

Leading Minnesota's campaign
for healthy fatherhood.



ANNUAL REPORT ■ 2005

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.



Minnesota Fathers & Families Network
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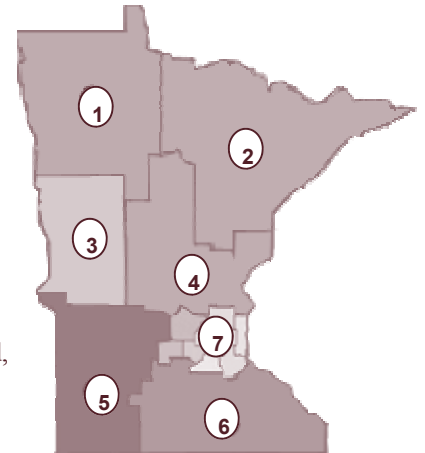
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- Loren Niehoff, Graduate Student Assistant, St. Cloud, Region 4



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Dear friends,

Since 2002, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network has been reaching across boundaries to share the message that healthy fatherhood leads to healthy children, healthy families, and a healthier Minnesota.

We have been determined to stay away from labels that narrow our focus or cloud our views. Healthy, positive fatherhood is not an issue of one political ideology, of one geographic region, of one socio-economic group, or of one gender. We believe in the simple principle that healthy fathers support healthy child development.

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Increasingly, we believe that many men and women are placing a higher value on the father's role as a mentor, a role model, and a co-parent. We believe that healthy fatherhood complements healthy motherhood; without regard to family structure, religion, or ethnicity.

Clearly, our work is still in its infancy. Too many of Minnesota's children are raised without the strong father-figures that they need. Too many fathers lack the social supports to learn how to raise their children. Too many

incarcerated fathers are isolated from their children; too many divorced fathers lack adequate parenting time; too many working fathers cannot afford child care and health insurance. Throughout Minnesota, there is a lack of resources for single fathers, gay fathers, foster fathers, teen fathers, grandfathers, and all of the social fathers that could potentially support the development of healthy children and adolescents.

Throughout our history, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network has reached out to a broad group of professionals who are advocating for positive father involvement. In the coming year, we hope to expand our reach to include more educators, social service workers, public policy makers, and other Minnesotans who will advocate for healthy children by promoting fatherhood.

The strength of any movement is in its ability to spread the message. We hope that you will join us in 2006 and beyond.

Sincerely,


R. Clarence Jones
Board President


A. Paul Masiarchin
State Coordinator

Professional Development Events

■ **Minnesota Fatherhood Summit:** MFFN hosted its second annual winter conference in St. Cloud in Jan. 2005. The one-and-a-half day conference featured keynote presentations by Dr. Mitch Pearlstein from Center of the American Experiment; Dwaine Simms from African American Men Project; and Dr. Martha Erickson from Univ. of Minnesota. 225 attendees from across Minnesota participated in a dozen workshop sessions focusing on healthy fatherhood. MFFN held its third conference in Jan. 2006.

■ **Sessions on Dads and Early Literacy Development:** Throughout the fall, MFFN collaborated with the Minn. Humanities Commission, St. Cloud State Univ., Southside Community Health Services, and the Minn. Initiative Foundations to host its fourth annual Fall Seminar Series. The half day training sessions, with presentations in seven cities, were attended by 220 early educators, health professionals, and fatherhood advocates. As a result of the sessions, over 40 communities developed literacy programs, reaching nearly 2,000 dads and kids.

■ **Male Socialization Roundtable:** In February, MFFN hosted the first of two roundtable meetings sponsored by

“The very existence of MFFN has really spurred those of us who always believed in the importance of engaging men in the work we are doing to promote peace in families and the community.”

Comments from an MFFN member working on violence prevention.

the Otto Bremer Foundation. This day long meeting provided an opportunity for three dozen professionals in higher education to discuss the societal influences that prepare boys for manhood and fatherhood.

■ **Roundtable Meeting on Fathers Transitioning from Corrections:** The second Bremer-funded roundtable provided an opportunity for more than 70 fatherhood advocates to focus on issues of incarceration and healthy re-entry of fathers into families.

■ **Conference Workshops and Exhibits:** Throughout 2005, MFFN presented workshops and/or displayed exhibit booths at a dozen professional conferences including Minn. Social Services Association (MSSA), Minn. Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP), the Communities Collaborative Brain Development Conference in Mahanomen, the Minn. Council on Family Relations (MCFR), the Association of Guardians Ad Litem, Prevent Child Abuse Minn., and various others.

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Resources & Outreach

■ **Newsletters and Informational Documents:** MFFN mailed quarterly newsletters to 300 professionals and e-mailed copies of the documents to another 1,000 individuals across Minnesota. Newsletters focused on working with incarcerated fathers, family law, and fathers in early literacy development.

■ **Public Policy:** MFFN continues to develop a base of support for healthy fatherhood public policy. MFFN espouses a nonpartisan approach with a focus on coalition building and educational activities. During 2005, MFFN maintained contact with numerous elected officials and shared information about the positive role that fathers play in healthy child development. During the legislative session, MFFN sent updates and notices to its members regarding proposed bills and pending legislation in areas of family law including child support, child custody, parenting time, and other related issues. MFFN staff joined the MOAPPP public policy committee in support of teen pregnancy prevention and healthy youth development.

■ **Email Service:** MFFN sends monthly fatherhood news updates to nearly 1,500 social service workers, educators, family service professionals, and fatherhood advocates across the Upper Midwest. These mailings contain updates about professional training events, recent research, and other news affecting fathers and families in Minnesota.

■ **Radio Stories:** Throughout 2005, the Minnesota News Connection produced a total of nine radio stories in collaboration with MFFN. These stories aired on a combined total of approximately 500 radio stations across the Upper Midwest; plus, some of the stories received national coverage. Additionally, MFFN staff and board members were interviewed locally by radio stations in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota.

■ **Website:** MFFN's Internet portal, www.mnfathers.org, was accessed by nearly 17,000 unique visitors (many visited more than one time) who accessed a combined total of over 200,000 files. According to the director of the fatherhood pages on About.com, the MFFN site “is one of the best statewide sites for fathers that I have seen.”

■ **Minnesota Excellence in Fatherhood Awards:** In January 2005, MFFN recognized five programs and individuals who are leading the advancement of fatherhood policy and practice. The Award Recipients were: Visionary: Mary L. Anderson; Individual of the Year: John Turnipseed; Agency of the Year: Minnesota Humanities Commission, Family Literacy Initiatives; Advocate of the Year: Louis Hohlfeld; and Member of the Year: Glen Palm. In January 2006, MFFN again presented five Excellence in Fatherhood Awards.

Collaborative Efforts

■ **Minnesota Festival for Fathers & Families:** MFFN co-chaired the 15th annual celebration of fatherhood in North Minneapolis in 2005, working in collaboration with two-dozen sponsoring agencies. Over 700 attendees participated in the free events including lunch, a T-shirt for every father, resource tents of family services, an awards ceremony for healthy fatherhood, pony rides, a petting zoo, a moon bounce, family photographs, bird-house construction, a children’s book giveaway, and much more.

■ **Statewide Meetings:** MFFN staff met with a wide range of organizations throughout the year including early childhood education advisory councils, county-based family services collaboratives, a children’s mental health advisory council, various fatherhood programs, fatherhood networking groups, Head Start parents groups, and other organizations.

“Finally, something that will really make a difference. We are very interested in doing this in our community!”

Dads and Early Childhood Literacy workshop attendee
Proctor, Minnesota
Fall 2005

■ **Hennepin County Teen Parent Connection:** MFFN is active with the Fathers Working Group of the Teen Parent Connection. This group is leading a plan to create a coordinated system that identifies and serves all fathers of babies born to teen moms in Hennepin County.

■ **Children’s Justice Initiative – Alcohol and Other Drug Project:** MFFN assisted a workgroup of professionals from Minnesota which convened to develop guidelines for father’s services in relation to chemical health. The workgroup was supported by the Minn. Supreme Court and National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

■ **SHAPE: Survey of the Health of All Residents, the Population, and the Environment:** MFFN participated in the development of the 2006 SHAPE survey. Data from the survey is used to assess the health and disparities that exist in Hennepin County; the data guides policy and program development.

■ **Fatherhood Training Video:** A filmmaker from Olive Branch Productions met with MFFN to seek input for a training video / documentary film for the Spaulding Institute of Michigan. The film, currently in production, will discuss the issue of how health care workers can help fathers to be more involved in potential adoption decisions.

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MFFN Principles

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network believes in the following principles:

- Fathers are an essential resource in building healthy families as a context for child growth and development.
- Fathers and mothers both have primary responsibility for supporting, nurturing and guiding their children’s learning and development.
- Family education and support services systems in Minnesota should provide equal opportunities for fathers and mothers to enhance and develop their capacity as responsible parents.

“I really never thought about how much we tend to ignore the fathers when it comes to the children. [One of the presenter’s] words from the conference really stuck with me: *“Expect male involvement.”* This has changed the way I do my [work].”

Comment from attendee of Fatherhood Summit, St. Cloud, Minn., Jan. 2005

- Agencies should work in a collaborative manner to identify and address the needs of men and to support responsible fatherhood.
- Agencies and practitioners providing family services should form respectful and culturally sensitive relationships with fathers and families.
- Fatherhood practitioners and advocates can enhance services to fathers and families through increased opportunities for collaboration, training and education.
- For children and families to thrive, the whole community – families and individuals, non-profits, public systems, policy makers, the private sector and funders – needs to work in partnership.
- MFFN is a nonpartisan membership organization that works with other organizations to support fathers and families in Minnesota.

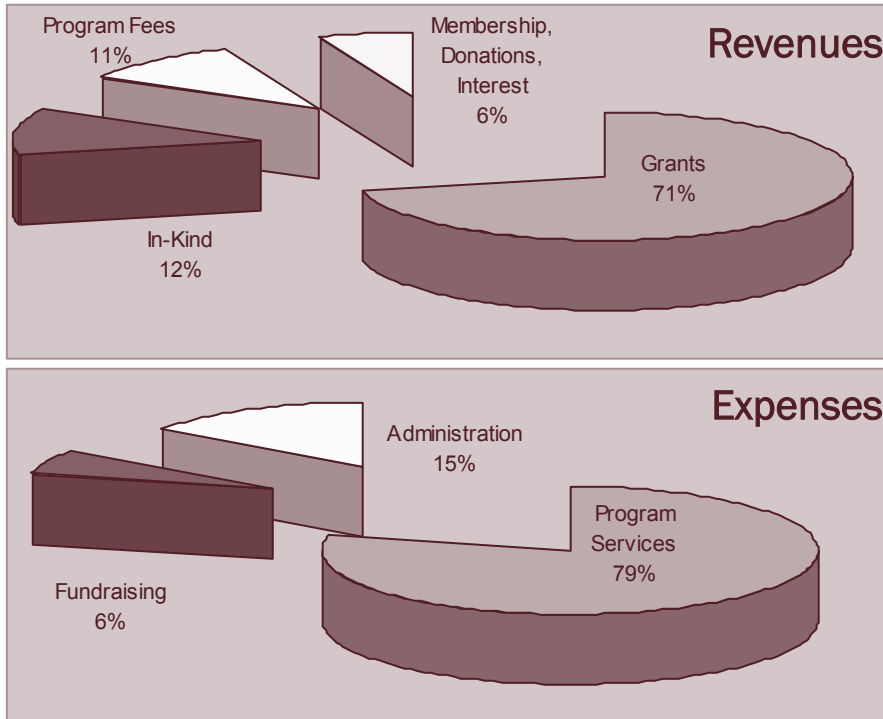
“I always enjoy networking with others passionate about fathers and families.”

2005 Minn. Fatherhood Summit attendee, speaking about the positive energy at MFFN’s second annual conference

January 1, 2005—December 31, 2005

Financial Report

On Jan. 1, 2005, MFFN began the final step of its transition to fiscal independence by ending its agreement to maintain the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families as its fiscal agent. Due to this transition, MFFN's 2005 financial report (the first as a fiscally independent organization) shows revenues considerably larger than its annual expenses. Nearly all revenues for 2005 and 2006 activities appear on this FY 2005 report. The chart to the left shows percentages based on revenues for 2005 activities.



Revenues for Fiscal Year 2005

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Grants* | \$171,300 |
| Program Fees | \$11,000 |
| Membership | \$3,500 |
| Donations / Misc. | \$1,800 |
| Interest | \$1,000 |
| In-Kind Revenue | \$12,300 |
| Total FY 05 Revenues** | \$200,900 |

* Includes \$99,500 temporarily restricted revenue for 2006 activities.
 ** Revenues for 2005 activities were \$101,400.

Expenses for Fiscal Year 2005

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Program Services | \$73,500 |
| Administration | \$13,600 |
| Fundraising | \$5,600 |
| In-Kind Expenses | \$12,300 |
| Total Expenses | \$105,000 |

Net Assets***\$137,900

*** Includes fund balance from beginning of FY05 and \$99,500 of net assets restricted for 2006 activities.

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2005 Funders

The following donors provided financial support to the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network for 2005.

“The information and research you presented was so interesting. I will definitely focus more on [dads and early literacy development] in the future in my work. Thank you so much...!”

Dads and Early Childhood Literacy workshop attendee
 Marshall, Minnesota
 Fall 2005

- Initiative Foundation, serving central Minnesota
- McKnight Foundation
- Northland Foundation
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Otto Bremer Foundation
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Southside Community Health Services

In-Kind Donor Organizations

The following organizations supported MFFN's work in 2005 through donations of in-kind support.

- Bemidji Area Schools
- Carlton County Child Support Unit
- East Side Neighborhood Services

- FATHER Project / Central Minnesota Legal Services
- Fatherhood Program of Carlton County
- Hennepin County
- Initiative Foundation, serving central Minnesota
- Mahnomen School District
- Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry
- Minnesota Humanities Commission
- Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
- National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families
- Northland Foundation
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Olmsted County
- Saint Cloud State University
- Saint John's University
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Southside Community Health Services
- Southwest Minnesota Foundation
- West Central Initiative

MFFN also thanks all of the organizations that enabled their staff members to

- lead sessions at the 2005 Fatherhood Summit.
- speak at various conferences and training events throughout 2005.
- join planning committees organized by MFFN.

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 John Titcomb, New York Mills
 Glenn Tobey, Cloquet
 Judi Tollefson, St. Cloud
 Minnell Tralle, Andover
 Laura Turner, St. Paul

“This was the best workshop I’ve attended in a long time.”

Dads and Early Childhood Literacy workshop attendee
 Northfield, Minnesota
 Fall 2005

John Turnipseed, Minneapolis
 Robert Velez, Minneapolis
 Doua Vue, Minneapolis
 Jeff Wahner-Larson, Crystal
 Terrie Wagner, St. Cloud
 Nancy Walker, Marshall
 Katie Wasness, St. Cloud
 Carol Weiner
 David Weiss, Stillwater
 Tina Welsh, Duluth
 Francis Wind, Cass Lake
 Pam Woitalla, Foley
 Deb Wright, Duluth

Rene Wright, Cass Lake
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