



“Valuing the role of men in families”

**Minnesota Fatherhood & Family Services Summit  
January 23-24, 2006**

**CONFERENCE EVALUATION**

84 overall evaluations submitted

<b>PLENARY SESSION EVALUATIONS</b>	Excellent = 4.0; Good = 3.0; Adequate = 2.0; Poor = 1.0
Networking Dinner, Monday evening with Sen. Linda Berglin	<b>3.4 average</b>
Mon. Morning Plenary: Dr. Oliver Williams (substitute speakers, Glen Palm and Sam Simmons, filled-in for the first 40 minutes)	<b>3.1 average</b>
Tues. Luncheon Awards Ceremony	<b>3.6 average</b>
Tues. Afternoon Plenary: Dr. Ron May	<b>3.7 average</b>

**Plenary session comments:**

- Did a nice job filling in; I preferred listening to the fill-ins than not doing anything. They were good. (2)
- Palm and Simmons were excellent. (4)
- Great to be flexible with morning plenary. Could have offered us to view Dr. Williams’ videos at lunch or added a workshop session for him.
- Dr. May: excellent speaker!
- The morning substitute speakers were very interesting and entertaining. The afternoon speaker was informative and thorough.
- Dr. May was terrific. I really appreciated how much information he covered in so short a time.
- Dr. May’s presentation was the type of session that needed an accompanying workshop to go more in depth, reiterate, and show how to apply.
- Sen. Berglin: Yes, Minnesota helps families; but it’s not enough. Minnesota families are hungry, need health care, and need more support for low-income families.
- Dr. May: sorry he had to present at the end of the day. Humor is good.
- Dr. Williams was late but good.
- I wish Dr. Williams had more time to talk. Dr. May had a lot of good information.
- The awards are beautiful!
- During morning plenary: Nice recovery Paul and Board! It would be nice to hear Dr. Williams’ entire presentation again in the future.
- Dr. Ron May was very interesting. I suggest having him speak earlier in the conference.
- I liked the mix of plenary sessions and workshops: coming together and separating.
- Maybe have a speaker over lunch and not have an afternoon plenary; it’s hard to focus after sitting all day.
- Unfortunate Dr. Williams didn’t have more time. Could have given him more time and cut the break. (3)
- The unplanned Tuesday morning sessions (Palm and Simmons) were actually the best.
- Substitutes were adequate; Williams was very late.
- I like having lots of room.
- I especially connected with Sam.
- Palm and Simmons were inspiring and knowledgeable. It sure is eye-opening to know that there is such great work being done.
- Morning – nice recovery. Afternoon – good information, but presentation was a little dry.
- I would have liked DFL Berglin to speak more about men’s issues and their responsiveness to helping men.
- I liked Glen talk about his work at the prison. Great information from May!
- The afternoon plenary session was a little heavy, intense for the last speaker of the day.
- I was disappointed that Sen. Berglin didn’t get into future issues and changes in laws supporting men.
- Awards: good choices!
- It is unfortunate that the group size diminished at the end of the day, for Dr. May. He had some important men’s issues. Yet, someone needs to be last.

<b>OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS</b>	Agree = 4.0; Somewhat Agree = 3.0; Somewhat Disagree = 2.0; Disagree = 1.0
This conference <b>stretched my mind</b> with new ideas regarding fatherhood and family services.	<b>3.1 average</b>
This conference provided <b>up-to-date information</b> related to the fatherhood field.	<b>3.8 average</b>

This conference provided ample opportunities for <b>networking and interaction</b> between presenters, participants, and exhibitors.	<b>3.7 average</b>
This conference provided a <b>good variety of topics</b> to meet my needs.	<b>3.7 average</b>
I am <b>motivated to use this information</b> in my work <i>(if so, please explain what you plan to do, on back)</i> .	<b>3.7 average</b>

### Something that I really liked...

- Great job on another great summit!
- I liked the day and a half format, meals, snacks. I got things out of all of my sessions.
- The session about Bullies.
- The resources available. (3)
- Presenter / participant dialogue.
- Frank Goodwin's Native American storytelling. (2)
- I always enjoy networking with others passionate about fathers and families.
- I really enjoyed the meth workshop and listening to the police chief and the man from the drug and gang task force. (2)
- All of the diversity!
- Plenty of time for networking. (5)
- All of the sessions I went to were excellent. But two were beyond that: the open discussion session led by Dwaine Simms and the workshop presented by Frank Goodwin.
- Nice variety of workshop topics and choices. (4)
- I enjoyed all of the plenary speakers.
- Workshop presenters all had good knowledge of their topics.
- MFFN Board Members ran the conference and Paul was in the background.
- Good people won the awards.
- The seminar about legal issues (child protection).
- Diversity of voices: American Indian, Latino, academic, etc.
- Food: refreshments in same room as exhibitors is a good idea.
- Good food.
- Good handouts.
- I made some good contacts. Good networking.
- Sam Simmons and Ron May were great!
- I really enjoyed the talk about the work being done in the prison with fathers.
- Well scheduled; interesting sessions.
- Great dinner, lunch, and breaks.
- The "back to basics" approach of Ron May.
- Presentation by Scott Harmon / STEEP. (2)
- Session by Neil Tift.
- Session on religion and faith was very good. (3)
- Just honoring the role of fathers.
- Research based.
- One of the attendees in the session about religion had some good ideas. He should present a session about using religion to help fathers and role providers to connect fathers to religion and morals and values.
- Dr. Ron May was very interesting; especially in the area of healing.
- Latino fathers session was very good. Great information; good facts; and great male presenters. (3)
- Good timeframe of breakout sessions, presenters, breaks, lunch. Relaxed environment. (2)
- All workshops. Great info!
- The speakers who "filled-in" in the morning were very good and had good senses of humor. (2)
- Good new topics. Great info. (2)
- Dr. May was the best.
- This was my third year in attendance; networking was easier.
- New people representing new blood in the field. Expanded exhibitors. Nicely handled potential problem with Linda Berglin's presentation. Things ran smoothly.
- ...to be inspired. And I was.
- Information regarding attachment.
- Speakers who are honest about themselves as it applies to providing services to families seeking support.
- I look for the balance of men and women.
- The wide choices and the excellent quality of information and presenters.
- The effort to put this together and build forward.
- Excellent speakers! Nice folders! Good info and food!

## Something that could be improved...

- Nothing. It was good.
- Unfortunately, I didn't really hear Dr. Williams' message.
- We need to get more African American men professionals involved in the conference.
- I think we skirt around the issues of comprehensive sexual health.
- Workshop seating with tables to make note taking easier.
- Consider the variety of sessions. None of Tuesday morning's sessions were really applicable to my job.
- Repeat presenters (i.e., there were three I wanted to attend in the PM; but none of much interest in the AM). Too hard to pick one session. (2)
- It's getting better, but still more ethnic diversity of those in attendance. (2)
- Maybe invite state agencies (DHS, OCSE, etc) to exhibit and present.
- Monday dinner was so-so. Tuesday lunch was great.
- Various speakers represented excellent programs, were knowledgeable, but struggled as presenters. (2)
- The lighting was too dim. (2)
- Connect plenaries with skill-building workshops.
- All speakers should provide handouts. (2)
- More focus on innovation, especially neuro-biology.
- More cultural competence: especially Somali and Hmong.
- More time for questions in several sessions. (2)
- Great event!
- More variety in topics.
- Add a strong Christian presence to the religion discussion.
- More program sharing: strategies we use in our programs that work. Things that didn't work. Things that increase father involvement. Successes! (2)
- Instead of having many options for one workshop session, have shorter workshop sessions in order to explore more of the options.
- I was disappointed by the workshops. I was hopeful for more information to use.
- Focus more on fathers. Seemed as though some of the workshops did not come together to focus the larger topic down to the effects and importance of fatherhood.
- More men providers / fathers to be present.
- It takes me time to warm up and network. As I did, I felt the need for more time. I recognize that is more my problem.

## Next year, I would recommend...

- General suggestions:
  - o Continue to work hard and promote these issues.
  - o Don't have the seats hooked together.
  - o Keep up the great and needed work.
  - o Encourage attendance from state and county agencies.
  - o Move plenary speakers back to the middle of the room instead of on the far wall.
- Suggestions for session topics / presenters / activities:
  - o Maybe cut down on the amount of workshops and work on three main topics which are really effective in information focused on fatherhood.
  - o Encourage workshop hosts to help keep speakers on track. We as participants are here to listen to the presenters speak about what we paid for; not to hear audience members on a soap box.
  - o I strongly encourage you to include Dr. David Walsh on your board and to speak for a full day. (2)
  - o Invite the author of "Lost Boys".
  - o More activities in the workshops instead of just speakers.
  - o More open discussion sessions. Repeat the free-flow workshop to network, share ideas, listen, connect, get support! (3)
  - o More rural resources.
  - o Mike Mann. Storyman.com would be a great presenter. He's a storyteller. A little lighter than some of these workshops. Fathers telling childhood stories. A good ending presenter – lighter.
  - o Larry Atkin from Leech Lake would be an awesome speaker!
  - o Include state and county and city administrations in developing a program which looks intensely at integrating fathers into the broad service system.
  - o A workshop on the proposed new child support laws in Minnesota and a comparison of child support laws in Minn. as compared to other states.
  - o A presentation on the new child welfare guidelines.
  - o Current fatherhood research information.

- SE Asian perspective on fathering.
- Other prevention services / programs for adolescents.
- More speakers/workshops on cultural differences of fatherhood (Somali, Vietnamese, Oromo).
- There is an amazing group of sisters based in St. Cloud, New Directions Counseling and the SEND Institute. They do a very interesting presentation about personality colors and the way they respond to information, communicate to each other, and process different situations, information, reactions. I think the attendees at this conference would like the presentations and information. [www.newdirectionsct.com](http://www.newdirectionsct.com).
- ADHD dads raising ADHD kids (see additional comment, below).
- The session that was originally planned about the “Boy Code”.
- Anger topics: non-residential fathers who view the system is against them.
- A seminar on using less day care and more parents spending time at home raising their children.
- More opportunities to look at practical things to do to get dads and families involved.
- Maybe speakers that use case studies that we can relate to more easily. Most of the speakers I saw today could have done this but did not. They would have been more interesting if they had.
- More fathers to present; especially those who may have successful results from service provided thru the network.
- Would Glen Palm bring a father to the conference from his jail group – a personal testimony?
- The program that I work with is mandated to develop fatherhood programs. One activity that I initiated was Father-Child Activity Days. Dads, uncles, grandfathers were encouraged to spend an hour or two interacting with a child in our program. Many women took offense. I continued to encourage the activity days and invited moms and dads to come in, however, stressing male involvement. I was reprimanded. I was told that unless I stopped stressing the importance of having dads attend, even as a by-line, I could lose my job. We have done the father-friendly assessments and they sit and collect dust. Is there someone out there who can not just speak to this problem, but who can offer realistic ideas of how to fulfill a fatherhood mandate in an anti-fatherhood environment?
- Location and date / time comments:
  - Think about days: Mon/Tues vs. Thurs/Fri and half-day followed by full-day or vice versa.
  - Not a Monday / Tuesday.
  - Move to Twin Cities location.
  - Keep same location.
  - Move to summer in St. Cloud or change locations.
  - Would be nice to be here in the spring, to take advantage of the beauty of the river.
  - A longer conference.
  - Maybe offer more breakout timeslots and shorter plenary sessions?
  - More time for awards.
- Food comments:
  - How about a healthy snack? Fruit or carrot sticks?
  - Hot water for tea. Bigger cup of coffee.
  - No pork.
  - Consider buffet style meals.
  - Need some salty snacks in the afternoon and more chocolate chip cookies.
  - More time to eat lunch.

### **I am motivated to...**

- The workshop on ethics will be useful in my job.
- I plan to lead my Home Visitor staff in elements of STEEP.
- Sometimes just one idea makes a whole conference worthwhile. For me, it was finding out about, and getting access to, a bilingual brochure that explains statutory rape.
- I am amazed and grateful for the exemplary organization of this conference. I have met people who work in a wide range of organizations serving men. The topic of the conference is so timely and “right on” in bringing fathers issues to the fronts – to help understand problems with men and parenting.

<b>OVERALL QUALITY</b>	Excellent = 4.0; Good = 3.0; Adequate = 2.0; Poor = 1.0
The overall quality of the conference?	<b>3.7 average</b>
The St. Cloud Civic Center’s facilities / rooms?	<b>3.7 average</b>
The meals and snacks?	<b>3.6 average</b>