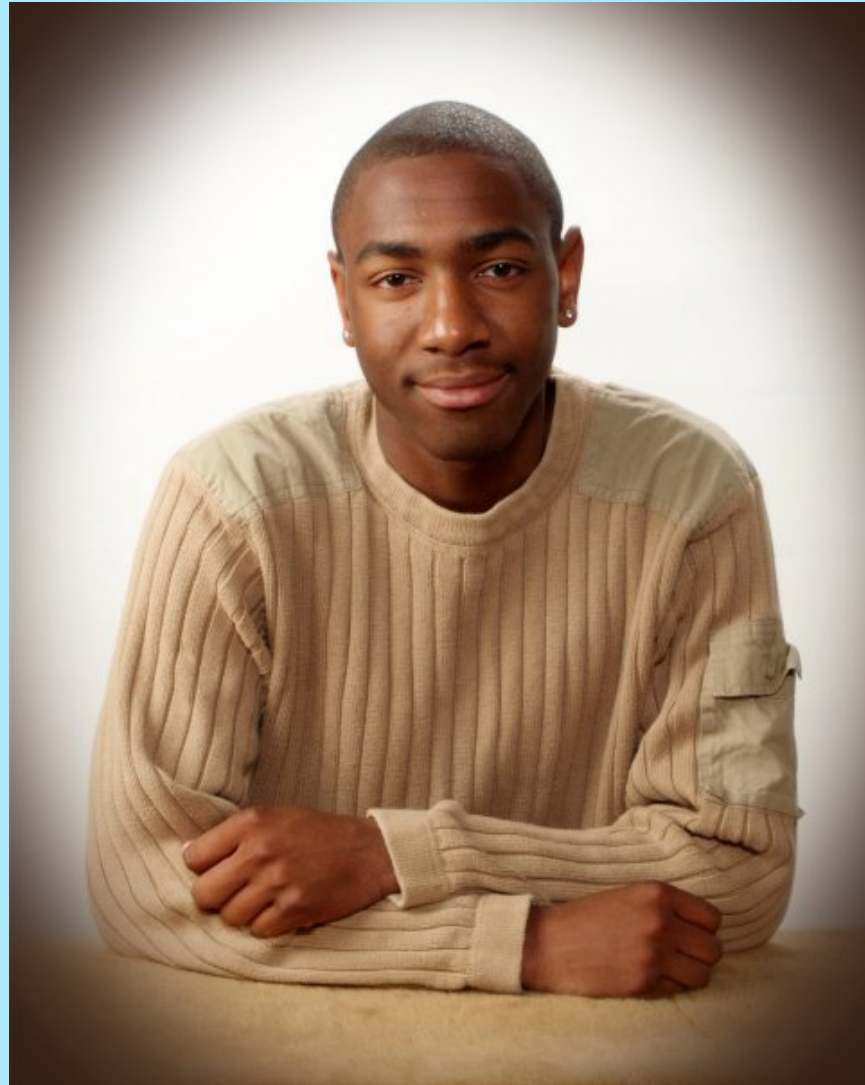




Fatherhood is a “Game-Changer”

Christopher



Kevin



Matthew



Father absence is
considered by many the
major social problem in our
society today.



Did you know?

Children who don't have a father figure in their lives are:

- 5 times more likely to be poor
- 3 times more likely to fail in school
- 2 times more likely experience behavior problems at school
- 2 times more likely to engage in criminal behavior
- 2 times more likely to use and abuse illegal drugs/alcohol & tobacco
- 4 times more likely to engage in early sexual behavior
- 3 times more likely to commit suicide

The History of Project Fatherhood

Having long observed that fathers were most often left out of programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect, CII's Senior Vice President of Clinical Services, Dr. Hershel K. Swinger, reached out to the fathers and began the process of engaging them in the lives of their children...

Project Fatherhood was born.



Reasons Fathers are not Involved

- **Poor Self-Esteem (PSE)**
- **Intergenerational Component (IC)**
- **Social and Psychological Isolation (SPI)**
- **Stress Component (SC)**

Session Themes

- Difference between Anger and Pain
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Loss and Separation
- Distinguishing Between Punishment and Discipline
- Normal Child Development
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Communicating Needs
- Rites of Passage: From Boyhood to Man
- Choosing a Healthy Mate

Program Services

In addition to our MIRG's, the program also offers the following services:

- Individual and Family Counseling
- Job Training
- Financial Literacy
- Healthy Marriage Workshops
- Parent-Child Enrichment Activities
- Legal Workshops and Consultations
- Employment Assistance
- Housing Assistance



Program Goals

- Responsible Parenting: Fathers will more consistently and effectively parent their children in a healthy, nurturing manner.
- Healthy Marriage: Fathers will develop skills to strengthen and stabilize all relationships in their lives, especially co-parenting and marital relationships.
- Economic Stability: Fathers will increase their financial stability.

Children of participating fathers will demonstrate improved functioning at home and in the community.



What we know!!

- Children with involved and engaged fathers tend to have more positive outcomes relative to physical, cognitive, and social emotional health.
- Of children who become involved in the child welfare system, involving multiple parents in the case (e.g. mother and father) often results in a greater chance of a child returning home, fewer placement episodes, and reduced trauma that may be caused by separation anxiety.

A New Day

Fathers can no longer be ignored in studies of child welfare. Regardless of whether they live with their children or not, it is important for researchers to examine how father-child relationships, as well as mother-child relationships, influence children's and parents' functioning. "Although it is important not to overvalue the importance of fathers, it is equally important not to dismiss their significance.

Father Involvement

various facets of father involvement

A father who
INTERACTS

A father who
TAKES CARE

An
AFFECTIONATE
father



A
RESPONSIBLE
father

A
PROVIDER

An
INSPIRATIONAL
father

Time to Step It Up

Establishing fatherhood initiatives in the communities is not enough. It also is important for agencies and programs to assess if they provide a father-friendly environment.

Important components include:

- The attitudes of staff;
- The inclusiveness of language and environment;
- The types of activities available for fathers;
- The scheduling of activities for non-work hours;
- Media and communications;
- The presence of male staff and volunteers.



Let's Train Them

In order to really make significant changes, some people need training!!!

- Doctors/Nurses
- Teachers
- Lawyers/Judges
- Child Support
- Social Workers
- Therapists
- Employers



Lessons Learned

- Have strong male leadership; use men to market, recruit for, and facilitate the program.
- Build programs around the stated needs of the men in the program.
- Respect is a key component to rapport building and sustained participation.
- Provide the leadership and men with the essentials of group and 1:1 leadership skills, including building group norms, handling differences, listening, and confidentiality.
- Respect the "culture" of the men involved: geographic area, age, socio-economics, ethnicity, and race;
- Provide resources, education, and information (Maslow's Physiological and Safety Needs).
- If possible, have developmentally appropriate father-child activities.
- Never let costs or money get in the way of father involvement (this includes transportation, child care).

Lessons Learned

- Be flexible in scheduling; find places and times where men can attend (i.e., individual education programs).
- Have family activities (family is everyone who is important in a child's life, such as grandparents and neighbors).
- Let men learn from other men (i.e., one-on-one and in groups).
- Have meetings in places that are friendly, easygoing, nonclinical, and relaxed;
- Know that numbers alone have little to do with program success.
- Always spend time "celebrating" successes ("bragging rights"); the men need unlimited opportunities to "brag" about their kids and the value they have in their children's lives;
- Provide food or snacks. "Feed them and they will come." (Yes, food does make a difference!)



Summary/ What's Next?

- Project Fatherhood 5-Day Training (Semi-Annually)
- On-going Father Engagement Training
- Parenting Beyond Conflict
- Head Start/School Involvement
- Foster Care
- Military/Veterans



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROJECT FATHERHOOD:



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“Project Fatherhood is a grassroots program that can take place in any place. It directly touches the lives of fathers and their children.”

Dr. Hershel K. Swinger,
Founder, Project Fatherhood



Thank You!

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safe children, strong families, healthy communities