The mission of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, 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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Tina Welsh, Boyz II Dadz, Duluth, Region 2

MFFN Staff—2004

Paul Masiarchin, State Coordinator, Minneapolis
Bill Anderson, Volunteer Graduate Intern, Buffalo
A Growing Voice for Minnesota’s Fathers

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network (MFFN) is still quite young in its existence. However, 2004 was a year full of growth, networking, relationship building and progress for Minnesota fathers and the practitioners that work with them. Our strength as a network comes from the united voices of Minnesotans who share in the work of advancing the physical, emotional, financial and spiritual health of fathers and men in families.

In January of 2004 MFFN hosted its first statewide conference, the Minnesota Fatherhood Summit, with nearly 200 practitioners from around the state in attendance. The summit offered practitioners an opportunity to gather and discuss the complex and interconnected issues surrounding the fatherhood field. MFFN welcomed all of the summit’s attendees as new members; this membership is a vital component of MFFN.

With the goal of creating an effective and supportive network of practitioners, MFFN began to distribute to its members a quarterly newsletter with topical articles, a calendar of events and news about the fatherhood field. In addition to the newsletter, MFFN sent regular email updates to current and potential members regarding current issues pertaining to the fatherhood field as well as information about training opportunities, events, etc. MFFN also maintains a web site at www.mnfathers.org; this web site holds a great deal of information about the network, the fatherhood field and other related sites.

We hope that these efforts continue to bring practitioners the information they want and the opportunities they need in order to come together to share ideas, discuss best practices, and fuel the fatherhood movement.

MFFN – in its commitment to be a truly statewide network – maintains regional representation on its Board from throughout Minnesota. As part of our statewide focus, MFFN held six training seminars in the fall of 2004 including sessions in Owatonna, Bemidji, Hutchinson, St. Paul, Brainerd, and Duluth. The sessions were held on the topic of legal issues pertaining to unmarried fathers including the fathers’ adoption registry, paternity establishment, parenting time, child custody, and child support collection. The 2004 seminars, our third annual series, were attended by 150 fatherhood practitioners and advocates.

MFFN will continue to provide support, networking, education and consultation to practitioners from all areas and communities of Minnesota. MFFN, together with all who work with fathers, will continue to play an important role of building the field of fatherhood practitioners throughout Minnesota and to expand the field in number and diversity.

MFFN is here to serve you in your work with fathers and in so doing, to serve fathers, their children, their partners and all of their families. Collectively we are MFFN and our hope is that we can all continue to work at our best, together to serve and improve the lives of fathers and families in Minnesota. We look forward to another year of growth and progress in 2005.

Pat Sharbonda
President of the Board

February 2005
Brainerd, Minnesota
Building the Field of Fatherhood Practitioners

Training / Events


Fall Seminar Series: MFFN hosted 6 half-day meetings on legal issues for unmarried fathers, in collaboration with Minn. Fathers’ Adoption Registry, Goodwill/Easter Seals FATHER Project, Central Minn. Legal Services, Southside Community Health Services and the regionally-based Minn. Initiative Funds. Sessions in Bemidji, Brainerd, Duluth, Hutchinson, Owatonna, and St. Paul were attended by 150 individuals.

Child Support Listening Session: MFFN hosted a luncheon meeting for fatherhood practitioners, low-income parents, and the director of Minnesota’s Child Support Enforcement Division. During the meeting, attendees generated 50 recommendations for improvements in child support collection and delivery.

2004 Conferences: MFFN hosted workshops and/or exhibit booths at conferences hosted by: Minn. Social Service Association (MSSA), Minn. Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP), Minn. Fathers’ Adoption Registry, Minn. Family Investment Program (MFIP), Minn. Assoc. for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC), St. Louis Co. Health and Human Services, and Minn. Council on Family Relations (MCFR).


Resources / Outreach

InfoSheets: MFFN published six InfoSheets as part of a series of father-related resource documents. Each document provides an introduction to a specific topic and a short bibliography for in-depth reading. The InfoSheets are available at: www.mnfathers.org/resources.html.

Newsletters and Emails: MFFN mailed quarterly newsletters, “Network Notes”, to 200 members. MFFN also e-mailed monthly updates to over 1000 fatherhood advocates, social services providers, and educators across Minnesota.

Family Law Resource Documents: MFFN collaborated with Central Minnesota Legal Services to develop a 4-page document, “The Top 5 Legal Issues for Professionals to Know When Working with Unmarried Fathers.” Also, MFFN helped to develop and disseminate the 30-page “Unmarried Fathers Guide to Paternity, Custody and Parenting Time in Minnesota.”

2005 Excellence in Fatherhood Award: In January 2005, MFFN will present awards to five individuals and programs selected by MFFN members for their support of a father-friendly Minnesota.

Minnesota News Connection: MFFN joined a news service that produces radio stories for release to Minnesota broadcast stations. In the first 3 months, three father-related stories were each aired by over 40 Minnesota radio stations.
Website: In 2004, 10,000 unique visitors viewed over 100,000 files on the MFFN website (www.mnfathers.org). All MFFN resource materials are available to download from the website.

Organizational Development: In 2004, MFFN acquired federal tax exempt status as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. MFFN also developed an organizational logo (see cover).

Additional Collaborative Efforts

Fatherhood Documentary: MFFN joined a group of fatherhood advocates to tape the pilot show of a documentary series, “Voices of Fatherhood”. The show was broadcast on cable access television across Minnesota.

Hennepin County Teen Parent Connection (TPC): MFFN staff sits on the Steering Committee of the TPC Fathers Working Group. This group aims to create a coordinated system to identify and serve young fathers.

13th Annual Festival for Fathers & Families: MFFN staff co-chaired the 2004 Festival, planned collaboratively by over 20 social service agencies and attended by approximately 750 individuals in North Minneapolis. Free activities included lunch, T-shirts for fathers, resource tents, an awards ceremony, pony rides, a petting zoo, a moon bounce, a raffle, and more.

2004 Financial Report

Throughout 2004, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network operated under a fiscal agent, the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF). This relationship allowed MFFN to gain stability while continuing to develop organizational infrastructure. In 2005, MFFN will no longer operate under a fiscal agency agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES</th>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<td>Foundation Grants</td>
<td>Personnel/Consultants: $52,157</td>
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<td>Membership</td>
<td>Occupancy: $3,905</td>
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<td>Program Fees:</td>
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<td>Contributions:</td>
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<td>In-Kind Contributions: $7,276</td>
<td>Workshops/Meetings: $7,744</td>
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<td>Total Revenues:</td>
<td>Total Expenses: $89,218</td>
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2004 Contributors

MFFN gratefully acknowledges our major contributors. Principal funding came from:

- The McKnight Foundation
- Otto Bremer Foundation

Additional contributors included:

- Initiative Foundation
- Minnesota Department of Health
- National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF)

- Northland Foundation
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Southside Community Health Services
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John Ticito, Otter Tail - Wadena CAC Head Start, New York Mills
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Minnell Traile, Univ. of Minn. Extension, Andover
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Annual Report 2004 7