African Community Endowment Fund and was recently appointed to the Council of Black Minnesotans by Governor Pawlenty.

2006 Board of Directors



The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network is committed to hearing the voices of fatherhood practitioners from throughout Minnesota.

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

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

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

Gene Banks, Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, **Mora**

Jason Giese, Southwest Minn. Private Industry Council, **Montevideo**

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

Jan Hayne, Dads Make a Difference, **St. Paul**

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

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

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

Joyce Lussier, Bi-CAP Head Start, **Bemidji**

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

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

Velura Peterson, Social Services, **Virginia**

Tamy Reese, Morris Early Childhood Family Education, **Morris**

Jack Sharp, Fatherhood Advocate, **St. Cloud**

Dwaine Simms, Twin Cities Rise, **Minneapolis**

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

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

Tina Welsh, Boyz II Dadz, **Duluth**

Fatherhood research roundup: Recent documents examine aspects of fatherhood

Statutory rape: Sex between young teens and older individuals

A new ChildTrends DataBank Indicator reports that, among young people ages 15 to 24 in 2002, 13 percent of females and 5 percent of males stated that their first sexual experience occurred at age 15 or younger with an individual who was three or more years older. These relationships are associated with risky sexual behaviors that could lead to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Online: www.childtrendsdatabank.org/indicators/100StatutoryRape.cfm

Young expectant Black fathers are committed to child; feel marginalized by family

Young expectant fathers feel marginalized and discounted by maternity services and by the extended family, according to this study by Bristol University, Fathers Direct, and St Michael's Fellowship. The London-based project found that young Black men's past experiences in the educational and employment systems may lead to their low expectations of inclusion. The clinic environment can give a powerful message about whether men are expected to be there, and could act as a gateway to relevant services. Special materials 'for dad' are vital: they acknowledge a young father's value, provide vital information and establish on-going links with support services. Online at www.fathersdirect.com; click on "research". (September 2005)

Intervening in litigated contact: Strategies to address custody and parenting time

Oxford University's Department of Social Policy and Social Work examines a number of issues related to child contact for separated and divorced parents. Sections of the study look at: education in post-separation parenting; mandatory mediation; parenting time guidelines; and strategies to tackle non-compliance with court orders. The paper looks at processes in Western Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. The focus is on the minority of cases which reach the courts, which generate greatest concern and disproportionately absorb public resources. The paper selects types of intervention which are not common in England and examines the evidence for their effectiveness, using research and other documentation. Online: www.apsoc.ox.ac.uk/Docs/fpb4.pdf (September 2005)

Fathers in prison: A journal of theory, research and practice about men as fathers

Fathering Magazine's Fall 2005 issue (vol. 3, no. 3) offers six articles that examine fathers' return home after incarceration, including "Prison, Fathers, and Identity", "The Reentry Process", "Babymama Drama and the Involvement of Incarcerated Fathers", and others. The 130 page book is available for purchase from www.mensstudies.com (Fall 2005).

Support for MFFN is provided in part by:
The McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, Grotto Foundation, & MFFN members.

Donate to MFFN

Help us to meet the needs of fatherhood advocates across Minnesota.
Your gift in any amount is appreciated.

Name: _____

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Amount enclosed : _____

My gift is (please check one):

membership registration (basic membership is \$20 annually).

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an anonymous contribution.

in memory of: _____

in honor of: _____

other: _____



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