May 2013

A Message from the Executive Director - Morgan Streeter

I read an article yesterday written by Michelle Teheux. In the article, she discusses the differences between "mothering a child" and "fathering a child". Mothering implies nurturing and caring for the baby; fathering implies simply being a part of the DNA that makes up a child. She goes on to write that this notion of fathering is changing, and I believe it is thanks to MFFN and similar organizations and initiatives around the country that put more value on the role of the father.

However, May is for mothers. MFFN has done a wonderful job of supporting the relationship between dads and their children without minimizing the role of the mother. Mothers bring life into this world, and it is a unique privilege that only mothers possess. While other roles for moms fluctuate, this privilege has remained constant. MFFN also looks to mothers to help support fathers in fostering that relationship with their children. In this society, mothers are trained from a very early age to be nurturing and care for children, from the moment they received their first baby doll to their first babysitting gig. Females are trained to care for children. Conversely, men are not. Even in my own home, my wife finds ways for me to build a stronger connection with my children by suggesting they go with me to run errands or signing us up for father/son activities. For that I am grateful!

Now, June is for fathers and it is not too early to start thinking about what to get Dad this Father's Day. I would like to suggest a "Daddy Pack." For $20 you will receive a handy cinch pack, The Daddy Book (everything a new father needs to know), and a deck of playing cards (each card has a different activity to do with your children). This is the perfect gift for that new father in your life. The cinch pack, also makes a great diaper bag and you can fill it with your favorite books and toys for dad and baby. This is also nice for us "experienced" dads. I use the bag as our "Church Bag", we put as many snacks and toys that we can think of to keep the kids occupied during Mass. Email: Mstreeter@mnfathers.org on how to order.

10th Anniversary

MFFN is in its 10th year thanks to the generosity of our members and funders. We are a membership driven organization and we want to make sure that we are providing our members with the best possible services and information. We are inviting all of our members to submit stories that tell the rich history of MFFN from its inception. Please include pictures if you can. We also invite
you to submit any thoughts on how MFFN can better serve your organization. Submit all stories to Mstreeter@mnfathers.org

Condolences
I would like to send out our thoughts and prayers to the family of Laura Turner. Laura passed away on April 27, 2013. She was a founding member of the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network. MFFN and its members thank Laura for her contribution in making this a successful network.

MFFN Annual Report
MFFN recently published its 2012 Annual Report. The 2012 Annual Report will also be posted on our website.

Has your membership expired?

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network is dedicated to supporting effective programs to enhance the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of children, families and the community. As a professional development and networking organization, MFFN will help you to strengthen your work, learn from others around the state, and build the field of fatherhood and family services practitioners. Link to the membership page on our website for more information or to become a member:

Membership Levels

Friend of Fathers
Join us at no charge to be a part of our listserve and receive e-newsletters, announcements or updates. (Training discounts offered with paid memberships). Existing and previous memberships will become a “Friend of Fathers” status in 2013.

Fatherhood Ally: Individual paid membership
$50 and above (includes toolkit, annual meeting invitation, voting privileges, and discount to 2014 Annual Summit $50)

Fatherhood Advocate: Individual paid membership
$100 and above (includes toolkit, annual meeting invitation, voting privileges, and discount to 2014 Annual Summit $50 and other MFFN offered trainings)

Organizational Fatherhood Advocate: Organizational paid membership
$200 (includes one toolkit, annual meeting invitation, voting privileges for up to 5 staff members and discount to 2014 Annual Summit $40 and other MFFN offered trainings for up to 5 staff members).

Suggested Readings

Strong Fathers / Strong Daughters; Meg Meeker
In today’s increasingly complicated world, it’s often difficult for parents to connect with their daughters—and especially so for fathers. In this unique and invaluable guide, Dr. Meg Meeker, a pediatrician with more than twenty years’ experience counseling girls, reveals that a young woman’s relationship with her father is far more important than we’ve ever realized. To become a strong, confident woman, a daughter needs her father’s attention, protection, courage, and wisdom. Dr. Meeker shares the ten secrets every father needs to know in order to strengthen or rebuild bonds with his daughter and shape her life—and his own—for the better.

**Doing the Best I Can;** Kathryn Edin

Across the political spectrum, unwed fatherhood is denounced as one of the leading social problems of today. *Doing the Best I Can* is a strikingly rich, paradigm-shifting look at fatherhood among inner-city men often dismissed as "deadbeat dads." Kathryn Edin and Timothy J. Nelson examine how couples in challenging straits come together and get pregnant so quickly--without planning. The authors chronicle the high hopes for forging lasting family bonds that pregnancy inspires, and pinpoint the fatal flaws that often lead to the relationship's demise. They offer keen insight into a radical redefinition of family life where the father-child bond is central and parental ties are peripheral.

Drawing on years of fieldwork, *Doing the Best I Can* shows how mammoth economic and cultural changes have transformed the meaning of fatherhood among the urban poor. Intimate interviews with more than 100 fathers make real the significant obstacles faced by low-income men at every step in the familial process: from the difficulties of romantic relationships, to decision-making dilemmas at conception, to the often celebratory moment of birth, and finally to the hardships that accompany the early years of the child's life, and beyond.

**Conferences or Events of Interest:**

**Mind the Gap Regional Training Event For Corrections and Child Support Practitioners**

Minnesota has just completed a pilot program to improve outcomes for incarcerated fathers with a child support obligation. Learn more about events around the state where speakers will share what they have learned in this program and practical tips that can be used when working with this population to better ensure re-entry for the non-custodial parent along with emotional and financial support for children. Speakers at this one day event will include representatives from the Department of Corrections, Child Support, Goodwill Easter Seals, Father Project and Mind the Gap/Father Project Participants.

**The Military Child Education Coalition®(MCEC) Training**

Supporting Children of the National Guard and Reserve Institute May 15 & 16, 2013 in St. Cloud.
Nurturing Fathers: Teaching Men Nurturing Skills
Mark Perlman, a nationally recognized parenting educator and facilitator of fathering programs will be speaking in Park Rapids on May 17th. Additionally Citizen Fathers from Minneapolis will present. RSVP to Cleo Hartung at 218-237-5475

Resources of Interest

Man Making Blog
This blog is about men, boys, male culture, mentoring, rites of passage, and men helping boys on their journey to manhood.
The most recent one is about Teen Boy Sexuality, Masturbation, Porn and Rape and discusses how the terribly tragic case of the Steubenville rape trial and subsequent sentencing of two adolescent male athletes to juvenile jail is only the most recent sad testimony to the very complex array of issues surrounding teen males and sexuality.

MOFAS Men's Morning Coffee Groups
Support groups for men who have a family member affected by an FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders). Could be an actual diagnosis, or maybe you suspect and are working toward a diagnosis. 3 meetings each month: Southwest Metro - 1st Saturday of the month; North Metro Dads Coffee Group - 2nd Saturday of the month; Metro Dads Coffee Group - 3rd Saturday of the month. Contact Jeff Beyer, MOFAS Family Resource Coordinator.

PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms are associated with a higher risk of divorce. Therefore, family support agencies should enhance their services for returning soldiers that screen positive for PTSD, according to a recent report titled: "Home Front, Post-Deployment Mental Health and Divorces.” It was prepared for the Department of Defense by the RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research.

Men's Therapy Group - Catholic Charities
Steven Roecklein, Men's Group Therapist, is holding a Men's Therapy Group through Catholic Charities. This therapy group for men will deal with:
-Issues of anxiety (e.g., feelings of stress, worry, insecurity, tension, anger, fear and guilt) and
-Problems of depression (e.g., low motivation, lack of interest in daily activities, loss of sleep and appetite, tiredness, hopelessness, agitation, loneliness and self-defeating thoughts.
More information on the attached flyer: Contact Steven Roecklein at 612-388-3588.

Circle of Parents - Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support
Men's breakout group meets 2 times per month in St. Cloud.

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network would like to help promote your event or conference by sending it in our monthly e-newsletter. Send information to info@mnfathers.org. We will make every effort to include the information and apologize in advance if your event or conference is missed.

MFFN Change of Address:
Send us your photos and/or stories of you or someone you know being a father to Sarah Cheesman mailto:scheesman@mnfathers.org. We would love to put those on our website. If you send something to us, you are authorizing us to share it with our members or put it on our website.